

**Education *in* and *for* Democracy and Human Rights:  
Moving from Utopian Ideals to Grounded Practice**

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## Abstract

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This thesis is set in the Western Australian education system and centres on the question of how primary schools can actively foster conditions conducive to creating and sustaining education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights. In Australia, as elsewhere, there is a widespread acceptance of the need for democratic education also referred to as civics and citizenship education. The perceived lack of public understanding of democratic principles and practices has, in the last decade, led various Australian governments to commit significant resources (\$ 31.6 million) to civics and citizenship education programmes such as *Discovering Democracy (DD)*.

This thesis argues that political engagement and civic learning is most effective when schools commit themselves to deliberately embedding a set of democratic educational principles in everyday practices. In contrast to traditional approaches to citizenship education that tend to focus on the operational aspects of representative governments, institutions and history, this thesis argues that education *for* Democracy and Human Rights (DaHR) can be effectively achieved through the fostering of DaHR *in* education. In this task the thesis draws on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC is rooted in a range of basic values about the

treatment of children in schools and elsewhere, and encompasses basic rights to which children are entitled.

The study empirically investigates through up close observations, interviews and surveys the efficacy of pedagogy for civic and citizenship learning in four schools identified as places of strong democratic practice. This study was able to identify particular commonalities between the four case study schools that were conducive to creating and sustaining democratic principles and practices. These schools, although very different in their composition, were lead by principals who shared the view that children under their care were subjects in the making with increasing rights and responsibilities rather than objects to be manipulated, controlled and protected. The findings suggest that experiencing democracy and human rights in daily school life in a variety of situations and on a number of different levels can effectively contribute to the learning of the meaning and advantages of democratic values such as the rule of law, participatory decision-making and due process. It also concludes that there may be a relationship between parental socio-economic background and the possibilities available for students to engage in effective civic learning and citizenship practices. The relationship between socio-economic background and other structural factors including gender and ethnicity in relation to possibilities of civic learning needs to be investigated in a larger study.

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## Declaration

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work, which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary institution.

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Eva Dobozy

January 2004

To Imre and Miki  
who inspired my interest in children's rights

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## Contents

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<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iv</i>
Tables	x
Figures	xii
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 Research Context and Methodology</b>	<b>18</b>
Written into the Script: Gaining Clarity of Personal Biases	20
Living and Working in the Postmodern Condition	24
On Methodology and Method	34
Design of the Study	42
Conclusion	52
<b>2 International Human Rights: An Overview</b>	<b>54</b>
The Historicity of an International Human Rights Regime	57
Natural Rights versus Civil Rights	62
Reconciling Ideals of Global Democracy and Cultural Diversity	65
Moving Beyond Universalism and Particularism	68
Countering Threats of Global Hegemony	70
The Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): An Attempt of Cultural Pluralism	73
The Convention on the Rights of the Child – General Principles	79
Children and Human Rights Education	83
Conclusion	85
<b>3 The Teaching and Learning of Democratic Citizenship</b>	<b>87</b>
A Changing Context for the Idea of Democratic Citizenship	89
Two Concepts of Democratic Citizenship	95
At the Crossroads – Navigating Curricula Tensions	96
An Australian Example of Political Education	103
Toward an Integrated View of Human Rights Education (HRE), Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) and Multicultural Education (MCE)	116
A Need to Move Beyond 'Quick-Fix' Approaches	118
Conclusion	120



<b>4 The Nexus Between HRE and Pedagogy</b>	<b>123</b>
Children's Human Rights and Education Policy	125
Schools and Political Socialisation	126
Human Rights and Everyday Educational Practices	128
Policy Documents, Student Autonomy and Human Rights Behaviour	130
School Environments and Human Rights Behaviour	132
Power, Rules and Student Autonomy	135
Conclusion	137
<b>5 Learning from Everyday Practices: The Case Study Sites</b>	<b>140</b>
What Makes A School 'Democratic'?	143
A Contextual Definition of Power	145
The Matrix of Schooling	147
School Portraits	152
The School Cultures in Comparison	211
Conclusion	219
<b>6 Students' Right to be Heard: A Challenge to Orthodoxy</b>	<b>223</b>
The Meaning of Student Participation in Decision-Making Processes	225
Student Discipline	232
School Leadership	238
Political Empowerment within the Schools	247
Political Empowerment within the Classroom	263
Student Participation in Comparison	316
Conclusion	323
<b>7 Nurturing the Good Citizen: Students' Development of Civic Proficiency</b>	<b>328</b>
Commonalities of Political and Moral Education	329
School Culture and Students' Development of Self-Regulation	331
Socio-Economic Background and Civic Proficiency	335
Democracy and Conflict: The Problem of Legitimate Authority	337
Conclusion	340
<b>8 Conclusion: Fostering Democracy and Human Rights in Education</b>	<b>344</b>
Key Themes of the Study Revisited	345
What is Possible?	350
Key Findings of the Study Revisited	353
The Effectiveness of Practical HRE: Implications of the Findings	361
The Need for Further Research	364
Concluding Comments	365
References	371
Appendices	386

## Tables

---

1	Participating Schools	7
2	The Relationship between the Historical Period and Knowledge	26
3	The Relationship between the Historical Period and the Separation of Church and State	27
4	The Relationship between the Historical Period and Scientific Knowledge	28
5	The Relationship between the Historical Period and Truth/Reality	32
6	The Relationship between the Historical Period and Social and Geographical Locations	32
7	Data Creation	46
8	Guide to Interview with School Principals	48
9a	The Multiple-Choice Questions	49
9b	The Open-Ended Questions	50
10	Contrasting Initially Proposed Text and Final CRC Text of Article 24.3	75
11	Evolution from Declaration to Convention	80
12a	Three Main Categories of the CRC	81
12b	Traditional Human Rights Categories in the CRC	82
13	Dimensions of Democratic Citizenship	93
14	Definitions of HRE, CCE and MCE	97
15	Similarities and Differences of HRE, CCE and MCE	101
16a	Principal Interview – Abernethy Country School: Description of School	157
16b	Principal Interview – Abernethy Country School: School Rules	162
17a	Principal Interview – Bolton Primary School: Description of School	178
17b	Principal Interview – Bolton Primary School: School Rules	182
18a	Principal Interviews – Crystal Montessori School: Description of School	192
18b	Principal Interviews – Crystal Montessori School: School Rules	196
19a	Principal Interview – Deanmoor Independent School: Description of School	205
19b	Principal Interview – Deanmoor Independent School: School Rules	208
20	Principal's Comments in Comparison	212
21	Eight Levels of Student Participation: From Manipulation to Empowerment	230
22	Behaviour Management Policies at the Model Schools	233
23	The Scrapping of the Resolution Room – Bolton Primary School	235

24a	Principal Interview – Crystal Montessori School	241
24b	Profile of the New Principal – Crystal Montessori School	243
25	Representation on Student Council	249
26	Gradelevels on Student Council	249
27	Frequency of Student Council Meetings	250
28	Meeting Times of Student Councils	250
29	Meeting Places	251
30	Setting of the Agenda	252
31	Socio-Economic Status and Level of Participation	262
32	Participating Teachers	264
33	Freedom of Choice – Questions	265
34	Number of Participating Students	268
35	Levels of Awareness, Comfort and Involvement – Questions	281
36	Classroom Rules – School B: Comparison of Teacher/Student Responses	315
37	Emphasis of Liberal Democratic Ideas and Values	331

## Figures

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1	Threefold Aim of Study	10
2	Borrowmean Rings	45
3	Building Plan – Abernethy Country School	155
4	Golden Rules, Abernethy Country School	158
5	Behaviour Management Flow Chart – Abernethy Country School	165
6	Building Plan – Bolton Primary School	173
7	Building Plan – Crystal Montessori School	188
8	Building Plan – Deanmoor Independent School	202
9	Hart's Participation Ladder	226
10	Treseder's Non-Hierarchical Model of Child Participation	229
11a-c	Teacher Responses (TR) to Questions 1, 8, and 9	267
12	Student Responses (SR) to Question 1	269
13a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 1	270
13e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 1	271
14	Student Responses to Question 8	272
15a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 8	274
15e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 8	275
16	Majority SR to Question 8	277
17	Student Responses to Question 9	277
18	Majority SR to Question 9	278
19a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 9	279
19e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 9	280
20a-e	Teacher Responses to Questions 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11	283
21	Student Responses to Question 5	284
22a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 5	285
22e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 5	286
23	Majority SR to Question 5	287
24	Student Responses to Question 6	287
25a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 6	289
25e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 6	290
26	Majority SR to Question 6	291
27	Student Responses to Question 7	292
28a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 7	293
28e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 7	294
29	Majority SR to Question 7	295
30	Student Responses to Question 10	296
31a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 10	297
31e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 10	298
32	Majority SR to Question 10	299

33	Student Responses to Question 11	300
34a-d	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 11	301
34e-f	TR/SR in Comparison – Question 11	302
35	Majority SR to Question 11	303
36	Frequency of Responses – TR	305
37	Agreement on Student Participation Level – TR	306
38	Frequency of Responses – SR	308
39	Agreement on Student Participation Level – SR	309
40	TR/SR – 'Always' and 'Often' Responses in Comparison	309
41a-d	SR to Open-Ended Questions	311
41e-h	SR to Open-Ended Questions	312
42a-b	SR to Open-Ended Questions	313

## Introduction

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Practices of pedagogy that work against systems of oppression are more, not less, needed in a world marked by growing global misdistribution of power and resources.

Patty Lather, 1992, p. 131

In liberal democratic societies, a primary mandate of education has historically been the development of an understanding of the value of social justice and the rule of law. The end of the Cold War in 1989 signalled an assertion of political liberalism. Issues of democracy and human rights (DaHR) were revitalised and gained precedence and in recent times, politicians and educators in new and old democracies alike began focusing their attention on DaHR. A renewed urgency to foster democratic values in schools also resurfaced in Australia as awareness increased about the general lack of democratic attitudes and understandings among Australia's youth. In terms of DaHR, there are the linked concerns of *education for DaHR* and *DaHR in education*, that is, whether schools are able to educate tomorrow's citizens to create a more democratic society without simultaneously democratising the processes

within a school whereby students practise the exercise of democratic decision-making and be active citizens of the school<sup>1</sup>.

A 1994 national civics survey found that there exists a "widespread ignorance and misconception about the structure and function of Australia's system of government" (Civics Expert Group, 1994, p. 5). The perceived lack of public understanding of democratic principles and practices has, in the last decade, led the various Australian governments not only to investigate this problem but also to allocate special financial support to remedy it. In June 1994 a Civics Expert Group (CEG) was established by the then Prime Minister Paul Keating with the aim to "recommend a non-partisan program to enable all Australians to participate more fully and effectively in the civic life of our country and thereby promote good citizenship" (Civic Expert Group, 1994, p. 2).

The report by the Civic Expert Group (CEG) which was entitled: *Whereas the people*<sup>2</sup> ... *Civics and Citizenship Education*, suggested comprehensive curriculum materials. In 1995 some \$25 million was directed to support the CEG's recommendations, with the majority of funding targeted specifically for school initiatives. Further investment of \$31.6 million over eight years to remedy the problem of Australia's civic deficit was allocated by the Howard government in 1998 to launch a comprehensive civics and citizenship education programme entitled *Discovering Democracy (DD)*. This new curriculum programme was seen as the answer to the problem of 'civic apathy' and a general lack of democratic attitudes and understandings amongst Australia's youth (Civics Expert Group, 1994). It has been widely agreed that schools and teachers play an important role in preparing

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, I will use the concept 'education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights', to emphasis the close relationship between education for DaHR and DaHR in education and will refer to it as democratic education and the teaching and learning of DaHR interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> These are the beginning words of the Australian constitution, acknowledging the democratic basis of the Australian governmental system.

individuals for democratic citizenship (Kennedy, 2001; Kennedy et al., 2001, and Sachs, 2001). Schools and teachers provide one of the first opportunities to introduce individuals to democratic principles and practices. The renewed desire of the Australian government to motivate students to learn and understand the history and operation of the Australian democratic system of government and law is understandable and highly commendable (The Commonwealth of Australia, 1999).

Although it is widely agreed that in a democratic society like Australia one of the core functions of schools is to provide future citizens with a democratic education (Civic Expert Group, 1994; Discovering Democracy, 1998, Kennedy et al. 2001), what a democratic education is and how it might be delivered is not clear. Geoff Clayton, a primary school teacher, contends:

Call it what you will – 'discovering democracy', 'active citizenship' or 'civics and citizenship education' – the fact of the matter is that in a lot of schools this area of study has not been actively addressed for some years. So how do we motivate students to learn about it, and teachers to include it in an already crowded curriculum? The answer to this question is compounded for many teachers because their students feel isolated from the democratic system of Australia. (1999, p. 11)

Despite the current Federal Government's commitment to provide over \$31 million of government funding for a comprehensive civics and citizenship education programme, recent research has shown (The Erebus Consulting Group, 1999; Kennedy et. al, 2001) that its implementation is neither easy nor unproblematic. Rather than investigating the relative success or failure of the *DD* programme<sup>3</sup> as a major civics and citizenship education policy initiative, this study investigates in depth how four primary schools endeavour to constitute a democratic education at both a philosophical and a practical level. The thesis argues that learning about democratic civic life and political engagement does not only occur in formal civics

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<sup>3</sup> Although this study is not primarily concerned with analysing the *DD* programme, chapter 3 explores some aspects of the programme in detail.



and citizenship education classes where concepts such as democracy and human rights are often taught in an abstract and often detached manner, but should be embedded in the day-to-day practices of school life. Or, to put it differently, children will learn more effectively by experiencing democracy and human rights in their schools on a sustainable basis, in a variety of situations and on a number of levels (whole school and classroom), and in doing so, learn to value the meaning and advantages of the rule of law and open and fair decision-making processes within and outside of the school context. Hugh Mehan observes: "Study after study reports that reforms that add work to an already crowded teaching schedule, and that are not perceived by teachers as helping them to meet their previously established teaching goals, will be rejected by those teachers" (1991, html document). He concludes that: "innovations whether in curriculum or classroom discourse, cannot be treated as stand-alone packages of information. They require social resources to mediate the relationship between new ideas and old practices". This means that school context and culture must be taken into consideration when proposing educational change. Unfortunately, many educational innovations, such as the *DD* programme do not take the social organisation of schooling and the everyday life of students and teachers into account.

It is within this framework that the present study examines the role of education *in* and *for* DaHR in Western Australia. By focusing on schools in which a democratic pedagogy is preferred, the study investigates the effectiveness of their educational practices for the teaching and learning of democratic values, understandings and skills.

This study will add to the field of knowledge which analyses how, within contrasting educational contexts, schools can educate students in civic attitudes and

proficiencies by the way of practicing democracy and human rights in education with varying degrees of success. In particular, this study explores some aspects of democratic pedagogy that highlight the interconnectedness of the learning of 'good' citizenship and everyday school and classroom pedagogy. It also analyses the significant similarities and differences that exist in school sites that were identified as places of strong democratic practice. For this reason, the overriding concern when selecting target schools was to choose those that are practicing active citizenship, in the sense that their students seem to have some form of agency. Looking at the unique effect of pedagogy on the development of civic proficiency and democratic values is important, especially in light of growing civic apathy among young Australians.

### ***Democratic Schools***

For the purposes of this study, schools that had a reputation as places of democratic educational practices and were diverse in their philosophical approaches to education and socio-economic composition were selected as 'model democratic schools'. The specific selection criterion was that these schools had a reputation for nurturing the critical capabilities of students within an explicit 'citizenship framework', where students were not seen as 'objects to be acted upon', but rather were trusted to be subjects in the making with increasing rights and responsibilities within the school community.

### ***Social Class and School's SES Score***

The Howard government recognises that the socio-economic status of Australians is largely dependent on occupation and educational qualifications inasmuch as its market power is based. In 1999 the Australian government introduced

the 'SES index' (Kemp, 1999), which is a new approach to assess a school's socio-economic status (SES). The SES index is used to establish the level of Commonwealth education funding per student and took effect in 2001 (Kemp, 1999). It assessed students' socio-economic status (SES) by connecting their addresses with current Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data. The SES score of a school is established by indexing household income, education and occupation of parents and ranges from 85 to 130. Studies undertaken by the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER) confirm the correlation between postal code, occupation and education background of parents (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999). The lower a school's SES rating, the less well educated and affluent the parent base is of the school. Conversely, the higher a school's SES score, the better educated and more affluent its parent base. The Australian government notes "SES is an open and simple measure of need. All SES scores are based on independent information which is consistent for all schools" (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000, html document). The hardline distinguishing social classification of schools in Australia by the way of SES index scores that reflect past 'working class', 'middle class', and 'upper class' distinctions may seem to have been revitalised by the Howard government as a means of identifying social difference. A focus on possible relationships between socio-economic background and democratic education will not only extend our understanding of educational opportunities and constraints based on socio-economic background as exemplified in the four model schools, but it may also enrich the understanding of the processes of social and cultural reproduction as well. Table 1 summarises the differing characteristics of the four model schools.

**Table 1: Participating Schools**

School	Fictive Name	Location	Type	Size	Social Class	SES Score
School A	Abernethy Country School	country school, app. 200 km inland from Perth	government school	medium, app. 500 students	marginal middle class (mainly manual occupations)	97
School B	Bolton Primary School	underprivileged area of Perth	government school	small to medium, app. 260 students	working class (mainly unskilled labour or unemployed)	85
School C	Crystal Montessori School	well-to-do area of Perth	private and independent school	small, app. 130 students	affluent middle class (non-manual occupations, mainly middle managerial positions)	110
School D	Deanmoor Independent School	affluent area of Perth	private and independent school	small, no more than 100 students	elite class (mainly upper managerial positions)	124

School A, Abernethy Country School, is a medium-sized, government school located approximately 200 km east of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia, with an SES score of 97. School B, Bolton Primary School, is a small government school located in an underprivileged area of Perth, Western Australia that is marked by high unemployment, a large ethnic community and related social problems. School C, Crystal Montessori School, is a small independent school located on the edge of a light industrial area of Perth, Western Australia. The parents are from a diverse ethnic background, relatively affluent and well educated. The school's SES score of 110 reflects this fact. School D, Deanmoor Independent School, is a small independent school located in one of the most affluent areas of Perth, Western Australia where the parents are mainly professionals, politicians and foreign business people and as a consequence *"rated as the second most affluent school in Western Australia with an SES score of 124"* explains Debbi, principal of the school (Principal-Interview, 13.11.2000). Despite their philosophical and socio-economic differences, all the sites are known to be schools of substantive democratic practice and present themselves as

strong cultural settings that appear to be successful in cultivating democracy and human rights. While this study is interested in exploring some of the characteristics that these schools have in common, it must be acknowledged that each school has its own particular culture that is underpinned by a set of complex social class relations (Kozol, 1991; Anderson, 1993). How these schools, which occupy different social locations, differ in their pedagogical approaches and how socio-economic background impacts on educational opportunities of students is of particular interest to this study.

### *Aims of the Study*

This project is a philosophical and empirical investigation of the value of democratic pedagogical practices for developing civic competencies. The investigation of day-to-day educational practices as a conceptual framework was purposely chosen because of what Beyer and Apple refer to as the 'antidemocratic nature' (1988, p. 174) of many contemporary schools with tightly controlled school environments. Thus, the focus of this study is the effectiveness of the often taken-for-granted day-to-day school and classroom practices to cultivate citizenship-related competencies. These practices are sometimes referred to as 'the implicit curriculum' and more commonly called 'pedagogy' (Lingard et al., 2000, p. 102).

School cultures and pedagogical practices at the four model schools were explored and compared. The aim of this investigation is twofold. Firstly, to search for similarities of school cultures and pedagogical practices that make them democratic. Secondly, to investigate how these democratic educational practices contribute to the cultivation of democratic attitudes and understandings among children. As stated above, the four model schools were purposely chosen as places of democratic educational practices and for their philosophical and socio-economic diversity. In selecting the four case study schools the following factors were considered:

- ❑ the physical environment of the school;
- ❑ the school culture;
- ❑ the school's general philosophical approach to education;
- ❑ the school's general approach to democratic principles and practices;
- ❑ regular and irregular integration of students in decision-making processes on whole school and classroom levels.

With the use of intensive site visits involving interviews, observations, and surveys with principals, teachers and students, together with policy document analysis, the investigation aims to explore the problems and possibilities of putting the visions and ideas of HRE into practice in contemporary Western Australian primary schools.

The aims of the study are further illustrated in Figure 1:

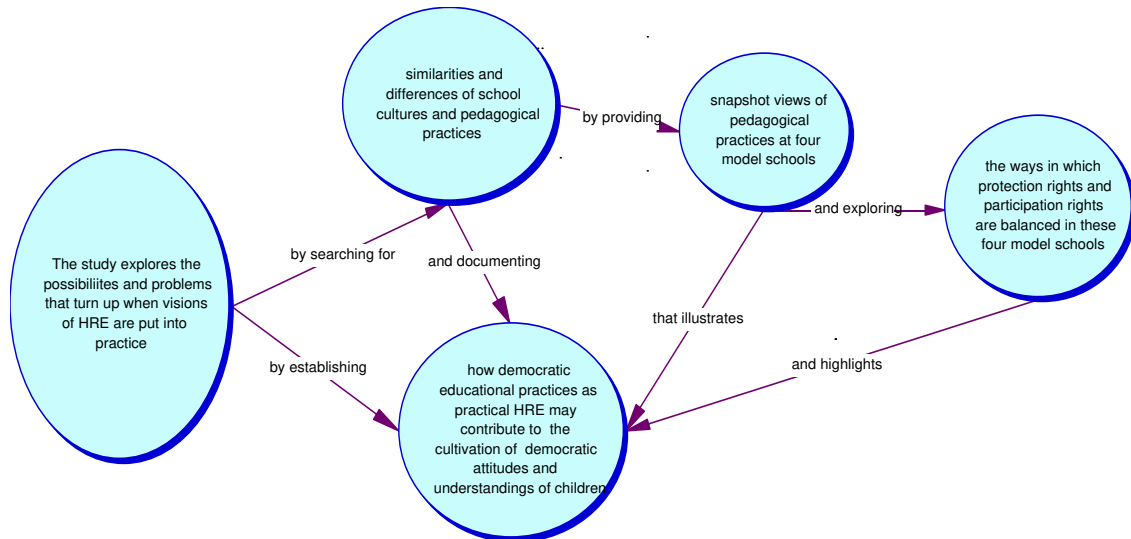


Figure 1: Aims of the Study

### ***Significance of the Study***

A dynamic democracy requires an aware and able citizenry. However, both the notion of what constitutes good citizenship and what educational practices lead to the formation of good citizenship are contested (Beyer and Apple, 1988; Civics Expert Group, 1994; Lingard et al., 2000; Montessori, 1996). There is a clear distinction between content driven and process driven approaches to values education. An often-repeated conviction of progressive, child-centred and needs-based practitioners and theorists of education is that the process of education is an enormously beneficial vehicle for developing many of the skills and attitudes needed for active citizenship. I contend that the pedagogy adopted by schools is a powerful tool in encouraging democratic values formation in children. The processes and practices of education hold out great promise for democratic citizenship education for two reasons:

- ❑ The school's physical, social and cultural environment is a reflection of the school's philosophical approach to education and key contested concepts in citizenship education (such as democracy, social justice, equality and civic virtues) fall directly within the general philosophical approach of the school.
- ❑ Pedagogical practices offer rich possibilities for civic competencies of experiencing, negotiating and deliberating personal rights and responsibilities that are essential for becoming active and responsible citizens.

These competencies and values are continually reinforced by routine pedagogical practices throughout ordinary school days. Although substantial empirical research has been conducted regarding the efficacy of pedagogy and its effects on students (Montessori, 1965; Dewey, 1966; Apple, 1982; Beyer and Apple, 1988; McLaren, 1989; Kozol, 1991; McGaw et al., 1992; Anderson, 1993), the value of pedagogy to increase the civic proficiency of Australia's youth, has not yet gained much attention and this gap urgently needs redressing. The explicit focus of the empirical investigation is the exploration of the governance structure of the four

model schools and students' abilities to effectively participate in decision-making processes. The project, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods, provides an account of the nature and scope of schools' day-to-day educational principles and practices as a conceptual framework for effective democratic education in a variety of schools and education systems. The stories from the four model schools analyse how the participating principals/students and teachers/students related to each other and how these relationships may contribute to effective education in and for DaHR.

School cultures, although set in specific socio-economic milieus, are dynamic and changing composites mirroring the values, attitudes and interests of their constituencies. This thesis acknowledges that principals, teachers and students have a disposition to endorse certain values, but it insists that school principals, teachers and students are individual agents who can make decisions, including the decision to change, within certain parameters. There is also a need to acknowledge that intercultural tensions occur within hierarchical contexts. Individual groups may find themselves in opposition to the culture of the dominating group or groups. The weaker groups do not have the same social power and cultural repertoire at their disposal as the dominant groups.

### ***The Research Question***

The research question of this project is as follows:

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*What conditions are conducive to creating and sustaining democratic school cultures and educational practices?*

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Some sub-questions that aid this investigation include:

- ❑ How do principals describe their schools to prospective students?
- ❑ What are the implicit ideological assumptions that inform the culture and pedagogical practices at the case study sites?
- ❑ How do power structures operating in schools either encourage or discourage active student participation in decision-making processes?
- ❑ What is the relationship between whole school and classroom level approaches to student decision-making possibilities?
- ❑ How significant is the socio-economic background of the school in relation to education in and for DaHR?

### ***Limitations of the Study***

Given the relatively small sample size of the study, causal inferences cannot be drawn. There may be a number of public and private schools in Western Australia that employ democratic educational principles and practices that were not part of this study but would have been able to provide valuable case examples. A study based on a random sample of local schools would be needed to confirm some of the findings of this study. A notable limitation was the relatively short time period of the field research and the limited amount of time spent at each case study site. I chose to undertake intensive, focused periods of time in the four schools. The development of democratic educational principles and practices that are deeply embedded in the school culture needs further exploration. In particular, the interviews need to be extended to include parent voices and more extensive student interviews need to be undertaken to capture the effects of changing practices on school cultures, teacher and student satisfactions and the political and moral socialisation of students. Although the issue of social class is explored in this study, gender and race as equally important dimensions of structural factors are not discussed explicitly due to the limited scope and time frame of the study. While student rights and responsibilities on whole school

and classroom levels were the primary focus of this study, principals' views and stories were mainly utilised, as school principals are the key players in terms of power to influence school culture. Thus, larger studies are needed that would allow the inclusion of gender and race issues as well as student and parent voices to a greater extent than it was possible in this study.

### ***Organisation of the Study***

This study argues that there is considerable potential for stimulating developments in education in and for DaHR by way of educational practices or practical Human Rights Education (HRE) as it will be referred to in this study. Day-to-day educational practices provide effective means in developing a solid understanding of democratic citizenship.

***Chapter 1, Research Context and Methodology***, describes the interrelationship between personal values, research interests and choice of research methodology. This chapter provides a broad theoretical framework for the arguments of this thesis and attempts to 'set the scene'. It discusses the context and scope of the study and explores issues related to the researcher's subjectivity and research bias. My preference for a critical research paradigm is discussed. Critical scientific research is viewed as a political standpoint and personal practice that seeks to transform relations of domination and oppression. It is committed to empowering research participants and promoting egalitarian research processes. The need for scientific validity and the requirement for a minimisation of the distance between the researcher and the researchee is discussed.

***Chapter 2, International Human Rights: An Overview***, situates the discussion of education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights historically by providing background information on issues of human rights and democracy as well

as the United Nations as one of the major international human rights organisations. It addresses problems with the UN's advocacy of the universality and inalienability of human rights and explores the significance of children's participation rights in decision-making processes as promoted in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finally, it introduces and discusses the importance of the UN Decade of Human Rights Education that will come to an end in 2004.

*Chapter 3, The Teaching and Learning of Democratic Citizenship*, links key concepts such as human rights and democratic citizenship with the nature and objectives of the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship. It makes apparent the interconnectedness of the historical and ideological contexts of recent discussions about democratic citizenship education and some new school curricula such as human rights education (HRE), civics and citizenship education (CCE), and multicultural education (MCE) as well as exploring their similarities and differences. An assertion is made that an integrated, process-oriented HRE approach, referred to as practical HRE, is preferable. To illustrate this point and to make explicit some of the potential problems and deficiencies of recent government initiatives, this chapter critically analyses Australia's recent attempts to educate for democratic citizenship and human rights.

*Chapter 4, The Nexus between HRE and Pedagogy*, points to the significance of school and classroom rules, instructional practices and the amount of autonomy granted to students. It highlights the important role democratic educational principles and instructional practices (practical HRE) play in the formation of young citizens.

*Chapter 5, Learning from Everyday Practice: The Case Study Sites*, introduces the four case study schools. It examines the complex social contexts and teaching styles that are related to issues of democracy and human rights within each

of these local sites with their unique histories and constraints. The four case study schools are portrayed individually paying close attention to each school's physical environment, culture and philosophical approach. The majority of the data for this analysis was collected in 2000 and 2001 and stems from school and classroom observations, principal interviews and the analysis of official school documents. Moreover, a comparison of the school cultures is offered in this chapter to illustrate how these schools see themselves succeeding in cultivating democracy and human rights in their day-to-day educational practices. These portraits and case narratives also illustrate the commonalities that these four case study sites share and why they seem to identify themselves as being distinctly different from traditional schooling.

*Chapter 6, A Right to be Heard: A Challenge to Orthodoxy*, discusses some of the ways the four case schools have sought to include students in decision-making processes. The first objective of this chapter is to illustrate how children are included in different ways in decision-making processes on issues that affected their welfare as stated in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The second objective of this chapter is to elaborate how effective their participation is in democratic practices within the four case study schools. It explores the operation of student councils and also discusses teacher and student perceptions about the emancipatory possibilities arising from student engagement. Hart's (1992) participation ladder is adopted with modifications to evaluate the effectiveness of student participation in decision-making processes at both whole school and classroom levels. This chapter further discusses teacher and student survey data that explore the possibilities students have within their respective classrooms to participate in decision-making processes. Whereas the previous chapter discusses some interesting commonalities between the four model schools, chapter six focuses on the substantial differences between them in regard to

educational practices at a whole school level and its relationship to the financial capacities of parents.

***Chapter 7, Nurturing the Good Citizen: Primary Students' Development of Civic Proficiency***, aims to consolidate the theoretical with the practical by fusing some of the arguments made in the background chapters with findings from the empirical investigation. Political and moral concerns are closely related and highly complementary. The interrelationship between political and moral socialisation in schools is discussed in light of the findings of the study. The previous two chapters described the ways in which some schools approach the development of 'good citizens'. These considerations relate to contemporary debates about the relationship between 'right' and 'good'. The focus on the 'right' underpins the questioning of values upon which judgments about equality and justice rest. The findings of this study support the fact that principals and teachers significantly influence and are able to drastically change the culture of a school.

***Chapter 8, Conclusion: Fostering Democracy and Human Rights in Education***, offers a review of the aim, themes and findings of this study and discusses the validity of practical HRE for primary students' education in and for DaHR. This study was able to identify definite commonalities between the four schools that allow them to be seen as democratic schools. These schools, although very different in their composition, are led by principals who share the view that school children under their care are subjects with rights and responsibilities rather than merely objects of protection, control and correction. The study also suggests that there is a relationship between socio-economic background and possibilities for students to engage in practical HRE and effective civic learning. Additionally, the need for further research

is highlighted and the point is made that education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights is not just a dream to be enjoyed but a vision to be pursued.

# CHAPTER 1

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## Research Context and Methodology

When the British Psychological Society decided that it was wrong to call people subjects, because it suggested that they were subjected to the will of the researcher, changing 'subjects' to 'participants' was for many psychologists simply a matter of calling up the 'find and replace' facility on the computer. It was not seen as related to the code of ethics, or requiring any change in them.

John Rowan, 2000, p. 103

Culture denotes traditions, beliefs and values that constitute past and present ways of acting and behaving in the face of the opportunities that occur in each new moment of that cultural dynamic. Culture is partly created through what the academic constituency believes and values. And, these cultural components are validated and strengthened in the way that scholars 'do' research.

Breaking with traditional research cultures within the social sciences, feminist and postmodern perspectives, acknowledge that scientific inquiry is a social process. Thus, scientific methods and the facts of scientific social inquiry reflect the interests of the person/s who produce them. Throughout this study, I have paid close attention to my own personal epistemology and how my personality and worldview informs and shapes the research project (Franklin, 1995). There is need to explain and justify

my choices of methodology and method in relation to both its own theories and those of traditional scientific social inquiry.

I am firmly rooted in, and comfortable with, postmodern thinking that can be characterised as a mode of thinking, a style of philosophising, and a kind of writing - yet it should not be used to convey absolute homogeneity and unity. On a general level, the label 'postmodernism' describes distinctive philosophical views and assumptions about concepts of 'reality', 'truth' and 'knowledge'. There is a clear tension between postmodern assumptions of the social construction of knowledge, truth and reality and principles of scientific rigor without the security of scientific neutrality and objectivity.

A central element of traditional social science research, which is deeply rooted in Enlightenment notions of Western science, is the insistence on neutrality as a prerequisite for objectivity. My introduction to social science research came at a time when many aspects of the Enlightenment-based vision of scientific progress have come under increased scrutiny. Especially scholars working out of postmodern perspectives have pointed out, that the concepts of neutrality and objectivity, in particular, are two of its more problematic principles. Patti Lather notes that:

This is both an exciting and dizzying time in which to do social inquiry. Given the postmodern debunking of universality, the autonomy of science, and the progress via technological rationality, the complex question of political commitment and its relation to concepts of advocacy research remains an oxymoron to the many who take scholarly objectivity as both a possible and desirable goal (1991a, p. 155).

In the first section on the chapter, my personal and professional background and the history of my professional interest in children's human rights will briefly be introduced, as a means of acknowledging the presence of the researcher in the research. Understanding the need to incorporate the researcher as a vital player in a research report entails some sense of my working definitions of modernism and



postmodernism and their relationship to the knowledge production processes of the thesis. How I frame these related concepts will, therefore, have to foreground biographical notes and their justification. In addition, some distinctions on methodology and method will be made and the ideologies and paradigms that govern this investigation will be discussed. The essential focus on critical pedagogy and critical educational research as my theoretical framework informing my methodology will be elaborated. Finally, I will discuss the design of the case study and explain data gathering processes and data analysis methods used.

### Written into the Script: Gaining Clarity of Personal Biases

Dispassionate researchers as described by Michael Patton (1990) strive to be 'neutral' and 'objective', by actively seeking the most unbiased method for arriving at 'the truth', and 'telling as it is'. This approach assumes that everyone else will see 'the facts' or 'reality' and call these 'facts' or 'reality' the same way if they examine the findings of the representative study. In such traditionally conducted research projects, the researchers, do not feature in the research report, they are virtually 'written out of the script' as their personal and professional interests need not be disclosed. I do not agree with this view. I argue that the researchers need to be aware of their personal biases and there is a need to engage with them. I have chosen to not only express the possibility of personal biases but also to engage with them and include them as part of the research report. Many social researchers have begun to ask for a more reflexive qualitative research account that considers the researcher's epistemic views, values, assumptions and emotions (see Margolis, 1998; Webb, 1998; Franklin, 1995, Kleinman and Copp, 1993; Hughes, 1990, Tuana, 1989). In other words, I have chosen, as other researchers before me, to acknowledge that the present research is subjective, but equally real, rigorous and valid (MacCount, 1998; Margolis, 1998;

Webb, 1998; Franklin, 1995, Kleinman and Copp, 1993; Lather, 1991; Hughes, 1990, Tuana, 1989). The final measure of relevance and rigor is the extent to which the findings of this study can be substantiated. Various critical research techniques were applied to a range of data sources in order to build a comprehensive explanation of the central issues being investigated. This combination of consciousness, reflexivity and rigor may lead to a better controllability of my biases that undoubtedly influence what I research, how I research it and what I have found. Rather than separating the 'true' from the 'false' acknowledging a subjective positionality destabilises assumptions of interpretative validity and shifts emphasis to the contexts in which meanings are produced (Lather, 1992, p.120 ff). This process may lead to my feeling "less constrained by the desire to maintain an 'illusion of objectivity'" (Pyszynski and Greenberg, 1987 cited in MacCoun, 1998). Any exploration of the validity and rigor or acceptance of subjective research findings grow out of postmodern assumptions of multiple and fragmentary possibilities of the production of meaning that this text might have for any reader. It is my intention to provide the reader with some of what I bring to this research enterprise in the form of personal interest and biases and attempt to name my social positioning and epistemological orientation. Although it is simply not possible to exhaustively name all of the conscious and unconscious 'baggage' that I bring to this research, a brief overview of my personal history will be provided as I have tried to turn the gaze upon myself as well as others in the investigation of education in and for democracy and human rights.

### ***My Personal Cultural Framework***

#### ***Growing up***

I grew up in a little town in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Both my parents were refugees who fled Hungary's bloody revolution in 1956. My mother

was a child and my father was a young adult. The family I grew up in was the kind of well-assimilated middle class family that believed in education as a powerful remedy against many forms of prejudice, which were all present in Switzerland at the time. My mother was working outside the home from the time my sister and I were very little. This was very unusual because in the 1970s mothers were traditionally homemakers and looked after the children. My mother was an ambitious woman, determined to fight for gender equality and a better life for us than she experienced as a young girl. Consequently, education and financial independence took first priority in our family. Growing up with an identical twin, with no other sibling created enormous pressures on us coupled with little autonomy or personal rights.

#### *School Experiences and Choice of Profession*

My sister and I developed different strengths and weaknesses in different curriculum areas, but we were constantly compared and judged by other's standards, by both the teaching staff and my parents. Competition was the lifeblood of my compulsory school years. My self-esteem was very much undermined by this constant pressure, however well intended it may have been.

My intrinsic belief in the inadequacy of such pedagogy came to light with my career choice of becoming an early childhood educator. In the traditional Swiss Kindergarten, 'the garden where children grow like flowers unfolding' according to its founder, Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), the children are granted ample autonomy and freedom to work and explore their own capacities with minimal structural restrictions. Froebel held a vision of nurturing the child's innate desire to learn and discover things at their own pace and without competition and comparison in a harmonious, safe and nurturing environment. This coincided with my own vision of a relevant and suitable pre-school setting.

### *Personal Experiences and Choice of Schooling for my Child*

Since 1992, I have resided in Western Australia and have been teaching in various positions, schools, and age levels (pre-primary, primary and tertiary). Searching for a suitable school for my young child and being not entirely satisfied with what I experienced in mainstream education, I investigated alternatives and found a Montessori school near by. Interestingly, I found that the Froebelian kindergarten and the Montessori school system have much in common, both advocating autonomy in children and opposition to excessive competition.

### *Researching the Value of Child Freedom in Education*

Remembering my own unhappy school years and seeing the difference in my young son's education and attitude to formal primary schooling, I decided to research the Montessori school system. I attempted to understand Montessori's educational philosophy, its application and relevance for Australian school children. Thus, I embarked on my honours thesis entitled: *Montessorian Perspectives on Child Freedom: An Empowering Experience for Teachers and Students (1999)*. The findings of this study concluded that mainstream schooling might benefit from some of the ideas and values incorporated in Montessori schools. At the same time, Montessori educators may also benefit from looking at alternative and/or mainstream education systems. Further, I concluded that the integration of other mainstream and alternative educational ideas, principles and novel curriculum programmes might be underdeveloped in some Montessori schools.

The present study represents a continuation of the previous inquiry into the importance of child freedom and autonomy, as it attempts to connect primary school students' experience of autonomy with practical HRE and education *in and for* DaHR in a variety of schools and education systems.

After providing an overview of my personal history, the next section will discuss the need of historically situating this research in an attempt to further contextualise the study and to emphasise the interdependence and interconnectedness of research topic, research design, historical period and the researcher's personal history and professional interests.

### Living and Working in the Postmodern Condition

Rather than attacking modernist perceptions, the present discussion may be viewed as an example of how deconstruction can serve to problematise educational research principles and practices in ways that resituate educational research practices rather than impair them. To be positioned within and against traditional research practices enables critical interrogation of existing knowledge as it is embodied in tradition and to re/trans-form traditional research principles and practices. Critical understanding is the event of problematising one's previously held understandings which is a procedural reconstruction of both self-understanding and tradition creation.

The following section has been developed to illustrate how I see the historical period we live in currently, often referred to as the postmodern condition, impacting on my research project, its content as well as its design. One major impact that the postmodern condition has on knowledge production processes is its challenge to 'expert knowledge' and the 'expert knower'. The central aspect of this idea is that no knowledge can be viewed as 'pure', uncontaminated, or objective. Furthermore, no knowledge can be viewed as representing 'the truth' or 'reality' but rather a multitude of 'experts' hold a variety of 'expert knowledges'. I define 'expert knowledge' as 'specialised knowledge' that is always partial and incomplete.

### ***The Postmodern Condition***

The postmodern condition is a difficult term to define. It is often used in conjunction with related terms such as postmodernity, postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism. Some authors prefer to use postmodern and poststructural interchangeably (see Lather, 1991a and b for example), Foster even coined the phrase 'poststructural postmodernism' (cited in Lather, 1991b, p. 4). When exploring what 'the postmodern condition' might or might not be, I find it useful to distinguish between what I call a 'modern condition', a 'pre-modern condition' and then, of course, a 'post-modern condition'. I am attempting to do this with an explicit view of the knowledge/power nexus and a specific interest in the development of the legitimization of scientific knowledge.

The following five tables (Tables 2-6) illustrate the difference in attitudes, values, beliefs and the general mode of thinking in three distinct historical periods: the Pre-Modern Condition, the Modern Condition and the Post-Modern Condition.. I intend to explore the conceptual development of, and changes in, the importance of scientific knowledge and the scientific method over these three historical periods and position this development in a wider historical context. More specifically, I will look at the relationship between the historical periods and:

- Knowledge
- The Separation of Church and State
- Scientific Knowledge
- Truth – Reality
- Social and Geographical Locations

It is instructive to look at key ideas in order to see them in the context of the historical era and to understand the relevance of these ideas for current social inquiry.

Table 2: The Relationship between the Historical Period and Knowledge

The Pre-Modern Condition	The Modern Condition	The Post-Modern Condition
<p><b>Knowledge is revealed:</b> Knowledge is revealed in a metaphysical sense through faith. People had to have faith and wait for 'true' knowledge to disclose itself, often through prayers. Theology was the dominant ideology/doctrine.</p> <p><b>Responsibility/ Ownership of knowledge:</b> Knowledge was the responsibility of, and controlled by, to a large extent, the clergy who delivered it. They had not only control of the production of knowledge but also the control over the distribution of knowledge.</p>	<p><b>Knowledge is attained:</b> Knowledge is attained through reason. Modernity is also referred to as <i>the Age of Reason</i> or <i>the Age of Enlightenment</i> with its emphasis on the emancipation of humankind. The Age of Reason or Enlightenment contrasts with the 'darkness' of traditionalism and mysticism characterising notions of thinking in the Middle Ages.</p> <p><b>Responsibility/ Ownership of knowledge:</b> Knowledge is now more the responsibility of the original thinkers. Especially after the invention of the printing press in 1565.</p> <p><b>The rational, freely choosing autonomous subject</b> The belief in the freely choosing autonomous subject coincided with the birth of the Enlightenment project. Being requires rationality. Descartes<sup>4</sup> famous quote: I think therefore I am, exemplifies this position. The 'I' is free, to think and act as the 'I' pleases and chooses.</p>	<p><b>Knowledge is constructed:</b> Knowledge is constructed, is contextual and historical. It is no longer believed that knowledge is 'out there' to be 'collected' or attained, rather knowledge is created. Scientific knowledge is the dominant ideology/doctrine. There is growing recognition of the existence and importance of irrational reason (emotional intelligence) the interrelationship between the body and the mind.</p> <p><b>Responsibility/ Ownership of knowledge:</b> Knowledge is now fully recognised as the responsibility of the original thinker, but is, at the same time, contextualised.</p> <p><b>Multiple subject positions:</b> The recognition that we are in fact, never able to be freely choosing, autonomous subjects but rather are constrained in our choices and inhabit multiple and at times contradictory subject positions. The 'I' is contingent, contextualised and relational. There is no 'I' without others.</p>

### The Motto of Enlightenment

The 'Enlightenment' denotes an intellectual movement that has its roots, according to Inwood (1995, p. 236-9), in 17<sup>th</sup> century England. The idea of the age of Enlightenment, also referred to as the age of Reason (Inwood, 1995, 237) with its focus on emancipation of humankind, contrasts with the 'darkness' of scholasticism and mysticism, characterising notions of thinking in the Middle Ages. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) defined 'Enlightenment' in a famous essay from 1784 entitled: *An*

*Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* as follows:

Enlightenment is man's [sic] emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of ... courage to use it without further guidance from another. Sapere Aude! [Dare to know!] 'Have courage to use your own understanding!' - that is the motto of enlightenment. (cited in Bowman, 1997, html document)

<sup>4</sup> Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was a French philosopher and mathematician. His aim was to reach totally secure foundations for knowledge. He began by attacking all his beliefs with sceptical doubts. What was left was the certainty of this own conscious experience, and with it of his existence: '*Cogito, ergo sum*' (I think, therefore I am). (Source, Pearsall and Trumble 1996 p. 385).

What Kant meant when he described 'Enlightenment' as the 'emergence of man [sic] from his self-imposed infancy' is that "infancy is the inability to use one's reason without guidance of another" (Kant, cited in Inwood, 1995, p. 237). The most important ideas of modernity, as a historical period, are the belief in the unquestionable power of reason and knowledge, the corresponding and infinite perfectibility of all humanity through education and the natural equality of all people and their rights (Weimer, 1963, p. 99). It was hoped that knowledge gained through the application of 'science' (see Table 4) would not only produce happiness among all citizens of this planet, but would also produce enlightened and liberated people, free to choose their own destinies. In pre-modern societies, people adopted a predetermined role and, in doing so, adapted to, or complied with, given social status and meaning. The value placed on reason in modern societies, made it possible for the individual to break free from the constraints that defined membership. Reason challenged the taken-for-grantedness of life through the attainment of knowledge. As a result, life in modernity became not simply something one lives but also something one creates, and in doing so, people thought to create themselves. This creative act is central to the idea of human development and progress.

Table 3: The Relationship between the Historical Period and the Separation of Church and State

The Pre-Modern Condition	The Modern Condition	The Post-Modern Condition
<b>Separation of Church and State:</b> There was no separation of Church and State, rather both were deeply connected. Clergy were involved in both earthly and spiritual matters. Clergy told the ruling class (Kings, Princes and Land-lords) what to do.	<b>Separation of Church and State:</b> Gradual increasing separation of Church and State. This is the coinage of modern bureaucratic apparatuses which developed later into modern democratic nation states and became increasingly powerful.  <b>Focus on absolutism - the divine right of Kings:</b> The King becomes 'absolute', able to express the will of God in earthly matters, whereas the Clergy was left to express the will of God in spiritual matters.	<b>Separation of Church and State:</b> The Church has no control nor power in democratically governed societies. The power of the nation-state is challenged by multi-national companies and the international ideology of consumerism.



Table 4: The Relationship between the Historical Period and Scientific Knowledge

The Modern Condition	The Post-Modern Condition
<p><b>Modern Science:</b> The gradual separation of Church and State enabled the coinage of the modern sciences. Its aim was to solve problems posed by humanity (earthly matters), rather than solving problems posed by theology (spiritual matters).</p> <p><b>The priority of the object:</b> Modernity has produced what may be called 'the ideal observer' with very specific attributes such as neutrality, objectivity and detachment. Science is strong to the extent that the observer is pure.</p> <p><b>Empiricism-Positivism-Social Darwinism:</b> Empiricism believes that all which can be known about the world and its inhabitants can be experienced through the senses, most notably through observation. Scientific analysis of social phenomena rests very much on a model of the natural sciences. The specific attributes of the rational human being can be discovered through scientific observation. This is sometimes called Social Darwinism.</p>	<p><b>The Ideal Observer is being challenged:</b> Through the contextualisation of knowledge and the realisation of the social construction of meaning, the positions of absolute scientific objectivity, neutrality and detachment are no longer attainable. (See Table 2)</p> <p><b>Empiricism - Social Darwinism:</b> Many social scientists have pointed out that it is not possible to observe and describe issues of culture and poverty the same way as one observes and describes cells, for example. Empiricism is still classed as very good science and the achievements especially in medicine are astonishing, the fallacy of empiricism is (especially as it is used in the social sciences) that it is overly reductionistic. It sets out to describe high order phenomena in terms of overly simplistic forms.</p>

Science's abiding faith in the power of human reason and logic was, and still is, clearly demonstrated by the many scientific theories that were, and still are, published, analysed, debated and contested, all in the name of the possibility of progress. Modern and postmodern researchers and educators believe that through knowledge, through the invitation of thought and the active engagement with emerging ideas, openly and responsively, humanity will have to progress because of wiser actions and better practices than would occur without these pursuits. Science has, in modernity, surpassed theology as the dominant ideology.

*Mass Education: Human development and progress in modernity and post-modernity*

The Assembly is convinced that awareness of citizens' responsibilities should be raised through **education**. ... The Assembly has repeatedly advocated **education** as one of the most effective ways of preventing negative attitudes towards others and of promoting a culture of peace among all groups of society.

Recommendation 1401 (1999) 1, Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe (emphasis added)

Modernity's goal of human improvement and development not only inspired Darwin, but also twentieth century progressive educationists such as Montessori and

Dewey<sup>5</sup>, among others and has continued to inspire education reform to the present day. The above mentioned thinkers<sup>6</sup>, which span a period of more than two-hundred-twenty year could have hardly imagined the importance of the 'investment in knowledge' and therewith the importance and advancement of, for example, formal primary education at the beginning of this millennium. These thinkers equate rationality and education with progress. Modernism, as a reform movement, advocated the increase of personal knowledge and understanding, which was and still is believed to lead to an increase in personal freedom to choose one's life path. In late modernity and postmodernity, the aim of democratic nation states was to empower the individual to the extent necessary to achieve social, political and/or economic freedoms and therefore to take more control over their personal lives than was commonly possible in pre-modern times. This goal requires an environment which firstly embraces personal freedom of choice, the development of people's abilities to act reasonably and autonomously and secondly, enables and encourages people's active participation in decision-making processes. These beliefs in the importance of the power of reason and personal autonomy to achieve social, political and/or economic freedoms are still present today. However, the Enlightenment's ideas and ideals of progress via education and rationality, as well as the totalising and universalising 'grand narrative' of 'equal, stable and autonomous rational subject positions' have been called into question and displaced by postmodern positions which acknowledge the multiplicity, partiality and contested discourses that underpin the subject. In this context of undefined foundations of knowledge and understanding, educational discourses are increasingly viewed as part of the power/knowledge nexus

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<sup>5</sup> I have named these two educationists as an example because two of the researched schools are adhering to these thinker's educational philosophical thoughts.

<sup>6</sup> Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Charles Darwin (1809-1882), John Dewey (1859-1952) and Maria Montessori (1893-1952).

that erodes Enlightenment views of basic assumptions of meta-narratives and foundational knowledge and understanding.

Nicholls (1995), however, criticises the 'one-dimensional' binocularly view, which many scholars adopt in representing the Age of Reason. He argues, in particular, that this representation of modernity and the Enlightenment, which is primarily characterized by its commitment to the above-mentioned 'grand narratives', runs the risk of implying that this intellectual movement constitutes or supports only one monolithic ideology (Nicholls, 1995, vii). There is a need to acknowledge that the epoch of modernity, as any epoch before or after, generated multiple ideologies within the epochal framework.

The global spread of formal primary education in the postmodern era is remarkable. UNICEF identified the guaranteed participation in education as an identified cross-national performance indicator. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a majority of children (75 %) in the world attend schools, and even in Sub-Saharan Africa and what the United Nations identify as "the least developed countries" 57 % and 58 % of children respectively have a "net primary school attendance" (UNICEF, 2001, p. 39). Despite this remarkable achievement UNICEF (2001) also observes that: "A basic, quality education is a human right, yet more than 130 million primary-school-age children in developing countries are out of school" (pp. 14-15).

Present government acceptance of the need for mass education which developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, arose out of the Enlightenment idea of social transformation and human progress. Evidence (UNHCHR, 2001) suggests that there exists, in principal, international consensus on

the positive impact of the Enlightenment conception of the teaching and learning of basic knowledge and skills learned throughout compulsory school years.

Despite the belief in the positive impact of mass education as a tool and major pathway for human development and progress, thinkers such as Freire (1970), Apple (1982), Kozol (1991), Giroux (1995) and McLaren (1989, 1995, 1997) have argued that the cultural practices of mass schooling not only teach basic skills and knowledge but also are actively producing and re-producing a certain social order. Complexities of mass education and their intensions as practiced in a number of established democracies have been well documented. Such accounts of the intension of mass schooling to inscribe normalising and normalised qualities of being that mark practices of inclusion and exclusion by constituting people who do or do not 'fit' the distinctions and dispositions of reasonable people, provide much of the data for the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy. Mass education as a product of collective human action shapes and constrains social existence. Critical pedagogues such as Freire (1970), Apple (1982), Kozol (1991), Giroux (1995) and McLaren (1989, 1995, 1997) and many others argued that mass schooling as cultural practices reproduce existing relationships of hegemony, of power and inequalities, in a struggle for knowledge and resources during which cultural meaning is contested and culture is constantly changing yet works to favour dominant interests. Critical pedagogy sees knowledge production processes as being deeply situated in social and cultural contexts. The notion of human progress through knowledge production and within institutions for the masses overlaps with discourses of reality and truth to fabricate particular kinds of people who are vested with particular capacities and capabilities of living their lives. The modern beliefs of the universality of human progress that embody the formation of the universal 'reasonable person' is flawed. As previously

stated, postmodern thinkers argue that modernist ideal of human progress with its belief in the same possibility for everybody, constructed as freely choosing agent, is no longer tenable. "Is there still anyone who can firmly and exclusively use the vocabulary of Enlightenment without being reminded of the dark sides of modernity, without demonstrating an embarrassing narrow-mindedness, and without evoking feelings of inauthenticity?", asks Roland Richenbach (2000, html document).

Table 5: The Relationship between the Historical Period and Truth/Reality

The Modern Condition	The Post-Modern Condition
<p><b>Truth and Reality:</b> Empiricism believed that through methodologic practices 'reality' or the true nature of being can be discovered.</p> <p>Scientists believed that reality is something that 'is'. Correspondingly, the notions of 'good', 'evil' and 'acceptable' had well thought out and definite meanings. There was <i>one</i> right way of doing things. One right way of discovering <i>the truth</i>, through the application of <i>the scientific method</i>.</p>	<p><b>Truth and Reality:</b> 'Truth' and 'Reality' are much the same as 'Knowledge' social constructs dependent on context, contingencies and relationships. (See Table 2)</p> <p>Reality is no longer viewed as something that 'is' but rather is perceived as socially constructed and different for each individual person. Correspondingly, the notions of 'good', 'evil' and 'acceptable' are contested and context dependent. There are <i>multiple</i> right ways of discovering truths and realities, thorough the application of <i>a</i> scientific method.</p>

Table 6: The Relationship between the Historical Periods and Social and Geographical Locations

The Modern Condition	The Post-Modern Condition
<p><b>The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> World:</b> The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Worlds are defined as geographical locations. The first world is the industrial, technically sophisticated world. The second world is the agrarian world. And, the third world is the colonised area of the first world. These were places of great natural resources, exclusively serving the enrichment of the first world.</p>	<p><b>The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> World:</b> They are no longer defined as geographical locations but rather as intellectual knowledge/power positions. The world is now described as "a global village". The first world is now a metaphorical place where knowledge is produced and controlled. The second world is the place of industry in any country in the world as well as the mass of people as consumers of products and knowledge. The third world is defined as a metaphorical place all over the globe which people inhabit with no monetary power, unable to consume goods and services, nor knowledge.</p>

Many governments, international, national and local agencies and communities are faced with the daunting task of working towards more just and egalitarian societies in established and new democracies. Hayat Imam (1997) notes that "today ... 'creation of wealth' has become the fundamental value at the centre of global society and analyses of economics are devoid of issues of morality, human

needs, and social conscience" (cited in McLaren, 2001, p. 137). Understanding global economic practices not only as exploitation of the poor but also as embodied forms of moral, political and social practices which affect *every-body*, should constitute a central focus of civics and citizenship education. McLaren and Farahmandpur posit that:

For those who believe that uninterrupted accumulation and increasing international concentration of capital is a good thing, that the shift from an international economy to a world economy is a sign of progress, that the feedback mechanisms of the unfettered 'free' market are fair, that only democracy will spring forth from its spontaneous order, and that the common good will magically advance from its networked complexity, there is reason to be wildly optimistic about the future. . . . But for educators who reject the idea that the social system under capitalism is a self-organising totality and who view the globalization of capital as an irredeemable assault on democracy, the future appears perilous indeed. (2001, p. 137)

### *The Price of Failure*<sup>7</sup>

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, children and women are "the overwhelming majority of the people in the world living in poverty" and as long as this accumulates and persists and "the circumstances that give rise to them remain unchanged – human development will be compromised", notes UNICEF's somber report on *The State of the World's Children 2000* (UNICEF, 2001, pp. 1 and 3). Despite, some of the most compelling and significant changes made in human development which began in modernity and continue to this day and age with the ideals of human progress, justice and equality, it is compellingly clear that not all of humanity has benefited from the advancement gained through science and technology, some members of the human family profit considerably more than others.

My intention in this section was to emphasise that the postmodern condition cannot simply be discarded as it represents on the one hand the epoch in history within which we live, and on the other hand a specific frame of mind or culture. To

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<sup>7</sup> I borrowed this title from Unicef's publication *The State of the World's Children* (2001)

characterise a postmodern culture, one must also get a sense of the shared beliefs, norms and values of people living and working within this culture.

## On Methodology and Method

The choice of methodology and methods in this research was directly influenced by the origins of the project and the literature dealing with the education for democracy and critical social research. I argue that there is an important distinction to be made between 'methodologies' and 'methods'. Failure to acknowledge a clear distinction between the concepts of method and methodology has contributed to a dichotomised view of qualitative versus quantitative research. In what follows, a brief overview of the distinction between method and methodology is presented and key assumptions about the nature of 'good science' and their relationship to the research 'subject' are addressed.

It is generally agreed that scientific methods refer to the ways in which data are generated: posing verbal or written questions to individuals or groups; observing; or reviewing records. Any of these methods may yield qualitative or quantitative data, stories or numbers (Patton, 1990). Notwithstanding this seemingly straightforward explanation, Karl Popper (1965) found the idea of scientific observation, for example, without reference to a general theory and taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions impossible to sustain. He writes:

Twenty-five years ago I tried to bring home the same point to a group of physics students in Vienna by beginning a lecture with the following instructions: "Take pencil and paper; carefully observe, and write down what you have observed!" They asked, of course, what I wanted them to observe. Clearly the instruction, "Observe!" is absurd ... Observation is always selective. It needs a chosen object, a definite task, an interest, a point of view, a problem. (cited in Schick, 1997, p. 37)

Similarly, David Dooley (1995, p. 6) observes that 'scientific facts' are not only selective but are also constructs of human sensations, subject to disagreement and revision:

What we usually mean by the notion of observation is that we feel sensations within us that we attribute to external causes. When I say 'I see a tree', I really mean that I have an inner visual sensation consistent with what I have learned is called a tree. But how can you or I be sure that a tree really exists? 'We do not actually see physical objects, any more than we hear electromagnetic waves when we listen to the wireless'. (Russell, 1948)

Further, any method has the potential to be used in exploitive or empowering ways. A paramount issue that confronts me, as a novice educational researcher, then, is how to use the chosen methods in a manner that is consistent with the postmodern paradigmatic methodological assumptions I choose on the one hand, and my personal ideological beliefs and values on the other hand. As Popper (1965), Kuhn (1970) and many others have pointed out there is a direct correlation between the methods of inquiry and the general theories, specific paradigms and taken-for-granted assumptions that guide the research. Accordingly, methodology, within the social sciences, refers to a set of principles for conducting research that evolve from and operationalise paradigm assumptions by guiding decision making in several areas:

- ❑ the relationship between the researcher and research participants;
- ❑ epistemologic assumptions about the nature of 'truth', 'reality', 'knowledge' and who is considered as a legitimate knower;
- ❑ the extent to which subjective meanings are valued and incorporated into the research;
- ❑ how participants are, or are not incorporated into the process of the research (Alcoff, 1989; Harding, 1986; Lather, 1991a).

Specific decisions about the design and conduct of a particular study are usually a trade-off between adhering to methodologic principles of the paradigm



guiding the study, achieving the specific study purposes, and attending to the many practical considerations of conducting an investigation. Patton's remarks summarise the discussion thus far as follows:

The politics of evaluation mean that evaluators must make their own peace with how they are going to describe what they do. The meaning and connotations of words like objectivity, subjectivity, neutrality, and impartiality will have to be worked out with particular stakeholders in specific evaluation settings. Essentially these are all concerns about the extent to which the evaluator can be trusted, that is, trustworthiness is one dimension of perceived methodological rigor. For better or for worse, the trustworthiness of the data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of the evaluator who collects and analyses the data. (Patton, 1990, p. 476)

### ***Interrelationship between Research Design and Personal Values***

The design of a research project is a very important element in the discussion of how values are inscribed into technical systems. Susan Leigh Star (1999, p. 387) uses the example of Robert Moses to highlight this point. Moses, a city planner in New York, decided to focus on a specific design feature of a bridge to promote certain personal and professional values. Leigh Star explains that:

[Moses] made a behind-the scene policy decision to make the automobile bridge over the Grand Central Parkway low in height. The reason? The bridge would then be too low for public transport-buses to pass under them. The result? Poor people would be effectively barred from the richer Long Island suburbs, not by policy, but by design. (1999, p. 387)

What she is pointing out here, is that there exists an explicit relationship between the personal and professional values and beliefs that Robert Moses holds and the design features of the bridge. In other words, the choice of bridge design is not merely coincidental, rather it stands in direct relationship to his personal and professional values, much the same way as a researcher's choices of research design are to some extent consistent with, and supportive of, the researcher's personal and professional values, beliefs, aspirations and assumptions. As Patton (1990, p. 13) so aptly noted: "research, like diplomacy, is the art of the possible".

I have a personal and professional interest in issues related to democracy such as human rights and social justice. And, as this research is about primary school

students' education for democracy, I searched for a specific research methodology that would allow more democratic research processes.

### ***What is a Critical Research Paradigm?***

Many distinctions have been made to characterise the epistemologic and ontologic beliefs, assumptions and aims of differing research paradigms. Guba and Lincoln (1994) use 'critical theory et al' to characterise one of four major social science research paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, constructivism and critical theory et al. (cited in Berman et al, 1998, p. 8). The use of the 'et al.' emphasises Guba and Lincoln's (1994) attempt to include multiple perspectives which share an interest in socio-political and/or structural change, such as, for example, critical theory, critical pedagogy, some forms of feminism and postmodernism. The phrase 'critical research' as used here, is similar to Guba and Lincoln's (1994) conceptualisation of 'critical theory et al.' and refers to the above-mentioned multiple perspectives which share a definite interest. They may differ on certain dimensions but they all share a central aspiration, namely the generation of knowledge that contributes to social and cultural emancipation, empowerment, and structural change. A critical researcher acknowledges an inherent tension between the need for scientific rigor and the need to minimise the 'distance' between the researcher and the researchees.

Critical research's questioning of the researcher's role in the research process has redefined the very nature of research. Researchers and researchees are called upon to abandon traditional views of 'the objective research process' in the same way that they are urged to abandon views of the 'objective reality', 'truth' and 'knowledge', and instead are urged to view 'reality', 'truth' and 'knowledge' as socially constructed products of our human practice which are relative to an individual's interpretation.

Critical scientific inquiry may be understood as a political standpoint and personal practice that seeks to transform relations of domination and oppression, rather than simply a preferred scientific method (Lather, 1991a). Critical researchers, who are committed to creating research that is empowering for participants, have attempted to promote more egalitarian research methodologies and methods responsive to differences of identity, power, knowledge experience and personal and professional background. Transforming relationships of power in scientific social inquiry has been manifested in new research methodologies. They are generally described as less hierarchical, focusing on increasing researchee control of the research process, valuing researchee expert knowledge as much as the researcher's expert knowledge and enabling the formation of a partnership in the deliberation and negotiation processes of the research. This form of knowledge creation enables the emergence of new ways of thinking about the general issue of scientific inquiry and may support the "crafting of new research cultures" (Titus, 2000, p. 23).

It is this notion of the social construction of knowledge and the changed view of the researcher's role in social inquiry that has not only led many scholars to question positivist paradigms but also paved the way for the dramatic conceptual shift of critical researchers. A fundamental assumption among critical researchers is that oppressive structures can be changed by exposing hidden power imbalances and by employing more empowering research processes. Implicit in this view is a valuing of research participants as the experts in their own lives, who have an important stake in how the research ought to be conducted and whose knowledge base and expertise ought to be valued. This requires an open and honest relationship between the researchers and the researchees; this position further holds that researchees must be valued and respected as individuals not merely as research 'objects'.

### Partners in Research

Traditional research practices, much the same as traditional educational practices, are still orchestrated with a view of the researcher as 'the fount of all wisdom'. Traditional researchers, instead of communicating, 'issue communiqués' which research participants 'patiently receive' and where knowledge "is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those they consider to know nothing", observed Paulo Freire (1970, cited in Kneller, 1984, p. 54).

The distinguishing characteristic of traditional research is the active and directive role assumed by the researcher, and the passive and receptive role by the researchees. The researcher is the person with power and is not only in control of the content of the research, its pace and sequence, but also in control of the participants' behaviours and the knowledge created.

Early efforts in the development of educational knowledge as well as educational research knowledge were shaped almost exclusively by the assumptions and methodologies of positivism. In recent years, critical educational researchers have broadened their scope and have begun to examine the relevance of other paradigmatic perspectives and epistemology for the field of education. Qualitative methodologies are now well-accepted and respected ways of developing in-depth understandings about phenomena of interest to education. Despite an enhanced legitimacy and increasing use of qualitative methods in social science research, Nigel Fielding notes that:

The field is marked by controversy about virtually every key tenet of qualitative inquiry, from matters of epistemology to purely practical matters of relations with research subjects. Not only is the practice of qualitative research hotly contested, consensus is lacking about the purpose of qualitative research and whether it has a distinctive role to play relative to other approaches to the study of social phenomena. (1999, p. 525)

Although the number of educational researchers using qualitative methodologies is growing, not many advocate explicit critical research practices (Macaulay et. al., 1999; Stoecker, 1999).

### *Common Methodologic Themes*

A number of scholars (Macaulay et. al, 1999; Park, 1999; Skrla et. al, 2000; Stoecker, 1999; Swantz, 1999) have argued that critical research practices have much to offer in the development of scientific knowledge, and have examined the fit of this perspective with scientific philosophies, ethics, agenda, and research traditions. Yet, proponents of this emerging perspective find themselves in much the same position as researchers using qualitative methodologies did one or two decades ago. There is caution and confusion and a need to engage with perceived advantages and disadvantages of a participatory research methodology. Similarly, it is bound upon researchers to clarify how traditional scientific genres pertain to this new perspective. Thus, as new perspectives evolve, existing methodologies must be transformed and new approaches developed that fit the aims and assumptions of the emerging perspectives. In particular, open-mindedness and welcoming the creation of opportunities of finding out what possibilities newer perspectives might have to look at existing tensions in a new light.

Across different critical perspectives, common methodologic themes can be identified, although the extent to which each theme is emphasized, and how it is typically enacted, may differ. The following core methodologic characteristics are common to critical approaches:

- ❑ the research process or results have the potential to benefit the group, immediately or longer term;

- ❑ the researchers' assumptions, motivations, biases, and values are made explicit and their influence on the research process is examined;
- ❑ prior scholarship is critiqued in an attempt to elucidate the ways in which biases, especially those related to gender, race, and class, have distorted existing knowledge;
- ❑ interactions between the researcher and participants convey respect for the expertise of the participants.

In contrast to the array of methodologic decisions researchers confront in designing and conducting social science research, there are fewer choices regarding methods. Finally, it is entirely unclear how a distinct 'scientific method' can be defined that would refer to practices common to every discipline. As Harding points out:

It is a problem that social scientists tend to think about methodological and epistemological issues primarily in terms of methods of inquiry. ... A-theoretical tendencies and excessively empiricist tendencies in these fields support this practice. It is also a problem that philosophers use such terms as 'scientific method' and 'the method of science' when they are referring to issues of methodology and epistemology. (1986, p. 22)

### *Putting Theory into Practice*

From the conceptualisation stage onwards, I was in regular contact with the case study schools throughout the project. The principals of the schools were regularly informed about the progress of the investigation and were encouraged to comment on the information given. All included transcripts were emailed to the participants for feedback. The comments received were all positive and the principals expressed a desire to know more about the findings of the investigation and other people's views. The regular contact with the participating principals and teachers allowed us to form meaningful and trusting professional relationships.

By consciously opting for a critical research design I intended to depict my commitment to principles of transformative and empowering social relations, of concepts of shared knowledge production and general democratic ways of conducting this inquiry. Provisions were made to allow participants space and time to make their own agenda. Further, this way of working also sets limits to the extent that the researcher can pursue her or his own political, ideological or any other kind of normative ideals (Swantz, 1996, p. 124).

Notwithstanding the advantages of critical case study research, there are also some drawbacks. More democratic collaboration in research as used in participatory critical research practices is energy and time intensive for both the researcher and the researchees. In this project, principals and full-time teachers were the partners in this collaborative effort. Time and energy are in especially short supply for full-time principals, teachers, and other busy professionals which makes the collaborative research approach less efficient and therewith perhaps less attractive than traditional research processes. It is perhaps for these reasons that although the number of educational researchers using qualitative methodologies is growing, not many advocate explicit participatory research practices (Macaulay et.al., 1999, Stocker, 1999).

## Design of the Study

The working title of the thesis and research questions of the present study evolved as a result of ongoing reflection on a number of issues involved in primary school student's education for democracy. This thesis describes the investigation of day-to-day educational principles and pedagogical practices in four model schools and evaluates their usefulness for practical HRE, using case study research. Daily routines in schools and classrooms also referred to as the 'hidden' curriculum, form a

vital and sometimes overlooked aspect of education in general, and education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights in particular.

### ***Case Study Research***

Case studies have been increasingly used in the field of education. Case study is seen as a valuable method of research with distinctive characteristics that make it ideal for educational research. A salient characteristic of case study research is that it typically encourage in depth and multi-perspective analyses in the sense that the researcher engages with various voices and positions. Tellis (1997) notes: "case study is done in a way that incorporates the views of the 'actors' in the case under study" (html document). Case studies investigate single instances of events or phenomena. The case study method is a sophisticated approach to integrating qualitative and quantitative data in case studies. In particular, it helps us to "understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth" (Patton, 1990, p. 54). The advantage of case study research for this investigation is that it allows me to engage with specific events and situations in depth and offer information that is "rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question" (Patton, 190, p. 54). The advantages of case study research have been well documented in recent times (Bennett, 1997; Odell, 2000; Scholz, 2001) as they are able to serve the heuristic purpose of inductively identifying additional variables and generating hypotheses.

### ***Ethical Issues***

The issue of ethics is of paramount importance in education research and professional ethics requires ongoing judgements and interpretations of codes of conduct. Extensive thoughts on the following principles ensured a high ethical



standard during the process of the research. These principles have been adopted from the information paper for institutional ethics committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council (1995) and the Australian Association for Research in Education (1995). Further, Felicity Haynes (1999) identified three aspects of which a researcher should think carefully in any research situation:

- ❑ Consequences
  - What are the consequences, both short and long term for others, and me and do the benefits of any possible action outweigh the harmful effects?
- ❑ Care
  - Am I responding to the needs of others as human beings? Do I care about other people in this particular situation as persons with feelings like myself? Am I attentive to others?
- ❑ Constituency
  - Am I in this situation being consistent with my own past actions and beliefs? That is, am I acting according to ethical principles that I would be willing to apply in any other similar situation?

She observes that all three aspects are of equal importance and exemplifies the interdependence of these aspects through the use of the 'Borromean Rings' (see Figure 2). The Borrowmean rings can be constructed in many ways, the common feature, however, is that if one of the three connected rings is removed, the remaining two will fall apart. Applying this concept, Haynes explains, "neither consistency, consequences nor care provide adequate foundation for ethical decisions, but jointly they constitute the base for ethical decision-making" (1999, html document).

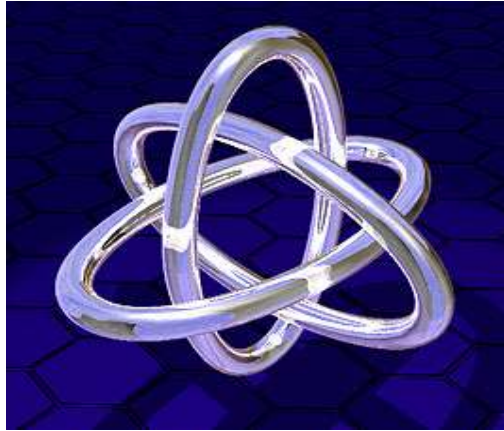


Figure 2 Borrowman Rings

An ethics permit and approval were obtained from Murdoch University Human Ethics Committee. In addition, informed consent was obtained from the participants in writing. All participants were assured that confidentiality has been maintained at all times. Furthermore, I explained to participants that they were free to withdraw at any time from the research project or to decline to answer any questions they wished.

There are other important ethical issues that need clarification. I am also concerned about the effect of the research on the particular school communities that are involved in the research. Taking seriously the power of knowledge in culture, I am not only concerned to work towards balancing the hierarchical structures inherent in research by choosing a participatory research model, but also I have to be careful about the side-effects of my actions, the unintended consequences of the research. As this thesis will show, the greatest obstacles to a student's rights-based agenda seem to be in School B, a public school in a low socio-economic area. My ethical standpoint, following McLaren (1995, 1997), is that unless socio-economic disadvantage is problematised and public schooling, especially in low socio-economic areas, is compared to private schooling (mainly servicing middle and upper classes), there will

be no serious attempts made to change pedagogical practices in public schools (Henry & Edwards, 1986; Slee, 1988; Anderson, 1993).

Despite careful consideration of professional and personal ethical principles, taking seriously the ideas of democratic research practices and being thoughtful of participants and the wider society in all its ramifications, the power imbalance between the researcher and the researchees remains. Although the researcher may renounce the role of 'the expert knower', it is the researcher who is firmly positioned as knowledgeable and is in control of the production of knowledge to a great extent. Therefore, it is not possible to achieve complete equality as it is inevitably the "researcher's version of reality that is given public visibility" (Tindall, 1994, p. 155).

### ***Data Creation***

Data gathering methods have included an initial questionnaire to teachers and students as well as document analysis, open-ended interviews and observations. Documents included policy documents, curriculum material, school mission statements, parent information booklets and documents generated by participants. Table 7 outlines the data gathering process that was closely followed:

Table 7: Data Creation

Time	Procedure
<b>Term 4 – 2000</b>	Gathering of Documents and interviews with school principals and negotiating the research process.
<b>Term 1 – 2001</b>	Interviews with school principals and negotiating the research process. Presentation of the study to teachers and students and an invitation of participation.
<b>Term 2 – 2001</b>	Administration of questionnaire to participating teachers and students. Observation of daily school and classroom routines, five days per school.

<b>Term 3 – 2001</b>	Observation of daily school and classroom routines, five days per school. Informal interviews with teachers and students.
<b>Term 4 – 2002</b>	Clarification and verification of interview and observation data.
<b>Term 1 – 2003</b>	Clarification and verification of interview and observation data.

### The Documents

Document information was a major data gathering technique. Western Australian education policy documents, such as *Making the Difference*, *Behaviour Management in Schools Policy* (1999) and the *Discovering Democracy* (1998) curriculum programme and school specific policy documents, such as school handbooks as well as mission statements were reviewed and analysed in the light of the guiding questions. Relevant published reports on a range of issues related to this study were reviewed.

### The Interviews

A semi-structured interview format was used to gather data from all interviewees. I sought to combine an interview-guide approach with a standardised open-ended approach to take advantage of both strategies. An agenda of guiding questions was used in some instances as well as a number of basic questions that was worded precisely in a predetermined fashion. Each interview was an average of 45 to 60 minutes in length. Subsequent interviews were sought and determined by events at School C that were not foreseen at the start of the project but were of importance to the investigation. All interviews were recorded on a portable tape recorder and transcribed as soon as practical after interviewing. The picture of how citizenship and human rights education is integrated within the school context in the case study schools is presented where possible in the participants own words; my observation

and interview notes were shown to the principals and teachers before being used in the report; and the summaries and links were intended to set the excerpts from interviews in context and be explanatory not evaluative.

Only data that was considered relevant and was included in the final report has been forwarded to participants for feedback to ensure that participants' time and energy was not unnecessarily claimed. Table 8 lists the guiding questions asked in the interviews with principals.

Table 8: Guide to Interview with School Principals

Question Number	Description
<b>Question 1:</b>	If you had to describe your school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?
<b>Question 2:</b>	What are the school rules? What are students allowed/not allowed to do?
<b>Question 3:</b>	Why do you think students can't always do the 'right' thing such as obeying the rules? – What do you think is happening when they don't?
<b>Question 4:</b>	What are the consequences for not obeying the rules? Can you give an example?
<b>Question 5:</b>	In what areas do you think students in your school would feel they have some control and can make decisions? Can you give an example?
<b>Question 6:</b>	How do you think the process of making choices as a student and actively participating in decision-making related to the preparation of students to be engaged citizens capable of living a responsible life in society?
<b>Question 7:</b>	Why do you think educational practices as described here are important?

### The Questionnaire

An initial questionnaire was handed to participating teachers and their students. The questionnaire was intended to investigate teachers' and students' perception of student autonomy, power and awareness of classroom rules. It was

divided into two sections, a multiple-choice section and a section where comments were sought on two open-ended questions. All the multiple-choice questions were scored on a five-point scale, ranging from 'Always' or 'Often' to 'Seldom' or 'Never'. 'Sometimes' was placed in the centre of the scale. Tables 9a and 9b lists the multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions in order of their appearance in the questionnaire.

Table 9a: The Multiple-Choice Questions

Question Number	Description
<b>Question 1:</b>	In this teacher's class, I get to decide what work to do.
<b>Question 2:</b>	My teacher encourages me to ask my peers for help.
<b>Question 3:</b>	In this teacher's class, I am allowed to walk around the classroom without asking the teacher's permission.
<b>Question 4:</b>	I am free to use the toilets during class time.
<b>Question 5:</b>	I am aware of the class rules.
<b>Question 6:</b>	I think the class rules are fair.
<b>Question 7:</b>	I have a say in helping to make new class rules.
<b>Question 8:</b>	In this class, I decide where I sit.
<b>Question 9:</b>	In this class, I decide with whom I would like to work.
<b>Question 10:</b>	I am aware of the consequences if I misbehave.
<b>Question 11:</b>	I think the consequences for misbehaviours are fair.

Table 9b: The Open-ended Questions

Description
What is the best thing about this classroom?
What would you like to change about this classroom?

### *The Case Schools*

Schools were selected to be included in this study primarily based on their reputation as places of 'good practice' and for their socio-economic and philosophical differences. Four schools were selected for their philosophical and socio-economic diversity, and with a range of teachers (grades one to seven). All four schools that were approached to be included in this study offered their participation. The contrasting features of the case schools consisted of existing aspects of each school's culture, organisation and procedures in their Western Australian context. They were:

- ❑ Location (metropolitan/non-metropolitan and specific location within the metropolitan area of Perth);
- ❑ Socio-economic background;
- ❑ Size;
- ❑ The institutional and physical structure of the school;
- ❑ The professional freedom and responsibility of the principals;
- ❑ The beliefs and attitudes of principals and teachers concerning students' rights and responsibilities.

In addition to these school variables, I expected certain aspects of the functioning of the education system as a whole to affect the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship and human rights to a greater or lesser degree in all the schools. It appeared to be significant that two independent progressive schools with different although similar philosophical approaches based on their values and beliefs were selected for inclusion in this study. Both emphasise child-centredness and

student autonomy. Thus, half the case studies are situated within a progressive educational environment and half are situated within a mainstream educational environment. The purposeful inclusion of these schools also appeared to be significant in contrasting features that might affect political decision-making practices and therewith the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship and human rights.

## ***Analysis***

### ***Inductive Method***

As is common in qualitative research, data analysis began during the data generation process. It was anticipated that themes would begin to emerge early in the study and the process of finding meaning in the information being created began. A case study approach has been chosen which involves triangulated data sources to develop a theory grounded in the practices of the case study sites (Tripp, 1994). This inductive search for patterns through systemic categories that is guided by the research question has been referred to by Patton (1990, p. 403) as 'comparative pattern analysis'.

### ***Viewpoint Triangulation***

The data generated from different sources has been compared and contrasted to gain a synchronised, authentic and detailed description of the case study sites. Tripp (1986, p. 345) refers to this technique as 'viewpoint triangulation'. The main aim to these qualitative analysis techniques is the search for patterns in the raw data. Tripp (1994) recommends that 'people', 'things', 'events', 'context' and 'relationships' are the five main categories of research work. Organising the raw data into these five major categories and searching for the relationship among these categories to develop working typologies and hypotheses is a form of analytic induction (LeCompte &



Preissle (1993, p. 254). The interview, observation and document data has been coded using an 'open coding' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) process, which means simply attaching labels (codes) to each unit of text, and writing 'theoretical memos' (Tripp, 1993a). Each code refers to an idea or theme. Themes have been drawn from the content of the case synopses by comparing words, phrases and sentences used. Close attention has been paid to implicit meanings of design features of the physical environment and what might be an implicit understanding or agreement among the constituency of a school or groups of people within the school. Description and analysis of the school, including the physical environment, the school culture and the philosophical approach of each case study school and the ways in which the opportunities and constraints created by complex societal (institutional and/or economic) forces are taken up by individual principals. Such descriptive accounts are important for understanding the interplay of human agency and societal power affecting the implicit and explicit teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. This leads to the identification of the most important influences on students' rights and responsibilities as part of integrated teaching and learning of democratic citizenship and human rights perceived in the case study schools.

## Conclusion

In summary, the research context and methodology used has been described. Emerging research issues and potential tensions in conducting postmodern participatory educational research have been identified and discussed. The research issues evolved from ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions embedded within educational research practices. Many underlying and often taken-for-granted assumptions which researchers use and accept have ethical and methodological consequences in academic practice. As I use a critical research model

the underlying epistemological assumptions governing this research and the description of the research process are significant. A general description and justification of the methodological approach taken to conduct this case study research was provided.

This study investigates how the understanding and enactment of identified democratic values enable students, as developing citizens, to cultivate attitudes and skills that help them to become informed and active citizens who are willing and able to participate in, and thus constructively contribute to society. Democratic schools may be an effective remedy for the problem of 'civic apathy', a phenomenon that has been well documented in established democracies. Although, a new civics and citizenship education curriculum, entitled *Discovering Democracy (DD)* has been introduced to primary and secondary schools throughout Australia the present study is centered not so much around the *DD* curriculum as on a case study examination of the ways in which democratic educational principles are played out in everyday school and classroom practices at the four model school sites.

I adopted a critical research methodology to provide a comprehensive explanation of the ways these schools succeed in providing an environment that promotes democratic values. The study illustrates that democratic values enhance and enrich not only the culture and conditions in the schools, but also enables students to actively participate in decision-making processes about issues that directly affect them as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

## CHAPTER 2

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### International Human Rights: An Overview

Are rights truly the product of a particular vision and laws of a society? Or, are human rights so inherently in humanity that their origins and foundations are incontestable?

Andrew Heard, 2001, html document

Our instrument and our hope is the United Nations, and I see little merit in the impatience of those who would abandon this imperfect world instrument because they dislike our imperfect world.

John F. Kennedy, State of the Union Address, January 11, 1962, html document

The United Nations is regarded as one of the major international human rights organisations advocating the universality and inalienability of human rights. The United Nations, which came together after World War II to agree on specific principles that would constitute a minimum standard or benchmark for human conduct, has its political power questioned at present as it has been in the past. Despite the widely acclaimed achievements of the United Nations and its growing membership base<sup>8</sup>, it is not possible to say that there is universal support for a global democratic and human rights discourse, although the support might be widespread and growing. Thomas Carothers (2002, p. 5) notes that:

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<sup>8</sup> The latest nation to become a member of the United Nations is Switzerland. The people of Switzerland voted in March 2002 in favour of joining the United Nations after two failed initiatives in 1975 and 1989 (Crivelli, 2002, p. 8).

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, trends in seven different regions converged to change the political landscape of the world: 1) the fall of right-wing authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe in the mid-1970s; 2) the replacement of military dictatorships by elected civilian governments across Latin America from the late 1970s through the late 1980s; 3) the decline of authoritarian rule in parts of East and South Asia starting in the mid-1980s; 4) the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s; 5) the break-up of the Soviet Union and the establishment of 15 post-Soviet republics in 1991; 6) the decline of one-party regimes in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa in the first half of the 1990s; and 7) a weak but recognizable liberalizing trend in some Middle Eastern countries in the 1990s. (2002, p. 5)

The central aim of establishing a human rights framework was to "provide a grassroots language as well as a legal framework", observes Dianne Otto. In her view, such strategies might further the vision of a transnational human rights framework for a more just and egalitarian society which would support:

decolonialisation, mobilisation around sexual and radical discrimination, the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, movements against authoritarian regimes, and the rights of a multitude of other exploited and subordinated groups including indigenous people, workers, children, lesbians and gay men, the elderly, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. (1999, html document)

Despite this positive view of the role of a human rights regime, it is open to criticism on mainly two grounds. Firstly, it can be argued that a global human rights regime is constantly contradicted by how contemporary lives are lived in many parts of the world and how people's human rights are violated daily not only by government authorities and their representatives but also on a wider, transnational level, by nongovernment organisations, such as multinational corporations operating out of so-called 'established democracies' (United Nations Children's Fund 2000 & 2001; Background briefing, ABC radio national 2001; Oxfam, 2002). Hilary Janks, a South African scholar, explains:

South Africa has the highest rape statistics in the world, and there are projections that 7 million South Africans will die of AIDS in the next 10 years. Child abuse is widespread; there are 58 cases of child rape a day including horrifying instances of infant rape that defy comprehension. (2002, p. 16)

Secondly, a number of scholars have pointed out that visions of a 'global democracy' and a 'global human rights regime' are impossible to sustain because they are by nature totalising. As a result, the voices of opposition to a 'global human rights

regime' are growing and the 'universal and fundamentalist nature' of a human rights regime are problematised (Otto, 1999; Heard, 1997 and 2001; Kennedy, 2001).

Notwithstanding this sombre outlook, the institutionalisation of human rights policies after 1945, and the presence of the United Nations as an international force in this work is significant because it challenges contemporary nation states, such as Australia, to constantly review their policies (including education policies) against established human rights benchmarks. As part of the debate, some of the issues that pertain to the claims of the universality of human rights are explored. In foregrounding this discussion, I will examine how the concept of universal human rights is situated historically. In particular, I will discuss why the Nazi Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki became such significant turning points in the history of international human rights. Thus, I will argue that universal human rights that are responsive to cultural differences are possible on a policy level in the international arena and need to be perceived as evolving, being shaped and shaping global historical events. It is imperative to move beyond universalist and particularist approaches in this debate. Universalists argue that human rights are universal in the sense that they are applicable to all humans, irrespective of time, space and context. Particularists, on the other hand, argue that human rights cannot be universal because they are time, space and context dependent. I assert that pluralist approaches can open up political spaces that enable dialogic processes capable of countering global hegemony.

This discussion is followed by an examination of the drafting process of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which had as one of its objectives the adoption of more culturally aware and inclusive procedures to make the final document less 'eurocentric' and the claim to universal applicability more

realistic. Finally, some aspects of human rights education and the United Nations Decade of Human Rights Education are briefly explored.

## The Historicity of An International Human Rights Regime

### *The Origins of Universal Human Rights*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly as a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the people of Member States themselves and among the people of territories under their jurisdiction.

United Nation's Centre for Human Rights,  
Fact Sheet No 2, 2001, p. 6

Some scholars believe that the concept of universal human rights is a relatively recent concept. Anna Yeatman (2000), for example, explains that: "Human rights is a historically recent positive discourse of legitimacy and law, established only with the United Nations Charter in 1945" (html document). Others (Izzard, 1997; Human Rights Web, 1994) take a different view altogether and point out that the concept of universal human rights existed "under several names in European thought for many centuries" (Izzard, 1997, html document). And some even believe that the origins of universal human rights date back to the code of Hammurabi established in 1750 B.C. (Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, 2001; Cooper, 2001; Evans, 2000; Heard, 2001); or, if not dating back to Babylonia, then at least to ancient Greece and classical Greek philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (Heard, 2001). Regardless of the dating of its coinage, human rights has focused, in the past, as in the present, on a search for ethical standards of how to best organise people in civil societies so that they can live autonomous and productive lives.

### ***The International Bill of Human Rights***

The establishment of the United Nations Charter of 1945 is broadly recognised as the starting point of the modern international human rights regime<sup>9</sup>. Before this charter was established, "international law permitted a prince or state to do as he or it pleased with those who came under his or its sovereignty... [b]y 1945, the indifference of international law to the fate of national-domestic subjects was no longer sustainable" notes Yeatman (2000, html document). After Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime came to power in Germany in 1933, a series of discriminatory laws was passed allowing the extermination of six million European Jews, indigenous people, Roma people, homosexuals and other, physically and mentally disabled people. This period until the end of the Second World War on May, 8, 1945 became known as the 'Holocaust'.

After the Second World War, the Western world experienced what may be called a 'paradigm shift', a 'veritable revolution in international law' (Sieghart, 1991, cited in Yeatman, 2000, html document) as the forbears of contemporary human rights advocates, still shaken from the horrors of World War II, tried to place a number of fundamental freedoms beyond the power of specific political regimes, and time and space specific contexts. A new international code of conduct was developed which Sieghart (1991) explains:

closely defined certain 'human rights' and 'fundamental freedoms' for all human beings, anywhere in the world, which were thenceforth no longer to lie in the gift of the sovereign states whose citizens these human beings were, but were said to inhere in them 'inalienably' and so could not be abridged, denied, or forfeited – even by their sovereign rulers – for whatever cause. ...[T]here is now a superior international standard, established by common consent, which may be used for judging the domestic laws and the actual conduct of sovereign States within their territories and the exercise of their internal jurisdictions, and may therefore be regarded as ranking in the hierarchy of laws even above national constitutions. (cited in Yeatman, 2000, html document)

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<sup>9</sup> The term 'modern international human rights regime' is defined as meaning both, an internationally accepted discourse as well as an administrative body or organisation operating within this internationally agreed framework and actively promoting its own discourse or 'a rights language'. In other words 'modern human rights' as used here, is understood as more than a specific discourse or a specific organisation, it is an ideology, a specific, although international political regime.

The 1945 United Nations Charter has great significance, because it was the first time that human rights discourse acquired "cosmopolitan salience and force" (Yeatman, 2000, document). The 1945 Charter is seen as a foundational text for the modern international human rights regime, written in a common language that enabled the charter to be specified in terms of universal human rights. In the aftermath of the devastation of World War II and the brutalisation of many societies which had taken place in the years just prior and during the war, the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration sought to establish a new framework for world order by adopting standards for both international relations and domestic policies. For this purpose, the UN Commission on Human Rights was formed with the objective to "formulate what is termed 'a preliminary draft International Bill of Human Rights'" and within one year the formal drafting committee, consisting of members from eight states, "selected with due regard for geographical distribution", (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, Fact Sheet No 2, 2001, pp. 3-4) drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1948<sup>10</sup>.

The Universal Declaration was not a legally binding international document<sup>11</sup>. Thus the Commission on Human Rights made an effort to translate it into a detailed treaty. The wider context of a 'new world culture' as envisaged by the United Nations Charter needs to be taken into account when interpreting the significance of the historical agreement between the 58 nation-states that were members of the United Nations in 1948. Eide (1998, html document) identifies three main points that drove

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<sup>10</sup> Since then, the 10<sup>th</sup> of December is celebrated annually as 'human rights day'.

<sup>11</sup> Yves Lador notes that: "Some instruments entitled 'declarations' were not originally intended to have binding force, but may have gained such character over time through international customary law. ... For example, many legal scholars consider the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to have gained standing in international customary law since its adoption in 1948, but many others still consider it to be non-binding (2001, p. 2).



the development of the framework for the construction of a 'world culture'. The underlying principles of the adoption of such international standards have been articulated in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter. They are:

- ❑ the maintenance of international peace;
- ❑ the development of friendly relations among nations; and
- ❑ the achievement of international co-operation in solving international problems.

The principles guiding the 'new world culture' develop a perspective that emphasises the role of ideas and values. Accordingly, the Charter has not only legal ramifications but has also very definite moral and social implications. The principles identify a sound need for protection of individuals and groups of people from the violence of other individuals or groups of people. Members of the United Nations thought that, as a representative of the international community (and its values), they had an obligation to impose clear regulatory standards (laws) that had universal application, independent of time and space. In this way, the drafters of the United Nations Charter prescribed fundamental human rights with a clear intention of regulating global ethical conduct according to their moral principles.

It is not entirely surprising, therefore, that opposition to international moral regulation was mounting. The Charter was intended as "a moral platform requiring respect for the freedom and dignity of everyone", suggests Eide and he further posits that "the Declaration had tremendous impact" because it is first and foremost a "future oriented project requiring continuous efforts at all levels to make human rights ... enjoyed in reality" (1998, html document). All thirty articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are based on the individual as the subject of human rights. Article 1 states, that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," whereas Article 2 states that, "everyone is entitled to all the rights and

freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality or social origin, property, birth or other status". This is the concept of non-discrimination, namely that no differentiation between persons or classes of persons should be made in respect of human rights.

The idea of human equality, although not new, was contested and the document had to be carefully worded. The possibilities of 'cosmopolitan global citizenship' (CGC) were envisioned in the past, notably by Immanuel Kant and the principles of the Enlightenment project. A basic principle of CGC is that some recognised fundamental rights of people are universal in character, meaning that they do not depend on particular circumstances of class, race or gender, etc. However, the potentials and problems of CGC seem, in the present as in the past, almost endless. The voices against this view of the essential sameness of the human race are equally forceful and span generations of scholars. The discussions about both the relevancy of human rights and perceptions of its universality/relativity and inalienability/alienability that are alive today are fuelled by conceptual and ideological controversies and have been raging for generations among scholars.

Andrew Heard (2001, html document) argues that the contemporary human rights regime has its origins in classical liberalism and theories that people possess natural rights. Liberalism first emerged as an important doctrine in the sixteenth century (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 483). In the pre-modern period<sup>12</sup>, the moral authority of all knowledge, including political thought was assured because it had divine

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<sup>12</sup> In pre-modern societies, people adopted a predetermined role and, in doing so, adapted to, or complied with, given social status and meaning. The value placed on reason in modern societies made it possible for the individual to break free from the constraints that defined membership. Reason challenged the taken-for-grantedness of life through the attainment of knowledge. As a result, life in modernity became something one creates, and in doing so, people thought to create themselves. This creative act is central to the idea of human development and progress.

authorship. More and more liberal minded thinkers who were living and working prior to and during the Renaissance started to argue for a very different approach to human rights. Early modern political theorists played their part by calling into question the many inequalities they witnessed. Although notions of inequality are always open to contestation, perhaps the most significant claim of liberal democratic theory is that political society has to grant *all* individuals some basic human rights. Inequality (in its many forms) needs to be expressed and fought because it involves dependency and dependency undermines a central dogma of liberalism – that of freedom (autonomous thought and behaviour). Will Kymlicka defines the concept of liberalism in the following way:

Liberalism is distinguished by the importance it attaches to the civil and political rights of individuals. Liberals demand substantial a realm of personal freedom – including freedom of conscience, speech, association, occupation, and more recently, sexuality. (1995, p. 483)

## Natural Rights versus Civil Rights

### *Questioning the Divine Nature of Natural Rights*

The divine nature of natural rights and natural law was still pursued during modernity, notably by John Locke (1632-1704), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Thomas Paine (1737-1809) who were strong defenders of the view that human rights are equatable with natural rights. These thinkers assumed that all people have, by nature, equal rights to life, liberty, and property. Locke (1690) posits: "Man [sic] ... is by nature free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of his estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent" (cited in Marshall, 1996, p. 57).

Jeremy Bentham (cited in Heard, 2001, html document) strongly criticised the notion of 'natural rights' as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. "Natural

rights is simple nonsense", he argued as rights cannot be natural because they are creations of particular societies. Further, Bentham posits that:

Right, the substantive right, is the child of law: from real laws come real rights; but from laws of nature, fancied and invented by poets, rhetoricians, and dealers in moral and intellectual poisons come imaginary rights. (cited in Heard, 2001, html document)

Another strong critic of natural, abstracted and uncontextualised rights and freedoms was Edmund Burke (1729-1797). In a letter intended to have been sent to a gentleman in Paris in 1790 entitled *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke noted that:

Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing color and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind [sic]. (Transcribed to HTML by Bjorn Christensson, 1996)

### ***Distinguishing Natural Rights from Civil Rights***

Subsequently, Thomas Paine, who was well aware of the work of proponents as well as critics of the natural rights theory, made an attempt to separate natural rights from civil rights, although not denying their close relationship:

Natural rights are those which appertain to man [sic] in right of his existence. Of this kind are all the intellectual rights, or rights of the mind, and also all those rights of acting as an individual for his own comfort and happiness, which are not injurious to the natural rights of others. Civil rights are those which appertain to man in right of being a member of society. Every civil right has for its foundation, some natural right pre-existing in the individual, but to the enjoyment of which his individual power is not, in all cases, sufficiently competent. Of this kind are those which relate to security and protection. (cited in Heard, 2001, html document)

Paine's position is somewhat in agreement with Rousseau's view of human rights that is inspired by social contract theory. Rousseau's popular epigram that 'man [sic] is born free, but everywhere he is in chains' implies that people will need to substitute their 'natural rights' with 'contracted rights' by entering into a voluntary social contract with each other. Therewith, individuals ultimately suspend their 'natural rights' but can gain 'moral', 'civil' and 'political' rights instead. Rousseau's model of 'contracted rights' is similar to Thomas Hobbes' earlier notion that the

individual is in this way, simultaneously ruling and being ruled, through the 'general will' or unwritten social contract. Heard (2001) notes that by expressing these views, Hobbes "posed the first major assault in 1651 on the divine basis of natural rights by describing a State of Nature in which God *did not* seem to play any role" (html document) (emphasis added). In this way, these thinkers' political doctrines that were derived from classical liberalism, prescribed that basic rights were necessary for civil society.

Contemporary debates of the legitimacy and relevance of international human rights are built upon the period of classical liberalism and the theories of the above-mentioned modern thinkers as Heard (2001, html document) elaborates:

Human rights are now often viewed as arising essentially from the nature of humankind itself. The idea that all humans possess human rights simply by existing and that these rights cannot be taken away from them are direct descendants of natural rights. However, a persistent opposition to this view builds on the criticism [that] rights are viewed as the product of a particular society and its legal system. In this vein, Karl Marx also left a legacy of opposition to rights ... [he] denounced rights as a fabrication of bourgeois society ... rights were needed in capitalist states in order to provide protection from the state. In the Marxist view of society, an individual is essentially a product of society and, ideally, should not be seen in an antagonistic relationship where rights are needed.

Past and present views are expressed explicitly in a way in which the individual person is placed at the centre of such rights. With the signing of the *Universal Declaration* in 1948, "the individual has acquired a status and a status which has transformed him [sic] from an object of international compassion into a subject of international right" explains Sir Hersch Lauterpacht (cited in Yeatman, 2000, html document). This means that the agreed 'basic rights' have come to be viewed not necessarily as 'natural rights' but rather as 'contracted rights' in the Rousseauian sense and have been seen as distinct from privileges because they are, so it is argued, innate or inherently human. Although the drafters of the *Universal Declaration* must have been well aware of potential criticism and the general problem

of interpretation and implementation of such generally formulated rights, they wrote, nevertheless, a very strong political statement. Yeatman observes that:

It is no longer necessary to appeal to either a divine or natural law as a basis for human rights, for they now have a positive existence in law. Their positive reality produces a politics of human rights. Not only does human rights become an openly contested discourse, but the positive institutionalization of human rights discourse invites a critique from all those who have been marginalized or excluded by the historical terms of its specification. (2000, html document)

While the achievements of the past are powerful, their shortcomings need to be addressed. Thus, the next section will explore attempts of adopting more culturally aware processes in developing the contents of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

### Reconciling the Ideals of Global Democracy and Cultural Diversity

Views greatly diverge as to what might constitute universally accepted basic human rights. International human rights may be defined as basic freedoms that humans require to live their lives with dignity. And, as with any abstract notion, 'dignity' itself is not unproblematic.

But what exactly are basic or minimal rights to which all humanity is deemed to be entitled? Can young children's inclusion in decision-making processes that affect their welfare as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) be identified as a 'basic' human right? Or is it possible that the consideration of children's views on matters that affect their welfare be desirable but not fundamental? Others may agree on the fundamentality of children's participation rights but are not very clear about the level of inclusion.

Some people (Hart, 1992; Verhellen, 1998, 2000; Harris-Short, 2001) definitely advocate that children's participation rights as enshrined in the CRC constitute 'basic' human rights. I tend to view the construct of human rights as a transnationally agreed core code of shared values, although constructed by an elite

group of people with similar historical and ideological roots. Members of this so-called 'dominant group' are typically, white, middle or upper class men who occupy positions of both political and economic power within their respective nation-states. It is questionable if those state elites who act in the international sphere are able and/or willing to represent the views of those states or merely represent their own views, even with the best of intentions. It is generally accepted now that notions of truth and reality are not absolute, dogmatic and universal, but rather reality is perceived differently for different people as assumptions are wedded to different paradigms, cultures and traditions of values and ways of life, as argued in the previous chapter. From this vantage point, the limitations of the universally acclaimed human rights discourse become obvious as it is just not possible to argue for a single, universal, unchanging, absolute truth about what constitutes 'human rights' in general, and 'fundamental or basic' human rights in particular.

However, a great number of scholars point out that there is nothing new about "the attacks on the small core of fundamental freedoms" (Glendon, 1996, html document). A common critique is that the so-called 'universal' rights are not universal at all but simply western ideas being imposed on everyone else. This is commonly referred to as 'cultural imperialism'. A growing number of scholars representing a wide range of academic, cultural and geographical spheres are now asserting that because of substantial cultural and social differences in the world, nation-states should not be subjected to existing international standards set forth by the dominant groups of the West.

The increasing demand to take the reality of cultural and social differences seriously can no longer be dismissed and needs to be taken seriously. There exists a general agreement that universal human rights, as set forth in the *Universal*

*Declaration of Human Rights*, are rooted in concepts of western liberal democratic thought and are therefore a western construct. The marginalisation of non-dominant and/or non-western social and cultural norms and traditions by the United Nations "raises fundamental concerns as to the basic legitimacy of the international human rights regime", as universal human rights, as currently defined, are nothing less than an explicit "culturally determined moral code specific to the West" (Harris-Short, 2001, html document). The West can therefore be accused of being the "cradle and custodian of a strong human rights tradition" (Glendon, 1996, html document). Thus, I agree with Sonja Harris-Short, when she states that "to simply assert that human rights must, by definition, be universal in scope, is rightly dismissed as moral imperialism" (2001, html document).

Problems with defining what constitutes basic, fundamental or minimal human rights are not only linked to questions of cultural norms and moral values but also to that of objectivity and the perception of truth and reality. The claim to objectivity is deeply flawed because meaning is socially constructed and people's views and judgements are shaped by subjective experiences and contexts that are related and correspond to differing positionalities, histories, cultural norms and traditions. In other words, it is not possible to reach agreement on what might constitute 'fundamental or basic' rights in a rationally explainable, objective way on a global stage.

Within, the United Nations and its agencies, although working within an explicit human rights discourse, there seems to be a growing awareness of the impossibility to sustain claims to the universality of basic human rights standards without acknowledging that the rules and regulations devised and knowledge produced are social constructs. However, there is within this organisation a growing



and an equally strong awareness that the current debate is not a valid reason to stop aiming for the continued development of international instruments as possible global frames of reference, using an explicit rights language to advocate liberal political thought of human equality and freedom. Susan Fountain, from UNICEF, acknowledges the social construction of reality in a recent working paper on *Peace Education* in the following way:

Forms of violence that may be considered unjustified by some may be seen as appropriate, or even righteous, by others. An inherent risk in the promotion of a value-oriented activity such as peace education lies in the possibility that it will be seen as culturally biased, or as an imposition of one culture's values upon those of another. And in some contexts, the word 'peace' itself may carry political connotations. While acknowledging that different value systems exist, UNICEF continues to support the development of peace education programmes, and the values of non-violent conflict resolution and peace-building. (1999, p. 3)

### Moving beyond Universalism and Particularism

Notwithstanding the achievements of the modern international human rights regime, its continuing claim to the universal applicability of its ideas and values has proven to be a point of tension in the past but has come to be even more problematic in recent times. Diana Ayton-Shenker explains:

Largely through the ongoing work of the United Nations, the universality of human rights has been clearly established and recogni[s]ed in international law. ... Human rights are the natural-born rights for every human being, universally. They are not privileges. ... As if to settle the matter once and for all, the Vienna Declaration states in its first paragraph that 'the universal nature' of all human rights and fundamental freedoms is 'beyond question'. The unquestionable universality of human rights is presented in the context of the reaffirmation of the obligation of States to promote and protect human rights. (1995, html document)

Although the UN does not seem to be ready to do so, the decentring of Western values and ideas in an age of multiculturalism suggests the possibility of abandoning the universal template of the advancement of the cause and standard setting of human rights throughout the world. The recognition of cultural particularism in recent times makes it possible to open up a space in which Western supremacy is challenged and it is "no longer axiomatic that what is universal is also what is Western" (Sayyid, 1998, html document). The critique of essentialism

suggests that Western ideas and values of individual human rights that have been represented in the past as the permanent essence of all humanity are actually historical and social constructs and have been used as a mechanism of domination. Dianne Otto (1999) explains that the dichotomisation of universalism and cultural relativism that have shaped much of the debates of the past and present are paralysing, disempowering and totalising as both groups are essentially fighting to have their views universally accepted as 'the one right way' or the ultimate Truth. She explains that:

A ferocious battle is being waged on the world stage over whether 'cultural relativity' should be a factor that qualifies the universal application of human rights norms. While not a new debate, the present contest squarely raises issues of European hegemony, state sovereignty and local and transnational solidarities ... its outcome has important ramifications for the struggle over economic dominance between liberal capitalism of the West and the powerful economic systems from the non-liberal contexts of some Asian states. . . .<sup>13</sup> The battle has created a paralysing polarisation between the binary camps of universality and cultural relativity ... *ultimately this is a contest between alternative assertions of universal truth* and not a questioning or rejection of the utility of universals. (Otto, 1999, html document) (emphasis added)

In studying the range of discourses that characterise the human rights debate over the last few decades, I find that they tend to take a one-sided approach. This is what Otto (1999, html document) so aptly describes as "a contest between alternative assertions of universal truth" and is incidentally, one of the most common and misleading fallacies of the twentieth century. Universalists and particularists either espouse a universal human rights discourse that presents human rights as 'nature given', or they embody a social relativist discourse that sees human rights as socially constructed and therefore not applicable to all of humanity in an equal way. I agree with Otto's criticism of this situation because it is applying a particular logic: Either

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<sup>13</sup> A disturbing pattern of positioning the protection of economic interests over moral values of democratic equality among the major powers of the UN (notably the US), in recent times, has been noted by several critics as well as supporters of the UN (Cronin, 2002; Franceschet, 2002; Luck, 2002). In particular, Cronin points out that "the major powers have usually hesitated becoming involved in potentially violent situations where their vital interests were not threatened... as a result, the organisation has not fulfilled the promise of collective security as espoused by the founders (2002, p. 55).

the universalist argument is true – or the social relativist argument is true but not both (1999, html document). This either/or thinking is problematic as such dichotomies are often not only inaccurate but are simplistic and fail to cater for a whole range of possibilities. Adhering to dogmatic one-sidedness disregards the possibility that ideas and views presented in both discourses may have validity.

### Countering Threats of Global Hegemony

Another way of approaching the question of the universality/particularity of human rights is a perspective that is commonly referred to as pluralism. Pluralism<sup>14</sup>, as opposed to universalism and particularism, has been described as positive tolerance, or the overcoming of a negative vision of difference, of the Other. It attempts to contest the conceptual struggle of the past and the effects of closed oppositional positions. The central tenet of cultural pluralism is that there are many valid moral and political values and ideologies that cannot be hierarchically ordered. A pluralist approach to human rights debates attempts to open up the references around which discussions of human rights and equality become constructed. Cultural pluralism ascribes to the view that there is no need nor possibility to rank certain political, cultural and social values according to a single vision of truth and/or reality nor to some standard that is valid in itself for all times and places simply because values need to be contextualised. A pluralist approach is open and willing to incorporate a variety of worldviews, welcoming previously marginalised communities and voices, where difference and diversity are thought of as sources of richness that may enhance constructive debate.

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<sup>14</sup> Herder (1744-1803) has been credited as the "first cultural pluralist in the West" (Linker, 2000, p. 268). Herder notes: "every nation has its centre of happiness within itself, just as every sphere has its own centre of gravity...no two moments in the world are the same" (cited in Linker, 2000, p. 269-71). Thus these cultural and moral norms, practices and beliefs need to be contextualised and cannot be viewed as static, fixed and eternally permanent entities.

It cannot be denied that there exist substantial cultural, social and political similarities and differences among nation-states and geographical regions. Notwithstanding the major differences among nation-states and geographical regions, a human rights discourse may well be a unifying factor. Alison Renteln (1990) contends that there is an urgent need to engage in the search for "specific moral principles held in common by all societies" (cited in Harris-Short, 2001, html document). In other words, Renteln, believing in the possibility and need for cross-cultural consensus on issues of human rights, advocates cosmopolitan moral benchmarking. A number of other writers echo Renteln's belief in the possibility of cross-cultural human rights' norm-setting (Donnell, 1989; An-Nai'im 1992; Bremes, 1997; Harris-Short, 2001)<sup>15</sup>. Harris-Short explains that:

non-Western states do not generally contend that they do not want to be part of an international human rights regime. Rather, they usually argue for a system that is more responsive to their particular needs and values. (2001, html document)

Another compelling argument is put forward by Marion Young. She contends:

In a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens persons should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences to adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce the privileged; for the perspectives and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate the unified public, marginali[s]ing or silencing those of other groups. (cited in Parker, 1997, html document)

What may be of concern is the possibility that international human rights' debates, although welcoming a diversity of opinion, may still be dominated by western views, which, when translated into human rights instruments (which are nothing less than moral benchmarks) may not be able to alleviate the charge of cultural hegemony. Is it realistic to aim for a pluralist approach that answers claims for a more culturally aware process that includes previously marginalised voices in the development of international human rights instruments? It is argued here, that pluralism may well be the only possible framework to be used as it accords a degree

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<sup>15</sup> All of these theorists have been cited in Harris-Short (2001) who has conducted a thorough literature

of respect for non-western and/or minority views. This approach may counter concerns expressed by Edward Luck about ideological dogmatism when he notes: "the right and left ends of the political spectrum do not speak to each other any more in academia than they do in politics" (2002, html document). Pluralist approaches may open up political processes and may advance the possibility of rethinking questions of how the current international human rights regime that lays claim to universal legitimacy may counter claims that it threatens to produce global hegemony. In the following section, some of the consequences that an anti-essentialist critique of cultural authenticity had for the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are explored. Although pluralist views which are more tolerant to differences may offer a new way of conceptualising a counter-hegemonic and empowering human rights discourse and open up possibilities of political processes, the outcome of more inclusive attitudes towards difference may not be predictable and may even produce outcomes that are undesirable. For instance, as the following discussion will illustrate, a general attitude of cultural inclusivity in the drafting processes of the CRC, may have succeeded in giving a voice to non-western views and concerns about traditional cultural practices thus enabling non-dominant groups to share power in decision-making.

From a pluralist process oriented view which aims to secure conformity from non-western states, the success of the Senegalese delegate in resisting 'cultural domination' and insisting on the right to a democratic political process and sharing in the power to decide what the final outcome will be, is desirable. However, the dilemma is that the Senegalese delegate's own awareness of his 'right to power' coupled with his strong views about the subject matter under discussion (traditional

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search on this topic.

cultural practices) and a general awareness of the need for more culturally inclusive political practices produced a result that may be described as highly unfavourable. The question remains, how can democratic political processes be advocated and social and cultural values and practices not be ranked according to mainly western moral conception of tolerable or intolerable cultural practices (I call these moral benchmarking)? Sonia Harris-Short (2003) believes in the necessity of universal cultural legitimacy. She contends:

To be committed to carrying out human rights standards, people must hold these standards as emanating from their worldview and values, not imposed on them by outsiders. It would therefore necessarily follow that if, or to the extent that, the present concept and its content are not universally valid, we must try to make them so. Otherwise, those standards that are not accepted as culturally legitimate will remain ineffective unless we are prepared to contemplate attempts to impose those standards on people against their will! (Harris-Short, 2003, html document)

## The Drafting of the CRC: An Attempt of Cultural Pluralism

### *The Role of NGO's and IGO's<sup>16</sup>*

With a growing acceptance of the value-laden nature of the concept of human rights and the acknowledgement of the general heterogeneity of its members, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights invited the participation of previously marginalised and excluded nations (developing states and non-member states) and groups (NGO's and IGO's) in the debate and drafting processes of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Harris-Short notes that:

One of the claims made for the CROC<sup>17</sup> is that a fully inclusive drafting process has ensured that the norms enshrined within it build on all the world's cultural traditions and are thus considered culturally legitimate by all the participating states. ... A truly inclusive drafting process demands not only participation from states across all cultural divides, but also participation from groups representing community interests at a grassroots level. The inclusion of groups that can give a voice to those, such as women, who are marginalised within state boundaries, is particularly important. (2001, html document)

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<sup>16</sup> Non state actors are generally identified as Non-Government-Organisations (NGOs) or as Inter-Government-Organisations (IGOs)

<sup>17</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child has different abbreviations such as CRC or CROC. The United Nations uses CRC which is the version used thorough the thesis.

The participation and strong presence of NGO's and IGO's with particular interest in children's rights in the standard setting processes has been noted as one of the most important distinguishing features of the CRC. For example, the active participation of a variety of international organised women's groups, such as The International Council of Jewish Women, Zonta International, and The International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, and children's groups such as The International Save the Children Alliance, The International Catholic Child Bureau, Defence for Children International, with extensive cross-cultural memberships within the CRC's Working Group provided "an invaluable opportunity for the international community to hear from women and children who would otherwise be silenced" explains Harris-Short (2001, html document).

### ***The Role of Non-Western States***

Despite such positive attempts to honour claims of cultural inclusiveness of the drafting process, the level of participation of non-Western states has been noted as rather disappointing overall as a great number of states from Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Latin-America and the Middle East chose not to send delegates to the Working Group. However, of particular concern is not only the quantity of representation but also the quality of representation when evaluating the overall success of a cultural inclusive drafting process. The possibility of a rather small group of nation-states representing non-western values and cultural norms "exerting any great influence over a Working Group dominated by powerful western nations was always remote", observes Harris-Short (2001, html document).

Although the general influence of non-western views may not have been overwhelming, the importance of securing agreement from states, such as Senegal, in a binding international human rights document on culturally specific practices must

not be underestimated. It was the representative of Radda Barnen International, a NGO, which initially tabled a concrete proposal to include a specific paragraph, dealing with harmful traditional practices as illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10: Contrasting Initially Proposed Text and Final CRC Text of Article 24.3

Text of the NGO's Initial Proposal	Text of the Final CRC Document
The State Parties to the present Convention shall seek to eradicate traditional practices harmful to the health of children and shall take all appropriate action including necessary legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure that children are not subjected to such practices. (cited in Harris-Short, 2001, html document)	State Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children. (The United Nations, Fact Sheet No. 10, 2001, p. 26)

After the initial tabling of issues of harmful practices, the discussion centred on the issue of explicitly naming 'female circumcision' as a harmful traditional practice. In particular, Western representatives argued that the inclusion of 'female circumcision' would "explicitly address the traditional practices of greatest concern" and would send a clear message that "the practices to be abolished were those of a serious nature" (Donnell, 1990, cited in Harris-Short, 2001, html document). Despite widespread cross-cultural and inter-group support for this proposal, it was not included in the final text because of the opposition of Senegal. This was possible because the Working Group operated on the basis of consensus and all representatives from member-states had to agree on a particular definition for its inclusion in the final document<sup>18</sup>.

### *The Role of Senegal*

Although the interest and active role Senegal took in the drafting process of the CRC was generally welcomed, the effect of Senegal's participation on the final

<sup>18</sup> Although non-member states and non-state actors (NGOs and IGOs) were welcomed to participate in the negotiation processes but were only given non-voting observer status.



document has been criticised by some scholars. Commenting on the final settlement over the issue of female circumcision, Lawrence LeBlanc (1995) notes that the compromise reached was "a significant concession to Third World states". He was rather critical of the practical implications of this concession and was concerned that attempts to be cross-culturally inclusive weakened the CRC.

It is one of the most important examples of how the cultural diversity of the United Nations forced a compromise that, rather than making advancement in the area of children's rights, actually resulted in the adoption of very weak norms. (LeBlanc, 1995, cited in Harris-Short, 2001, p. 322)

For democracy to work, transformative understandings of cross-cultural deliberative processes need to incorporate procedural goals of arriving at a collectively agreeable solution to a problem posed. Iris Young argues that:

Political actors should promote their own interests in such a process, but must also be answerable to others to justify their proposals. This means that actors must be prepared to take the interests of others into account. ... I define the democratic process as a form of practical reason for conflict resolution and collective problem solving. So defined, democratic process entails that participants have a commitment to cooperation and to looking for the most just solution. (1997, p. 400)

It is unfortunate that the final text of Article 24.3 of the CRC is significantly weaker than the majority of western countries argued for. Notwithstanding this setback, it is imperative that nation-state representatives begin to listen to each other as it is only through the strengthening of a sense of 'political community', of participation, negotiation and foremost, cooperation that harmful practices in states, such as Senegal and South Africa, will be reviewed and progress on cultural practices which are seen as child abuse, can be made.

### ***Validating Democratic Processes and Political Unity***

Jessica Kulynych (2001) argues, "a deliberative understanding of democracy assumes that one's interest can be transformed through the process of deliberation" (html document). This means that although concerns of some western states that more culturally inclusive drafting processes may substantially weaken existing human

rights standards seem to be warranted, democratic deliberative processes (Habermas, 1996) cannot be abandoned. "The West does not have a monopoly on 'good culture'" and should not see itself as morally and culturally superior (Harris-Short, 2001, html document). An advanced concept of democratic cross-cultural deliberative processes must allow for cultural and social differences. It was the acceptance of and adherence to democratic political processes that ultimately united the members of the Working Group. Members of diverse cultural and social-economic backgrounds and interests, such as representatives of nation-states, NGOs and IGOs that made up the Working Group need to see their unity in political rather than cultural terms.

Parker (1997) points out that there is a need to "interpret *E pluribus unum* not as 'from the many, the one' but as 'alongside the cultural many the political one'" (html document). In other words, it is the identification of political equality and a deeply held respect for democratic political processes that accept cultural difference and recognise multiple identities which may work towards political unity and may overstep identification with a particular language, ideology, religion or culture (Doerre Ross and Yeager. 1999, html document). The challenge for democracy and education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights is to embrace and work with unity/diversity tensions. The success of future international collaboration requires the embrace and cultivation of attitudes, dispositions and identities that recognises the need for global basic human rights and a shared vision of a global democratic culture.

### ***The Case for Moral Benchmarking: Institutionalised Values of Dignity and Respect***

An argument is made here that although the substantial criticisms mounted on liberal democratic ideals is recognised and may well be warranted, the gains of the institutionalisation of values of dignity and respect that are grounded in Enlightenment progressivism should not be overlooked. Echoing views of Renteln

(1990) and many others<sup>19</sup>, de Zengotita (2003) reflecting on the issue of the bombing of the Twin Towers, only recently argued that liberal democratic ideals are "the only conceivable anchor for the cause of human progress in general" (p. 37). The statements made by these scholars point to substantial agreement on the need for global moral benchmarking. The basic human rights standards advocated are historically developed and based on liberal democratic conceptions of right and wrong. Or, to put it differently, a case is made here for recognising the value of international human rights standards as a foundational principal for global human progress. Notwithstanding my support for Enlightenment principles, the achievements of critics of this view are significant and need to be acknowledged<sup>20</sup>. Their arguments are important and enable the emergence and growth of new and different vantage points on common issues and aid the development of more awareness of difference and the building of more tolerant western societies. Reflecting on the importance of this work, de Zengotita comments on the events after the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York, commonly referred to as '9/11' as follows:

To take just the most salient case in point: were it not for identity politics, the degree of xenophobic racism in the American response to 9/11 would have been much worse – more indiscriminate bombing in Afghanistan, more attacks on innocent Muslims in [America], more stereotyping in the press, the whole shebang. We owe what tolerance we did display to institutionalised values of diversity and to the people who have worked for that institutionalisation, especially in education. (de Zengotita, 2003, p. 37).

Although this comment was footnoted, De Zengotita's validation of the importance of recognising the works of critiques of liberal democratic idealism further strengthens the argument for pluralist positions. Critical reflections on differences, particularly of race, class, gender that give rise to discriminatory practices, are urgently needed. Promoting the gains made by liberal democratic idealism and adherence to essentialism is, however, equally important in a fragmented

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<sup>19</sup> They have been previously discussed in this chapter (p. 55ff).

postmodern world, with its increased awareness of human suffering and the gross violation of basic human rights of a great number of people, but especially children.

Before advancing my argument on international children's human rights standards, I need to point out that discussing 'children' and 'children's rights' as if children could be perceived as being a homogenous group with matching life histories and experiences, poses problems. Concurring with feminist and cultural studies scholars that simple representation of children as advocated by Enlightenment progressivism hide the within-group differences based on race, class and gender – differences that are socially constructed and in asymmetrical power relations. Thus, children from marginalised groups in western societies, such as Australia, face a range of additional obstacles that are not faced by children from privileged groups. From this vantage point, the limitations of liberal democratic idealism and Enlightenment principles become obvious. Notwithstanding the recognised problematic of this liberal democratic position, the conceptions of children as a group with claims to basic human rights has been considered as a need and reality.

### The Convention on the Rights of the Child – General Principles

Of all the United Nations Human Rights instruments, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most widely ratified. It has been described as a "milestone in the development of civilization" (Jones, 1999, html document) and in its recognition of the concept of the rights of the child. The CRC is rooted in a range of basic values about the treatment of children, their protection, provision and participation in society and encompasses basic rights to which all children are entitled, irrespective of their social, political or economic backgrounds. This Convention is, according to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, not only the

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<sup>20</sup> The basis for criticisms of liberal democratic ideals has been discussed previously (p. 55ff).

most complete statement of an internationally developed core code of children's rights ever made and "the first to give those rights the force of international law", but it is also "the most widely accepted human rights instrument ever" (United Nations, Press Release HR/4327, html document). It was adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2 September 1990.

This historically significant document evolved over a period of six decades from an initial declaration in 1924, to a convention in 1989 (Verhellen, 2000, p. 76). The evolutionary process from an initial declaration, which included five general principles to a convention of 54 principles, is discussed extensively by Verhellen (1998; 2000a, p. 76 and 2000b) and briefly summarised in Table 11.

Table 11: Evolution from Declaration to Convention

Year	Text-Type	Number of Principles
1924	Declaration	Five principles
1959	Declaration	Ten principles
1989	Convention	Fifty-four principles

The substantial expansion of principles over a period of sixty-five years points to the growth of awareness of children as rights holders on an international stage. The Convention as well as the Declarations included a preamble that describes the background to the document and introduces the frame of reference for the declaration or convention (Verhellen, 2000a, p. 77). The CRC, as the Declarations of previous years aimed to set basic global standards to ensure the well-being of children all over the world. However, the Convention is historically the most significant, as it is the first legally binding children's rights document in history. The CRC's 54 articles can

be broken down into three extended clusters of different types of rights: protection rights, provision rights and participation rights<sup>21</sup>, as illustrated in Table 12a. This is the most commonly used classification of the CRC (Verhellen, 2000a, p. 80).

Table 12a: Three Main Categories of the CRC

Type of Rights	Description of Concept	Corresponding Articles
<b>Protection Rights</b>	Cover specific issues such as abuse, neglect, exploitation and protection of privacy.	16,19, 32 – 36.
<b>Provision Rights</b>	Address a child's particular needs such as health care and education.	6, 24, 26, 28, 29.
<b>Participation Rights</b>	Acknowledge a child's growing capacity to make decisions and take part in society.	12-15, 17.

Verhellen (2000a, p. 80) divides the CRC's 54 articles into different and equally relevant parts. He refers to Articles 1 – 41 as 'substantive articles' which define the rights of the child and the obligations of the state, Articles 42 – 45 as 'procedures for monitoring' the implementation of the CRC, and Articles 46 – 54 as 'formal provisions' governing entry into force of the CRC (Verhellen, 2000a, p. 76).

Another possible subdivision discussed by Verhellen (2000a, p. 79) is a more traditional classification of human rights into five sub-headings: civil rights, political rights, economic rights, social rights and cultural rights. The following table (Table 12b) illustrates the categorisation of the CRC into these categories, which are adapted from Verhellen (2000a, p. 79).

<sup>21</sup> In this study, I am particularly concerned with the participation rights of children as set out in Article 12, 13, 14,15, and 17 within the context of education.

Table 12b: Traditional Human Rights Categories in the CRC

Type of Rights	Description	Corresponding Articles
<b>Civil Rights</b>	These correspond mainly with the rights recognised by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as right to a nationality, identity, life and protection from discrimination, violence and arbitrary arrest and the right to privacy.	2, 6-8, 16, 19, 34, 37, 40.
<b>Political Rights</b>	These correspond mainly with participation rights and cover freedom of opinion, association, expression, religion and conscience and freedom of access to information.	12-15, 17.
<b>Economic Rights</b>	These correspond mainly with protection rights such as the right to protection from exploitation. In particular, this right is described in general terms in Article 4.	4, 32, 36.
<b>Social Rights</b>	These correspond with provision rights and rights providing access to certain goods and services, such as right to food, health care, education and social security.	4, 24, 26, 28, 29.
<b>Cultural Rights</b>	These correspond to articles which describe rights to leisure and cultural activities.	4, 31.

A central driving force behind the CRC is that children are equals to each other and to all human beings; they have the same inherent value as adults and thus should be entitled to equal protection under international law. This may be perceived as a radical thought and one that does not find unanimous recognition. Two of the more controversial articles of the CRC are Articles 3 and 12 that promote the 'equal rights' principle. How can children be granted equal value and at the same time the necessary protection? This question may partly be answered in the principle of 'the best interest of the child', formulated in Article 3(1):

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration. (United Nations, Human Rights Fact Sheet No 10, 2001, p. 17)

This means that when official decisions are taken which affect children, the child's interest should be considered as important; the interests of the parents, guardians or state should not be the all-encompassing consideration. This is indeed one of the major messages of the CRC. Another core principle, which by its very nature follows the above principle to consider the best interest of the child, is the need to respect the views of the child. To know what actually is in the best interest of the child, it is paramount that she or he may be heard. This principle is formulated in Article 12(1):

State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (United Nations, Human Rights Fact Sheet No 10, 2001, p. 20)

This article constitutes the cornerstone of the third group of rights, namely those of the 'participation rights', as illustrated in Table 12a. Verhellen notes that this is an important article as it "recognises the child as *having* an opinion and no longer as having a 'not-yet' opinion (2000a, p. 81) (emphasis in original). This point provides a central focus for the investigation of educational practices at the four model schools described in the latter part of the thesis. What kind of human rights and citizenship education approach have the four case study sites displayed in response to the principle of participation in decision-making processes on issues that affects life in schools and classrooms and what is the relationship to democratic educational practices, practical HRE and political education?

## Children and Human Rights Education

At the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (Austria) in June, 1993, it was agreed that human rights education is "essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities



and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace" (United Nations, 1999, p. 1). The United Nations General Assembly also proclaimed the *Decade for Human Rights Education* between 1 December 1995 and 31 December 2004. The specific aim of the proclamation was to draw attention to and support the growing importance given to issues of human rights (United Nations, 1999, p. 1). The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe suggests that:

- (1.) The understanding and experience of human rights is an important element of the preparation of all young people for life in a democratic and pluralistic society. It is part of social and political education, and it involves intercultural and international understanding.
- (2.) Concepts associated with human rights can, and should, be acquired from an early stage. For example, the non-violent resolution of conflict and respect for other people can already be experienced within the life of a pre-school or primary class.
- (3.) Opportunities to introduce young people to more abstract notions of human rights . . . will occur in the secondary school.
- (4.) Human rights inevitably involve the domain of politics. Teaching and learning about human rights should, therefore, always have international agreements and covenants as a point of reference. (Recommendation R (85) 7 to Member States on the Teaching and Learning of Human Rights in Schools, United Nations, 1999, p. 151-2).

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe indicates firstly, that children's education for democracy and human rights cannot, and should not, be left until students reach high-school or upper primary school years, but rather students should be exposed to human rights from very early on in their school career. For example, students may receive education in human rights by the way of:

- ❑ recognising and accepting difference;
- ❑ establishing positive and non-oppressive personal relationships;
- ❑ resolving conflict in a non-violent way; and
- ❑ taking responsibility and participating in decisions.

Secondly, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe notes that education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights is not only the domain of social, cultural and moral education, but also that of political education. Therefore, students should be made aware of the existence of international agreements and conventions and what relevance such conventions hold for their personal wellbeing. The unilateral

ratification of the CRC by all but two member-states of the United Nations illustrates the widespread consensus and the growing commitment expressed by the international community to abide by international law and educate all members of society on the importance of children's rights.

## Conclusion

A general rhetorical commitment to respecting some basic human rights of individuals in general and of children in particular may not seem totally surprising at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Modernism and the ideas of the age of Enlightenment, also referred to as the Age of Reason (Inwood, 1995, p. 237) with its focus on the emancipation of humankind, brought liberty, mass production and mass education to many people as well as an end to feudalism and theocracy in many places in Europe. These were remarkable achievements indeed. Modernism and Enlightenment thinking contrasted with the 'darkness' of traditionalism and mysticism characteristic of thinking in the Middle Ages. However, the Enlightenment created its own set of problems, "a new kind of old problems", according to Parker, as "civic life was 'invaded'" by science and technology, where subjects became citizens, but peasants became 'sweatshop' workers, families became 'nuclear' families, [and] humans separated from nature" (1997, html document). Thus, the celebration of human progress and the acknowledgement of some basic human rights and personal freedoms as inalienable and universal, although a great achievement, was not unproblematic nor uncontested. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which Australia is a signatory<sup>22</sup>, stipulates that fundamental

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<sup>22</sup>Although, Australia was one of the first countries to ratify the CRC, it decided not to incorporate the terms and conditions of the CRC into domestic law. The Australian government, in its First Periodic Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, stated, "Australia does not propose to implement [CRC] by enacting the Convention as domestic law. The general approach taken in Australia to human rights and other conventions is to ensure that domestic legislation; policies and practices comply with the convention prior to ratification" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1996, cited in Jones, 1999, html document).

human rights which are granted to adults in a democratic society should also be made available to children, precisely for the reason that one cannot be(come) a responsible citizen unless one has certain rights and responsibilities.

The extensive recognition of basic human rights on an international scale is signalled by a steady growth of ratification rates of human rights treaties. Notwithstanding seemingly widespread acceptance of the concept of international human rights standards for adults and children, such as the CRC, Jude L Fernando paints a rather grim picture about the effects such treaties have on limiting children's human rights violations. She observes that:

Even as evidence of the violation of children's rights multiplies at an alarming rate - pointing to the wholesale failure of policies, programs, interventions, and conventions designed to curb these violations - the world remains divided over the fundamental question of what constitutes basic human rights. (2001, p. 8)

Favouring a pluralist view, I advocate the institutionalisation of liberal democratic values of dignity and respect. During the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, global support for human rights and democracy has become prominent and human rights education is likely to gain equal prominence within the field of education throughout the world.

The following chapter explores the concept of democratic citizenship and the growing interest in the development and implementation of educational programmes that are designed to support young people's development toward competent and responsible citizenship in constitutional democracies such as Australia.

## CHAPTER 3

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### The Teaching and Learning of Democratic Citizenship

Despite the rapid changes that have occurred in education over the past decade, the focus and scope of education must change once again. As far back as 1981 Menzey argued, that previous educational reform had been similar to rearranging the toys in the toy box, when what we really needed was a whole new box. This claim would still be true today. ... [W]e cannot have education for the few who are rich and privileged (pre-industrial), we cannot see schools as factories (post-industrial) or businesses (enterprise), but must see education as a community experience, where people work together for the betterment of themselves, each other and the community as a whole.

Tony Townsend, 1999, p. 26

Debate about the nature and purpose of civics and citizenship as a school subject emanated from what Murray Print describes as "a profoundly inadequate civic understanding by Australian youth. The literature on civic literacy in Australian schools has been compellingly condemnatory" (1995, p. 2). Australia is not isolated in this experience of political apathy and knowledge deficit amongst young people. This phenomenon, which is in German referred to as 'Politikverdrossenheit' (political vexation), is high on the political agenda in established democracies (Veldhuis, 1997, [html document](#)). Growing disillusionment with Western liberal democracies that manifests itself in an increasing lack of interest in voting at elections has prompted increased interest in this topic and a search for remedies in the last few decades.

The broad question of how the concepts of citizenship and citizenship education may be defined and enacted in Australia is the primary focus of this chapter. The chapter begins with a discussion of the concepts that are being used. The aim of this chapter is threefold. First, to provide an overview of core issues and debates in Australia and elsewhere that link key concepts such as human rights and democratic citizenship with the nature and objectives of the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship. Second, to explore the relationship between human rights education (HRE), civics and citizenship education (CCE), and multicultural education (ME). Although, all of these curriculum areas claim to educate for democratic citizenship, they seem to have developed as distinct topics in recent years, and, paradoxically, seem to be deeply divided in their view of democratic citizenship. Even though HRE, CCE and MCE are distinct curricula areas and may have different foci and motivations, they are clearly interrelated. To mediate tensions *in between* as well as *within* distinct subject-specific-knowledge of the three curricula areas, the inherent interconnectedness of the curricula is made explicit. Third, my general resistance to the ways in which the Australian government approaches the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship and human rights as envisioned and enacted by the *Discovering Democracy (DD)* programme is discussed. Subscribing to a school of thought that has been termed civics liberalism, the *DD* designers view democracy and human rights as a finished product and thus focus mainly on the teaching and learning of historical facts and places. In particular, this section explores why a predetermined and centrally designed curriculum programme, as the basis of the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights, may not be able to deliver the desired results. The final section of this chapter explores why educating students to be knowledgeable, active, responsive and engaged democratic citizens has to begin with

an exploration and critical review of current educational principles and pedagogical practices. Everyday educational practices may have profound effects, positive and negative, on children's political socialisation processes and should not be neglected in current debates on how to best educate students *in* and *for* DaHR. Concentrating on pedagogical processes instead of set curricula may present a way to avoid the trap of moral and political absolutism and may further enhance searches for commonalities and less traditional ways of educating students for democratic citizenship.

### A Changing Context for the Idea of Democratic Citizenship

The concepts of democracy and citizenship are complex and can, therefore, not be encompassed within simple definitions. There are multiple versions of democratic citizenship and even these are changing over time, in correspondence with social, economic and political developments on global and local levels. Thus the concept of democratic citizenship can be depicted as being constantly 'under construction' (Veldhuis, 1997, html document).

Democratic citizenship, and the spectrum of rights and duties associated with it – embracing equality of treatment, equality of opportunity and entitlements, rights and duties of citizens, citizens' active participation in decision-making processes - is a constantly changing framework. This process of underlying change of the concept of democratic citizenship may be exemplified by the degree to which decisions once made on national levels are now being made on supranational levels through agencies such as the United Nations and on transnational levels through organisations such as the European Union.

The development of new international treaties, and therewith the rearrangement of governing instruments on a supranational level to include children as 'citizens' with rights and responsibilities, may produce definitional challenges to

conceptions of citizenship. Another example of how the conception of democratic citizenship can be depicted as being 'under construction' has been brought about with increased economic pressures of globalisation. With increasing pressure to withstand global market interests of powerful transnational corporations with headquarters in the USA, western European nations saw a need to create a European Union that brought with it the establishment of European Citizenship and a European currency (EURO). On occasion, some of these changes produce constructive dialogue and general reflection on what it means to be 'a citizen'.

### ***The Issue of Definition***

Citizenship is a concept that involves great disputes and debate, similar to the concept of human rights. Carr and Hartnett explain:

Citizenship is a 'contested' concept in the sense that the criteria governing its proper use are constantly challenged and disputed; such disputes are 'essential' in the sense that arguments about these criteria turn on fundamental political issues for which a final rational solution is not available. (cited in Veldhuis, 1997, html document)

Or, as Hugh Segal notes: "Battles around rights conferred and hard won [and] endless debates over the privileges and obligations of citizenship, all conspire to make the definitional challenge one of ongoing and continuous controversy" (1999, p. 2). In what follows, some definitions of citizenship are presented.

The members of the Council of Europe's<sup>23</sup> *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (1996) project defined citizenship in the following way:

Citizenship is a historical construct between the individual and the State. ... In the strict sense, citizenship concerns the integration of the individual in the political framework and the participation of citizens in the institutions of law ... citizenship is expressed in the continuing participation of individuals in the co-management of public affairs. (Council of Europe, 1996, html document)

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<sup>23</sup> The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 by 10 Western European nations. In 2001 it has a membership base of 43 nation states that also include non-Western countries and the latest countries to join were Armenia and Azerbaijan (Council of Europe, 2001, html document).

They contend that T.M. Marshall's (1950) explanation is one of 'the best expressions' of the concept of citizenship:

He [Marshall] sees citizenship in the capitalist market system as an evolving status which provides citizens with access to **rights** and consequently, to **power**. As a result, citizenship becomes empowerment and a fight for obtaining the rights of the citizen. (p. 31) (emphasis in original)

Carr and Hartnett also believe that Marshall (1950) presents the "most authoritative formulation of the meaning of citizenship in modern industrial democracies" (cited in Veldhuis, 1997, html document). They cite Marshall's definition in its entirety:

There are not universal principles that determine what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of ideal citizenship against which achievement can be directed. ... Citizenship requires a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession. ... Its growth is simulated by the struggle to win those rights and their enjoyment when won.

Carr and Hartnett go on to explain that:

The obvious attraction of Marshall's definition is that it makes 'membership of a community', 'rights' and 'duties' definitive features of citizenship without stipulating how 'membership' is to be determined or what the specific rights and duties of citizens should be. Who is to be excluded? What kind of rights should citizens have? Is participation in the exercise of political power a right or a duty? Are the duties of citizenship absolute? It is the different and often conflicting ways in which these questions are asked and answered that give rise to rival and incompatible accounts of what citizenship actually means. (cited in Veldhuis, 1997, html document)

Others challenge Marshall's (1950) definition and point to the "failure of any passive definition of citizenship to spur active engagement" and argue for "a new definitional path" altogether (Segal, 1999, p. 4). Citizenship cannot be viewed as a state of unchanging statutory status but rather a new definition of citizenship needs to reflect the changing nature of life in a globalised, postmodern world with its internationalisation of trade and commerce (production, distribution and consumption of goods, services and information) and the lately recognised multicultural and multinational face of established and new democracies or nation-states. Segal points out that:



It is reasonable to embrace the notion that the networked citizenship, linking the citizen to a series of access points that reflect changing flows of power, authority and necessity, begins to change the broad context within which citizenship exists. (Segal, 1999, p. 5)

### ***Four dimensions of democratic citizenship***

I find both, Veldhuis' (1999) and Hebert and Sears' (2000) distinction between four dimensions of citizenship equally useful as they correspond with the most commonly recognised subsystems of democratic society. Both outline key features that establish a knowledge base for understanding democratic citizenship. Although, their conceptualisation of democratic citizenship is somewhat similar, I favour Herbert and Sears's (2000) categorisation because it is more comprehensive. While Veldhuis (1999) distinguishes between political citizenship, social citizenship, cultural citizenship and economic citizenship, Herbert and Sears (2000) approach encompasses political citizenship, civil citizenship, socio-economic citizenship and cultural or collective citizenship. The following Table<sup>24</sup> (Table 13) explores four dimensions of democratic citizenship, supplies a possible interpretation of each of the four dimensions and further names understandings, attitudes and skills required to effectively fulfil the duties of democratic citizenship. The table is not an exhaustive one but exemplifies the highly complex and multileveled character of democratic citizenship.

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<sup>24</sup> The types of citizenship and their meaning (column one and two) have been adapted from Hebert and Sears (2000, html document).

Table 13: Dimensions of Democratic Citizenship

Type of Citizenship	Meaning of Concept	Preconditions
<b>Political Citizenship</b>	Refers to political rights and duties with respect to the political system.	Requires knowledge of a society's or community's political system (system of government), understanding of core democratic values, democratic attitudes, particularly the valuing of political tolerance and a sophisticated level of participatory skills, such as collaboration skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, conflict resolution skills, just to name a few.
<b>Social and Economic Citizenship</b>	Refers to the relationship between individuals in a societal context and rights to participate in the polity and demands loyalty and solidarity. It further includes rights to economic well-being, for example rights to social welfare, education and work, to minimum means of subsistence and to not only a safe physical and social environment but also refers to the relation of an individual towards the labour and consumer market.	Requires knowledge and sophisticated understanding of social and cultural diversity in a democratic society, democratic attitudes, such as for example, respect for social and cultural pluralism with an emphasis on political unity and loyalty, beside developed social and vocational skills to participate in economic activities.
<b>Cultural or Collective Citizenship</b>	Refers to consciousness of a common cultural heritage but also to the manner in which societies take into account the increasing cultural diversity in societies (multiculturalism). This dimension includes the quest for recognition of collective rights for minorities and is based upon a common understanding and acceptance of basic human rights.	Requires knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage of different cultural groups of a nation, democratic attitudes, specifically the valuing of cultural pluralism and tolerance.
<b>Civil Citizenship</b>	Refers to a way of life where citizens define and pursue commonly held goals related to democratic conceptions of society. It inscribes liberal democratic values, including beliefs in the rule of law, freedoms of speech, religion, association and access of information.	Requires knowledge and understanding of all the above to form normative concepts of 'good citizenship' which incorporates various dimensions of individual and collective identities and their relationship to each other which are informed by moral world views.

The above dimensions of democratic citizenship exemplify the highly complex and multileveled character of democratic citizenship. This conception of

democratic citizenship holds significant implications for the processes of teaching and learning democratic citizenship. Liberal democracies, such as Australia, make extraordinary demands on their citizens, as they are required to have highly developed attitudes, knowledge and skills to function effectively in a democratic society.

***Democratic citizenship: Toward an explanation of this multifaceted concept***

In an attempt to reconcile the tensions and contradictions that are reflected in the dualistic relations between the individual and society in its many diverse forms (aliens and citizens, private and public identities, rights and responsibilities etc), my definition of democratic citizenship proves to be rather extensive. It may, therefore, be viewed as an explanation, rather than a definition. I explain the concept of democratic citizenship in the following way:

*Democratic citizenship may be characterised as the fluid, multifaceted albeit necessary glue between two simultaneously abstract and concrete concepts, namely that of an individual person on the one hand and that of a group of people (community and/or society) to which this individual person belongs through some form of membership on the other hand.*

*It is the relational possibilities between the individual and the group, community and/or society grounded in common life and within one or multiple spheres such as the political, social and economic, cultural or collective and civil, which constitute the extent of democratic citizenship.*

*Democratic citizenship has three distinctive features. Each succeeding part builds upon and extends the initial understanding of the concept:*

- ❑ *It provides a broad framework for successful practice of common life and 'popular government' which rests on the principle that each individual person constitutes an ultimate source of agency with responsibility to contribute to and uphold the common good in a democratic group, community, society, nation-state or global community.*
- ❑ *Through the integration of both rights and responsibilities, democratic citizenship is fundamental to the strengthening of human rights for minority*

people<sup>25</sup> (such as children, women, ethnic people, refugees, the elderly etc), in terms of equality and justice.

- Active participation in political life and decision-making processes on communal, local, national and/or transnational or supranational level is the life blood of democratic citizenship and needs, therefore, to be perceived not only as an individual political right but also as an individual political responsibility to serve the common good.

The interpretative framework of democratic citizenship used here is informed by the definition presented above and acknowledges Veldhuis' (1999, html document) and Hebert and Sears' (2000, html document) list of key features outlined earlier. In addition, two distinct and conflicting ways of thinking about democracy and democratic citizenship have emerged over the years.

## Two Conceptions of Democratic Citizenship

The first mode of thinking, at times referred to as *civic liberalism*, tends to stress individual rights to freedom and views democracy as a finished product, whereas the second mode of thinking, often referred to as *civic republicanism or communitarianism*, stresses individual responsibilities and concerns itself with the public or common good and views democracy as an ongoing process.

Civic liberalism promotes a rather passive role of citizens and calls for little effort on the part of citizens beyond electing parliamentary representatives to government. Yet, civic liberalism is very interested in achieving democratic outcomes through well-defined policy articulations. By contrast, communitarianism implies a much more active role for citizens where the ongoing participation of citizens in

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<sup>25</sup> The question of who is to be included/excluded in the group of minority is a vexed question. Even Members of the United Nations are unable to "arrive at a universally acceptable definition". However, they state that "the most commonly used description of a minority in a given State can be summed up as a non-dominant group of individuals who share certain national, ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which are different from those of the majority population". (Fact Sheet No 18 'Minority Rights', 2001, p. 14)

governing processes is not only welcomed, but is an absolutely necessary for democracy to work. In this tradition, citizenship is understood as participation in a variety of self-governing communities in which individuals are encouraged to share in a common civic life, along the lines evident in ancient Athens<sup>26</sup>. Civic liberalism promotes a weaker sense of belonging to a political community than communitarianism, which tends to emphasise individuals' social responsibilities to promote equality and social justice. Yet, communitarianism is much more open to value relativism and a process approach in which benchmarks are difficult to articulate or achieve. Notwithstanding the strengths of civil liberalism and communitarianism, both approaches have identifiable limitations. A pluralist approach may open up possible forms of communication between the seemingly oppositional approaches, which would enable the shifting of positions and negotiation of understandings. Adhering to one of these two positions has fuelled the development of distinct topics, literatures and professional communities, and consequently has dominated the development of distinct educational curricula such as human rights education (HRE), civics and citizenship education (CCE), and multicultural education (MCE).

### At the Crossroads: Navigating Curricula Tensions

The teaching and learning of democracy and human rights is a part of many subject areas and approaches in formal education and has wide political and social implications. Not surprisingly, there exists little agreement about what should be taught and how it should be taught. Ideological and political positions also influence what theorists, policy designers, and educators think should be covered in the education for democratic citizenship.

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<sup>26</sup> The term democracy is derived from the Greek words 'demos' meaning people and 'kratos' meaning rule. Originally, democracy meant rule of the people or involvement in self-governing processes.

Some commonalities as well as differences between human rights education (HRE), civics and citizenship education (CCE), and multicultural education (MCE)<sup>27</sup> will now be explored. This discussion attempts to provide a framework for identifying some general concepts and themes that underpin current debates. The purpose here is not to explore in detail the various curricula, but simply to point out that tensions within the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship are deeply connected to ideological beliefs. Following Parker (1997), O'Brien (2000) and Hunter and Meredyth (2000), it is argued that arbitration and the search for different, more inclusive approaches may be a way out of present dilemmas.

### ***Definitions***

To compare some definitions of human rights education (HRE), civics and citizenship education (CCE) and multicultural education (MCE) may be useful in determining underlying ideological perspectives and political concerns. Table 14 provides a brief overview of various definitions as they are currently used.

Table 14: Definitions of HRE, CCE and MCE

Type of Education	Definition of Concept
<b>Human Rights Education (HRE)</b>	<p>The UN Resolution declaring the Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, states:</p> <p>Human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive life-long process by which people at all levels of development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies.(United Nations, 1994, General Assembly Resolution 49/184, 23.12.1994)</p> <p>Dennis Banks (2000) notes that: Simply put, human rights education is all learning that develops the knowledge, skills and values of human rights (html document).</p>

<sup>27</sup> There are other curriculum areas, for example peace education and global education, which have recently been introduced in various social science curricula at different levels of education. Although they could have been included here, I chose to concentrate on only the three main areas referred to in the literature.

<b>Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE)</b>	<p>The Civics Expert Group (CEG) established by the former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, accepted a broad definition of the concept of citizenship education. Civics and Citizenship education was recognised as: an identifiable body of knowledge, skills and understandings relating to the organisation and working of society, including Australia's political and social heritage, democratic processes, government, public administration and judicial system. (Civics Expert Group, 1994, <i>Whereas the People: Civics and Citizenship Education</i>, p. 4)</p>
<b>Multicultural Education (MCE)</b>	<p>Banks, an American multiculturalist (1993) suggests that multicultural education has evolved and changed over the years since its inception and has gone through four distinct stages (cited in Kaltsounis, 1997, p. 18). Initially, multicultural education in America<sup>28</sup> as elsewhere consisted of ethnic studies. It was hoped that such studies would contribute toward the empowerment and advancement of African Americans. Other minority groups of colour joined the American movement, including Mexican American, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, and Asian American and the ethnic studies movement was soon replaced by multiethnic education, which Banks identifies as stage two. Banks (1993) notes that the objectives of multiethnic education were "to bring about structural and systemic changes ... that were designed to increase educational equality. However, women and people with disabilities lobbied for inclusion that caused the change of the movement to multicultural education (Banks, 1993, cited in Kaltsounis, 1997, p. 18). The fourth stage of multicultural education "consists of the development of theory, research, and practice that interrelate variables connected to race, class, and gender", explains Banks (1993, cited in Kaltsounis, 1997, p. 19).</p>

The question remains as to which curriculum subject should be favoured and what should be included/excluded under the headings of HRE, CCE and MCE? For instance, all seem to agree that knowledge and understanding of 'the working of society' (CEG, 1994, see definition for CCE) is important. HRE and MCE should also teach 'respect for the dignity of others' (United Nations, 1994, see definition for HRE). Further, all three subject areas envision that the engagement with their specific curriculum will 'bring about structural and systemic change' (Banks, 1993, see definition for MCE). Although definitions may be somewhat broad and the interconnectedness of the subject areas seems rather apparent, there exists much dissonance between HRE, CCE and MCE in relation to the themes covered and perspectives taken.

<sup>28</sup> America is seen as a 'trend-setter' and Australia seems to follow the American model closely.

### ***Perceived Differences***

There is definitely much common ground between these three distinct subject areas if one considers the various definitions and implicit objectives. Despite such similar goals, their common aims are often obscured because of the strong and conflicting ideological motivations and practical implications. Human rights educators, whose primary objective is the teaching and learning of a global human rights culture with a perception of structural and cultural similarity, the history and advancement of an international human rights regime and the range and relevance of major human rights instruments, may find it difficult to view civics and citizenship education or multicultural education as pursuing similar objectives. This is especially the case, if civics and citizenship education is perceived as mainly focusing on historical and procedural aspects of a nation's civic society, and multicultural education is viewed as primarily focusing on particular aspects of race and gender difference, such as Afrocentrism versus Eurocentrism and human rights versus women's rights.

For instance, the British Council (2000) identified 'the force behind' the surge in uptake of HRE and CCE over the last few years as a clear demarcation between the two movements. It explains that:

Current forces behind CE in England and Wales, for example, include concerns about political alienation, and the reluctance of young and old to participate in both civil society and in public politics. Human rights agendas, on the other hand, link to forces such as the impact of new legislation, and to broad international concerns about infringements of rights. The agendas also stem from the perception that children and young people are being denied their rights in and out of school, and would benefit from an openly critical teaching programme on entitlements and responsibilities. (The British Council, 2000, html document)

Evidence (Civics Expert Group, 1994; Print, 1995; Kennedy et al, 2001) clearly supports the British Council's (2000, html document) position that CCE has regained popularity, precisely because of concerns about civic apathy in a number of established democracies. Moreover, it may not be difficult to see tensions between the



objectives of HRE, which may be perceived as pursuing a 'world-polity approach' (Boli and Thomas, 1997, html document), CCE as pursuing a nationalist approach and MCE as pursuing a cultural relativist approach. Even though a number of scholars (Parker, 1997; Kaltsounis, 1997, Kennedy et al, 2001) have pointed out that many of the generally accepted principles within the different movements are contested and generate considerable conflict within the distinct curricula areas. Irrespective of the movement and ideological perspective taken, the curriculum programmes continue to be perceived in rather narrow terms with a limited scope to teach knowledge and understanding of singular themes (Parker, 1997; Kaltsounis, 1997; Kennedy, 2001).

A second major point of division and polarisation exists between HRE and CCE on the one hand and MCE on the other hand. Both HRE and CCE promote unity (oneness) through the 'endorsement of 'universality and inalienability' of human rights and 'neutrality' of the development of democracy. This narrative's fallacy is that both HRE and CCE overlook the historical and contextual nature of reality and truth, which can never be neutral and all encompassing but instead is historically situated and fragmented.

The celebration of 'the spirit of brotherhood', symbolising unity, inclusiveness and fraternity, as stated in the Universal Declaration, has alienated a great number of people<sup>29</sup>. Equally the negation of ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism of Western history make the teaching and learning of the historical development of democracy and human rights as well as democratic system of government, anything else than neutral or apolitical. Proponents of this perspective take their views of the neutrality and universality of their ethnocentric and Eurocentric vantage point for granted, forgetting that this history, this reality, this point of view, is one among many. Thus, diversity

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<sup>29</sup> See chapter two for a detailed analysis of this argument.

(different histories, cultures, realities, and truths) cannot simply be transcended or subsumed under a 'meta narrative' that celebrates oneness/unity/universality (Parker, 1997; McLaren, 1995). Neglecting and/or ignoring such concerns that are mainly raised by cultural studies scholars, has fuelled a commonly understood divide between HRE and CCE on the one hand and MCE on the other hand. Deep-seated underlying assumptions and beliefs encourage continued tensions between the three curricula areas. Sadly, as illustrated in Table 15, they enhance and highlight the divisions that exist and therewith leave not much room for the possibility of arbitration and active search for a common approach to the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship. Hunter and Meredyth (2000) point out that "this debate is irresolvable in its current terms" (html document).

Table 15: Similarities and Differences of HRE, CCE and MCE

	HRE	CCE	MCE
<b>Aims</b>	To educate students to be knowledgeable, active, responsive and engaged democratic citizens. To bring about structural and systemic changes to increase equality of opportunity and social justice.	To educate students to be knowledgeable, active, responsive and engaged democratic citizens and to understand democratic systems of government.	To educate students to be knowledgeable, active, responsive and engaged democratic citizens. To bring about structural and systemic changes to increase equality of opportunity and social justice.
<b>Definition</b>	All learning that develops respect for the dignity of others and the values of human rights.	All learning that develops knowledge, skills and understandings relating to the organisation and working of society.	All learning that contributes to the empowerment and advancement of minority people.
<b>Focus</b>	The teaching and learning of a global human rights culture, the history and advancement of an	The teaching and learning of historical and procedural aspects of democratically	The teaching and learning of particular aspects of race and gender differences such as Afrocentricism vs Eurocen-

	inter-national human rights regime and the range and relevance of major human rights instruments.	governed societies.	trism and human rights vs women's/children's rights.
<b>Perspective</b>	Universalist	Universalist	Particularist
<b>Characteristics</b>	Supports a 'meta narrative' and general unity (inclusiveness) through the promotion of the universality and inalienability of human rights.	Supports a 'meta narrative' and general unity (inclusiveness) through the promotion of 'neutrality' of the development of democracy.	Supports a 'situated narrative' and general difference (exclusiveness) through the promotion of context dependency and the social construction of meaning making which is always historically situated and fragmented.

### *Searching for Similarities*

It is evident that these conflicts may not be resolved and no progress made, if both sides (commonly referred to as the universalist/cultural relativist or unity/diversity divide) reiterate established positions. However, if a more sophisticated view<sup>30</sup> of the education *in* and *for* democracy is applied, it may be easier to accept and work with commonalities between the three curricula areas rather than concentrating on their differences. The question remains: given the competing world-views, is it possible to bridge the wide-ranging division of ideological perspectives and epistemological understandings with the application of good will and appreciation of democratic political processes?

All three curriculum areas make general claims to aim for the development of democratic attitudes, knowledge and skills in students which could easily be tied to fundamental meanings and processes inherent in the concept of education in general<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> This notion has been introduced earlier in this chapter and refers generally to a civic republican view of democratic citizenship and democratic citizenship education.

<sup>31</sup> For example, Murdoch University has made serious efforts to promote a range of 'graduate attributes' to students and staff. It is stated that these attributes "have been devised to enrich students' abilities to participate in and contribute to dynamic national and international ... communities" and include

In their respective broad definitions, they all make claims to broaden students' views and develop their critical attitudes. The central goal of such heightened consciousness in students is an increasing awareness of societal inequality and the will to change unjust structures and processes. Thus, all three curriculum branches may easily claim the entire school programme as their respective domains as they all make claims to develop a range of skills in students such as decision-making and participation skills, critical thinking skills and conflict resolution skills.

### An Australian Example of Political Education

#### *Conceiving and Implementing the Discovering Democracy programme*

In 1989, the Australian Education Council agreed to adopt a set of ten national goals that highlight the notion of 'active citizenship' as a central component of basic education. The said document: *Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling in Australia* (1989) came to be known as the 'Hobart Declaration'. The stated aim for civics and citizenship education was:

Goal 7	To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context. (Curriculum Corporation, 2000, html document)
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In June 1994, a Civics Expert Group (CEG), was created by the former Prime Minister Keating with the following mandate:

To recommend a non-partisan program to enable all Australians to participate more fully and effectively in the civic life of our country, and thereby promote good citizenship.

The CEG's terms of reference were set out as follows:

- ❑ To educate and inform the public about governmental, constitutional, citizenship and civics issues in Australia
- ❑ To help Australians understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to promote good citizenship
- ❑ To enhance Australians' capacity to participate fully in decision-making processes affecting these issues. (Civics Expert Group, 1994, *Whereas the People: Civics and Citizenship Education*, p. 4)

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concepts such as 'social justice', 'global perspective', 'social interaction', 'interdisciplinarity', 'communication', 'analysis and problem solving' (Bell and Wilcox, 2002, p. iv)

Utilising the above-mentioned goals from the Hobart Declaration as part of its justification for a civics education initiative, the CEG in its 1994 report recommended a range of measures to increase the level of political knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes of young Australians. Its historical report *Whereas the people ... Civics and Citizenship Education* (CEG, 1994) has become the cornerstone of Australia's renewed interest in civics and citizenship education.

This report had a legacy of two previous attempts to assess and recommend strategies for the incorporation of CCE nationwide, the initial discussion paper produced by the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Education for Active Citizenship* (1989) and *Active Citizenship Revisited* (1991). This later document advocated a critical and reflective approach to the issue of political education. The report reads as follows:

This approach seeks to assess the values associated with the political structures and institutions under examination at the same time as looking at how they work and how to operate within them. It also seeks to broaden the field of what is accepted as 'political' by *including power relationships* in other areas of life *beyond formal political structures*, thus coming closer to young people's interest and experiences and giving politics and its connection with active citizenship more meaning for them. (Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, 1991, p. 59) (emphasis added)

Within the past decade, "a flurry of activity has occurred which has catapulted the new civics education into a position of national prominence", observes Murray Print (1995, p. 9). Now that civics education has been accepted as an important component of a well-rounded education, the 'next major challenge' remains to successfully implement the policy in Australian schools (Print, 1995, p. 9).

### ***CCE in Australia: The Implementation of Policy***

Over the past few decades in Australia as elsewhere, the implementation of education policy in general and civics and citizenship educational policy in particular, has been the subject of sustained scrutiny and intense debate, involving politicians,

academics across disciplines, practitioners and the wider community in general. This scrutiny and debate has focused upon the lack of success of translating policy into sustainable practice at the grassroots level. Debate and confrontation of what it may mean to students to be citizens of a democracy has its problems for policy developers. The complexities of addressing and acknowledging the differences inherent in views about the conception of civics and citizenship education (CCE) has been acknowledged by the Civic Expert Group and later also by the curriculum developers of the *Discovering Democracy (DD)* education package. *Discovering Democracy*, a national programme of civics and citizenship education in Australia was launched in May 1997 and allocated funding of \$31.6 million over seven years. The *DD* materials comprise 18 learning units developed around four themes: *Who Rules*, *Law and Rights*, *The Australian Nation*, and *Citizens and Public Life* and have been designed for various levels (middle primary level, upper primary level, lower secondary and middle secondary levels). They were distributed free of charge to all schools, including Catholic and independent schools.

Much time has gone by producing, testing and disseminating curriculum materials so that 'schools have really had less than a year of effective time for implementation. Consequently, the programme has not yet been taken up in any serious way in the majority of Australian schools' (Erebus Consulting Group, 1999, html document).

With the introduction of the new national CCE curriculum, the inescapable struggle of educational practitioners has been to accommodate yet another justifiable curriculum programme into their busy and already crowded timetable. The tension such curriculum completion demands of space and time and the emotional satisfaction of teachers have been clearly documented in recent evaluations about the relative

success of the *DD* policy and programme (Print, 1995; Erebus Consulting Group, 1999; Kennedy et al., 2001). Murray Print (1995, p. 9) notes "teacher reactions in large measures are less than positive and forthcoming". Similarly, the British Council (2000, html document) observes "many texts on citizenship and human rights education mention the reluctance of teachers to engage effectively with this material". Kennedy et al. (2001) have closely scrutinised the policy texts upon which the *DD* was created. They have criticised it as an approach to citizenship education that emphasises civil and legal status, and a relatively uncritical study of the rights and responsibilities arising from membership of Australia's democratic society. In particular, they note that "a commitment to a somewhat academic rationalist view of the school curriculum" has been applied and it was "the subject of history that was seen to be the most vital in carrying the nation's messages about civics and citizenship" (p. 5). This analysis is consistent with the British Council's (2000, html document) evaluation that distinct curricula approaches are developed according to underlying ideological assumptions and political interests. Similar to Australian initiatives, "the recent reintroduction of CCE in England and Wales is also strongly grounded in a history perspective as opposed to a rights perspective which HRE advocate", according to the observations of the British Council (2000, html document). In other words, both Kennedy et. al.(2001, p. 5) and the British Council (2000, html document) suggest that the Australian, English and Wales CCE curricula seem to be based on a civic liberal view of democracy and thus tend to favour not only a history based approach but a rather narrow view of democracy.

### ***A Critical Evaluation of the DD programme***

Although, this education package may be a worthwhile and stimulating resource for democratic citizenship education and may well be achieving short-term

goals of enhancing some students' civics knowledge, it may not be the most effective way of developing an engaging and politically active citizenry. This approach to political education for the enhancement of active citizenship points to significant weaknesses. My criticism of and struggle with the latest CCE initiative of the current conservative Australian government is fivefold:

- ❑ The *DD* curriculum applies a narrow reading of democracy rather than a more sophisticated, dynamic perspective.
- ❑ The *DD* curriculum underestimates teacher's abilities to be policy designers and reduce them to 'teaching-technicians'.
- ❑ There seems to be a general incompatibility of the *DD* subject knowledge with perceived social and political realities of a great number of students.
- ❑ Human rights, which constitute a central aspect of democracy and democratic citizenship, are not given adequate consideration in the *DD* policy.
- ❑ The evaluation of the effectiveness of the *DD* curriculum material uncovered major inadequacies in its implementation.

In what follows, all of these points are addressed in more detail.

#### *Narrow reading of democracy*

The *DD* programme offers teachers and students a detailed overview of the historical origins, legal basis and structures of the Australian democratic system of government. Learning about democracy and human rights with an underlying perception that these concepts are finished products is a largely cognitive endeavour that involves the memorisation of large amounts of data about past events, places, dates, and people. Thus, the teaching and learning approach taken is largely cognitive, memorising great amounts of data and content information. This approach to CCE, which emphasises civil and legal status, and a relatively uncritical study of the rights and responsibilities arising from membership of a community or society, can be criticised for its narrow interpretation of the concepts of democracy and human rights.



Following Parker (1997, html document), I describe interpretations of democratic citizenship as more sophisticated interpretations if they include the following attributes: a) they need to entail an understanding of the individual as part of a shared democratic culture and b) they need to take into account the enormous range of variables impacting upon and defining the experiences of individuals in the community and influencing their relationships to others.

*Experts versus Non-Experts: The Issue of Curriculum Control*

Kennedy et al. (2001) who studied recent research in policy studies has pointed to the importance of the social construction of meaning within the field of education in general and CCE in particular. They refer to five key findings of policy studies by Blackmore that have serious implications for the *DD* curriculum design:

- ❑ Policy is a process not just a product;
- ❑ Recognition of the action oriented bottom-up perspective which sees those working at the workplace as also informing and making policy;
- ❑ Policy changes in the very process of implementation;
- ❑ Policy should be seen more as a pattern of actions over a period of time rather than a specific document;
- ❑ Policy is as much a study of non-decisions as of decisions. (Blackmore, 1995, cited in Kennedy et al., 2001, pp. 3-4)

Constructing and interpreting CCE policies as changing, fluid processes may well be a preferable model for the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. Subscribing to this more sophisticated view of policy, teacher professionalism is constructed in direct opposition to civic liberalism's narrow reading of policy, which is in direct relationship to narrow perceptions of democracy and human rights. The underlying positivistic assumptions of the *DD* curriculum designers is the uncritical taken-for-grantedness of a 'sanitised, one size fits all' (Sachs, 2001, p. 11) version of reality, truth and meaning-making. As a consequence, there is a false

understanding that there are established and fixed boundaries between policy and implementation processes and this can ultimately reduce teachers to teaching technicians (implementers of policy). Mainstream educational practices in the past were primarily based on positivist epistemologies and technical and transmission pedagogical practices. Although, positivistic views continue to be challenged (Dobozy, 1999, html document), the unproblematic acceptance of objectivity, established hierarchies and privileged hegemonic realities that are being exemplified in the *DD* curriculum programme is still widespread. Judith Sachs argues that:

The effect of these initiatives is the control of teachers' work, and to define what constitutes professional knowledge and judgement which promotes one particular version of teacher professionalism and is eroding alternative forms of teacher professionalism. ... There is a preferred vision of teacher professionalism implicit in how the curriculum is to be implemented and the role teachers will have in its implementation. This vision of teacher professionalism sees the teacher as a compliant technician who implements policy in an acritical and instrumental way. (2001, p. 1)

At the core of Sachs's argument is that the power in a centrally developed curriculum programme such as the *DD* material may well control the practice and form of teachers' professional work. The type of control implicit in such a centrally developed civics and citizenship education programme may not be in the best interest of the students and teachers as they take no account of the complex contextual nature of the educational environment and further ignores the development and exercise of autonomy of both parties. While this short-term strategy may well be achieving short-term goals of enhancing students' civics knowledge, the strategy "used by the state to control an increasingly disaffected teaching profession, is not a strategic way to develop a strong and intelligent teaching profession"(Sachs, 2001, p. 5). Moreover, it may also lack in effectiveness to developing an engaging and politically active citizenry.

*Incompatibility of Subject Knowledge and Perceived Social and Political Reality*

Teaching about democratic society and human rights, based on history<sup>32</sup>, is arguably very interesting and may be worthwhile for a number of students. At the same time, it may encourage surface-learning in students as they have to memorise a great number of historical events, places, dates, and the names of influential people through the invitation of the adoption of technical and transmission teaching and learning processes<sup>33</sup>. But, more importantly, this sanitised version of Australian history and the working of the Australian democratic system of government glosses over the real, and often sharp, conflicts among groups in Australian society and within various primary schools as schools are an integral part of Australian civil society. This view is confirmed by the findings of a recent international *Civics Education Study*, which suggests that democratic educational principles and practices are necessary for students' deep understanding of civics and citizenship. In reality, however, "a quarter of Australian students, for example, said they rarely or never are encouraged to voice their opinions in class" (Kennedy and Mellor, 2001, html document). Another compelling example of the great variety of experiences is how a primary school principal describes the school environment of his school that is located in an underprivileged area of an Australian capital city. The principal explains that:

*I think this [school] is like a prison, because of the fact that there is a fence with three strings of barbed wire on top all the way around. We've had the Minister of Education visiting the school last week and he just couldn't believe that a school would look like this. (Principal Interview with Ben, School B, 14.11.2000)*

Unfortunately, the inequality and injustice felt pertains also to the social and cultural environment of a number of these students. The principal, further, explains

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<sup>32</sup> For example, the themes of the DD programme are: Who Rules? Law and Rights, The Australian Nation and Citizens and Public Life (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998, p. 4 and 5).

<sup>33</sup> Recent research carried out by Phillips et al. (2002, html document) uncovered that surface-learning techniques are primarily adopted by students when educational material is "spoon fed" (utilising technical and transmission approaches) and when the content "relies heavily on memory".

that certain teachers display a "lack of understanding of the students' background and culture" and thus treat them unfairly:

*Rather than having to deal with the teacher, they [these Aboriginal students] can come and talk to me and I go back and deal with the teacher on their behalf ... the kids can walk right in through this door. They have the right to come in and tell me ... I have about six or seven kids, it's a flexible number. (Principal Interview with Ben, School B, 14.11.2000)*

Deep-seated conflicts and perceived injustices of social life, in the absence of specifically political attention and settlement can and often do spill over into disruption and violence inside and outside of school life. If CCE does not address the everyday challenges of students' and teachers' lives in schools in a democratic nation, it would seem that there are serious problems with the form of that educational provision. A content-based approach to CCE seems to suffer these very limitations.

#### Human Rights of Children

Chief Executive Officer of the Curriculum Corporation, Bruce Wilson, expresses his hopes that the *DD* policy and programme will assist students "to understand Australia's democratic system" and that they will, through this understanding of the working of the Australian democratic system "appreciate the importance of engaging constructively in civic life" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998, p.iii). Although the *DD* curriculum material under its heading *Law and Rules* encourages the investigation of (a) definitions and origins of rules and laws, and (b) types of rules and laws and presumably *the* qualities of *good* rules and laws, for middle and upper primary students, the concept of human rights is only later incorporated into this theme in middle secondary school years. By the time students reach middle secondary schooling, (grades 8 and 9) they are 14 and 15 years old and deemed to be ready to understand the importance of, for example, The Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights (USA), the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens (France), UN Declaration of Human Rights, Australian Constitution, civil

rights organisations, Indigenous peoples' human rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>34</sup>. However, although Indigenous peoples' rights<sup>35</sup> have been included in the content description, women's rights, other minority rights, but foremost children's rights, have not been integrated. While Australia has been one of the first nations to ratify the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), it may be seen as rather disappointing that the CRC has not been included in the *DD* content list under the heading *Human Rights*. Further, the relevance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is not made explicit to Australian students and this omission may even be seen as breaching article 42 of the CRC, which states that "State Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike" (CRC, Fact Sheet, No 10, United Nations, 2001, p. 34). Policy makers must recognise the richness of understandings and experiences students bring to the CCE educational environment. Tim Goodwin (2001, html document), a 17-year old Australian youth, speaking at the 2001 Discovering Democracy National Forum, notes that:

Discovering Democracy is in many ways discovering identity ... Who am I, who are we? Lets put it into context. I'm 17. I'm young. I'm inquisitive. ... I'm not physically strong, but spiritually, I sure am. I'm Aboriginal. ... I have a black mother and a white father, yet I'm no less or no more then any other Indigenous person. I'm Australian. ...Then, at the International Youth Parliament in my working group ... we talked at great lengths at what makes a personal, cultural and national identity. Really, for us, it came down to three major phases: Preserving, Maintaining and Evolving. And what exactly do these words represent? A journey.

### ***Commissioned Reports about the Effectiveness of DD programme***

Despite generous funding and great efforts on the part of the *DD* designers, the evaluations of the success of the *DD* policy and programme is not as favourable as its

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<sup>34</sup> For a detailed description of the structure of the *DD* programme, refer to Print, 1995 and Commonwealth of Australia, 1998, p 4-5.

<sup>35</sup> Although Indigenous peoples' human rights find mention in the *DD* materials, the IEA study found that "it didn't really address students' knowledge and awareness of Indigenous people and their issues" (Harris, 2001, html document).

designers may have expected - many schools clearly avoid working with this material. An evaluation report commissioned by the Australian government notes that 80% of respondents to the survey "indicated that they were aware of the *Discovering Democracy* program to some extent" but almost two thirds of the respondents (69%) "said that they had no significant experience" in using this material effectively (Erebus Consulting Group, 1999, html document). Although, the report found that teachers who know the policy and materials had "widespread, though not unanimous, praise" for the programme, it also acknowledges that teachers thought that the *DD* curriculum programme is "too wordy" or "too hard", "assumes prior knowledge that neither the teachers nor students may have" and is "too much to absorb in a busy teacher schedule" (Erebus Consulting Group, 1999, html document). Moreover, the report concluded that many of their surveyed schools saw the *DD* programme as a valuable "but additional curriculum element ... among other competing priorities" and gave the overcrowdedness of the curriculum as the main reason for not using it (Erebus Consulting Group, 1999, html document).

In a more recent evaluation of the successful implementation of the *DD* policy and curriculum programme Kennedy et al. surveyed only schools that were using or planned to use the *DD* programme. One of their general findings was that the "rationale for schools either using *Discovering Democracy* (*DD*) or planning to use these materials varied considerably" (Kennedy et al., 2001, p. 13). For example, Kennedy et al, 2001, p. 13 noted that:

The impetus to use *DD* at [one of the case study sites in NSW] was a result of junior History syllabus change in 1998, but not specifically because of the perceived merits of *DD* and its resources. At [another NSW case study site], three teachers applied for a *DD* grant in 1999, by writing a proposal that included a *DD*-related program into the school curriculum. They were successful and were awarded a sum of money that was put towards professional development and resources. This programme aimed to use Civics related materials as texts to improve student literacy, and as a way to promote student awareness of citizenship. The program never became part of a regular curriculum, and ... none of the participating teachers indicated that *DD* materials were being accessed or used in 2001.

Although Kennedy et al. were overall critical of the *DD* policy, they identified two positive aspects the *DD* policy and materials had for teachers and schools in Victoria, one of which was extra funding for professional development and another one was additional time to reflect on educational content materials and pedagogical practices. The report notes that:

One of the key benefits of the Discovering Democracy policy was that it provided significant monies for professional development. This strategy was universally applauded by all staff interviewed. ... It also provided time for teachers to reflect on what the schools were doing and what they might like to change. ... All three schools ... grasped what they saw as an opportunity to review their goals, and in the case of two of the schools they were significantly reviewed and augmented and in the third it resulted in a realisation that they needed more information/knowledge themselves. However, they made little use of the Discovering Democracy materials, which 'lie languishing somewhere in the library, I guess! ... we can always ask the librarian ...'. (Kennedy et al., 2001, pp. 15-6)

In contemporary capitalist societies, where monetary considerations are regarded most highly, educators who participated in the above study "grasped what they saw as an opportunity to review their goals" (Kennedy, et al. 2001, p. 16). Notwithstanding this rather critical analysis of the effectiveness of the Australian government's recent attempts to educate students *in* and *for* democracy and human rights, a definite positive side of the extra funding for professional development that the *DD* policy provided was identified as the freeing up of time for additional reflective work and meaningful debate within schools about the purposes of education in general and social and political education in particular. Thus, any accommodating infrastructure that supports the development of reflective educational minds and moral visions needs to be welcomed and viewed as, although insufficient in many aspects, a positive general development.

Kennedy et al.'s 2001 study, following two years after the Erebus Consulting Groups' study, did not point to any significant changes in teacher attitudes toward the *DD* policy and programme. Similar to the findings of these two reports, all five principals and six teachers participating in the present study are aware of the *DD*

policy and programme but only one teacher in one school is making active use of the material. One principal who I asked if the school is using the *Discovering Democracy* curriculum material replayed: "*Oh, I guess we should, but you know ...*" [throwing her hands in the air] indicating that there are so many things that should be done but there just seems no time for all of it] (Principal Interview with Debbie, School D). Notwithstanding the inclusion of a diverse range of materials such as CDROMS and videos, its generally inviting presentation and the generous financial assistance it was given, a great number of Australian teachers so far seem to resist the taking up of the *DD* curriculum programme in any serious way.

One reason why teachers seem to be reluctant to embrace the *DD* education policy and education package was identified by Kennedy et al. (2001) as a tension between strongly held personal views about the relative importance of civics knowledge as opposed to civics skills and the way democratic citizenship education is being portrayed by the *DD* curriculum. Kennedy et al. (2001, p. 18) conclude that:

There is a scepticism about an emphasis on 'civic knowledge' as part of civics and citizenship education. Described by teachers as 'dry', teachers seem to prefer a focus on skills and on civic attitudes rather than civic knowledge. ... Teachers may use the materials but they will not necessarily be persuaded by the perspective they take. ... Teachers' personal values and understandings construct civic and citizenship education in these schools rather than a major policy initiative that had the support of two successive Australian governments.

This critical assessment of the *DD* policy and programme highlight the problematic character of a programme that envisions the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights through the uncritical acceptance and implementation of a centrally devised school curriculum, implanted as an add-on in an already overcrowded curriculum. The concept of civics liberalism and its relationship to perceptions of the concept of democracy as a static product rather than an ever-changing fluid processes can clearly be located in modernist positivist ideologies. Similarly, the clear separation of curriculum designers and educational bureaucrats



who are 'the experts' and the teachers who, as 'non-experts', are given the task to simply transfer the knowledge prepared by the experts to the students, and the remoteness of the relevance of subject knowledge for a number of students, given the diverse realities and histories, originate from similar positivist theories and epistemological positions.

It is central to any political education that the investigation of underlying assumptions and epistemological positions of a corresponding curriculum development need to be scrutinised. The effects taken-for-granted values have on social forces within the field of education, individual schools and classrooms, which are embedded in and form part of our civil society, must not be underestimated, but rather must be open to critical scrutiny and debate. Such work could well be the basis for a more responsive CCE.

### Toward an Integrated View of HRE, CCE and MCE

While there is a strong need to operate on a cross-curricular, inter-subject level, crossing formal borders between HRE, CCE and MCE, a process-oriented, rights-based approach to education *in* and *for* democratic citizenship is more favourable than a content-dominated history-based approach. Rights-based approaches are comprehensive in their consideration of a full range of interdependent and interrelated rights and freedoms, accounting for the protection of rights and freedoms of non-dominant groups or individuals in society or community. Thus, they seem to protect against discrimination of a wide range of individuals or groups of people often referred to as the 'Other'. In other words, adopting a rights-based approach means that particular attention is given to social, political and cultural needs of the 'Other', and to issues of discrimination, equality and social justice.

Human rights education (HRE), focusing on particular processes of social life in a variety of communities and groups, is essential to active citizenship in a democratic and pluralistic civil society. Citizens need to be able to think critically, make moral choices, take principled positions on issues, and devise democratic courses of action. Participation in the democratic process means, among other things, an understanding and conscious commitment to the fundamental values of human rights and democracy, such as equality and fairness, and being able to recognise problems such as racism, sexism, and other injustices as violations of those values. Active citizenship also means participating in the democratic process, motivated by a sense of personal responsibility for promoting and protecting the rights of all. But to be engaged in this way, citizens must first be informed. Recognising that the better-informed members of social, political and cultural groups and communities are, the better their chances for active participation within that community and polity. Unmasking hidden power structures and underlying assumptions through active engagement may constitute one of the many ways of effective education *in* and *for* democratic citizenship.

Rights-based approaches focus on raising levels of awareness of rights and levels of accountability of rights of minority groups and individuals by identifying 'duty-holders' and 'claim-holders' (The United Nations Human Rights Commission, 1996, html document) and their respective entitlements and obligations. In a document entitled: *Human Rights in Development*, the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) posits that:

For all human rights, States [and their local agencies, such as schools] must have both the political will and the means to ensure their realization, and they must put in place the necessary legislative, administrative, and institutional mechanisms required to achieve that aim. (1996, html document)

Also concerning itself with the development of education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights, The Council of Europe (2000) contends that it is not possible to apply a 'quick-fix' solution but instead recommends, "the best element for evaluating the place of human rights in a school is an analysis of school regulations" (html document). Further, The Council of Europe notes that:

Democracy and the respect of human rights allow everyone to assume their responsibilities; the citizen must be able to make knowledgeable choices in the interest of the whole community. For this to happen, the school must be seen as having a central place in the process of forming future citizens. ... there is a growing desire to make the school an instrument of democracy. (2000, html document)

Similarly, Chakraborty (2002) posits that it is important to 'liberate' HRE from content and he advocates an inclusive process. The entire education for democratic citizenship "has to be integrated with the real life experiences of the people who need the education most, to know what their rights are", explains Chakraborty (2002, html document). Such suggestions of the relative importance of pedagogy and institutional processes may reflect long-standing debates and tensions in social education about the relative importance of 'content versus context'. According to Kennedy et al. (2001) "there has been a strong shift in recent years from curriculum authorities to reinstate content as the dominant partner in this debate" (p. 18).

### A Need to Move Beyond "Quick-Fix" Approaches

A number of organisations and scholars (Chakraborty, 2002; Giroux, 1995; Hunter and Meredyth, 2000; Parker, 1997, The Council of Europe, 2000, UNHCR, 2001) have pointed toward a need to move beyond a narrow single-subject view and 'quick-fix' approaches of past government initiatives in answering calls for better democracy and human rights literacy of students.

The meaning and the implication of democracy and human rights are plural and heterogeneous. Education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights thus are context

dependent and vary according to time and location. They need to be conceptualised as processes which are under permanent construction rather than finished and fixed products.

Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, in his message for the Human Rights Day 2000 asks:

Why is human rights education so important? Because, as it says in the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 'since wars begin in the minds of men (sic), it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed'. The more people know their rights, and the more they respect those of others, the better the chance that they will live together in peace. Only when people are educated about human rights can we hope to prevent human rights violations, and thus prevent conflict, as well. (2000, html document)

A similarly compelling argument for HRE is made by O'Brien (2000) when he states that:

Those promoting HRE must focus on changing the language so that people begin to use the word 'human rights' in their everyday lives. In this way, the language of human rights will be incorporated into our culture and thoughts. ... Only then will we be able to change what is principally 'a legal and constitutional law culture' to a system of laws and a constitution based on human rights. Only then will people ... see the need for HRE. (O'Brien, 2000, html document)

The questions remains as to what schools already do which may count as 'human rights education'. If one believes that there is a role for a comprehensive education *in* and *for* democracy, then it is both useful and relevant to understand to what extent schools are already complying.

The above-mentioned problems replay a classic problem of liberal-democratic governance. In democratically organised polities (schools and classrooms in this instance), the legitimacy of self-determination and participation in the political process is widely held to depend on a range of freedoms of the governed (in this instance teachers and students), which presume a prevalent existence of a capacity to exercise such freedoms in a responsible manner which does not impinge on the freedom of others. There are habitual suspicions about the extent to which students as members of the polity and active citizens may be willing and capable of informed

choice and of exercising freedoms. What is possible and what is actually happening in schools and classrooms? No mandate in the world can assure effective student learning without active participation of schools and classroom teachers. Albala-Bertran (1997c) contends that:

World events are there to remind us that democracy and the rule of law are not historical necessities, are not ineluctable, but a victory of human moral sense that needs constantly to be reinforced and renewed in the mind of all individuals. (cited in Hunter and Meredyth, 2000, p. 1467)

The central focus of this study is a close up investigation of everyday school life because taken-for-granted educational principles and conditions of everyday school life constitute major parts of political socialisation. In particular, this study points to the irrevocable interrelationship of students' human rights needs, school regulatory and disciplinary procedures and practices and effective HRE. The culture and environment of many schools may not include attributes that would identify them as democratically governed schools. It may seem unfortunate, that everyday educational principles and practices are often overlooked when discussing education *in* and *for* democracy.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the inherent interconnectedness and social construction of the concepts of human rights and democratic citizenship has been discussed. Both concepts need to be understood as changing over time and can therefore be depicted as being under perpetual construction. In developing a definitional explanation of democratic citizenship and exploring the interrelationship between the three curriculum areas of human rights education (HRE), civics and citizenship education (CCE), and multicultural education (MCE), an argument was made for the support of a process-oriented, rights-based education approach to the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. The reason for this is simple: rights-based approaches

focus on both raising levels of awareness of rights and of accountability of rights. Raising levels of awareness and of accountability of human rights will make apparent the interconnectedness of social justice, equality of opportunity, and global economic, social, and cultural contexts. Equally important are issues of accountability of human rights as marginalised groups and individuals in society are increasingly recognised as legitimate 'claim-holders', although they are still being deprived of some basic human rights.

Further, some problems of the new Australian education policy and programme, called *Discovering Democracy* have been explored. This programme's development is one of the many examples that illustrate how local realities are neglected and teachers and students as meaning-makers become irrelevant, as the teaching and learning process is firmly controlled by expert designers, text-books and sophisticated instructional material. This model of teaching and learning manages not only the curriculum content but also the process, all of which seems to contribute to the de-skilling of teachers and production of 'teacher-proof' classrooms (Shapiro, 1998, html document). Despite generous funding and extensive promotion, the *DD* policy and programme has not had as much success as may have been expected. The main reason appears be the lack of understanding of the centrality of schools and teachers who hold strong views on this matter. "Too often elite policy makers take the high ground when it comes to the production of educational policy as though the creation of a new policy is enough to make it successful", observe Kennedy, et al. (2001, p. 19). I agree with Kennedy et al.'s conclusion that "a truly sustainable policy process has to both recognise and celebrate the contribution that teachers make for they are the final arbiters of policy and its true success depends on them" (2001, p. 19). However, it may not go far enough as it is the voices of students that need to be

heard. Many primary and secondary school students are denied the right to be included in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them during their school days. The apparent paradox in this situation, which has been observed by a number of scholars (Anderson, 1993; Blum, 1998; Brandes and Ginnis, 1986; Hansen and Childs, 1998; Slee, 1998), is that formal schooling, in many instances, fails to be democratic, and hence fails to educate effectively *for* democracy. Faith Trent (2001, p. 2) explained this situation in a recent keynote address as follows:

We exhort older students to behave 'like adults' ... and we treat them like children ... we talk of teaching them to make decisions but we do not allow them to do so, unless they are the decisions we wish them to make ... - and we impose a formality that exists nowhere else except perhaps in the army.

A central argument made in this thesis is that schools should work explicitly with diverse contexts and the dimension of students' active participation in the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. Thus, the diversity of students' lived experiences, school environments and pedagogical practices should be closely scrutinised. A centrally devised and sanitised version of the Australian democratic governing system may not be able to engage students' desires to be skilled at critically reading their world in relation to concepts such as democracy and human rights as citizens within a particular group, community, society, nation-state or global community.

## CHAPTER 4

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### **The Nexus between HRE and Pedagogy**

The call for scholastic democracy runs up against strong resistance among those who are not ready to share the power given to them by their societal position. ... The question which, however, is raised is how to defend a democracy if the school does not prepare democrats?

The Council of Europe (2000, html document)

Schools are not isolated from the rest of society or free from the political and economic demands of the larger democratic system of government. On the contrary, schools are part of the 'basic structure' of society. According to John Rawls, the basic structure is "the way the major social institutions fit together into one system" and when looking at education, includes public as well as privately funded schools (Rawls, 1993, p. 258). Thus, as integral parts of the system of government in any democracy, schools are sites in which a great diversity of political, cultural and economic beliefs are articulated, contested and finally internalised. As individual identities come together to form a collective identity, such as a school community, internalised, taken-for-granted beliefs, values and attitudes inform attempts to define what commonly shared school values and visions are and what acceptable norms and dispositions may flow out of them. Rawls (1993) defines a community as an association of individuals that is united by a comprehensive conception of the good



(p. 146). These commonly held conceptions of 'the good' (including good life and good citizenship) are made explicit in school mission statements, school policy documents and general guidelines for staff and students (Apple, 1982).

Schools, as one of a number of governmental agencies in democratically governed societies, need to be recognised as being among the most important sites of political and cultural socialisation. Schools are involved in the development of particular ideologies not only in their students, but also in other members of their constituency, such as parents and teachers. For example, school rules and regulations inform the development and perfection of understandings, skills and attitudes of social interactions between the school administration and guardians/parents, school administration and teachers, teachers and students and, students and students, to an understanding of how knowledge, power and resources (financial and other) are organised and distributed within the school community.

Apple (1982, p. 69) has warned us that this "one-way perspective" of cultural and political socialisation is flawed because it does not take into account the extent to which people resist such processes. Resistance to political, social and cultural socialisation of formal schooling needs to be acknowledged and investigated. However, it cannot be denied that schools play a pivotal role in socialising teachers, parents and students into the existing social order. This social order is, however, not fixed or static but rather is one which is constantly changing and evolving through political, social and cultural struggles which are part of everyday life in Australian society and elsewhere.

The question of whether school regulations and classroom rules matter in education *in* and *for* DaHR may need to gain more empirical attention. This chapter points to the significance of school and classroom rules and regulations, pedagogical

practices and the amount of autonomy granted to students. It intends to highlight the important role democratic educational principles and instructional practices play in the formation of young citizens. In other words, a central aim of this chapter is to make explicit the inherent connection between underlying ideological assumptions, school policy documents and everyday educational practices and the objectives of education in and for DaHR. The shaping of deep-seated understandings and attitudes of valuing other people's human rights and developing necessary skills is something that is modelled and practiced on a daily basis within and outside of formal schooling. The recognition and acceptance of difference, non-violent conflict resolution and the establishment of positive and non-oppressive personal relationships may be viewed as rather abstract concepts. The deconstruction and analysis of possible meanings and relationships of these concepts in formal HRE lessons is indisputably important and valuable. Nonetheless, it should also be noted that daily school experiences and practices expose students to various interpretations of these concepts. Various community members express the degree to which they value these and related concepts through their daily actions, consciously and unconsciously. The relevance of these and related concepts for the socially and culturally diverse constituency directly informs and influences individual student's personal understanding of and empathy for them.

### Children's Human Rights and Education Policy

In 1990, the Australian government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Ratification of the CRC entails reviewing national legislation to ensure that the provisions of the treaty are honoured. The CRC stipulates, among other things, that every child has the right to be heard and that when administrative

authorities deal with children, the child's best interest shall be a primary consideration. Further, it stipulates that discipline in schools should respect the child's dignity.

The advent of the first decade after the CRC's ratification by Australia provides an important occasion upon which to reflect on possible changes this may have had on policy developments, general awareness and the regulatory provisions of children's human rights that may affect the lives of many school children within the Australian education system. While education is specifically targeted in two of the articles of the CRC (Article 28 and 29), the new Western Australian School Education Act (1999), which replaces the old Act from 1928, makes no specific reference to children's individual rights, nor to the above-mentioned treaty. This does not mean, however, that policy developers or educators, are not aware of, or committed to acknowledging and honouring basic human rights of children. For example, the Review Project Director Ken Booth and his team, consulted the CRC as well as the State Ombudsman, according to an official working on this five year project, to ensure that the new Western Australian Education Act has a "high degree of compliance with the CRC" (Fieldnotes, interview with an employee of the Western Australian Education Department, 9 March, 2000).

### Schools and Political Socialisation

It is evident that education in Australia is undergoing profound changes. Some of these changes include new policy and curriculum developments such as, the formulation of the *New Curriculum Framework and Outcomes Statements* (1998), the *Making the Difference, Behaviour Management in Schools Policy* (1999) and the introduction of the *Discovering Democracy* (1998) curriculum. These initiatives are aimed at promoting the development of democratic values and attitudes in students through the establishment of "positive social relations", the provision of "safe and

welcoming environments for all members of the school community" (*Making the Difference, Behaviour Management in Schools*, Parent Information Brochure, September 1999) and the development of knowledge and skills that will enable students to "take their place as effective and responsible citizens" within schools and within the wider community (*Discovering Democracy in Western Australian Schools*, 1998, p. 3).

The development of fundamental democratic values within the school system is at the core of recent changes in educational policy and curriculum developments in Western Australia and beyond. However, as discussed in chapter three, many schools shy away from working with the *Discovering Democracy (DD)* curriculum material. The reasons for doing so are multiple. But more importantly, a great number of schools are not only successfully avoiding the integration of the *DD* policy and education package into their curriculum but are also struggling to find ways of incorporating democratic principles into student learning experiences (Anderson, 1993; Apple, 1982; Slee, 1988).

There are multiple ways to educate students *in* and *for* democracy and human rights, one of which include reviewing and adjusting school policy and instructional practices to enable students the experience of being a rights' holder. Overall, the importance of finding ways to enhance the experiences of school children in Australian primary schools – in part to "take their place as effective and responsible citizens" needs to be emphasised (*Discovering Democracy in Western Australian Schools*, 1998, p. 3) within schools and within the wider community.

## Human Rights and Everyday Educational Practices

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe suggest that: "concepts associated with human rights can, and should, be acquired from an early stage" and they can "already be experienced within the life of a pre-school or primary class" (Recommendation R (85) 7 to Member States on the Teaching and Learning of Human Rights in Schools, United Nations, 1999, p. 151-2). What the Ministers are pointing out is that students should be exposed to the modelling of, and given ample opportunities to practice skills, attitudes and behaviours associated with understanding and supporting human rights, from very early on in their school career. School students' daily experiences and practices of skills, attitudes and behaviours of 'good citizenship' should lead to an understanding of, and sympathy for, concepts of social justice, equality and peace.

"The practical use of rights is a do-it-yourself craft and those engaged in it need to be both free and capable to practice it", explains Elisabeth Wolgast (cited in Houston, 1992, p. 5). Both Houston (1992) and Trend (2001) suggest that Wolgast's observation presupposes an autonomy that "belies the realistic situation of most [school] children" (Houston, 1992, p. 5). Equally, Foucault suggests that "the guarantee of freedom is freedom" (cited in Otto, 1999, html document) and Otto explains that freedom is a practice which "must be exercised in order to be attainable" which is, again in agreement with Wolgast's observation that people need to be free to be able to exercise their rights and practice what it means to have freedom. However, Houston (1992) restates the point that Wolgast's argument is not a valid one because it expects school children to have certain freedoms. "By virtue of their situation", Houston observes, "children lack the required autonomy necessary to practice rights",

which highlights the paradox facing contemporary school children (Houston, 1992, p. 5).

According to Slee "students are often taught about rights the very moment they are denied them" (1988, p. 235). It is this contribution of an explicitly desired but generally enforced denial of student autonomy that marks the starting point for the exploration of the importance of school rules and regulations as well as school cultures and classroom environments (social and physical).

The focus on internalised values, which find expression in school rules and regulations, is born out of a desire to understand how, through the structuring of daily school life, individuals are socialised into a given order. Specific educational rules and regulations, through which members of a community are constructed and regulated, by themselves or others, are expressions of specific values and beliefs of the good (including good citizenship). Hence, the investigation of school rules and instructional practices enables a close scrutiny of social, political and economic realities, and of racial, sexual and class identities.

Theorists in the past, as in the present, have pointed out that different students are taught differently depending on their social, political and/or economic background (Apple, 1982, Anderson, 1993, McLaren, 1995, Townsend, 1999). This variation includes the teaching and learning of what it means to be a bearer of rights, to be granted/denied certain freedoms, to be in a position to regulate oneself or be regulated by others. An individual's relationship to knowledge, power and resources within the school community is often a direct reflection of distributional patterns in society at large.

Thus, the investigation of school rules and instructional practices will inform how HRE is incorporated in everyday school life. It will also closely analyse the

production of different social and political identities through everyday taken-for-granted socialising processes and practices. Most people's views about schools and schooling are informed largely by personal experiences. James Comer and Valerie Maholmers (1999), for example, report on a study conducted by Haberman and Post (1992) where 23 white female middle class student teachers volunteered to work a minimum of 100 hours with low income children in an urban American public school.

Comer and Maholmer contend that:

Results of their [Hamberman and Post's] study showed that for the most part, the students gained confidence in their ability to interact effectively with the children. However, the data also showed that students generally used these direct experiences to selectively reinforce their initial preconceptions. ... Consequently, many negative preconceptions were reinforced, which diminished students' desire to choose an urban site for their student teaching experiences. (1999, p. 9)

Thus, it may not come as a surprise that James Comer and Valerie Maholmer (1999) report that only 6 % of Caucasian student teachers in a recent study expressed a desire to work in underprivileged areas and schools. Consequently, this research will be formulating what might be desirable and what is seen to be possible in the midst of the social, political and cultural constraints of everyday school life in different locations and with different school communities in Western Australian case study sites.

### Policy Documents, Student Autonomy and Human Rights Behaviour

School policy documents, which regulate everyday educational principles and practices, are important documents for schools because they define the rules and norms that inform the relationship between individual identities and collective identities within a given social order. Specifically, school rules and regulations impose constraints upon the school's governing body and protect the individual's freedom from arbitrary or abusive action. The regulatory enumeration of individual student's rights, which is a primary focus of this study, is believed to be most

important as it is expected not only to safeguard students' rights but is also expected to grant students' rights to self-governance and thus improve schools' human rights practices.

The right to participate in decision-making processes on issues, which directly affect students inside and outside of school contexts, has been included in the CRC.

Articles five and 12 of the CRC read as follows:

Article 5: State Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents, or where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, *to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognised in the present Convention. (emphasis added)*

Article 12: 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, *the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*  
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law. *(emphasis added)*

The international community, through its membership in the UN and its high ratification rate of the CRC, has clearly demonstrated that it identified participation rights to be basic human rights of children. School rules and regulations provide concrete standards against which community members' behaviour can be assessed. At the same time, they also provide a provision of protection of the individual member against arbitrary action of the school governing body, as the school governing body is held accountable for its actions and decisions. Rules and regulations generally articulate norms and ideals to which the school aspires and may thus powerfully shape the school's culture. In this sense, school regulations and classroom rules serve as a socialising tool that conditions the expectations of members of the school community, promoting the development of the good (including good citizenship) and a particular consciousness among its members. David Schimmel (1997) identified five problems



that "most [American] school codes of conduct share" (html document). He contends that:

1. They are negative, restrictive and unexplained.
2. They are authoritarian.
3. There is non-participation by students in the development of school rules.
4. School rules are usually written and distributed in a formal and legalistic rather than educational manner<sup>36</sup>.
5. School rules lack standards or procedures<sup>37</sup>.

The ways in which school and classroom rules and regulations serve as a stimulus to increase 'rights consciousness' among the school community and how schools through heightened consciousness, further the development of human rights is of particular interest to this study. School regulations and classroom rules can be dishonoured or ignored to the extent that they are reduced to 'empty rhetoric'. Accordingly, the implementation of policy, which has a profound impact on school culture and climate, deserves equal consideration. In other words, school and classroom environments and instructional practices will need to be investigated in conjunction with the study of school rules and regulations.

### School Environment and Human Rights Behaviour

Many schools and their constituencies are trying to improve school environment through personal dedication and conscious efforts to enrich the culture and conditions in their schools. However, it seems that many regulations govern many schools in ways that make schools impersonal, indifferent and generally insensitive to

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<sup>36</sup> Schimmel (1997, html document) explains that "many principals appear unconscious of their role as the leading 'law teachers' of their schools, and seem unaware of the educational implications of the way they develop, interpret, and apply school rules".

<sup>37</sup> Schimmel (1997, html document) explains this point in the following way: "While student handbooks often include procedures for hearings before students are suspended or expelled, they rarely include procedures that allow students to challenge or question the fairness of specific rules or their implementation".

the individuals needs of a diverse school population (Anderson, 1993). Nevertheless, there are schools that seem to succeed in creating an atmosphere of respect, trust, support, tolerance, encouragement and compassion. Schools that were described by Lightford (1983, in Hansen and Childs, 1998), McGaw et al. (1992) and Hansen and Child (1998) as 'good schools' which has also been referred to as 'effective schools' or 'democratic schools' have very specific attributes where individual human rights (including students' participation rights) are honoured and respected. More importantly, members of 'good schools' have a sophisticated understanding and respect for basic human rights which implies that students' basic human rights are not only respected by adults (school administration and teachers) but also by each other.

The specific culture of schools, as encapsulated in principals' and teachers' beliefs and attitudes, is of vital importance in the discussion of the characteristics of 'good' or 'democratic schools'. To characterise a school's culture, one must get a sense of the "shared beliefs, norms, values, assumptions, and attitudes" of people living and working within this culture. Culture is partly created through what the schools' constituency believe and value. And, these cultural components are validated and strengthened in the way these members practice teaching and learning within the school with "regularity, both overtly and covertly" (Weller and Weller, 2000, p. 10). Culture denotes traditions, beliefs and values that constitute past and present ways of acting and behaving in the face of the opportunities that occur in each new moment of that cultural dynamic (Weller and Weller, 2000, p. 10).

The culture of a school includes more than its rules and regulations that may be seen as the tools and techniques of formal education. However, the formulation and implementation of school rules and regulations are informed by personal beliefs, values and attitudes that can be summarised as being the 'shared emotions of the

school population'. The school population shares a collective identity and membership to this community. The language used in a particular school community has developed in that community, a language that carries certain meaning as the discourse constructs dominant ways of thinking and acting. Putman (2000), distinguishes between the liberal and the republican sense of concepts such as 'freedom' at school. It can be understood as "their capacity to choose their ends" or as "sharing in self-government"(html document). The nexus between political and ideological views and specific understandings of concepts has been extensively discussed in chapter two and three. Meaning making processes and general understandings of the concept of freedom is similar to the understanding of concepts such as human rights, democracy, democratic citizenship and education for democratic citizenship.

Employing a pluralist approach, valuing a sophisticated view of democracy, I argue that student freedom and autonomy, which is inextrinsically linked to students' basic human rights, is defined as an acknowledgement of the capacity of self-governance in contrast to heteronomy, which is defined as being governed by someone else. This reference to governance by the self or by others is indicative of particularly structured situations and social orders within a given community and relationships of agency and power. The question as to why students in some schools seem to be perceived as being worthy of greater autonomy and self-governance than in other schools can be traced back to ideological assumptions and educational philosophies which inform policy formulations and daily practices.

Maria Montessori forcefully states, "discipline comes through liberty" (1967, p. 86). Exploring the ever-present topic of school discipline, Montessori noted, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that the child in the public school system was considered disciplined "only when he [sic] has been rendered as artificially silent as a

mute and as immovable as a paralytic" ([1912] 1967, p. 86). For Montessori, such a child is "an individual annihilated, not disciplined" (1967, p. 86). Educational experiences that educate some to become citizens, educate others to become aliens or non-citizens. Citizens in a democracy have certain rights and responsibilities that are denied or only partially extended to aliens or non-citizens. One such right is the right of participation in governance. While governance of the self and governance of the community are different concepts they both relate to the value of democracy. The value of and belief in the capacities of the individual person to take on the responsibility of self-governance is validated in democratic schools. However, the individual's capacity to participate in the governance of the school should also be valued. As participatory members of a community, individuals, are not only seen as empowered and given the chance to be heard, but are also seen to take on the responsibility to be actively engaged in the government of the community and, thus, express care and concern for the common good.

### Power, Rules and Student Autonomy

In a democratically governed school with active and engaged citizens, school rules are viewed as an effect and as a mechanism of managing people's relation to power. The matrix of power relationships in democratic schools is perceived to be non-oppressive, consensual and fair. All members of the school community, including marginalised individuals and groups of people, are claim-holders of basic human rights, which include participation rights in decision-making processes. In this way, power/authority is not *possessed* by individuals or groups of people with privileged social and political positionality within the school community, rather, power is *exercised* via active engagement in governance of the self and/or the community. Foucault notes that, what makes power/authority acceptable "is quite simply the fact

that it does not weigh like a force which says no, but that it runs through, it produces things, it includes pleasure, it forms knowledge" (cited in Otto, 1999, html document).

Applying a Foucauldian perspective, the primary focus is not to transcend power/authority or to protect against abusive practices. Rather, the questioning of dominating forms of power/authority on the production of the individual and the school's culture becomes a central issue, which highlights the strength of democratic principles and practices as transformative and empowering. However, Putman (2000) points out that certain attitudes, skills and behaviours need to be developed sufficiently to be able to function effectively in community life. He states that:

To participate fully with other human beings in some sort of social order, one must have the capacity to comprehend, accept, and abide by the customs and traditions of that order. . . . At issue are precisely the limits of community and the boundaries of self. (Putman, 2000, html document)

Members of democratically organised communities require highly developed knowledge and a sophisticated understanding of the community's political system, social and cultural diversity and cultural heritage which are informed by a moral worldview that respects individual human rights. The acquisition of such highly developed moral values, knowledge and skills need careful modelling and much practice.

With respect to students' human rights and effective HRE, the granting of participation rights to students not only means giving voice to students and thereby contesting authoritarian principles and practices but also means that students are given ample opportunity to develop their skills to exercise their rights which is vital in the development of moral values and effective democratic citizenship.

## Conclusion

In this chapter the importance of educational principles and everyday practices in relation to the renewed debate about the need for effective citizenship and human rights education has been explored. The interrelationship of students' human rights, school disciplinary procedures and HRE was established. The culture of many schools does not yet seem to include attributes that would identify them as 'good' or 'democratic schools'. Equally, many schools and their constituency may not be in a position to honour some fundamental human rights of children. As Schimmel (1997) so aptly notes: "After twelve years in a system that seems to reward non-questioning nonparticipation in the rule-making process, it is not surprising that many students become cynical, passive, non-voting citizens (html document)".

Educators ought to recognise that children are important stakeholders in the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. There is a definite need to take children's opinions into account and acknowledge that children are bearers of rights. The CRC is clear that a set of responsibilities is associated with these rights:

- ❑ responsibilities of parents and adults to guard and ensure each child's rights;
- ❑ responsibilities of institutions, organizations, nations and the state to provide these rights; but
- ❑ children have responsibilities too, and these also need to be considered within education. One of these is the responsibility to learn. By learning, I mean not only the acquisition of academic knowledge and skills but also social competencies and ethical conduct.

Chapters two, three and four intended to create a firm connection between school cultures, school rules and regulations which govern students' lives, and education in and for democracy and human rights. Consequently, chapter two began with a discussion of the concept of international human rights as it is currently understood. Dualistic views of human rights were problematised and the advantages

of pluralist approaches considered. Further, two distinct and conflicting ways of thinking about democracy and democratic citizenship, civic *liberalism* and civic *republicanism* or *communitarianism* were discussed. Chapter three examined a range of definitions of democratic citizenship, including political, social and economic, cultural or collective and civil citizenship. My own definitional construct was introduced which pointed to three distinctive features:

- ❑ the provision of a broad framework for successful practice of democratic citizenship;
- ❑ democratic citizenship as fundamental practice which strengthens human rights of minority people; and
- ❑ the need to see active participation in political life as the lifeblood of democratic citizenship.

Moreover, the interrelationship between human rights education (HRE), civics and citizenship education (CCE) and multicultural education (MCE) was explored and a solution offered as to how tensions between these curriculum subjects can be overcome. A detailed analysis of the latest Australian CCE initiative was also provided. In particular, it was argued that while this short-term strategy may well be achieving short-term goals of enhancing students' civics knowledge, it might not be the most effective way of developing an engaging and politically active citizenry. Finally, an argument was made as to why a HRE approach to education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights is viewed as the preferred option. To this end, chapter four introduced the idea that that much HRE takes place in informal ways through daily school practices. Thus, the investigation of students' daily school experiences is warranted when exploring effective HRE.

In the following chapters, the possibilities of education in and for DaHR through adhering to democratic principles and practices in everyday school life is

explored in detail. To grant students greater autonomy and freedom may enable them to practice their rights and improve their democratic skills, as they become active and responsible participants in democratic processes. Democratically governed schools which invite students' participation in the governance of themselves and the governance of the school may encourage students to enter into a social dialogue and be exposed to a variety of viewpoints and opinions which may not be in agreement with their own point of view. The opportunity to experience and value 'democratic life' and deal with competing interests in an empowering way should not be underestimated. The power of negotiation and open-mindedness, tolerance for other perspectives and trust that all members of the school community will respect fundamental human rights are qualities that prepare children for a responsible life in a democratic society.

Even though exploring the educational implications of specific curricula such as HRE, CCE or MCE may be interesting and relevant, the investigation of everyday practices in schools for their potential as practical HRE, may be equally if not more important in the discussion of effective democratic education. The recognition of students as valued actors and active participants in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect their welfare in everyday school life deserves attention.



## CHAPTER 5

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### Learning from Everyday Practices: The Case Study Sites

Even to talk to students or educators about the idea that schools are the incubators of democratic commitment and attitudes is to frequently evoke looks of incredulity and bewilderment. This reflects on the general remoteness of any vision of a life seriously engaged in public, civic, and citizenship matters. . . . More than some nostalgic evocation, what is being suggested here is a strategy for education that operates on the terrain of the still most resonant, progressive values in this culture – the democratic idea, the self-governing community, the participative citizen, and the socially responsible public life.

Svi Shapiro, 1993, html document

*We teach in a non-competitive way ... [and] we are quite careful about their self-esteem. ... So they are growing up in a climate of tolerance and with an expectation that it's not o.k. to put other people down.*

*Debbie (Principal School D)*

This chapter introduces the four case study sites, and describes their complex social contexts and teachings that are related to practical human rights education (HRE) pedagogy. A central aim is the investigation of how these case schools are seen as "incubators of democratic commitment and attitudes" (Shapiro, 1993, html document). Within each of these local sites, with their unique histories and constraints, the possibilities for practical HRE are multiple. Everyday life holds a great variety of possibilities for students to engage in the understanding and practice of civic attitude and behaviour, as Svi Shapiro (1993) notes: "this kind of concrete

grounded vision implies ... the struggle for radically deepening and extending democratic practices" (html document). He continues: "it means infusing school practices, curriculum and pedagogy with a democratic vision". This democratic vision enables the development of an education agenda that is about improving students' social and political competencies and skills. The investigation of taken-for-granted and commonly held beliefs and values in, for example, their own school, may encourage interest and knowledge of concepts such as democracy and human rights. Further, such an education agenda may foster students' appreciation and understanding of the ways they (and authority figures, such as their parents, teachers and school administrators) are constituted differently as social and political actors and treated as subjects with rights and responsibilities or as objects of social control and modification with a need to be 'normalised' into a given and presupposed 'natural' social order. For Shapiro (1993, html document) an education agenda that intensifies and fundamentally expands democratic practices is grounded in three general principles:

1. Concern for a self and collectivity-assertive citizenship; one that confronts the widely shared disempowerment of individuals and groups.
2. Continuation of the struggle for equality – of rights, of access, of opportunity, and of results.
3. Development of the attitudes, values and practices necessary to a socially responsive community (local, national, and global).

Vital to the aim of demonstrating the effectiveness of pedagogy for democratic education is the investigation of the many intended and unintended effects of day-to-day practices in schools. Of particular interest here is the investigation of a) the physical environment of the school; b) the school culture; and c) the school's

general philosophical approach embedded in the school's cultural context and teaching processes.

In the first section, I discuss the meaning of the above factors. The second section portrays the four case study schools individually, paying close attention to the schools' physical environment, culture and philosophical approach<sup>38</sup>. Finally, I conclude with an analysis of the model schools' cultural contexts. The aim of this analysis is to draw out the commonalities between these four very different model schools. Two key questions to be answered are: a) what educational principles and practices do these schools have in common and how are they conducive to democratic practices; and b) why are these educational features of importance for practical HRE?

Opening the examination to include specific attention to physical and cultural spaces means searching for an understanding of how techniques of control and rights to participate in decision-making processes are employed at the four case schools. The goal of this and the next chapter is to illuminate how the four case schools are able and/or willing to engage with issues of rights and responsibilities of students.

The ability of students to make choices by expressing their views and take responsibility for both their choices and the acts based on these choices are central to the practice of democracy and human rights in education. Students' decision-making powers within the school may function as practical HRE curriculum. Whereas the present chapter attempts to identify similarities in approach between the four schools, the next chapter will investigate some of the differences in pedagogical practices and the implications of identified variations of students' decision-making powers at the four case study schools.

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<sup>38</sup> The majority of the data for this analysis was collected in 2000 and 2001 and stem from school and classroom observations, principal interviews and official school documents.

## What Makes A School 'Democratic'?

The case narratives in this chapter are able to illustrate why and how these schools identify themselves as being distinctly different from traditional educational practices. For example, Debbie, principal of School D observes that her school is committed to "*removing a lot of the institutionalisation, the practices that are about controlling children or managing children rather than teaching them*"(Principal-Interview, 13.11.2000).

According to Bennett and LeCompte<sup>39</sup> (1990), Hood<sup>40</sup>, (1998), Costello et al., (2003) and many others, traditional educational practices seem not to have changed much in the last few decades. Commenting on American schools, Bennett and LeCompte ask:

Why are schools still organised and operated in much the same manner they were one hundred years ago? Why do we ignore research on individual differences and continue to educate children in batches, like cookies? ... Much of what happens in and to schools is done because of habit. (1990, p. 249)

And in New Zealand Hood notes:

Structurally the curriculum is much the same as it has been for the last 50 years, as is how teachers approach the curriculum. Students are still divided into classes of about the same number, primarily based on age . . . . Teachers teach subjects and [may] front up each hour to a different group of students. (1998, p. 3)

In a similar vein, Costello et al. explain:

[In the past] the school replicated the organization of the factory. ... As schools have increased in size and curricula have increased in specialization, the hierarchical factory model of school structures has persisted. (2003, pp. 195-196)

A close analysis and comparison of the school cultures in the final part of this chapter is able to illustrate, how the four case schools, which were purposely chosen because of their reputation as being places of 'good' democratic practices, attempt to practice democracy. All four schools clearly demonstrate a commitment to democratise educational practices with a view of cultivating DaHR in education. In

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<sup>39</sup> Bennett and LeCompte and Costello et al. are commenting on schools in the United States.

effect, so strong is the commitment of some of the principals to resist traditional notions of schooling and break up rigid structures and hierarchies of control that they are willing to take risks, implement policies, and try out practices that may be termed unusual or even radical. For example, the abolishment of school bells (School A, Abernethy Country School) and the scrapping of a so-called 'resolution room' (School B, Bolton Primary School) or the idea of including a primary school child in the selection proceedings as part of the selection panel that interviews candidates for the position of the principal at this particular school (School C, Crystal Montessori School)<sup>41</sup>.

A changed child-image where children are perceived as active actors in social and political contexts underpins the changes in educational practices at the four model schools. This changed perception of children seems to pave the way for the partial inclusion of this previously excluded group of people in decision-making processes.

In the light of a clear commitment to break away from traditional models of hierarchies of control and to democratise school practices, it is rather surprising that even these model schools, which have been purposely chosen because they are believed to be sites of democratic practices, are at times reluctant to upset the 'status quo'. This means that although there seems to be a clear commitment to 'listen to children', their views, more often than not, are still not accorded equal weight to that of adult stakeholders. Thus, students' power to effect changes in school policies and/or practices is still minimal or non-existent. Therefore, as a close analysis of classroom practices in the next chapter will illustrate, students are encouraged to participate in the governance of their classroom and decide for themselves where to sit and what work to do. However, students are unable, by the virtue of their status, to effect

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<sup>40</sup> He is commenting on schools in New Zealand.

change of, for example, the dress code in School A (Abernethy Country School). Couched in an ideology of democratic participation, the political technology employed is successful in maintaining the status quo. Thus the question may be asked: is this purposeful political participation or can these practices be tokenistic? On the surface students appear to have actively participated in the political processes of the school but without any real chance of effecting change and upsetting the status quo. This question will be answered in the next chapter as it pertains to the effectiveness of students' participation in decision-making processes and therewith in their ability to share in formal power.

What is of interest here, however, is the relationship of knowledge to power. Because, this relationship becomes a central point of investigation as students' social and political participation in the life of a school depends on more than deciding where to sit and what work to do, even if this is, in a very limited way, empowering students to be able to practice responsible decision-making. It requires a more profound change in cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that shape how people in different positions of power relate to the others who share the same environment but not necessarily the same relationship of knowledge to power.

### A Contextual Definition of Power

Inevitably power is a central issue in the investigation of the four model schools' cultural contexts and their relevance for practical HRE. Michel Foucault's theories of power and discourse enable a mapping of these existing notions onto these schools. One of Foucault's (1977, 1980, 1987) principal aims was to analyse the power relations governing the production and dissemination of discourses. His

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<sup>41</sup> This example is discussed in the next chapter.

concept of discourse is important for an understanding of much of his thinking on power.

Through the investigation of the interrelationship between discourse and ideology, power relationships within schools are explored, particularly the ways power is exercised within the specific domains students inhabit. Questions that are of interest here are: What is life like in these case schools? What do the principals say? How are students able to participate in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them as outlined in Article 12 of the CRC?

According to Foucault, discourses are historically situated truths or means of understanding reality through specific sets of knowledge. Power and knowledge are closely linked together through a multiplicity of discursive elements and ultimately bond in the formation of discourse. Foucault notes:

Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. . . . Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy. (Foucault, 1987, pp. 101-102)

Thus, discourse, as complex and unstable processes and practices produces relationships of power/knowledge and can, at the same time, be a product of power/knowledge. In other words, for every discourse there are multiple readings that produce different kinds of knowledge and ways of thinking. Thus, it is not possible to arrive at an absolute 'truth' as power/knowledge is constituted through various discourses or specific ways of viewing the world. It is, therefore, imperative that allowances are made for the production of different 'truths', "whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power" (Foucault, 1987, p.101). Two senses of power are relevant to an analysis of students' decision-making possibilities within the schools. The first is the notion of power as structured and unequal – principals and teachers, because of their institutional position and functions, have more power than

students. The second is the notion of power as fluid, interactive and intersubjective where power relations are lived out in productive but constrained ways. In other words, although students find themselves in a less powerful position, they may still be enabled and encouraged to find ways of participating in meaningful ways in the decision-making process on issues that directly affect them. As a result, through active participation, students, although less powerful from a structural point of view, may still be able to effect change. A desire to shift thinking about student control, students' freedom of choice and relevant input in decision-making processes away from traditional conceptualisations to a more democratic, interactive and situated model is the recurrent theme and purpose of this thesis.

## The Matrix of Schooling

### *The Physical Environment*

Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, and that schools, barracks and hospitals all resemble prisons?  
(Foucault, cited in Horrocks and Jevtic, 1997, p. 118)

The physical environment can be viewed as an important political space. What this means is that the physical space underpins the surveillance of students and is the first effective tool of social control. In this sense, the architectural and physical landscapes of a school are important sites of investigation. For Foucault, social control is not only exercised through rules and regulations, "power is quite different from and more complicated, dense and pervasive than a set of laws" (1980, p.158). A classic example of the power of architectural design for surveillance is Bentham's Panopticon. The Panopticon allows people in power to observe the movements of the less powerful without being seen. Foucault explains that:

The very word 'Panopticon' seems crucial here, as designating the principle of a system. Thus Bentham didn't merely imagine an architectural design calculated to solve a specific problem, such as that of a prison, a school or a hospital. He proclaimed it as a veritable discovery. ... And indeed what Bentham proposed to the doctors, penologists, industrialists and educators



was just what they had been looking for. He invented a technology of power designed to solve the problems of surveillance. (1980, p. 148)

This asymmetry of power is, in Foucaultian terms, the power to dominate the less powerful and rests on differential possession of knowledge:

In the Panopticon each person, depending on his (sic) place, is watched by all or certain of the others. You have an apparatus of total circulating mistrust, because there is no absolute point. The perfected forum of surveillance consists in a summation of *malveillance*. (Foucault, 1980, p. 158) (emphasis in original).

Similarly, investigating Foucault's analysis of power, Symes and Preston note:

Foucault suggests that power in modern societies has gone underground and become more discreet; it is now omnipresent throughout all levels of society, spreading its tentacles throughout the practices of everyday life in a capillary fashion. ... Power is not an external force, ... rather it is one which permeates its whole fabric, controlling our actions and desires in small and very detailed ways, in the habits and micro-practices of everyday life, in the drills and routines of training institutions like schools and prisons where the power practices of modern life are incorporated and inculcated. (1997, p. 29)

Thus, the underlying mechanisms of contemporary educational practices which are not only centred on the mind but also engage the body and are "involved in controlling its anatomy rather than its belief system ... [and result] in the production of docile bodies" (Symes and Preston, 1997, p. 30) are of interest here. Foucault's analysis of the interplay between the control of the body and the mind, which he in his earlier work called power/knowledge and in his later work termed 'bio-power' (Donnelly, 1992, p. 199), is especially significant here. There is a recognisable epistemological dimension that is closely linked to the formation and control of the development of democratic citizenship and moral human conduct, as "the more organi[s]ed or technologically thought-out knowledge becomes, the closer we get to a political technology of the body" (Horrocks and Jevic, 2001, p. 111). In other words, specific forms of surveillance and control mechanisms give rise to specific forms of knowledge at the expense of other kinds of knowledge. More specifically, Foucault asserts that "power *is* 'always already there', one is never 'outside' it, there are no 'margins'" (1980, p. 141) (emphasis in original).

Because power is everywhere, power should not necessarily be interpreted as being 'positive' or 'negative', but the gaze should rather be on how power permeates social and physical spaces and how it legitimates certain kinds of knowledge (Foucault, 1980, p. 141). "My problem has always been ... the problem of the relationship between subject and truth. How does the subject enter into a certain game of truth?" asks Foucault (1988, cited in Marshall, 1990, p. 24). It is against this problem that the mutual interdependence of the concepts of power and knowledge is perceived.

Thus, the social and political function of a school's architecture needs careful consideration in relation to the discussion of everyday democratic educational practices and practical HRE, as it forms important technologies of surveillance and social control. Foucault describes surveillance as a perfect apparatus that makes it possible for "a single gaze to see everything constantly" (1980, p. 173). School buildings serve as technologies of surveillance of individual students (and teachers) that map them and assess individual students' conduct to better "judge it, to calculate its qualities and merits" (1977, p. 143) in order to consolidate control over the student population.

When briefly describing the physical environment of the four case schools, close attention was paid to the layout of the buildings, the colour scheme, and the general atmosphere of the school. By mapping the school settings this way, the effect of a school's design on the way in which the school is governed and its relationship to power/knowledge will become apparent. The various sub-systems of a school are seen as interdependent parts so that the political, cultural and economic systems can be understood in relation to each other. In other words, as I have argued before, taken together, schools' organisational principles and practices are informed by certain kinds

of (scientific) knowledge and legitimate forms of power, which enable the production of specific regimes of truth and notions of subjectivity within a school.

### ***The School Culture***

Even though the concept of culture has long been a topic of interest to social scientists, there is little agreement regarding its definition. Anthony Marsella et al. define culture as the:

Shared acquired patterns of behaviour and meanings that are constructed and transmitted within social life contexts for the purpose of promoting individual and group survival, adaptation, and adjustment. ... The shared acquired patterns are represented externally in artifacts, roles, activity contexts, and institutions, and they are represented internally in worldviews, identities, meanings, values, attitudes, epistemologies, consciousness patterns, cognitive, somatic, and affective processes, concepts of self and personhood. (2000, html document)

Thus, when trying to capture the participating schools' cultures, their sense of shared beliefs, norms, assumptions and attitudes were explored. Culture is partly created through what the school's constituency values. And, Weller and Weller explain that these cultural components are validated and strengthened in the way these stakeholders behave with "regularity, both overtly and covertly"(2000, p. 10). Or, to put it differently, culture, as the product of collective habitual actions shapes and reproduces educational experiences of a school's constituency. Each of the four model schools may thus develop distinctive, if often implicit, social practices that contribute to the maintenance or change of the existing school culture. Culture, is thus deeply embedded within the school, its philosophical approach to education which underpins school rules and regulations, and the strategies deployed that further educational goals. Thus, capturing the delicate interplay between these diverse components, the cultural capital of a school may be reflected in the way people describe their school's environmental quality or climate. A school may, thus, be perceived as friendly/unfriendly; bustling/slow paced; and/or colourful/plain. Therefore, I see the school's educational principles and day-to-day educational practices as interactional

manifestations of the school's cultural capital. The terminologies used depict overall subjective experiences of these social and physical spaces that operate in conjunction with each other, for example: 'formal and friendly' or 'warm and bustling' etc. Yet, they have been devised to capture, how certain forms of power/knowledge are privileged and regimes of truth are produced, through which the school principal, teachers, students and parents govern each other and are governed by themselves. Through a genealogy of the school culture, a production of 'moral technologies' and discursive practices can be traced. This is important here, as a Foucaultian theory of power/knowledge, or bio-power offers a means of thinking about the mechanisms of social control being embedded into the core of the schools' physical and social landscape. The investigation of the socio/cultural landscape in this way points to the school as a 'moral' as well as 'physical' space and the process of governmentality<sup>42</sup> over students' bodies and minds. It focuses on how educational knowledge, practices, and techniques are informing the aim of producing 'democratic subjects' and transforming schools to become democratic 'places' and 'spaces'.

### ***The Schools' Philosophical Approach***

The philosophical approach to teaching and learning pertains to epistemological considerations and the general issue of knowledge/power to truths production. In the last few decades, many educational theorists and practitioners have parted with the technical model of instruction, which is understood as mere transmission or dissemination of information and knowledge, to a more dynamic form of teaching and learning, that is constructivist. The participating schools' philosophical approach can generally be described as being student-centred albeit not

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<sup>42</sup> Foucault used the term governmentality to indicate the interplay between power and knowledge that shapes the conduct of a person or persons towards certain principles to discipline human behaviour;

necessarily constructivist. Some schools utilise constructivist approaches more than others.

### School Portraits

The physical environment, the culture and general philosophical approach to teaching and learning taken by the four case schools are described using school documents, observational and interview data. The principal interviews that were conducted in the third teaching term of 2000 helped to capture the culture of the school, the general philosophical approach in use at the school and why these principals believe that their schools are places of 'good' democratic practice.

The first two schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) are government schools and the latter two schools (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) are private and independent schools<sup>43</sup>. The first school (Abernethy Country School or School A) is geographically a rural school; the other three schools are urban schools, located in Perth, Western Australia. The second school (Bolton Primary School or School B) is a small, multicultural primary school, located in an underprivileged area of the city. The third (Crystal Montessori School or School C) and fourth schools (Deanmoor Independent School or School D) are well-resourced private, independent schools. The stories of these schools and their constituencies illuminate the contrasting ways in which they have confronted the challenges associated with integrating democratic educational principles into everyday educational practices that serve the objectives of an integrated HRE curriculum. The school contexts vary and thus the possibilities, limitations and

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and how certain regimes of truth are able to regulate social relations differently between institutions and citizens (Gabardi, 2001, html document).

<sup>43</sup> For ease of recognition, the names of the schools and participants of each school have been alphabetised. For example School A is Abernethy school, the principal of the school has been named as Anna etc.

practices of the schools differ greatly as staff, parents and students struggle together to find desirable and workable ways of 'doing democracy' and being proactive in their search for educational possibilities to enhance students' awareness of social justice issues. Nevertheless, there are identifiable similarities among the four case schools. They all seem to struggle to increase their potential to develop a critical social consciousness in students through the ways they operate with the aim to aid in the development of certain kinds of social beings. Each portrait looks at the kind of culture the schools and classrooms are trying to build around the integration of educational principles and students' participation rights, the sort of policies, if any, they have developed to guide the integration of students' rights into school life, and examples of school and classroom pedagogy.

### ***Abernethy Country School***

#### **Contextual Information**

Abernethy Country School is a medium-sized government school and provides education for students ranging in age from four to 15 years. The school is situated in a historic town and is approximately 200 kilometers inland from Perth. The town's population is approximately 1600. The town has a diverse community, based around numerous enterprises such as light industry, agriculture and tourism. The school has approximately 500 students and has a staff of over 50 members. It consists of five administrators, 25 teachers, 10 education assistants and 12 non-teaching staff. The principal of the school resigned shortly after I gained access to the school as a research site. The staff did not know who would be the new principal of the school as the appointments are made centrally by the State's Education Department. Due to these circumstances, the deputy principal, Anna<sup>44</sup>, who knew the school, its history

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<sup>44</sup> This is not her real name.

and constituency agreed to take part in the research. Anna grew up in the town and lived there most of her life and is sensitive to and aware of the unique character of the place. She describes the general feel of the town as 'relaxed' and 'laid-back'.

Anna was appointed as deputy-principal in 1990. She has sensed the growing importance of students' participation rights and has initiated great changes to the governance structure of the school since the amalgamation of the three separate small schools into one large school in 1998. In the formal interview she states "*We really developed ourselves and established ourselves as a new school with new directions*" (Principal-Interview with Anna, 23.11.2000).

### Physical Environment

The Abernethy Country School is located at the edge of an historic town. The school is new and thus has a modern design with a number of small separate courtyards and play areas. The school is located in clusters that have been named after old historical farm school sites in the town. The school buildings are built out of cream-coloured bricks and have red tiled rooftops. There are a great number of trees surrounding the buildings. The feel of the school is generally warm and inviting. Figure 3 shows that this school does not have the Panopticon effect described earlier, as there is no centrally defined place from which "teachers can spy on and penetrate behaviour" (Horrocks and Jevic, 1997, p. 118).

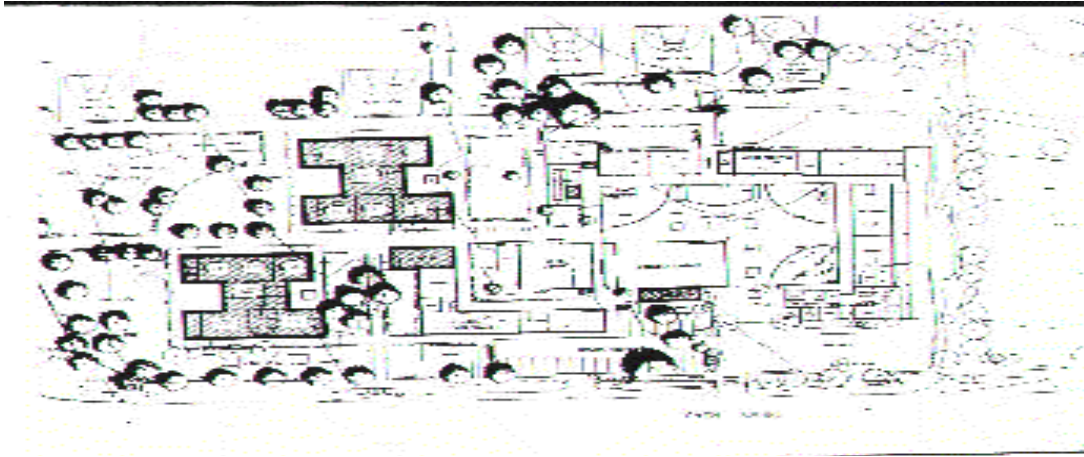


Figure 3, Building Plan Abernethy Country School

The architecture of this school enables the departure from an ideology that views students as 'objects' in need of constant surveillance and control. Teachers at this school are on an organised 'duty-roster', where three teachers are walking around the school-ground at recess and lunchtimes to ensure that students are safe and behave in an orderly manner. As I note in my field journal:

Alice, a participating teacher, is on duty-roster today. She invites me to accompany her on the walk around the school. We walk around in a designated area, there are three teachers on duty-rosters and everyone has their own area. While we walk around in circles, we discuss daily routines in her classroom and at the school. I notice that she is frequently smiling at some students sitting on a bench and eating their lunch. The students return her smile. The atmosphere is relaxed. However, when she is addressing the students, it is to remind them 'not to run around, only walk', 'where is your hat? No hat no play - 'sit down please', 'John, put that stick down' etc. Essentially, Alice and I are patrolling the school ground, much like prison guards patrolling prison grounds and police patrolling the streets to ensure law and order. (Fieldnotes, 05.09.2001).

This observation may suggest that the students are not necessarily encouraged to regulate their own behaviours as teachers are there to do this for them. Although Alice is smiling and displays friendly mannerisms, the monitoring of students' actions in the search for 'rule-breaking' may point to an underlying mind-set that still perceives a need for students to be controlled by external forces and constantly subjected to adult surveillance. From this and similar observations it seems that in this school, student bodies continue to be the sites and operation of an ideology that sees a



need for constant external surveillance and control by teachers during lunch and recess times. Even though the physical landscape does not resemble a Panopticon, the school is successful in maintaining a monitoring system of teacher control of student bodies at lunch and recess times that points to a predominant view of students as objects of protection. How can teachers balance their duty to protect children from harm to themselves and others with their mandate to foster self-discipline and civic engagement in students? How do teachers at the other three model schools engage with this dilemma?

### School Culture

The environmental qualities of the school can be described as formal, friendly and colourful. It was not perceived to be uplifting in the sense of inspirational or particularly encouraging, nor was it perceived to be depressing in the sense of discouraging or gloomy but rather professional and fair. Other cultural attributes such as a shared set of beliefs and attitudes that characterise daily cultural practices of this school can best be derived from the answers to questions posed in the interview with the principal. One of the core questions that intended to capture both the general philosophical approach to teaching and learning and the school's unique culture, was the following question: *If you had to describe your school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?* Table 16a illustrates, in the left column, Anna's response to this and subsequent questions and in the right column my thoughts and comments about the content of the discussion as it relates to the culture of the school.

Table 16a: Principal Interview – Abernethy Country School: Description of School

<i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview 23.11.2000 – School A, (Anna)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Eva<sup>45</sup>: If you had to describe your school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: I'd tell them, depending on their age, but certainly I'd tell them that our school is a very friendly school. And it's a very caring school. Other students are caring and we are here to help students and families as much as possible.</i></p>	<p>What specific principles and practices are applied at this school that make Anna believe that it can be classified as being 'friendly' and 'caring' as opposed to being 'unfriendly' and 'uncaring'?</p>
<p><i>Eva: Why would you say that this is a friendly school?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: Because it has a nice and relaxed atmosphere. We don't have rigid school bells. We don't have bells or sirens or anything. Everybody just looks at a watch. Teachers just say: "O.K., it's class-time now, children move in".</i></p>	<p>Attributes such as 'no bells' contribute to an atmosphere that is perceived as being 'nice and relaxed'. School bells that served to regulate time and control teachers and students have been replaced by a system where responsibility of controlling students' movements has been handed to teachers.</p>
<p><i>Eva: Why did you decide against school bells?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: Because we thought [that] in real life, you don't work by a bell, you work with self-discipline, guided by a watch or the activity that you're doing. Guided by the history of the town, it did not sit comfortably with us to have a school siren bellowing out across the whole relaxed Avon Valley hills.</i></p> <p><i>Anna: We had lots of discussions with parents, with staff and students and initially it was very hard. We thought that this is a great idea but certainly the first term, the first semester was a bit difficult.</i></p>	<p>Anna was the person who initiated the discussions about the 'bell-issue' after the amalgamation of the three separate school sites. Is it possible that her understanding of the school as part of a unique culture present within the larger context of the town in which it is embedded, which she described as 'relaxed' and 'laid-back' lead her to instigate this move away from 'rigid school bells'?</p>
<p><i>Eva: So it didn't work?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: Well, it's like teaching an old dog new tricks, you have to train people [laughing]. It's a new skill that people have to learn.</i></p>	<p>School bells which are there to regulate student and teacher bodies are an integral part of a school's 'way of life' and thus of a school's culture. How will the change in regulatory practices be perceived by teachers and students whose bodies will be regulated differently?</p> <p>Developing new skills and internalising new rules presupposes an awareness and understanding of the relevance of the change in structure and habits.</p>
	What are some possible effects of 'no bell'

<sup>45</sup> This is my real name. I decided to use my name rather than the impersonal 'the researcher' to emphasise the co-operative nature of this endeavour.

*Eva: Looking back, would you go back to having a school bell as most schools do that are this size?*

*Anna: Oh, no! I personally would hate it. Just the feel of the school is a lot more relaxed and more positive and more comfortable without a rigid siren and people rushing to get to the door. Everybody knows that this is a time that you come in. And if you're late that there is an apology: "Oh, sorry, I am late, I'll work hard to improve it tomorrow".*

on the culture of the school? Are the changes perceived as positive or negative? Why?

Control is to be internalised and teachers will need to regulate their students differently. Are students socialised to regulate and police each other?

Another indicator of specific cultural attributes are the school rules as set out in the policy documents of schools and the way they are implemented in the day-to-day life in schools and classrooms. The Abernethy Country School has a comprehensive Behaviour Management Plan (BMP) that is based on four 'golden rules' and a charter or rights for students, staff and parents (see Figure 4).

\*\*\*insert Golden Rules\*\*\*

Figure 4: Golden Rules – Abernethy Country School (cited in Handbook, 2001, p. 26)

The Charter of Rights and the Golden Rules convey much about the culture that is envisioned by the policy makers. Phrases such as '*be treated with courtesy and respect*' and '*be proud of self and school*' evoke images and concern for the individual as well as the community. The terminology 'golden rules' and 'charter of rights' invokes a sense of importance, grandness, all-encompassing principles of the ideal of democratic life, much the same way as democratic life has been envisioned in the past by theorists of democracy such as Locke, Rousseau, Paine and many others and later on by the United Nations. It seems that the 'Golden Rules' principle as a basis for democratic life, attempts to instill a sense of self that is connected to the community in a positive way. In other words, Anna and the other policy designers at Abernethy Country School seem to believe that by embracing these rules and accepting these values, students will reaffirm and reevaluate who they are as individuals, but also as members of the school community. This may lead to the conclusion that through the valuing of these 'Golden Rules' democratic attitudes and beliefs are internalised by students, which is seen as a model that enhances the formation of 'good citizens'.

High ideals are not only assumed for students but also for teachers who are assumed to be of high morals and infallible. For example, under point one (Charter of Rights) is stated: '*Everyone* has the right to *be treated with courtesy and respect*'. In the next column (Golden Rules), under point two it says that the students '*must follow the instructions of staff at all times*'. There is a presumption that teachers will automatically always treat students with courtesy and respect and it is the students who have not yet mastered the art of respectful treatment of others. This is made explicit under point two of the Charter of Rights where it is stated that '*everybody* has the right to *teach and learn without unnecessary or constant disruption*'. That 'everybody' may refer to every child and not necessarily to every person is further

exemplified under point three (Charter of Rights) where it is noted that *'everybody'* has the right to *work and play in a safe, secure, friendly and clean environment*. The 'Golden Rules' give concrete examples of how the above-mentioned principle may be applied and who is targeted. For example, it is explained that: *'spitting is not acceptable'* and *'no ball games in covered areas or around garden beds'* are allowed. The reference to 'safe play', 'no spitting' and 'no ball games' is clearly intended for students as it is not assumed that teachers and parents will come to school to 'play ball games' etc. Although students are at times specifically mentioned (*Students must be punctual to class*), the Golden Rules, while embracing an inclusive terminology and referring to 'everyone', are explicitly designed to inform students about their duties. It can, therefore, be concluded that while it is explicitly stated that *'everyone'* has the right *'be treated with courtesy and respect'* and *'everyone'* has the right to *'teach and learn without unnecessary or constant disruption'* the implied meaning is that teachers have a right to be treated with courtesy and respect and students have a responsibility to display courteous behaviour and respect. Such behaviour is shown when students refrain from, for example, swearing and wearing hats inside the classroom. At the same time, it is emphasised that students also have a right and a duty to treat each other with respect and courtesy as *'aggressive behaviour, retaliation, racism, sexual harassment and bullying are not permitted'* (Golden Rules, point three).

These Golden Rules intended for the students, make explicit what behaviour is 'right', normative, and pathological by identifying how to feel and what to do and not do. For example, the Charter of Rights notes that *'everyone has the right to be proud of self and the school'* and this 'proudness' is demonstrated by students wearing the school uniform *'at all times when representing the school'* and this is non-negotiable as it is clearly stated that *'students must wear the uniform'*.

The instrumental language used in the school documents is important in illustrating the school's general desire to gradually change the culture and display to students, parents and staff that the school is serious in its attempt to part with traditional educational models. However, the use of inclusive terminology such as Charter of Rights and Golden Rules which may well display egalitarian ideals may not be enough to change the mind-set of people in power. It seems that the control of student bodies and minds by adult authority figures is implicit and firmly embedded within the culture of the school. To change the culture of the school, deeply entrenched ideological beliefs about students' unequal social positionality and the power/knowledge nexus, which is in operation at this school, needs to be changed. The ideology in operation at the school reflects the transition from an outdated image of children that sees them as 'objects' to be 'ruled over', founded on beliefs that seem to be in tension with the view of children as subjects of rights as portrayed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Transitional stages reflect powerfully how hard it is to change entrenched school cultures and child images. The acknowledgement of children as bearers of rights and thus parting with traditional child-images is at the heart of a practical HRE pedagogy and contemporary political citizenship education programmes such as the *Discovering Democracy* curriculum that attempt to create schools as places of democratic commitments and attitudes. The paradox is that democratic visions and innovative policies such as 'no school bells' designed to foster subjectivity and student agency occur in a context of sophisticated technologies of regulation such as the Behaviour Management policy pages of the Handbook. For example:

Staff have the responsibility to:

- ❑ Model respectful, courteous and honest behaviour

- ❑ Document student misbehaviour and correctional strategies  
(Handbook, 2001, p. 25):

The underlying ideological belief reflected here is the taken-for-granted notion that power/knowledge is 'naturally' structured and unequal. Adults are the 'rulers' and students are 'ruled-over' and thus do not share in the governing process of themselves as individuals, nor in the governance of the community. The question of student control and discipline ranks very high among the concerns of teachers and students alike. What are Anna's thoughts on the meaning of the school rules that she helped to develop and how do they seem to work in her opinion? The following table (Table 16b) illustrates the significance of the 'golden rules' and exemplifies some of the consequences students face when resisting these rules.

Table 16b: Principal Interview – Abernethy Country School: School Rules

<i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview 23.11.2000 – School A, (Anna)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Eva: What about the rules? What are students allowed/not allowed to do?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: We've got a charter of rights for everybody. And linked to our charter of rights are our golden rules. So we've got our 4 charters of rights and the golden rules that link with them.</i></p>	<p>Anna is emphasising the idea of equality, stressing that the charter of rights is for 'everybody', obviously meaning that 'everybody' encompasses every person. Here she seems to be concerned to stress the importance of the democratic ideal of the universal applicability of rights to all members of the community, which include children as rights holders.</p>
<p><i>Eva: Why only four rules?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: Because we thought to be realistic. There are a lot of things that come under 'respect'. So our rule is that everyone is having respect for each other and when we break this down into the classroom, a very big part of a teacher's programme at the beginning of the year is about being descriptive about what respect means.</i></p>	<p>Although Anna strives towards the realisation of an ideal democratic life, she concedes that there is a need 'to be realistic'. This may reflect the state of confusion and contradictory messages and highlight the paradoxical situation this school seems to face. A way out of this paradoxical situation is seen by being 'descriptive', so that it can concretised enough to be doable and limited to a small number of specific behavioural attributes that may reflect common values of respect and courtesy, such as 'no swearing' and 'no hats inside'.</p>

<p><i>Eva: What are the consequences for not obeying the rules?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: We have a behaviour management plan that has different levels.</i></p> <p><i>[At this stage, Anna explains the plan in detail and refers to the Abernethy Country School Handbook of which the BMP occupies the last 3 pages.]</i></p>	<p>How 'sufficient' respect for authority and appropriate attitudes and behaviours may be demonstrated by students in this case school has been noted in the Golden Rules. 'No swearing' and 'no hats inside' are such examples. Anna further stated that there are other concrete examples that are context dependent and are usually discussed on a class level. Students are held accountable for their behaviour. An implicit understanding that students need disciplining and are developing attitudes and behaviours that is deemed appropriate is displayed here. The 'different levels' refer to the levels of punishment.</p>
<p><i>Eva: Have you had many suspensions this year?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: No, our suspension data is excellent. We haven't had any this year. And we've gone from having had 60 suspensions two years ago to hardly any last year.</i></p> <p><i>Eva: Why does this occur?</i></p> <p><i>Anna: This is only the second year we've had this approach. ... We [the working group, consisting of Anna, parent, teacher and representatives] did quite a bit of research. We went to primary and secondary schools in Perth which had a positive approach and we asked them what they've got and how they made it [BMP] work. So we came up with this plan.</i></p>	<p>One way of monitoring the impact of novel approaches on the socialisation of children may well be through suspension data of schools. It may be significant that there is a noticeable drop of suspensions that is believed to be caused by changes in behaviour management procedures.</p> <p>The emphasis is on developing 'appropriate' attitudes and behaviours as well as accountability for failing to behave in an 'appropriate' way.</p>

Anna, who believes in the liberal democratic ideas of fairness and responsibility seems to be quite comfortable with the Behaviour Management Plan (BMP) that the school developed after *'quite a bit of research'* (Principal-Interview, 23.11.2000). The BMP, of which the 'golden rules' is an integral part, demonstrates how the policy developers envisage their role in mutually developing the abilities and attitudes necessary for students to act as active and responsible citizens of their classroom and wider school environment. Under the heading: *Incentives and Rewards* it is noted that:

Every positive interaction with students contributes towards the development of meaningful relationships. The provision and attainment of rewards and incentives is essential in order to facilitate and promote the development of positive relationships. [The Abernethy Country School] encourages the use of incentives to promote and encourage desirable behaviours,



attitudes and values. The provision of such incentives shall be at the discretion of individual staff members. ... Note: When the reward or incentive is food based, extra consideration must be given to the nature of this item. Sugar based rewards should only be used in moderation and healthy alternatives provided where practical. (Handbook, 2001, p. 22)

Incentives and rewards are significant socialising tools used by staff members to ensure the attainment of the goal of "developing positive relationships between students, staff, parents and members of the wider community" (Handbook, 2001, p. 22). However, the BMP pages of the handbook are equally explicit in naming the level of punishment for students who fail to "display desirable behaviours, attitudes and values", as mentioned in the extract above (Handbook, 2001, p. 22). To mark the centrality of student behaviour and consequences for misbehaving students, a flow-chart has been developed and printed on the back pages of the handbook that seems to explicitly emphasise its importance as a socialising tool.

**Figure 5: Behaviour Management Flow Chart, School A**

During the course of the interview Anna provided a number of examples for all levels of warning, with level five constituting the highest level that may lead to suspension or expulsion. My observations and casual interactions with students support Anna's view that the BMP is well liked and accepted. Parents, teachers and students alike seem to be familiar with all the levels of the BMP and perceive it as an open and fair system. For example, Alice, a participating teacher explains: *"I like the BMP because it is fair and students know exactly where they stand. Everyone is treated the same, no exceptions are made"* (Fieldnotes, 05.09.2001).

The BMP, as an instrument of control and surveillance of students, seems attractive as it is explicit in its attempt to hold students accountable, reward 'desirable behaviour, attitudes and values' and teach students about the need to moderate their behaviour and to act with restraint and care. Therefore, the BMP together with the Golden Rules, convey a message that to act with care for the self and the community is to act with regard to limits deemed appropriate and set by the policy designers of the BMP. These minimum standards of behaviour are seen as essential for 'good' democratic citizenship.

The school administrators display an understanding here that these minimum standards of behaviour can be ensured through a system of reward and punishment, where discipline is achieved through external means. The BMP actively constructs and rearranges the behaviours, attitudes and values of the students (and teachers) to make them 'fit' those of the school and of its current ideology.

In summary, Abernethy Country School is a middle-sized government school that not only occupies new buildings and new grounds, but is attempting to change its philosophical approach, from a more traditional educational model to one that might be referred to as a constructivist approach, with an emphasis on co-operation and

child-centredness. The school sought a number of new approaches to its day-to-day operation, one of which was the development of a comprehensive behaviour management plan and the abolition of the school bell. If the culture of a school denotes traditions and ways of doing things, then the fact that the school, although a rather large school with 500 students, has decided against the use of bells or sirens, is significant, as it contributes, in the words of Anna, to a *'nice and relaxed atmosphere'* for the purpose of instilling a sense of self-discipline and self-control in students. Ian Hunter (1994, p. 54) explains in a similar vein: "the capacities of the reflective person emerge only after individuals have been initiated into the acts of self-concern and self-regulation". Unfortunately, the school's innovative new idea seems to be in tension with other practices at the school that reinforce external control of students by the teachers. The possible effects of the specific use of these technologies of power to uphold social order (Foucault, 1977, 1980) will be further developed in the next chapter. However, it is becoming clear, from the above discussion on the way student bodies and minds are socialised, that traditional understandings of hierarchies of control are present and shaping the culture of the school through the operation of the BMP and an active system of reward and punishment.

Despite clear signs that teachers are used as moral disciplinarians of students through the enforcement of adult surveillance and control of students, the school is in the process of transition and seriously trying to not only shed traditional understandings of children as objects of care and protection but also attempting to transform traditional educational practices. This becomes apparent by the enthusiasm displayed by Anna when she discusses the *"youth parliament"*, which is yet *"another new approach"* (Anna, principal interview, 23.11.2000) taken by the school and was established to actively encourage students to take part in thinking about and helping to

find workable solutions to the day-to-day school governing problems. What the youth parliament is and what its terms of reference are, will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

### ***Bolton Primary School***

#### **Contextual Information**

The Bolton Primary School can be classified as a small to medium-sized government school that provides education for approximately 260 students ranging in age from five to 12 years. The school has a staff of 20 members. It consists of one principal and one deputy-principal, eight teachers, three specialist and support teachers, three educational assistants, two administration staff, one library officer and one gardener. The school can be described as a difficult site that epitomises the many social injustices and inequalities that are the reality of many large cities in established democracies. The systems of inequality are manifold, powerful and ever-present within as well as outside of the school as it is located in one of the most underprivileged areas of Perth, Western Australia. Indeed, it cannot be denied that the Bolton Primary School, its culture and physical appearance, is marked by the inscription of poverty. The principal's description of the community and the location of the school illustrates this poignantly. When I enquired about demographical details, Ben<sup>46</sup> explained that:

*You see, the children in this local community are so disempowered ... this school is the most disadvantaged school in Western Australia. We have over 30 different nationalities represented at this school. Most of our parents . . . rent [government-subsidised] housing. ... about 60% of our students are from single parent families and . . . about 60% or 70% of our parents are unemployed and are relying on social [welfare] as their main source of income. But our main issue is the transition of children. We've got children currently enrolled and we are their fourth school this year. We've 160 students who transferred out of the school and 130 students who transferred into the school. Not only do they [the children] have to get used to living in a new suburb and new housing, they have to get used to a new school, make new friends and a new set of rules in the school. When you're six, seven or eight years old, that transition is difficult to make. (Ben, interview transcript, 14.11.2000.*

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<sup>46</sup> This is not his real name.

Ben's explanation demonstrates powerfully how Foucault's theory of bio-power works in society. In the above interview extract, Ben described the social context of the school by referring to the parents' social class. Dimensions of social difference, such as class, often in combination with ethnicity, as inscribed upon the bodies and minds of the students at Bolton Primary School, are able to effectively illustrate a range of social and political disadvantages these students face. The compounding processes of bodily/social inscriptions mentioned by Ben, such as '30 different nationalities', 'transferring into and out of the school', 'living in government housing and on social welfare' are not faced by the majority of Western Australian students and, thus, are often not only not catered for, but just simply forgotten by politicians and educational policy designers who are charged with looking after the educational development and welfare of Western Australian school children. The disadvantages 'poor children' face, based on the economic position of their parents cannot be hidden or erased. As this case narrative of the life at Bolton Primary School will illustrate, inscriptions of poverty, as social and political pathology, leave a trail of disempowered and disenfranchised bodies and minds which leave a bitter taste of hopelessness in people that attempt to fight societal inequality, but most unfortunately, more so in people that are directly affected.

Ben has been the principal of the Bolton Primary School for three years. Before taking up this position, he was employed as a principal of two independent progressive schools in the metropolitan area of Perth for over five years. The experiences of working in alternative educational systems helped to shape Ben's ideas about the purpose of education in general and education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights in particular.

During the course of this investigation, Ben decided to resign his position as principal of the Bolton Primary School to take up another leadership position with the Western Australian government education system, involving the care of severely disadvantaged, mainly Indigenous, children in a rural area of Western Australia. Since the departure of Ben, the school had *"two complete sets of administrators (principal and deputy-principal) with their own ideas and practices"* (Telephone-Interview with Barbara, the current deputy-principal, 18.09.2002). Barbara explained that she was not aware that the school was involved in a research project, nor did she know Ben or his educational ideas and the background of the changes that he implemented while principal of the school. The drawbacks of a centralised system where principals and deputy-principals of government schools are sent to a new appointment at the beginning of a school year or term without much knowledge and understanding of the school, its history or recent educational developments, and without knowing the previous principal, are clearly visible in this case school. The new administration (principal and deputy-principal) was not aware of significant events at the school or special arrangements that certain students had with the former principal (Ben). This makes it extraordinarily hard to develop consistency of a school's culture.

Further, to instill a sense of safety in students, where they would be able to develop a sense of agency is almost impossible in a climate of constant change of educational and administrative staff, where there is a lack of effective communication between retiring and new school administration. Although sad and unfortunate, it does not come as a surprise that after Ben's departure, major changes that he instigated were discontinued. A poignant example of this is Ben's attempt to enfranchise students who are marked by societal disadvantage. Ben explains later how he and his staff worked to *"scrap the resolution room"* that was in use when he became principal

and was "*hated by staff and students alike*" (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000). However, the new administrators were not aware of Ben's ideas and innovations. Since the departure of Ben and his deputy-principal, the new administration reinstated the old system, although in a different form. The resolution room is now called the 'interview-room' and "*it works well, because the students hate it*", explains Barbara (Telephone-Interview, 27.09.2002).

The belief in the need and effectiveness of such policies and practices that attempt to 'normalise' student behaviours at the school, exemplifies the tendency for inscriptions of poverty to be translated into social and moral pathology. Power/knowledge is intimately tied to the construction of student bodies and minds. All students, even the 'non-deviant students', are affected by bio-power and the reinstallation of the 'resolution room', now referred to as the 'interview-room', as the students that escaped this form of punishment 'watch and learn', similar to the 'public spectacle' described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1977). The 'interview room' functions as a public display of power on the bodies of 'misbehaving' students to discipline their minds, through a change of attitude. Barbara (School B) seems to approve of the 'interview-room' in a school that caters for socially disadvantaged students, precisely because it is used as a 'deterrent', "*something to hate*", much the same way the 'resolution room' was despised and functioned as a deterrent prior to Ben's initiative to 'scrap the resolution room'.

### Physical Environment

The first thing that one notices when entering the school grounds is the massive school gate and the three meter high fence with three strings of barbed wire on top all the way around. Discussing the school's physical environment, Ben notes that: "*We had the Minister of Education visiting the school last week and he just*



*couldn't believe that a school would look like this"* (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000).

The school seems to have great resemblance to a prison, not just because of the high fence but also the way it was built. Conveying my observation to Ben about how the school's physical appearance resembles a prison he nods and explains:

*It does, it's all about surveillance and control. You can stand in the front office there and you can basically observe everything that is happening out in the playground ... I'm not even sure if teachers understand [the implications of] that. ... Foucault would have a field day here [laughing]. (Interview transcript, 14.11.2000)*

The way the buildings are set up reminds me much of Bentham's Panopticon, which I discussed earlier. The school buildings have strategically been placed so that staff *"can stand in the front office and can basically observe everything that is happening out in the playground"* (Principal-Interview with Ben, 14.11.2000) without being seen to observe the students. The school was built in the 1970s and the buildings look generally old and run-down although the majority of buildings seem to have been painted afresh only recently in light cream and blue colours. According to Ben, a prospective parent, commenting on the physical environment of the school, *"described this school as a sad school and didn't want to enroll his son and he didn't. He went to another school"* (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000). The severe impact that the physical environment of the school has on visitors may be illustrated with the following short interview extract in which Ben and I discuss the Minister of Education's visit to the school. This is also a pertinent reminder of how the systems of inequality and disempowerment are ever-present and may be perpetuated by limited actions taken on the part of people in positions of power in our society.

*Eva: So, what did the Minister think of it [the physical environment of the school]? He was shocked obviously?*

*Ben: He just thought that it really didn't do much for the image of the school.*

*Eva: And is he going to change anything or propose any change?*

*Ben: No, no, no – he came to have a look at the school to get a reality check that schools like this exist. At the moment he's giving us some money to upgrade one of the toilet blocks as a result of his visit. That's basically it.*

The school gets vandalised regularly. It is not uncommon that some angry students paint graffiti all over the walls of the classrooms or that windows are smashed or scratched.

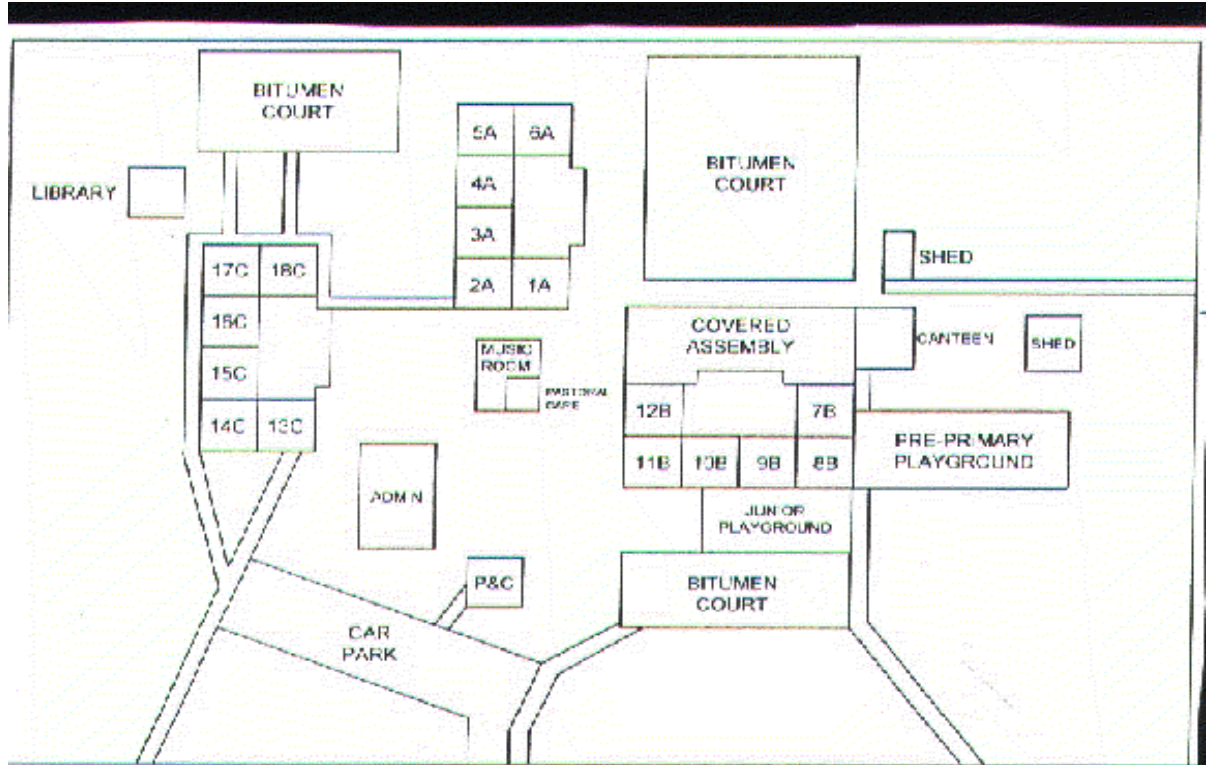


Figure 6: Building Plan of Bolton Primary School

As the above building plan (Figure 6) illustrates, surveillance of students by teachers and administrators or hierarchical observation is a prime feature of the architectural design of the school. The strategic placement of buildings in this way is another example that extends the logic of disciplining students to become ethical subjects who learn 'appropriate behaviour' and thus learn to observe the human rights of others. The acquisition of democratic skills does not necessitate an interest in and valuing of democracy and human rights or of democratic attitudes and behaviours but may simply be an unquestioned and therefore taken-for-granted belief in the value of hierarchical structures and 'acceptable behaviours' that demands a display of the

'mastery of rule-following' and enforced self-restraint if one wants to avoid punishment. For Foucault, the deliberate placing of school buildings and play areas reveal the underlying desire to exercise social control and purposely evaluate student's behaviour through effective and efficient means.

[This form of] examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them. (Foucault, 1979, p. 175)

The strategic placement of buildings and play areas enables the objectification of students. In this way, students' behaviour is under constant surveillance and control of adults. In other words, following Foucault (1979, p. 175), teachers' and administrators' formation of knowledge of student behaviours is linked with a structural display of power. In this way, students become the object of 'the powerful gaze', which enables a meticulous evaluation of their behaviour and intervention that potentially leads to successful socialisation.

Similar to the Abernethy Country School, teachers in this school are also organised into a 'duty-roster'. However, teachers are not required to walk around the school ground, but instead are placed strategically in the corners of the large and bare concrete playgrounds to be visible and able to intervene in an instant as violent outbursts are not uncommon, even with very young students (Fieldnotes, 02.03.2001).

Belinda, a grade one teacher participating in this study further elaborates:

*They've got so many problems at home that they come to school – and they come to school angry, and they are so young, they don't have this understanding, they have to get this anger out somehow. (Teacher interview, Belinda, 02.03.2001)*

At Bolton Primary School, students are then not only objects of constant and hidden surveillance but of constant covert *and* overt control and judgment.

In conclusion, my observations illustrate how school buildings function as microphysics of power/knowledge. Bolton Primary School serves as a prime example

of how a school's architecture can be instrumental in preserving and aiding traditional notions of control and authority. These are embedded in an ideology of hierarchical surveillance and control, where adults are empowered and students are objectified and subjected to control and normalising practices. Thus, the physical landscape of this school is not at all conducive to a child-image that sees children as social agents and bearers of rights and responsibilities. It is in this way that this and other school's physical landscape aids in the construction and reconstruction of its socio/cultural and political landscape. The power relations enabled within the architectural design of the school touch every aspect of the organisational life at the Bolton Primary School. To make changes to the physical environment would drastically impact on the socio-political environment of the school and send an unmistakable message that pre-existing power-balances may be disturbed and/or the status quo challenged. The scrapping of the resolution room, for example, was seen as a strong message that traditional child-images and outdated educational practices as forms of hierarchy, surveillance, and control are no longer deemed desirable ways of educating in and for democracy.

### *School Culture*

The school's physical features can be described as being closed, depressing, impersonal, formal, and plain. Despite these negative attributes, the school is an 'uplifting' and even 'friendly' place, largely due to the leadership characteristics of the principal and the way his educational ideas have impacted on the culture of the school. Listening carefully to the stories of the people at the school, there is a strong sense of compassion and care for the well being of its constituency, where innovation is encouraged and longstanding educational principles and practices are challenged. The high fences, for example, are not necessarily there to keep the students 'in' but

rather to keep the students safe, out of harm and potential dangerous individuals 'out'.

Ben illustrates this point when he states:

*Often, once a month, we have to lock the gate for security reasons during the day. ... So it's basically to keep people out, rather than to keep people in. ... Earlier this year, we had a man come on the oval with a gun at lunchtime and the students were out there, he was pointing the gun at the students. We had to get all the students into the school ground, inside the fence and lock this guy out while the police dealt with him later. We've had a student kidnapped from the school grounds by an adult with a rifle, a loaded rifle. He just walked into the classroom and grabbed one of the kids and took him off. So, you know, we've got a lot of issues like that. So at times it is an advantage to have a fence, although it looks terrible. (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000)*

The fence, although unattractive, is useful in conveying a sense of safety and security and facilitates the attempt to keep the potentially violent character of the local community somewhat removed from the school. The school, although deeply connected to the local community, is a different site, where different rules apply and where children are allowed to feel safe, at least while in the care of the teachers and administrators. As Ben explains:

*A very sad thing happened. A teacher rolled up at 5.30 a.m. one morning to prepare to take the kids on camp and she found a student rapped-up in a rug on her doorstep of the classroom. This child had actually climbed the fence and she arrived before the cleaners and asked him what he was doing and he said that it was safer to sleep at the school than it was at home and he had this blanket that he hid in the bushes and he was woken-up each day by the cleaners as they came through the gate. What he would do, he could hear them coming and take his blanket, climb back over the fence and hide in the bush to about 8.30 a.m. when the kids arrive to come into the school and he's been sleeping outside the classroom for several months. The parents hadn't missed him and didn't know what he was doing. It is the safest place for a lot of kids and our attendance rate is higher than most similar schools like us. (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000)*

Despite these stories of genuine care and compassion, it cannot be denied that the above quote is also illustrative of a dismal reality. The bodies and minds of these children are deeply impregnated with and scarred by the inscriptions of poverty. Schools, like Bolton Primary School, continue to be the sites where students are viewed as children constituted by poverty and social inequality. Ben's observation that the school: *"is the safest place for a lot of kids"* (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000), emphasises the compounded vulnerability of these children, which cannot be denied. The tension between children's right to protection and their right to participation is

clearly visible here. The dilemma present in this and similar situations is, that children's rights to protection from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse" (Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) seems clearly in the forefront of Ben's mind. The problem is that if children are perceived as primarily in need of protection, then these children become 'objects' again as they are the 'objects of protection'. They are the passive recipients of care of adult decisions. Or to put it differently, the balancing of the duty to protect children and the desire (and duty) to emancipate them from the role of the passive recipients of care and adult decision-making is not at all easy and there are no simple answers available. In the case of Ben, his desire to engage with processes and practices that facilitate the democratisation of the school is overshadowed by his concern for the students' physical and emotional safety. The dilemma between protection rights and participation rights of students can disadvantage these socially disadvantaged students even more as there is a concern that they are again objectified; this time, not primarily because of their status as children but their status as poor children. Inscriptions of poverty can be seen as the primary cause for the objectification of students as they are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and in desperate need of protection. The undeniable wish, to protect students in situations of stress, effectively render mute any discussion of alternative possibilities. Thus, the obstacles to establishing a subject identity and the incorporation of children from poor economic backgrounds into the political culture is compounded, which may well make attempts to genuinely include these students in democratic participation if not unimaginable, very difficult indeed. However, Ben is determined to create spaces where the balance is shifted towards the realisation of students' participation rights. His aspiration to empower these students leads to transformative educational practices, where student voices are included in decision-

making processes and are thus only marginally objectified. The examples of such pedagogy, which are discussed below, signal a vast improvement in the lives of these students<sup>47</sup>.

Because of the difficult and unforgiving physical and socio-political environment at Bolton Primary School and the very definite educational ideas held by Ben, it is appropriate to consider his philosophical approach to teaching and learning and the impact it has had on the culture of the school. An extract of the principal's interview is provided in Table 17a with Ben's views expressed in the left column and my thoughts and comments in the right column.

Table 17a: Principal Interview – Bolton Primary School: Description of School

<i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview 14.11.2000 – School B, (Ben)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Eva: How committed are you to democratic principles within the school, given the rather difficult circumstances?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: We are changing. When I first came to the school 3 years ago, we had a very rigid structure certainly as far as discipline and school rules were concerned and the level of misbehaviour and suspension from the school were rising and also rising with that was parent dissatisfaction with what was happening within the school.</i></p>	<p>Considering the harsh physical and social conditions that these students face simply by living in such disempowering environments, how did this school manage to gain a name for being a place of democratic educational practice? What are the possibilities in such an unsympathetic place with its many limitations? What is happening within the school that seems to make a real difference to the lives of these students?</p>
<p><i>Ben: I was the principal of [two alternative schools]. I really like the principles of the alternative schools, of students being empowered and also parents involved in decision-making and the life of the school. I am trying to implement a number of those principles into this setting here but a large number of teachers and some parents feel really threatened by that because it's just something they have no experience of and they just can't imagine students' having power within the school, you know, it's the teachers who have the power. So</i></p>	<p>Carefully listening to Ben's explanations, I began to understand that his general philosophical approach was child-centred and also very much grounded in educational experiences. It was not only a theory that student empowerment may cause fewer behavioural problems and greater student and parent satisfaction but Ben was convinced that there existed a definite correlation between student empowerment</p>

<sup>47</sup> Although a central aspect of practical HRE, a more detailed exploration of the tension between protection rights and participation rights of children is outside the scope of this thesis. This line of inquiry will need to be pursued later.

*my experience in the alternative school system has been to have very few issues to do with behaviour in the playground also the classroom. That's what I'm trying to change here. Where a child gets into trouble for not following one of the codes of behaviour, then they basically have the right of reply and some participation in resolving the issue.*

and fewer behavioural problems because of his previous experiences as principal of two different alternative educational settings in which students seem to be more empowered as a fact of more democratic educational practices and greater student consultation.

*Ben: We've implemented a 'stop-think-do' programme as part of our change in the discipline policy in the school. And what this does is that it involves the students in the discipline process. So if they have acted out for whatever reason, it means that they can have input into it [the discipline process], so they have to go through the 'stop-think-do' process. 'Stop' what you do, 'think' about what you did, 'do'- 'a better way of reacting' – and that's the first stage of getting them to reflect and make decisions. The second stage is called the social circle and this is happening in every class, where the whole class sits down and helps that child, or group of children through the whole process of making better decisions. And that is working really well.*

These strategies seem to empower students and work actively against their objectification. They encourage them to look at the issues they are facing and what they can do about them. Instead of being the victims or perpetrators, the students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and understand that they have various choices of acting that bear various consequences. Students' participation in decision-making processes displays social and political agency on part of students and is working towards transformative educational practices.

*Eva: If you had to describe your school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?*

*Ben: O.K. the first thing I would talk about is that it is a multicultural school. We've got over 30 different nationalities and we respect each other, every one of those nationalities. Everyone is different and what may happen for one person may not necessarily have meaning for another person. I state that upfront to the child and the parents and that gets around this discipline issue where kids aren't treated the same. So that's day one, it's made very clear to them that we treat students in different ways, according to their backgrounds.*

Immediately, Ben introduces the concept of democratic tolerance and social justice. The importance of understanding the value of differential treatment of students, depending on their cultural backgrounds, social histories and personal needs seems to be stressed here.

*Eva: So the children are not treated the same?*

*Ben: That's right. I might have a child that breaks some windows, smashes a window and I might, rather than suspend the child, I will, if she or he is an Aboriginal student, then I would wait until they cool down and then work out what the issue is. If it was a Vietnamese child, I'd do the same and with the Vietnamese child it might have something to do with the school, with the Aboriginal child it may have something to do with home – it usually has something to do with home. And therefore, suspending the Aboriginal*

This seems to be a convincing example of the importance to take the context of situations, events and reactions of a multicultural and diverse student population into consideration. By doing this, Ben models how ideals of democratic tolerance can be applied in a concrete situation. This may have well been an important HRE lesson as such modeling may be an effective way of encouraging students to believe in their reflective abilities that may lead to the



<p><i>child for smashing the window when it's a big issue at home (suspending means sending them home again to the situation that's made them angry in the first place) so I wouldn't suspend them when I find out what their problem is. I know that this causes problems as far as consistency but you know ...</i></p>	<p>development of democratic skills and attitudes.</p>
<p><i>Eva: So racial issues?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: Yes, racial, lack of understanding of the student's background and culture. Rather than having to deal with the teacher, they [the students] can deal with me. They can come and talk to me and I go back and deal with the teacher on their behalf. That's a subtle thing that's happening that is not up front but it's happening where the kids can walk right in through this door. They have the right to come in and tell me. And that's working really well with those kids and I have about 6 or 7 kids, it's a flexible number.</i></p>	<p>The wish to teach all children equally through a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is very tempting. However, the present examples seem to illustrate the limitations of such an approach to student behaviour in our contemporary complex, multifaceted and multicultural society.</p>
<p><i>Eva: What about the other children. Do they feel disadvantaged because these kids seem to have some rights that they don't have?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: Well, certainly some of the other kids are much more empowered. They are more at ease with teachers and other students and often teachers are more willing to deal with an angry white student than with a let's say Ethiopian or Aboriginal student.</i></p>	<p>Ben is presenting students and teachers with significant educational opportunities for exploring their personal understandings of the variety of social disadvantages and how these are embedded in our society. By critically reflecting on why these students seem to be given 'special rights', Ben aims to problematise the ways in which social and political disadvantage is manifested, perpetuated and at times reinforced through day-to-day practices. Is the use of 'differential rights' a strategy that may work against such practices?</p>
<p><i>Ben: I also point out that our school may be different from other schools. For instance uniforms, I am not a great uniform person.</i></p> <p><i>Eva: Why not?</i></p>	<p>It is significant that this principal also believes that the school is 'different' from other schools in the way it operates.</p>
<p><i>Ben: Having had an alternative school background tends to suggest that uniforms are all about surveillance and control.</i></p> <p><i>Eva: Why do you perceive uniforms to be about surveillance and control?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: Well, because we are a factory. We've got kids all dressed the same. We are a factory, we are running an institution where all kids are the same. You are not allowed to be an individual, you're not allowed to be different. And the other aspect is the punitive aspect of that. Every child has a uniform, is supposed to wear uniforms.</i></p>	<p>School uniforms are seen to be a tool of surveillance and control for Ben and he seems to be determined to 'ease off' on surveillance and control. To change the school uniform policy means effectively changing the power/knowledge balance and breaking with the hierarchies of surveillance and control.</p>

<p><i>What about the parents, if this is their 4<sup>th</sup> school, do they have to buy a uniform? So we are very tolerant but we still encourage the kids to wear the school colours that are blue. It doesn't matter what they wear. But I've eased off on uniforms since I've been principal here.</i></p>	
<p><i>Eva: And are the kids happy about that?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: Yes.</i></p>	<p>Ben believes that the children like the fact that the uniform policy is not strictly reinforced. My observations seem to support this view as on my school visits, I observed that fewer than 50% of students were in school uniforms, but many were dressed in the school colours in a lower and upper primary class.</p>
<p><i>Eva: And the parents?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: Yes, well depends, the white parents who are the consistent people in the school they would like to have their kids in uniform because that's the expectation. They try and get me to enforce the policy. It's maybe because of the lack of understanding of the situation of other parents. That's one issue why we're different from other schools. The other is rules... We have a code of behaviour rather than rules and we like to work things through.</i></p>	<p>Ben's view about the potential problems of school uniforms is not shared by all the parents. Some parents seem to see school uniforms as something that represents a tradition in the Australian school system and its relevance or purpose should not be questioned. However, Ben's conviction about the problems of uniforms and potential hardship for some parents who are not in a financial position to purchase school uniforms for their children seems to be strong enough to withstand the pressures of some of the parents.</p>

Ben indicated that one of the first tasks of his leadership at Bolton Primary School was a critical review of the school rules and regulations, because he seemed to be aware of the 'factory-nature' of the school or as Bennett and LeCompte describe it, children are still being educated in 'batches, like cookies' (1990, p. 249). Ben's critical views of the hierarchical factory model at Bolton Primary School is clearly expressed in the following comment: "*We are a factory, we are running an institution where all kids are the same. You are not allowed to be an individual, you're not allowed to be different*" (Principal-Interview with Ben, 14.11.2000). Equally visible is his strong desire to change the culture of the school to make it more student-friendly and empowering. Ben contends:

*But I've eased off on uniforms since I've been principal here. ... So we are very tolerant but we still encourage the kids to wear the school colours that are blue. It doesn't matter what they wear. (Principal interview with Ben, 14.11.2000)*

Under Ben's leadership, Bolton Primary School has undergone a number of changes. The following Table (17b) gives a 'snap-shot' of some of the processes that Ben initiated as he hoped to change the school from a hierarchical factory model to a more student-centred, participatory model of education. In particular, the changes of the disciplinary policies of the school and their effects are discussed.

Table 17b: Principal Interview – Bolton Primary School: School Rules

<i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview 14.11.2000 – School B, (Ben)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Ben: Over the last three years we set about re-examining where we were coming from as far as kids being empowered within the school. So we came up with what we feel are major changes.</i></p> <p><i>Eva: Can you give me an example?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: O.K. – The School Rules. It used to be called 'The School Rules' and is now called 'The School Code of Behaviour'. So we have taken the 'rule' away because often the people in this school have problems with rules as such as governing device. We decided that we would look at the rule issue, and the kids decided they didn't like the terminology of rule.</i></p>	<p>Changing the terminology from 'school rules' to 'code of behaviour' seems significant as it reinforces student's responsibility as social agents to behave ethically. In particular it encourages students to view themselves as subjects, active agents that are able to make choices. So, in listening to students and acting on their wishes, Ben intended to signal a radical reconceptualisation and reconstitution of the students and teachers at the school. He intended to make visible the challenge of the 'status quo'. The change of terminology was, thus, the signaling of a paradigmatic shift of students from 'objects of surveillance and control' to 'subjects with rights and responsibilities'.</p>
<p><i>Eva: How did the children decide that?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: We put it to the senior students in the school.</i></p>	<p>Although, as discussed in chapter two, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) does not set any lower age limit on children's participation rights in decision-making processes, Ben thought that the 'senior students' may have the 'maturity' required to participate in the decision-making processes.</p>
<p><i>Eva: How did you do that?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: We called all the kids together, that's from years 5 to 7 in a group meeting and we put our existing rules up and said: "We're not happy with what's happening here, how do you feel about these school rules, etc?" They thought that they were quite draconian and it was basically all about control and surveillance and the whole structure of the school was built around that.</i></p>	<p>The present example is another powerful illustration of how democratic consultation is modeled here and democracy and human rights taught in very concrete ways. The practices of consultation and shared problem-solving emphasises student agency, where notions of passivity even if only marginally or temporary are still superseded. These students are in this</p>

*This negative focus on control and surveillance. We even had a resolution room where students that had received so-many crosses would go into the resolution room and would miss out on their recess or lunch break. They were sat down in this room facing the wall, away from each other and a teacher supervised them. They were supposed to write a sheet why they misbehaved and what they could do about it. It was very hard to motivate kids to do that sort of stuff, working in that sort of situation. The kids didn't want to be there and the teachers didn't want to be there either. So what we did is, we discussed it with the kids and they hated the system. Sometimes, in some lunchtimes there were up to 40 students in this little room and of course it just became chaos. Plus, the teachers felt that there was just too much work involved in having this surveillance of the students and the data collection was just a nightmare for the teachers and the administration staff.*

instance no longer the passive recipients of care of adult's decisions but instead are involved in decision-making processes about the rules of the schools.

Ben openly advocates the idea of greater student participation in decision-making processes. In particular, he pointed out that listening to student concerns not only benefits the students and addresses their evolving capacities to gain democratic skills, experiences and responsibilities, but more so helped him and his staff to reflect on and change the school's discipline policy. The significance of the 'resolution room' as a technology of social control and 'normalisation' has been touched on briefly before and will be discussed in detail later. However, Ben's explanation illustrates that although a great number of children were sent to the resolution room for 'rehabilitation', it did not seem to be either successful nor popular with students or teachers as it did not effect much change in behaviour and added to the workload of teachers.

*Eva: So what happened to this room, is it still in existence?*

A clear link is established by Ben between the 'scrapping of the resolution room' and student behaviour that seemed to have contributed to student and teacher happiness.

*Ben: The room has been scraped and immediately the behaviour at school improved just with the scrapping of this system.*

*Eva: How did you measure this?*

*Ben: Well, number one was suspension data. Basically it came down straight away. ... We completely turned that around. We implemented some programmes that empowered the students into resolving the issues that are happening out in the playground. Under this old system which a lot of schools call "MSB" [Managing Student Behaviour], the behaviour in the playground was terrible, because the teachers were looking for confrontations all the time and this sort of rubbed off on the students ... and the problem with that is that the focus was on looking for kids misbehaving and writing it in the book, their misbehaviour, but not resolving a situation with a student. ... Nothing was ever resolved and as soon as we got rid of that resolution room, the behaviour in the playground was amazing.*

Changes of the discipline policy at the school that are informed by constructivist views of children as social agents are seen as the causes of a reduction in student suspension. The shift in focus away from recording student 'misbehaviour' where teachers sought that it was their duty to "look for confrontations all the time" which did not assist students in solving problems, seemed to be perceived as enfranchisement as it invited students to find solutions to their problems and attempt to resolve issues they may have with peers and/or teachers.

A distinctive sign that the school is shifting focus from student misbehaviour to positive attitudes in students, staff and parents is the careful wording of the 'behaviour policy' as noted in the recently revised School Handbook (2000): "The policy aims to develop skills, attitudes and self discipline which will result in a safe and caring environment for the whole school community. It also encourages the students to make positive choices" (p. 7). The aim is to create a "safe and caring environment". Despite this aspiration for the school, more work was necessary before it could be realised.

In summary, Bolton Primary School is a small to middle-sized government primary school that was established in the 1970s. The school buildings are in a state of disrepair with vandalism readily apparent. Money is scarce and is spent mainly on the most urgent repairs and educational materials. Consequently, there is never enough money left for urgently needed upgrades to the physical environment of the school. Despite its rather unpromising physical environment, Bolton Primary School seems to have undergone a number of positive changes under Ben's leadership, in particular his desire for more democratic school practices. Ben saw a definite need to reconstruct school policy and practices away from outdated ideological images of poor children as objects in need of control, correction and protection. The shift in perception of students from 'objects' to that of 'subjects' can be seen as 'revolutionary' in this socio-political environment. The above examples are illustrative of Ben's struggle to enfranchise students as subjects in the making with increasing rights and responsibilities rather than objects to be manipulated, controlled and protected. Ben's struggle is, however, tempered by his acknowledgement of the fragile state of many of his students as children constituted by economic and socio-political inequality. Nevertheless, it seems that the non-traditional 'child-image' is shared by other

authority figures within the school and is thus slowly becoming embedded in the social fabric of the school through the implementation of, for example, a school 'code of behaviour' and the 'scrapping of the resolution room'. Democratic consultation and deliberation as practiced in this school are illustrative of the number of ways in which day-to-day educational practices are effectively contributing to practical HRE and the gaining of democratic attitudes, knowledge and skills. The practices of student consultation and shared problem-solving emphasises student agency, rather than passivity. Therefore, the sentence: "*So what we did is, we discussed it with the kids*" (Principal-Interview with Ben, 14.11.2001), becomes a sentence of central importance as it signals a powerful transformation in the conception of the child-image at this school where children "are seen as *meaning-makers*, as essentially actors and not just as reactors" (Eugeen Verhellen, 2000, p.22) (emphasis in original).

Although not necessarily seen as equal partners, these students, possibly for the first time in their lives, are seen as partners in the process of government and in the building up of a somewhat democratically functioning community. This process signals the underlying belief that solutions to problems need to be built with children and due consideration given to their frame of reference and their perspective on the realities heard. Practical HRE can take many forms; however, it requires a child-image that gradually changes the relationship between adults and children. In essence, it affirms the need to view children as 'subjects of rights', who are able to form and express opinions, to participate in decision-making processes and influence solutions as laid out in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A significant goal of practical HRE as exemplified by Ben is a deepening of understanding of how schools construct students as objects of protection, control and correction rather than subjects of rights and meaning-makers. Ben has found strategies

that inform the empowerment of at least some older students at the school and help them claim their rights to participate in decision-making processes. How the Bolton Primary School has involved students in decision-making processes by way of a student council, which was in operation before Ben came to the school, and other forms of student empowerment, will be analysed in the next chapter.

### ***Crystal Montessori School***

#### **Contextual Information**

The Crystal Montessori School is a small independent school, established in February 1990 by a small group of parents who sought an alternative education for their children. The opening paragraphs of the history section in the school handbook read: "In the early days, the speedy rate of progress was a direct result of all members putting together their time and talents as best as they could . . . this has created a strong sense of community within the school" (Handbook, 2000, p. 7). Thus, the 'strong sense of community' within the parent body at the school was a result of multiple events. Firstly, the founding parents sought formal education for their children that was not yet available in the way it was envisioned. Secondly, these people were prepared to be actively engaged in the realisation of a joint vision. And, finally, these parents were in a financial situation that allowed them to not only invest their own time and professional expertise but also make considerable monetary contributions to the establishment of a private and independent school. Therefore, the social class position and the cultural capital associated with such a position contributed to the educational opportunities of the children of these founding parents of the school. These attributes associated with the founding families of the school are still unmistakably visible in the educational landscape of the school today. The school started with 10 primary and 16 pre-primary children and has since steadily grown and

presently caters for approximately 132 students, ranging in age from three years to 12 years.

The school is situated at the edge of a light industrial area of Perth, Western Australia. The Crystal Montessori School has a diverse parent base with a number of ethnic students and home languages spoken. The parents are mostly affluent and well educated, the majority with tertiary degrees. A great number of them operate their own businesses or work as professionals in industry or in government positions. The school has a staff of 17 that consists of one fulltime principal, six classroom teachers, two specialist teachers (French and music), one support teacher, four teaching assistants and three non-teaching staff. A number of these positions are filled on a part-time base. The principal, Carl<sup>48</sup>, was the founding principal of the school and announced his resignation shortly after I gained access to the school as a research site. He decided to give six months' notice of his decision to leave the school to enable a smooth transition as he expected his resignation to be upsetting to some of the students, staff and parents. Subsequently, his long-time deputy, Cathy<sup>49</sup>, was appointed as new principal of the school after a lengthy and thorough consultation process with students, parents and staff members. Both principals, Carl and Cathy, agreed to take part in this research project, which has been welcomed as it adds to the richness of the data.

### Physical Environment

The Crystal Montessori School is adjoined by a park, a large open field and a small stream. The school buildings are built out of cream-coloured bricks and have metal, dark blue rooftops. The colour-scheme of the school is prominent. The main colours of the school are dark purple, plum blue and cream. The exterior walls, the

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<sup>48</sup> This is not his real name.

<sup>49</sup> This is not her real name.



public areas of the school as well as the majority of the classrooms are painted in these colours. Much thought has gone into the colour scheme of the whole school. Architects<sup>50</sup>, which specialise in feng-shui, have advised the school as to the suitability of various colours schemes for the conduciveness to student learning in the different areas of the school. Further, the school's floors are covered with cork-tiles, which are fashionable at present and enhance the image of a warm and inviting learning place. The school's entrance is prominent, with two large round purple poles and two lemon trees flanking the entrance. The centre of the main building opens to a large atrium with an open kitchen area that invites much natural light. As Figure 7 illustrates, this school does not seem to have a Panopticon effect.

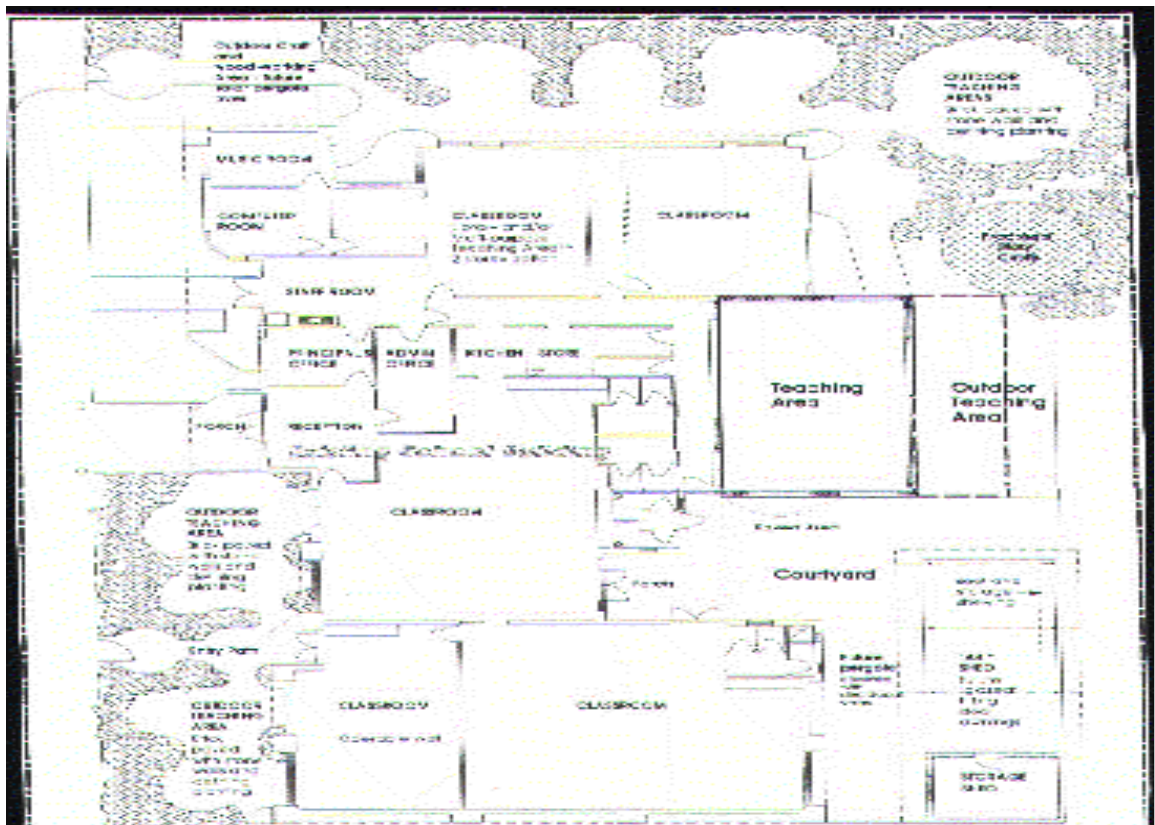


Figure 7: Building Plan Crystal Montessori School

<sup>50</sup> The architects are not only well known and successful but also educate their children in this school.

The school's physical environment, with its colour scheme, wooden play equipment and limestone walls is inviting and dramatically contrasts with Bolton Primary School, which is rather bleak with barbwire fence surrounding the school and bare cement playgrounds. Major upgrades to the playground area of the Crystal Montessori School have been budgeted in 2002 to include more play equipment, water features and outdoor work areas. The total cost for improvement of the outdoor area was estimated at approximately \$ 95,000.—(Telephone-Interview with Cilia, an administrative officer, 24.11.2002). This playground upgrade further adds to a distinctively exclusive image of the school. As the above building plan (Figure 7) and observational notes illustrate, surveillance of students by teachers and administrators are not part of bio-power at this school. Rather than surveillance and external control, self-regulation as internal control is encouraged. Students, even as young as three years old, are expected to understand and obey some of the basic democratic rules of self-governance. These students are, therefore, trusted to understand and demonstrate the mastery of democratic attitudes and behaviours toward fellow students and staff to a great extent, which seems to make the need for constant surveillance and control of their movements unnecessary.

The underlying belief in the social competence of these students which influences educational practices that seem to make overt surveillance and control obsolete, is in stark contrast with educational practices observed at the Bolton Primary School where surveillance and control is covert and overt, and at Abernethy Country School where surveillance and control is more distinctively noticeable, with teachers' 'patrolling' the school grounds.

Although, Crystal Montessori School (School C) is distinctively smaller than the other two schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) and

thus the policing (surveillance and control) of student bodies and minds less prominent, it is a significant finding that the school's architecture and dominant ideology as a signification of social relations does not include constant overt and hidden control of the students by adults in the way that they are present at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School. This is further exemplified in another prominent architectural feature of the school. All the rooms are linked and have internal doors that allow students, teachers and parents to move freely around the whole school from room to room. The notes from my field journal illustrate further how the school's architecture and the dominant ideology operating at the school enable unique educational practices and have significant effects for practical HRE:

A great number of children arrive early at the school, between 8.15 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. and are laughing and playing on the playground. A few boys are playing soccer with a parent. The parent seems to know all the kids quite well and is calling them by name. Other parents arrive, stand around and talk while observing their children play on the wooden play equipment. A teacher is on duty from 8.30 a.m. onwards and joins some of the parents that are engrossed in a conversation. Some children are running around the playground and others, some of the older children, have gone inside their classrooms and play on the computer, read a book or play board games. (Fieldnotes, 27.02.2001)

These observations confirm the image portrayed in the school handbook as mentioned earlier. The school aims to, and seems to succeed in fostering a 'strong sense of community' among its culturally diverse constituency. The regulatory practices at this independent and privately funded school, aided by the school's physical landscape, differ distinctively from that of the previous two government schools that are located in middle to lower socio-economic areas. Unlike the students at Abernethy Primary School (School A) and Bolton Primary School (School B), the students at Crystal Primary School (School C) seem not to be subjected to 'the same powerful gaze' as they are allowed to freely move around the school ground and are trusted to obey commonly understood and shared social rules.

Although, teachers are in the playground during recess and lunchtime, they are not 'patrolling' the school ground, but stationary during the lunch break and engaged in multiple conversations with students (Fieldnotes, 27.02.2001). The school's architectural design enables the Crystal Montessori students to easily escape adult supervision. The normalising practices of adult control and correction in operation at both the Abernethy Country School and the Bolton Primary School seem largely absent Crystal Montessori School. Thus, the power relations operating at Crystal Montessori School are more diffuse with social control and correctional practices not so readily visible.

### School Culture

The school's environmental quality can be described as open, uplifting, warm, friendly and colourful. Other cultural attributes such as shared beliefs and attitudes have been discussed with both the outgoing and incoming principal of the school. Table 18a illustrates Carl's and Cathy's responses to questions which elicit the general philosophical approach to teaching and learning and the school's unique culture. Extracts of the principals' interviews are provided in the left and center columns and my thoughts and comments are in the right column.

Table 18a: Principal Interview – Crystal Montessori School: Description of School

<i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview<sup>51</sup> - School C, (Carl)</i>	<i>Transcript from principal interview 27.02.2001 – School C, (Cathy)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Eva: If you had to describe your school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: Any age?</i></p> <p><i>Eva: What difference would it make if it would be a younger child or an older child?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: It would depend if they come from another school or not. If they come from another school, I would make some comparisons.</i></p> <p><i>Eva: O.K. let's say it's a grade one or two child [6 or 7 years old]. What would you say?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: I would say that this school is a very friendly school. For example, the teachers are called by their first name. Now if a kid doesn't come from another school then this is not a problem. Then I would say that there are older kids and younger kids and you can ask for help not just from the teacher but also from the older kids. Then I would get another kid to show them around the school.</i></p>	<p><i>Eva: If you had to describe your school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?</i></p> <p><i>Cathy: I would say that it is a very friendly school, where children are important and the teachers are important but it's not a teacher's classroom, it's a children's classroom. And, the children work together with different age groups of children, children the same age and children older or younger than them. I would want to find out what sort of things the child likes and link it with what they were wanting in a school, because I feel quite sure that there is something here for everybody and it's a matter of finding out what it is, where their interests are. These are the things that are important to us here that the child feels emotionally and intellectually stimulated and safe.</i></p>	<p>Both Carl and Cathy describe the school as being 'a friendly' school. Carl identifies the fact that the children can call their teachers by their first name and that the school has no school uniform as outward and visible signs that contribute to the friendliness of the school. Whereas Cathy thought that the idea that 'children are important' and that it's 'not a teacher's classroom' are significant factors that identify the school as a 'friendly school'. Although both principals seem to identify different attributes, they seem to agree that it is the general attitude of adults and people in positions of power that contributes to the friendliness of the school.</p>
<p><i>Eva: Why would you say it is important to call the teacher by her/his first name?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: In a cultural sense, it reflects on what we do now. I think it's just more natural, it's only abnormal in contexts where kids have other experiences.</i></p>	<p><i>Eva: You said that coming from the government school system to this school was a big step. Why, what was different?</i></p> <p><i>Cathy: The whole authority thing was gone. They could call me by my first name. I really liked that – to have respect for someone you really don't need to call them Miss or Mrs or anything like that. So the</i></p>	<p>Again both principals identify the fact that all the children, even the very young ones, who are only 3 years old, are able to call all the adults at the school, even the principal by their first names. They identify this as avoiding artificial emphasis on power</p>

<sup>51</sup> Due to Carl's resignation and the school's intent to include students in the process of appointing a new principal, which was the first such event in this school's history, I interviewed Carl on two separate occasions, on the 7.08.2000 and on the 12.10.2000.

	<i>underlying thing that I felt was that as an individual being I could make a difference too.</i>	differentiation which enables children to develop respect for the person and not necessarily for the position this person holds. Cathy also mentioned the significance of feeling important and respected as a person, irrespective of one's age or social position within a community.
<p><i>Eva: What made the school decide against uniforms?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: I think it's an outward sign of individuality. It's funny because kids, that is older kids, sometimes like the idea of uniforms and there are others who like the idea of not having uniforms and I know the classic argument about uniforms that you don't have to worry about fashion-consciousness. Obviously [without school uniforms] you make a bigger deal about cloths and students think a lot about what pants to wear and how to wear it. This is really just part of life to think about cloths to wear. I like the idea that they can move freely and comfortably.</i></p>		<p>Cathy did not mention uniforms at all and Carl only mentioned them in passing. It almost seemed to be a non-issue at this school. This is a significant observation as the regulation of student and teacher bodies by authority figures enables individual expression and personal agency that is less restrictive than in the previous two schools. Why is it that the need for regulation of student bodies is perceived to be an issue of lesser importance in this school than in School A and School B? This under-lying attitude enables bodily expressions as a number of people (teachers, students and parents) at the school dress in quite distinctive ways.</p>

Both principals highlight the importance of physical and emotional safety of students. Feeling safe is seen as a precondition for emotional and intellectual stimulation and learning. For example, Cathy noted: *"These are the things that are important to us here that the child feels emotionally and intellectually stimulated and safe"* (Principal-Interview, 27.02.2001). Similarly, Carl explained that students *"can ask for help not just from the teacher but also from the older kids"* (Principal-Interview, 07.08.2000), which implies that this school is portrayed as a 'friendly'

school because it is a safe school where the dignity and rights of all people, including those of young and vulnerable people are seen as equally important as those of older and more mature adults. A feature that exemplifies the emphasis of notions of 'equality' and 'status' is the fact that everybody at Crystal Montessori School calls each other by their first name; no distinction is made between adults and children, teachers and/or parents. In a formal educational environment, it is significant that children are encouraged to perceive themselves as equal in claims of basic human rights and dignity, even though their developmental needs and evolving capacities may set them apart and make them unequal in age and position. In the General Comment No 1 (2001) to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which discusses the aim of education, it is explained that: "The aims of education that it [article 29 (1) of the CRC] sets out ... are all linked directly to the reali[s]ation of the child's human dignity and rights" (The Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2001, p. 20). Basing practical HRE on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), its primary aims are the realisation of respect and dignity for all people and the development of respect for humankind, irrespective of cultural, racial, class, age and other possible differences and an obligation to assist students in developing an ethics of social consciousness, favouring equality and social justice and working on behalf of the common good. Gradual expansion of views that children are equal in dignity and rights can be signaled in many different ways. One outward sign of equality at Crystal Montessori School is the calling of adults and children by their first names. Although it is not unusual in Australia that people call each other by their first names, and children are usually called by their first names, primary school students typically call their teachers by their surnames. The impact of the change from a government school where children call their teachers by their surnames to the Crystal Montessori School

where everybody is called by their first name is captured by Cathy: *"The whole authority thing was gone ... so the underlying thing that I felt was that as an individual being I could make a difference too"* (Principal Interview, 27.02.2001). Cathy's explanation illustrates that traditional and taken-for-granted policies can hinder the development of attitudes toward children that would enable the bridging of the differences that have historically separated adults and children as groups of people with different rights and needs from one another.

Another important element that assists the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights is the valuing of equality despite individual differences. An outward sign of valuing difference and individuality is clothing. There are no uniforms at this school, so teachers, parents and students walk around the school ground in street-wear, which is another deliberate policy of the school to work against taken-for-granted symbols of power differentiation between adults and children, teachers and parents. The lack of school uniforms can thus be interpreted as a deliberate emphasis on democratic notions of equality between adults and children. As a 'non-factory' approach to formal education, this school seems to perceive no need to regulate student bodies in the way the two previous case schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) seek to control what and how students have to dress at school. How important the non-regulation of the dress-code at this school is and how much importance is given to the issue of clothing as causative dynamics of power can be illustrated with two examples: Firstly, Carl explains laughing, during one of the principal interviews that one morning *"I came dressed to school like a clown and was wondering how the kids, especially the younger once, are going to react ... I was still fulfilling my duties as a principal"* (Principal-Interview, 07.08.2000). It was important for Carl to experience the reaction of students that *"were not that different at all"*



(Principal-Interview, 07.08.2000), which seemed to please him. Secondly, on one of my observation days, I noticed two older boys walking around the school ground with red scarves around their heads and a number of students kept their hats on inside the classroom. This would have definitely been a violation of the 'Golden Rules' at the Abernethy Country School (School A), and would have resulted in a 'level one' punishment based on the BMP discussed earlier. Further, one teacher assistant has what is commonly referred to as an 'afro-look' with long black hair in curls and some of the children and parents were walking barefooted around the school ground (Fieldnotes, 21.06.2001). Therefore, it can be concluded that the students at this school appear to experience a distinctively different reality than students in the previous two case schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School).

As in the previous examples, I also asked Carl and Cathy about the school rules, as they are central to the functioning of any school and community life and provide further insight into the specific culture of the school. The following extract in Table 18b illustrates the principals' responses about the school rules.

Table 18b: Principal Interviews – Crystal Montessori School: School Rules

<i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview - School C, (Carl)</i>	<i>Transcript from principal interview 27.02.2001 – School C, (Cathy)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Eva: What are the special rules of the school? What are children allowed/ not allowed to do? Things that you would mention specifically?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: I had in fact two kids from [another city]. I sat them down and said: "We don't catalogue rules." Because their [old] school had a big list.</i></p> <p><i>Eva: How many rules do you</i></p>	<p><i>Eva: We were just talking about a new child coming into the school. What would you tell a new child about the rules?</i></p> <p><i>Cathy: Generally, we talk about values and virtues as part of the rules. We have rights and responsibilities as a child. The right to be able to work in peace. So the rule – if you like – could be to allow everybody to work. If they're working, try not to disturb</i></p>	<p>Both principals seem to have a solid understanding of the rules and why the school opted to have only a few general rules. Interestingly, both were referring to the same example in illustrating their awareness of the fact that children transferring from other schools may have some difficulties with the idea that the rules are more</p>

<p>have?</p> <p><i>Carl: Four rules. In our anti-bullying policy we call them affirmations because we get the lawyer-kids that argue the point. There can be so many convolutions of any rule and you don't necessarily have the same situation across all ages.</i></p> <p><i>We just have four basic ideas that we're looking at. One is 'courtesy-affirmation', another one is 'co-operation-affirmation', another one is 'safety-affirmation' and the last one is 'care of environment-affirmation'.</i></p> <p><i>And we only really came up with doing it this way this year [2000] and I don't think it is embedded within the culture of the school yet. But we would like it to be in a way that we could say: "Oh, that's the safety rule or affirmation" and people will get the gist of that.</i></p>	<p><i>them. But as with all things, our school is actually quite organic in it's nature [laughing]. That we don't have a list of rules that you walk into. Some children may find this a bit threatening, if they were new and older, because they may be used to having set rules in that sense. But it's all to do with human respect and it's all to do with how you would like to be treated and what are your higher-order needs and wants. So we did have a case with some children last year that came from [another school] that had rules written up in the foyer so they felt that they had that as a grounding. Whereas we didn't have that in a tangible place for them to be able to see. So they were asking all sorts of things that they could or couldn't do and I was talking to them and I knew that Peter was talking to them too about safety issues. So rules are to keep you safe. Safe in your body, safe in your mind and in your heart and freedom.</i></p>	<p>like general guidelines of behaviour than rules that are spelled out in detail and apply equally to every situation and every person. Both principals were emphasising that one of the cultural factors of this school is for the students to understand the way the school operates with regard to rules, rights and responsibilities. Carl and Cathy stressed the importance of a deeper understanding to not only know what the rules are, but why they have been formulated in a very general way and why it is possible and regarded as fair that they may not find universal application but are rather context dependent and thus may change, much the same way as the Convention on the Rights of the Child is formulated in very general terms and needs to be implemented on a case to case bases.</p>
<p><i>Eva: So the children are not treated the same?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: No, and the consequences wouldn't be the same. And we say that up front. I would say that in a more kid-friendly way. I would say: "We try not to have a lot of rules because it can get very complicated and people can argue about it. It depends on the situation, if it's happened before or things like that."</i></p>		<p>Similar to Ben's ideas, Carl and Cathy also believe that students need to know that they receive differential treatment and that this is deliberate practice rather than a mistake. Cathy offered an illustrative example of how this may work in a day-to-day situation.</p>
	<p><i>Cathy: We certainly have had a case where a child kept on taking things from other children because he wanted other people's things and with him it was really a case of him confronting himself and owing up to those feelings that he did want things that belonged to</i></p>	<p>This is another interesting example that illustrates how children are treated with respect as individuals with their unique needs and issues rather than getting the 'factory treatment' (Ben's terminology) with an emphasis on uniformity and</p>

	<p><i>other people. So he was quite in a confronting place and it took quite a while for him to even admit – even if he was sort of caught red-handed – that he was really doing that and that could affect other people. So we aren't the type of place to just say: "Right, you're a thief, out in the office". You know, something like this. It doesn't happen here. It's always looking for the deeper aspects of the child and what is going on there, because they're always depths and each case is unique.</i></p>	<p>a 'one-size-fits-all' mentality.</p>
	<p><i>Eva: So, what happened to the child?</i></p> <p><i>Cathy: All sorts of things. He sometimes writes letters to people to apologise. ... We worked in different ways, but one of the ways that works most for him was forgiveness of self and talking about forgiving yourself when making mistakes, because if you're making mistakes, he is going to be less likely to try the next time. Whereas if you are going to learn something from that mistake, it is going to be better for you. So, lots of support from parents, other children in the sense that at one point, yes the children needed to know that this boy would do those types of things. "We don't like what you do, but we like you anyway" – you know, those sorts of comments to help the other children in the class who may have felt that they were disadvantaged, to try to help them not to feel disadvantaged and to see that they could be empowering in helping someone to resolve something.</i></p>	<p>Here Cathy explains that while the teachers are trying to help the child resolve his issues, they do not necessarily expect him to suddenly have remorse and not do it again but rather try to enable him to face the issue and hold him accountable for his actions in an empowering and non-threatening way to encourage the child to keep trying until the issue is resolved. Clearly this situation is presented as a learning experience for all children to show compassion and understanding for the struggles of fellow students.</p>
	<p><i>.... So, I guess, in our case, the whole notion of rules – they are not allowed to hurt other people and they are not allowed to be disrespectful to any person. So they are treated</i></p>	<p>Cathy, as Ben in the previous example is conscious of the fact that there is a need for consistency and equality of treatment despite the unique</p>

	<p><i>very equally in that sense. I mean bad language – all the usual things that you can expect without having a rule that says that.</i></p>	<p>and individual needs of students. So the principles may be the same but the consequences for not obeying rules may vary according to contexts and children.</p>
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Although Carl discusses some basic 'affirmations', Cathy notes that: *"we don't have a list of rules that you walk into ... as with all things, our school is actually quite organic in its nature [laughing]"* (Principal-Interview, 27.02.2001)]. Expecting to find more explicit information about the behaviour policy of the school or specific school rules, I consulted the Crystal Montessori School handbook (2000), which is divided into ten sections. Unlike the handbooks of the Abernethy Country School (School A) and the Bolton Primary School (School B), the Crystal Montessori handbook has no specific heading such as 'behaviour management' (Abernethy Country School) or 'behaviour policy' (Bolton Primary School). The only reference to student behaviour is made in section two: Crystal Value Statements under the sub-headings 'respect' and 'self respect'. They read as follows:

#### Respect

Respect is the care and consideration we give to others through our daily interactions. It involves accepting the difference in opinions, behaviours, and background to our own. We all have rights but these are linked with our responsibilities for our own behaviour. Respect is also demonstrated by our relationship to property, nature, and our planet Earth.

#### Self Respect

Self-respect is to honestly accept oneself as one is now; to forgive past mistakes and to honour one's achievements. It involves self-discipline and self care. When children have input into their learning they not only respect their limits and differences, they also learn to appreciate their abilities. (Crystal Montessori School Handbook, 2000, p. 6)

These extracts confirm Carl's and Cathy's assertions that students' rights to individuality are strongly emphasised and considered essential in maintaining a stable and safe environment and developing democratic attitudes and skills in their students. Whereas the 'behaviour policy' of the Bolton Primary School aims to aid the process of *achieving* a safe and stable environment that is conducive to student learning, the

above mentioned value statements of the Crystal Montessori school aim to *preserve* an already safe environment.

In summary, Crystal Montessori School is a small, private, independent school. Montessorian educational approaches try to cater for the individual needs of children and have generally an individualistic and child-centred approach to teaching and learning, where the emphasis is on the needs of children, their individual as well as age and development-specific collective needs. Great emphasis is given to maintaining a pleasant and safe working environment, where children of all ages feel welcome and comfortable. This educational approach is in accordance with, and inspired by Enlightenment reason and the belief in progress through knowledge. Maria Montessori's (1964) deepest misgivings about traditional schooling were what it did to the moral character of the children who suffered therein. In Montessori's view, the state school system of the time was full of deficiencies and inequalities as it bred dependency and exploited and disempowered children. She explains that:

Our children are noticeably different from those others, who have grown up within the gray walls of the common schools. Our little pupils have the serene and happy aspect and the frank and open friendliness of the person who feels himself (*sic*) to be master of his own actions. (Montessori, 1964, p. 375)

The way in which the children in this particular school have been involved in choosing the new principal for the school is an interesting example of how children are included in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them during the course of ordinary school life. This example is illustrative of practical HRE, its possibilities and limitations, and will be discussed at length in the next chapter. Similar to the Abernethy Country School and the Bolton Primary School, the Crystal Montessori School also has a student council that will also be explored in the next chapter.

***Deanmoor Independent School***<sup>52</sup>*Contextual Information*

The Deanmoor Independent School is a small school, founded in 1974 as one of three independent schools established by a lecturer in education at a local university who was searching for a different education experience for students. Three years later, the founder of the schools withdrew his support and as a result the three schools dissolved their association but kept their educational approach. The Deanmoor Independent School provides education for a student population which is always "kept at less than 100" (Handbook, 2001, p.5). This deliberate choice is said to enable teachers "to know the academic, emotional, and social development of each child" (Handbook, 2001, p. 9). *"All the teachers know all of the children and see them in a range of contexts ... the teachers know the children in other classes almost as well as they know their own"*, explains Debbie<sup>53</sup>, who has been the principal of the school for six years. The school is situated in an affluent area of Perth, Western Australia. The clientele of the school is drawn mainly from professional people. According to Debbie, *"most of [the] parents are doctors and lawyers, big business people or politicians"* (Principal-interview, 13.11.2000). She further explains that:

*The school has been ranked as the second most affluent school in [this state] on the SES ranking from DETYA, which is determined by where the parents live. We had to give the parents addresses. So basically these children come from very affluent backgrounds. (Principal-Interview with Debbie, 13.11.2000)*

The school employs one full-time principal, six full-time teachers and one teacher assistant. In addition, one music teacher, one language teacher and an arts teacher are employed on a part-time basis. As was the case at all the other three case study sites, the principal of the Deanmoor Independent School also resigned her position after a six-year-term to take up a principal's position at a rural government

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<sup>52</sup> The school's original name may translate into good spirit and a happy place in an Aboriginal dialect.

<sup>53</sup> This is not her real name.

school. The deputy-principal, who took part in this study as one of the classroom teachers replaced Debbie as the principal, "*which guaranteed a smooth transition and as little disruption to the day-to-day practice of the school as possible*" (Principal-Interview with Debbie, 13.11.2000).

### Physical Environment

As the school is rather small, it is housed in one building with a large backyard. The architectural design of the school has no resemblance to traditional schools with long hallways and separate classrooms (see Figure 8). Rather the school is built in an open-plan-living style. Thus the school neither looks nor feels like a school but rather like a large home with a gigantic living area and a staircase that leads to the first floor. A small staff-room is located in the centre of the building, which has purposely built large windows for people to look in and out of it. The school has a casual feel to it. The floor is covered with a wall-to-wall green carpet and the entire interior as well as the exterior walls of the school are white.

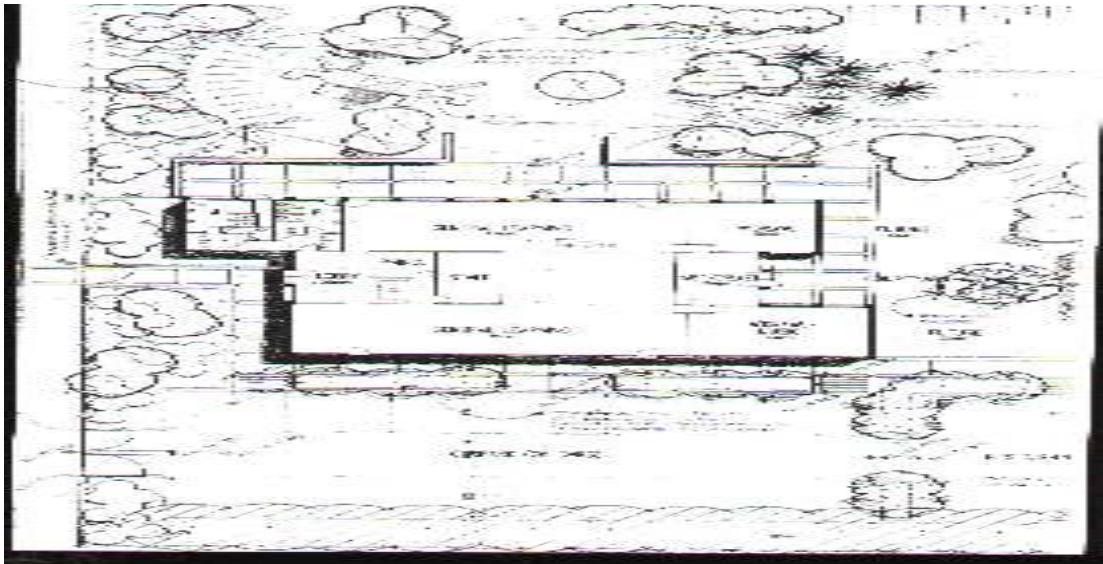


Figure 8: Building Plan Deanmoor Independent School

The school's physical environment with its unconventional looks can hardly be compared to that of the three previous schools. The school's location, its architectural features and generally non-traditional representation seem deliberate and may add to a distinctively elite image of the school. Given the above-mentioned features, it is rather surprising that surveillance of students, as part of bio-power, is so easily accessible by teachers and administrators at this school. As an open-plan school, there are only a few internal walls and people can be observed from almost every place within the school. Hence, not only students' conduct can be observed constantly but also teachers' and visitors' movements are easily observable. Interestingly, and unlike Bolton Primary School, the lack of privacy adds to a relaxed atmosphere at the school, where people do not seem to be aware of the surveillance possibilities created by the school's physical environment. During my school observation days, I noted that:

Similar to practices in School C, the underlying belief in the social competence of these students seems to make overt surveillance and control obsolete. During lunch break and recess time, the teachers and administrative staff sit in the little staff room in the center of the school, where they can be seen by the students. The students are permitted to stay in their class corners or the library area during break time or go outside and play. There is one staff member on duty before school starts, during lunchtime and recess. (Fieldnotes, 7.08.2001)

Analogous to practices at the Crystal Montessori School (School C), which is also a non-government school, the staff member on duty is not seen 'patrolling' the school grounds but rather is engaged in conversation with children or observing the children who are playing. Unlike my experience at the Abernethy Country School (School A) and the Bolton Primary School (School B), the 'teacher on duty' seems not to be searching for misbehaving students but instead seems to be present in case there is an emergency or other safety concerns (Fieldnotes, 07.08.2001). This may be due to the fact that not only is this school located in an affluent area of Perth, it is, similar to Crystal Montessori School, also a small school that sanctions educational practices that may not be possible in larger schools. In other words, although, the dominant



ideology operating at the school enables distinctive educational practices, it is possible that the 'non-patrolling' of the school ground by teachers at Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School is dependent on social class as well as school size. However, analogous to the possibilities at Bolton Primary School, the physical landscape of the Deanmoor Independent School has an identifiable Panopticon effect, which does not seem to affect the students in the same way as it affects students at Bolton Primary School. Thus, even though the physical landscape would seem to sanction similar practices in both schools (Bolton Primary School and Deanmoor Independent School), the power relations operating at these schools are distinctively different, as social control of students is not readily visible and correctional practices are more diffuse at the Deanmoor Independent School than at the Bolton Primary School.

### School Culture

The school's environmental quality can be described as uplifting, personal, warm, friendly, and informal. The shared beliefs and attitudes of people and the school's general philosophy have been discussed with the principal. Table 19a illustrates Debbie's responses to questions that hoped to elicit the general philosophical approach to teaching and learning and the school's unique culture. An extract of the principal's interview is provided in the left column and my thoughts and comments are provided in the right column.

Table 19a: Principal Interview–Deanmoor Independent School: Description of School

<i>Transcript from principal interview 13.11.2000 – School D, (Debbie)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Eva: If you had to describe your school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?</i></p> <p><i>Debbie: I usually tell them that I think that they will like it. If they don't know the school, children are often very shy about going to a different school because it's almost like a whole world and then mom and dad say: "How about we go to a different school?" Unless they hate the school that they're at, they usually need to feel that they're going to be O.K. So I usually say: "Look, when children come here and spend a day", which is what they need to do when they want to be enrolled, "they usually never want to go home. So I know that you are going to like it and I have a lot of experience with that". And they do and they go: "Oh, right, this was fun! - ... I usually say that basically I think that they would like it, that there are fewer children, and that they have more chance to do some of the things that they want to do.</i></p>	<p>Social control of students as bio-power is readily visible here through technologies of self. Having 'fun' and 'never wanting to go home' function as socialising practices, to normalise students' bodies and mind to become self-sufficient and self-disciplined citizens.</p>
<p><i>Eva: So what do they say is so special about the school?</i></p> <p><i>Debbie: It depends on the age ... one of the things children say is that they like that they don't have to wear shoes. You know, they notice when they walk through that the children haven't got their shoes on and they go: "Oh, can I take my shoes off?"</i></p>	<p>Similar to practices in School C, which is, interestingly enough also an independent school, the principal of this school also emphasises the choices students have in self-regulating their bodies. Agency and the ability to self-regulate their bodies becomes an important socialising aspect of students.</p>
<p><i>Eva: Why has the school decided against the wearing of uniforms?</i></p> <p><i>Debbie: The [school] motto is: Individuals enjoy learning. So it's about individuality and uniforms aren't. I think that is the basis of it. I think it is mainly about removing a lot of the institutionalisation, the practices that are about control-ling children or managing children rather than teaching them. But the other part of uniforms is the sort of school pride thing. So there is a compromise, we have T-shirts and we say: Wear it on excursions so people know where you're from. That sort of thing but it's not about conforming so the T-shirt comes in all the different colours. So a lot of things that happen in conventional educational systems are there so the teacher can manage 30 children in the classroom, the lining up and everybody doing</i></p>	<p>Unlike Ben (principal School B), who identifies school uniforms as technologies of control, management and surveillance, Debbie, identifies the function of school uniforms not only as negative but also as positive. School uniforms may constitute students as 'different' and therefore as 'special'.</p>

<p><i>the same work at the same time, those sort of things and the formality makes it easier to manage the group, to kind of force a kind of distance between the teacher and the children. So once you strip that away, you fully engage with children. This is much more demanding on the teacher.</i></p>	
<p><i>Debbie: The parents send them to us mainly because want them to grow up a little bit more independent and to be able to think for themselves. They talk about not wanting the children to be 'squashed'.</i></p>	<p>The term 'squashed' implies a definite hierarchy of control much the same way as Ben (School B) described practices at the Bolton Primary School present when he took over the leadership position. Not wanting their children to be 'squashed', avoiding disciplined but passive and non-engaged citizens is seen as a primary goal of the kind of education offered at this school.</p>
<p><i>Eva: So the social and political development of children seems very important. Can you elaborate on this a bit more?</i></p> <p><i>Debbie: We teach in a non-competitive way, we don't talk about year levels much that's why we can have these overlapping grades and have children working at their own level academically. So we don't give them a book that's got Year 4 written on it if they are in Year 5 because they find that humiliating. So we are quite careful about their self-esteem. If children are going to learn, they have to be happy socially, they have to be able to interact with other children, or at best have to be able to choose not to ... So they are growing up in a climate of tolerance and with an expectation that it's not o.k. to put other people down.</i></p>	<p>Students' right 'to choose' is emphasised and the democratic value of equality of opportunity to engage with each other or 'choose not to' engage with each other. Further, equality of rights is emphasised and the interrelationship between attitudes and behaviours such as not humiliating, not 'squashing' and protecting students' self-esteem and being tolerant as important democratic values to be learned and understood as part of practical HRE, in a democracy is made visible in this example.</p>

Although Debbie does not use the terminology 'friendly' to describe the school, she clearly implies that it is a friendly school where children are not 'squashed', openly humiliated or 'put down'. Debbie seems confident that a special regard for students' dignity will ensure that a prospective student will like the school. In fact, she notes that visiting children seem to like the school so much that they are reluctant to leave. Debbie identifies other factors that contribute to the friendliness of the school: the smallness of the school and the fact that the students have more choices as to what and how they would like to work. Debbie's comments suggest that

the students are encouraged to actively participate in decision-making processes about their educational projects.

Having 'fun' and 'never wanting to go home' function as socialising practices, to normalise students' bodies and mind to become self-sufficient and self-disciplined citizens who value and observe democratic values such as equality of opportunity and equality of rights. Social control is not so much external but instead internalised as self-control and self-discipline. Another factor that contributes to the feeling of 'friendliness' of the school may be that bio-power functions yet as another technology of self where student bodies are less regimented than in traditional schools. Not only are there no uniforms, but students are also given the choice of walking around with bare feet. School uniforms are identified by Ben (Bolton Primary School), Carl (Crystal Montessori School) and Debbie (Deanmoor Independent School) as restricting the individuality of children and assisting in the management and control of students. However, Debbie also acknowledges that there is a positive aspect of school uniforms and that children sometimes like to dress in uniforms, which serves a different purpose than controlling and managing. This view is shared by Dylan, a participating teacher at the school who contends that:

*Some children like uniforms and particularly new beginners feel cheated if they start at the school and they don't [have a uniform]. My daughter did [feel cheated], she was excited about getting a school uniform. (Teacher-Interview with Dylan, 9.03.2001).*

To avoid this dilemma and give children the freedom of choice, the school decided to make T-shirts with the school logo printed on them available for purchase, which children are free to wear if they choose to do so. The renewed discussion about school uniforms at this school illustrates persuasively how school uniforms can have an impact on children's identity formation and inform the constitution of students' social positioning. Uniforms thus function as technologies of control and management but can equally function to convey status, pride and privilege.

I proceeded to ask the principal about the school rules, as rules function as yet another form of control, surveillance and bio-power. Debbie's responses pertaining to questions about the school rules as they relate to the day-to-day lives of students are displayed in the left column of the table and my thoughts and comments in the right column of Table 19b.

Table 19b: Principal Interview – Deanmoor Independent School: School Rules

<i>Transcript from principal interview 13.11.2000 – School D, (Debbie)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to the culture of the school
<p><i>Eva: What about the rules, what are children allowed or not allowed to do?</i></p> <p><i>Debbie: Well, we have a code of behaviour and it's based on rights, rules and responsibilities and there are only four rules. We keep it [the school rules] down to the simple ideas that are colour-coded so that the children start out with a simple understanding of the concept and then develop a more complex one as they go through. So we have "the learning rule" which is that people have a right to learn, teachers have a right to teach and that therefore they have a responsibility to let that happen. Then there is an environment rule that says that children should look after the environment, so if a child is breaking a branch of a tree outside, then the teacher will tend to say: "Don't you remember the environment rule?" "What is the environment rule?" Something like that, so the conversation, the dialogue always goes back to what the problem is. Whose rights are being interfered with? What responsibility have they [not observed]. It's not such a simple thing as rules in themselves. There are two other rules. The safety rule, which involves other people's safety and the treatment of others which of course is about their feelings and bodies and so on.</i></p>	<p>The developmental stages of children and their growing maturity and ability to reason is acknowledged as the 'children start out with a simple understanding' of the importance of rules and gradually 'develop a more complex one'. Respect and dignity are emphasised as children learn the value of rules that enable peaceful and harmonious co-existence. Respect for each other but also for the environment that sustains life is illustrated here.</p>
<p><i>Debbie: So this means that every time that something happens, when a child is doing something in the classroom, they are throwing a rubber across the room, then the teacher will stop and say: "Wait a minute, what's the problem here?" So it's never, you know: "You know that you don't throw rubbers in school" [said in an authoritative and aggressive voice].</i></p>	<p>This is yet another illustrative example of practical HRE pedagogy. The emphasis is not placed on the child's mistake and the subsequent set consequence but on the</p>

*It's "What are you doing wrong and why is this a problem?" And they may say: "Oh, it may not be safe. I may hit somebody else, or it's not my rubber, it's their rubber so I haven't got a right to throw it". So, you're basically asking them for the reason that they are doing something wrong and as often as possible the teacher will then negotiate what they should do. "O.K. so what are you going to do now?" Oh, I will give it back and say I am sorry", to the person that he hit or whatever. Or the teacher is in a hurry and it's a minor incident and they may say: "Oh, I want you to give it back". That would depend on the age of the child and how often they've done it, that sort of thing.*

importance of understanding rules as a function, which safeguards and ensure equality of rights and opportunities within the community. Therefore, misbehaving children are urged to reflect on their actions and encouraged to find more appropriate actions in the future.

*Eva: Why do you think that children can't always do the right thing?*

*Debbie: I think that usually their emotional stuff gets in their way. Well, it depends on their age. If they're only 5, they're still learning. So basically each interaction or experience is a potential learning one until they have built up enough experiences to understand how the rules transfer across different situations. If they're older, it's usually because they're really upset or some children just want to attract some attention. But if children are healthy and happy, then it's just a temporary slip up.*

A structural cognitive, social and ethical developmental educational model is explicitly informing the school pedagogy at this school where younger children will develop a more complex understanding of the significance of social rules when they mature in age and have thus 'built up enough experiences to understand how the rules transfer across different situations'. 'Temporary slip-ups' are potential opportunities to reflect on one's actions and the significance of social rules.

Respect for each other's dignity, safety and rights, and also for the environment that sustains life is exemplified in four major rules at the school, which are colour-coded for easy recognition. Rules, as technologies of external control are kept at a minimum but perceived as essential in sustaining a functioning social order. Therefore, the infringement of other peoples rights is taken seriously as it is *"not such a simple thing as rules in themselves"*, as noted by Debbie (Principal-Interview, 13.11.2000). Rather, the school aims to convey the message that the rules in the school have a definite social function that benefits the individual as well as the whole community. Therefore, people in positions of authority in the school hope to instill a positive attitude in students and a clear understanding of the function of the school

rules that is seen as essential to the functioning of a democratic community. This aim has been illustrated powerfully in the above example where Debbie explained that:

*So it's never: "You know that you don't throw rubbers in school" [said in an authoritative and aggressive voice]. It's "What are you doing wrong and why is this a problem?" ... So, you're basically asking them for the reason that they are doing something wrong. (Principal-Interview with Debbie, 13.11.2000).*

The pedagogical implications of this illustrative example of practical HRE are multiple. Firstly, it emphasises the need for internalising democratic values, which inform the desire for a social order that is socially just and enforces individual responsibility to protect the rights of children and adults. Secondly, although children's difference in age and cognitive and social maturity are emphasised, and taken into consideration at the school, all children are encouraged to use their cognitive potentials to the best of their abilities to uphold the common good. And finally, self-reflexive practices are modeled as the children are invited to critically reflect on a particular incident, such as the throwing of a rubber across the room, in a non-threatening way, which highlights the problematic nature of such actions and leads to positive changes in attitudes and behaviour. Even though the 'throwing of a rubber across the room' may be perceived as a minor incident, it can be used as an illustrative example of HRE pedagogy that demonstrates how such small incidents, which may happen regularly during ordinary school days, are seen as a violation of democratic principles and thus attract a disapproving reaction from the teacher.

Only after valuing school rules as social technologies that enable the formation and preservation of a democratic social order within schools and classrooms is it possible to negotiate more appropriate behaviours. In this way, the children are active social actors, positively involved in the process of resolving issues rather than being encouraged to simply follow the rules. Hence, the children have a voice, and they are enabled to actively participate in the ruling. In this way, the individual child is

simultaneously ruling and being ruled, through the 'general will', or social contract to work towards a democratic ideal.

In summary, Deanmoor Independent School is a small, private school that was established in 1974 to enable a different education experience to that of traditional government schooling. It caters to affluent children and desires to offer an individualistic and empowering educational experience without humiliation and loss of dignity. The development of high self-esteem and a love for learning are seen as preconditions for independent critical thinkers, who are socially aware and able democratic citizens.

### The School Cultures in Comparison

Three of the four model schools (Abernethy Country School, Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) were perceived to be open and friendly. They were generally lively, bustling places. Although Deanmoor Independent School was rated as 'informal' because of its very casual feel, Crystal Montessori School could easily fall into this category as well. The children at Crystal Montessori School seem to have some degree of freedom of choice in different areas. For example, they are able to choose some of their work and are free to wear street-clothes and walk around barefooted in the classrooms, if they wish to do so. However, the Crystal Montessori School environment (School C) seems also to be structured in a way that the Deanmoor Independent School (School D) is not, thus I rated Crystal Montessori School as a rather formal place. Bolton Primary School occupies a special place due to the generally difficult and harsh environmental restrictions it faces. Despite its grave limitations and the general unfriendliness of the physical environment, I perceive the school to be a friendly place, mainly because of the leadership qualities of the principal and the openness and caring attitudes of the two



teachers that participated in this study. The five principals' comments to the two main questions are summarised in Table 20.

Table 20: Principal's Comments in Comparison

	<b>Question: <i>If you had to describe this school to a new child, what would you tell her/him about it?</i></b>	<b>Question: <i>What about the rules, what are children allowed or not allowed to do?</i></b>
<b>School A</b>	Very friendly, very caring	A charter of rights.
<b>School B</b>	A multicultural school. The right of reply. Some participation in resolving issues.	School code of behaviour.
<b>School C – P1</b>	Very friendly. The teachers are called by their first name.	Four basic ideas.
<b>School C – P2</b>	Very friendly. Children's classroom.	Organic.
<b>School D</b>	They will like it.	A code of behaviour. There are only four rules.

Exploring the responses of these five principals to two central questions pertaining to day-to-day educational principles and practices listed above, which directly relate to practical HRE, it becomes apparent that there are striking similarities as well as differences between the way these schools are portrayed by the principals and how student bodies and minds seem to be governed. Although there are identifiable differences, I am particularly interested in exploring the similarities between the four case schools as they pertain to the schools' cultural attributes and philosophical approaches. The finding that some of the diverse strategies that are employed at these case schools enhance students' democratic knowledge and understanding is significant.

Based on the data introduced in this chapter, I identified three major corresponding features at the four case schools. Firstly, the principals believe their schools are not '*ordinary*' but distinctively different from traditional schools.

Secondly, all four case study sites have carefully developed school rules as statements of principles rather than an extensive list of do's and don'ts. School rules as *statements of principles* are thus kept to a small number, usually to no more than four. Thirdly, three of the four schools employ *differential treatment practices* rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the discipline of students.

### ***No 'ordinary' School***

All five principals perceive their schools to be distinctively different from traditional schooling. Therefore, they like to see their schools as exceptional educational environments that cannot be compared to 'ordinary' schools. These principals generally perceived their schools to be friendly and caring places where "children are important" (Crystal Montessori School), "have a right to reply" (Bolton Primary School) and are respected as individuals with their own personal histories and needs. These schools seem to be concerned to "*always look for the deeper aspects of the child and what is going on there, because there is always depth and each case is different*", explains Cathy (Principal Interview, 27.02.2001, Crystal Montessori School). What seems to make these schools different in the eyes of the principals is a particular focus on children's rights to dignity. As a consequence of promoting children's rights to dignity and fair treatment, the two public schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) have engaged in the process of seriously reviewing student behaviour policies operating at their schools and made some major adjustments to the rules in their schools. For example, the 'school bell' was abandoned at Abernethy Country School, and the 'resolution room' was scraped at Bolton Primary School. Further, all four case schools have developed specific ways to increase students' awareness of the significance of 'rules' that inform the regulation of people's conduct within a community. Rules, as technologies of control, internal and

external, are vital to a functioning democratic community to uphold social order and ensure equality of rights and opportunity among the student body.

A particular focus on underlying values to be internalised by students that find expression in school rules within the four case schools is a high regard for rules as functioning technologies that inform the vision of a democratically organised school community. This does not necessarily mirror the social injustices of society or the local community, as illustrated at Bolton Primary School but models an internal social order where social justice is enforced, individual responsibility expected and basic human rights respected and protected. The principals of the four schools agree on the premise that school rules although often used to uphold hierarchies of control and surveillance are valued differently in the four case schools. They are seen as positive social technologies that structure daily school life in a way that is conducive to either the formation (as at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) and/or preservation (as at Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) of a democratic social order within the four case schools where teachers and students can feel safe and know that their rights and dignity are respected.

### ***Statements of Principles***

All the four case schools seem to have deliberately developed a small number of school rules as statements of principles that inform democratic order. These are used as guidelines to inform 'respectful conduct' which are seen as more effective than traditional school rules that are more often than not drawn out lists of rules that are to be followed by everybody equally and are requisites of the factory model of schooling. As Anna (School A), Debbie (School D), and Cathy (School C) note:

Anna: We thought to be realistic. There [are] a lot of things that comes under "respect". So our rule is that everyone is having respect for each other ... a very big part of a teacher programme is [to] be descriptive about what respect means" (interview transcript, 23.11.2000).

- Debbie: We keep it [school rules] down to simple ideas ... so that the children start out with a simple understanding of the concept and then develop a more complex one as they go through [school] (interview transcript, 13.11.2000).
- Cathy: The whole notion of rules – they are not allowed to hurt other people and they are not allowed to be disrespectful of other people. ... "We don't like what you do, but we like you anyway" – you know, those sorts of comments to help other children ... to see that they could be empowering in helping someone to resolve something.

These three principals believe that learning interpersonal concepts, such as 'respect', 'tolerance', and 'equal rights', is a slow and complex process. First, the children need to develop an understanding of what 'respectful conduct' might mean and that requires time, adequate modeling, practice and maturity. Further, these principals believe that the developmental process of understanding and acting respectfully may not be supported with an extensive list of do's and don'ts. Rather, as stated above, students in these case schools are invited to reflect on their beliefs and actions and gradually develop understandings of the ethical dimensions of purposeful and respectful conduct that connects the rights of others with their personal responsibilities. All of these principals seem to share in the understanding of a Piagetian liberal humanist model of child development along pre-defined structural stages of child maturity.

### ***Differential Treatment of Students***

The schools' philosophical approaches, which can loosely be described as social constructivist and child-centred, allow the employment of socialising practices which are child and context dependent. Thus differential treatment of students and situations are common practice. Three of the five participating principals mentioned the significance of differential treatment for the benefit of all students. Ben (Bolton Primary School) observes: *"Everyone is different ... I state that upfront to the child and the parents and that gets around this discipline issue where kids aren't treated the same. So that's day one, it's made very clear to them that we treat students in different ways"*. Similarly, Carl (Crystal Montessori School) explains that the children are not

treated the same and *"we say that upfront"* to all the children at the school. Ben (Bolton Primary School), Debbie (Deanmoor Independent School) and Cathy (Crystal Montessori School) provided explicit examples that are worth re-visiting here to illustrate the significance of these situations for the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. Ben mentions an incident where he would hesitate to suspend a child for breaking a window, if this child was an Aboriginal or Vietnamese student. Although, the students may have had different reasons for their violence, as in the case of the Vietnamese student, the anger may be caused by something that occurred at the school, whereas in the case of the Aboriginal student, the anger may have nothing to do with the school. Instead of 'simple rule following' and thus suspending a child for a grave infringement of school rules, Ben explained that he would wait until the child *"cools down and then work out what the issue is"*. Ben's explanation and reaction can be compared to the emphasis made by Debbie in the rubber-throwing incident. Both of these principals are interested primarily in the student's welfare and attempt to act in a way that makes the best interest of the child a primary consideration (Article 3 of the CRC). Rather than focus on punitive measures and act with anger such as: *"you know that you don't throw rubbers in school [said in an authoritative and aggressive voice]"*. Ben (Bolton Primary School), as well as Debbie (Deanmoor Independent School) strive to find the cause of unacceptable and unsocial behaviour and Debbie illustrates this, asking: *"wait a minute, what's the problem?"* And, Ben further explains:

*Suspending an Aboriginal child for smashing the window when it's a big issue at home ... means sending them home again to the situation that's made them angry in the first place. So I wouldn't suspend them" (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2001).*

In much the same way, Debbie contends: *"So, you're basically asking them for the reasons that they are doing something wrong and as often as possible the teacher will then negotiate what they should do"*. Hence, both principals seem to agree that

focusing on punitive measures and, for example, suspending the Aboriginal child or punishing the rubber-throwing student would not be in the best interest of the child.

Likewise, Cathy relates a story where a child kept stealing stationery materials from other children. Rather than punishing the student, Cathy explained that she was committed to finding out what the cause of this unusual behaviour was. *"We recognised that this was his way of saying: 'Hey, I'm really stuck, something is going on in my life that I really don't like' and then we would be able to help him deal with that"*, Cathy explained. Although these principals acknowledge that their practices are open to contestation, as Ben notes: *"I know that this causes problems as far as consistency but you know..."* they, nevertheless, believe that these are practices that aid the personal development of their students. Hence, Cathy concludes that the experience of the stationary-stealing student: *"was empowering for him ... so it will help him personally"*.

The examples provided in this chapter illustrate that these principals do not advocate that children's misbehaviour should not be punished, rather they exemplify serious attempts that illustrate shifting perceptions of children as bearers of rights and corresponding responsibilities of adults to acknowledge this view of children and adjust outdated principles and educational practices. The participating principals display an understanding of the status of children that recognises children's rights and dignity. Except for Anna, (Abernethy Country School), the principals note that the children's personal contexts should be considered when trying to resolve the issue at hand and they seem to agree that a 'one-size-fits-all' rule-bound approach or consequential punishment (such as suspension) to disrespectful behaviours displayed in the above examples would not necessarily be in the best interest of the student and may even exaggerate the problem. Considering the children's background and history,

the principals devised different strategies to aid students' awareness of their responsibilities towards themselves and others in a democratically organised community.

If democracy is defined as 'ruled by the people', and human rights as 'equal dignity of all', it becomes clear that the democratic ideal of equality of rights, of access and of opportunities may not be achievable within these case school communities or society at large. Other children were undoubtedly affected to varying degrees by the above-mentioned incidents (window-smashing, rubber-throwing, stationary-stealing) as they may have felt anguish and resentment towards the rule-inabiding children who seem to disrupt the social order of the school and may not even have to face equal consequential treatment. *"It's a two-way thing. I didn't want [the offending child] to feel that he was a victim. ... Ownership without pointing fingers"* was Cathy's and the other principals' central aim. A precondition for a school community as a functioning democracy is a solid understanding that students as citizens with rights and responsibilities constitute an ultimate source of agency. Rather than assess which case school observes which rights better, I examined principals' descriptions of their schools by focusing on possible similarities. Through an acknowledgement of children's rights to dignity, these case schools seem to part with traditional conception of children, where discipline, conformity and obedience are seen as the primary social goals. The above analysis illustrates that power relations at these case schools is changing. They further confirm that transforming traditional school cultures and entrenched power relations is by no means easy, but is a highly rewarding experience for students.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the four case study sites were introduced. These four schools were purposely chosen because they have a reputation for adopting democratic educational practices. Each school's location, constituency, physical environment, culture and general philosophical approach was described and analysed. Some of the commonalities between these four very different sites were identified that seem to have contributed to their status as being reputable democratic schools. The identification of common features among this diverse group of schools is a significant finding. The identified similarity is important in validating the hypothesis that everyday educational principles and practices that model democratic attitudes and skills are effective ways of teaching and learning democracy and human rights. One feature that is shared among the four schools is their view of themselves as being 'out of the ordinary' schools. They see themselves as progressive educational institutions where children's dignity is acknowledged. They share in the belief that in their respective schools children's rights are observed to a greater extent than is commonly understood to be the case in comparative educational settings. To this extent, the principals have used their leadership position in all the four case study sites to reflect on governing issues within their schools. The re-evaluation of school rules and discipline procedures which at some of the schools resulted in the initiation of substantial adjustments, particularly in the two government schools (School A and School B) are a reflection of the principal's child-image. This changed child-image where students are not primarily seen as objects of control and correction but instead as subjects of rights and responsibilities is shared among all the five participating principals. This finding is central to an understanding of the importance of practical



HRE as the value of democracy and human rights cannot be taught if it is not genuinely experienced.

The principals at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School saw a need to formally recognise this changed child-image by altering the terminology used in school policy documents. The application of this view of children as subjects of rights and responsibilities was realised with the abolishment of the school bell at Abernethy Country School and the scrapping of the resolution room at Bolton Primary School. Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School seemed not so much concerned with the recognition or realisation of the value of child-centred education practices. These practices were well established within the school's culture. Therefore, the solid understanding of democratic values such as the interrelationship between individual rights and individual responsibilities to uphold a democratic social order become central.

Moreover, principals from three of the four sites have purposely decided to mention to a prospective new student that the school is not necessarily treating all students equally but rather as individuals with special needs and would take their personal backgrounds and developmental stages into account. Another theme that emerges from the analysis of the commonalities shared between the four case schools is that a liberal-progressive child development view of education underpins the school's policy guidelines. In this way, students' right to self-determination and participation in political processes at the whole school and the classroom level seems dependent on their age and cognitive/emotional development. How students' age is correlated with their knowledge production processes and socio-political competencies will be discussed in the next chapter. All the same, these findings point out that even young students are encouraged to think through their understandings of

social justice and fairness. The teaching and learning through lived experiences seems prioritised as student's social realities are presented as unique, complex and ambiguous and warrant differential consideration and actions at three of the four case schools. Why should it be fair that a non-Caucasian girl or boy is not treated the same way as I am? These and similar questions illustrate that unequal powers in society do exist and are played out on a daily basis within and outside of school contexts. Ethnic, class, sex, age and other forms of group dominance are not natural but rather social constructs, which need to be interrogated, confronted and challenged. The struggle for equality of individual and collective rights, of access and opportunity as a liberal democratic ideal needs to be kept alive through local practices as exemplified in these case schools which inform the development of attitudes, values and processes that are vital to a socially just and responsive community.

The next chapter continues the discussion of how educational practices that are employed as part of ordinary school days in 'democratically' organised schools can be viewed as practical and effective HRE pedagogy. By granting students greater participation rights as laid out in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and generally striving to find possibilities for the inclusion of children in decision-making processes on issues which directly affect them, students are not primarily perceived as objects of care and protection but instead are recognised as social and political subjects with rights and responsibilities. Concluding from an analysis of data presented in this chapter, it seems that all five participating principals from the four case schools share a similar child-image and genuinely believe that the students in their schools are enfranchised. This finding suggests that these schools embrace the notion of greater student participation in decision-making processes as there is no longer a need to exclude students from formal power. Further, these

principals believe that it is precisely this changed conception of children as social agents which enables the granting of participation rights to students, the way it is practiced in their schools, that sets them apart from other schools and makes them friendlier places. In other words, these principals argue that the ways in which adults in these schools behave in relation to children, is what makes these schools special and friendlier places as children's experiences are seemingly validated and the children are received with a respectfulness that is them traditionally denied. Moreover, these principals are convinced that their investment in the development of a microcosms of democracy, as practiced in their schools, has overall positive effects for both the school culture and the individual student. They report that the educational implications of these democratic experiences and non-traditional policies and practices generally enhance communication, lower behavioural problems and lead to the development of social and political empowerment of students. Nonetheless, how much has the replacement of traditional child-images from 'objects of care, protection, control and correction' to 'subjects with rights and responsibilities', in the eyes of these principals, resulted in changing habits and educational practices? Also, it must be asked, even though these students may be enfranchised and encouraged to participate in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them, how effective is their participation, and how much are they allowed to share in formal power at their schools?

## CHAPTER 6

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### **Students' Right to be Heard: A Challenge to Orthodoxy**

Children are undoubtedly the most photographed and the least listened to members of society.

Roger Hart, 1992, p. 8

Viewing schools as democratic public spheres means regarding schools as sites dedicated to forms of self and social empowerment, where students have the opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to live in an authentic democracy.

Peter McLaren, 1989, p. 238

The core objective of practical HRE pedagogy is a conscious engagement with day-to-day educational practices that enable students to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to become active citizens and thus live in what McLaren calls 'an authentic democracy' (1989, p. 238). HRE pedagogy, as outlined in this thesis, supports McLaren's observation that an authentic democracy is a "social movement grounded in a fundamental respect for individual freedom and social justice" (1989, p. 238). The focus on pedagogy in the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights illustrates that lived experiences in what are referred to as 'good' democratic schools provide students with ample and diverse opportunities "to learn the language of social responsibility" (McLaren, 1989, p. 238). In addition, this thesis argues that struggles to find suitable ways of implementing a pedagogy where children are viewed as active and responsible citizens with rights and responsibilities could further

the process of democratising schools and classrooms. Such practices could assist in minimising the dehumanising impact of schools emanating from the period of the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century and which continue to this day.

This chapter discusses some of the ways the four case study sites sought to include students in decision-making processes. Two key objectives of this chapter are the investigation and effectiveness of children's participation in decision-making processes on issues that affected their welfare, as stated in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The following questions are investigated: How substantive is students' decision-making within their respective classrooms? Are negotiations of classroom rules common in these case study sites? Can students effect change at the policy level of the school?

Although the principals from these schools primarily agreed on the fundamental idea of children's participation rights in decision-making processes, the level of inclusion at the four case study sites varied considerably and these differences are discussed. First, this chapter explores the ways in which the students at both Bolton Primary School (School B) and Crystal Montessori School (School C) are included in the decision-making processes related to the restructuring of their respective schools. Second, the various models of student councils, with their varying degrees of responsibility and autonomy are discussed. Third, teacher and student perceptions and views about the possibilities students have within their respective classrooms to be heard are analysed. Finally, a participating teacher's 'special rule' at Bolton Primary School (School B) is discussed as a prime example of practical HRE. Foregrounding this exploration, different conceptions of student participation are briefly examined and my use of Hart's (1992) participation ladder is discussed. Hart's well-known model of child participation, which defines degrees of dependence to

emancipation, is expanded to include a section on power relations between adults and children.

## The Meaning of Student Participation in Decision-Making Processes

### *Distinguishing between Passive and Active Involvement*

While the involvement of students in decision-making processes is seen as a commitment on the part of the school administration to listen to the views of students, the various initiatives at the four case study sites are underpinned by different understandings of the term 'participation'. To involve students in decision-making processes can mean that students are simply 'consulted' on issues that directly affect them. This may be seen as a rather passive involvement of students in decision-making processes that does not require any power sharing. Whereas the term 'participation' normally implies a different form of power relationship between adults and children, whereby power is shared, although not necessarily equally between adults and children, but nevertheless, children are given a more active role in the decision-making processes. It is my view that students who are recognised as social agents should be able to share power in decision-making and be actively involved in finding meaningful outcomes. Consequently, the following question needs to be asked: to what extent did student participation in decision-making processes enable them to influence school level policy changes such as uniform policy (Abernethy Country School), discipline policy (Bolton Primary School), and selection of the new principal (Crystal Montessori School)?

### *Ladders of Participation*

In 1969, Sherry Arnstein developed a model of citizen's participation levels, symbolised by a 'ladder', representing eight degrees of involvement in decision-making processes. Roger Hart, in his 1992 UNICEF publication, *Children's*

*Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship* offered a useful alternative to Arnstein's 1969 ladder of participation. Even though a number of other models of participation were developed with different goals, purposes and methods, Hart's (1992, p. 9) participation ladder is one of the most cited models in the discussion on children's participation rights (Save the Children's Fund, 1997, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Dooley, 2002; Howard et al., 2002; The Freechild Project, 2003). His ladder of participation reflects children's ability to share in the power of decision-making and represents eight ascending levels of participation. The first three levels are classified as being non-participatory as they serve adult purposes of being seen to involve children, but do not afford real opportunities to participate in meaningful ways that might result in changed outcomes. The upper five levels represent increasing degrees of participation as Figure 9 illustrates.

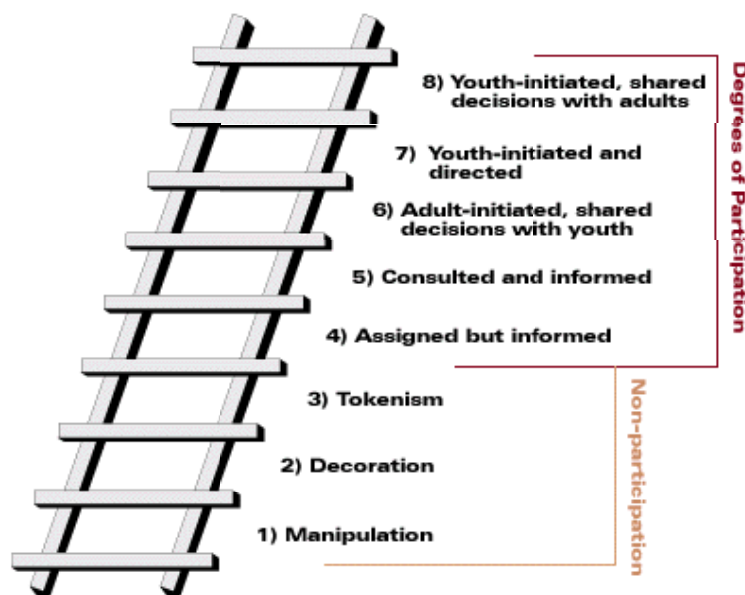


Figure 9: Hart's Participation Ladder as cited in Save the Children's Fund 2000

Hart's model recognises the different ways in which students can be involved in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them in the flow of

everyday interaction. In particular, this eight-step ladder, which distinguishes between different levels of participation, is linked to questions of student agency and action. On the bottom of the ladder, children are largely excluded from formal power. There is a gradual increase of child agency along the steps of the ladder. The levels have been defined as: manipulation; decoration; tokenism; assigned but informed; students consulted and informed; adult-initiated, shared decision with students; student-initiated and directed; and student-initiated, shared decisions (Hart, 1992, pp. 8-16). Based on Hart's (1992) participation ladder, Table 21<sup>54</sup> illustrates the various stages of student-participation in decision-making processes and the change in the power-relationship between children and adults.

The gradual decrease of adult direction, control and manipulation to the empowerment of students as social agents is exemplified in this table. Although, the present model makes clear distinctions between the different levels, the boundaries between these levels and power-relationships between adults and children may often be blurred and the levels of participation not as clear cut or easily distinguishable as presented in this model. While Hart's participation ladder is widely used, it has attracted some criticism precisely because "it represents the relationship between these eight levels as static and hierarchical" (Dooley 2002, html document). Dooley critically comments that:

This approach belies the dynamic and porous relationship that can exist between these different levels of involvement and obscures the possibility that 'assigned but informed' involvement done well can be more meaningful and effective than, for example 'child initiated, shared decision with adults' done badly. (Dooley, 2002, html document)

I share Dooley's concerns about Hart's modernist, hierarchical and linear approach. However, I argue that theorists should concentrate on questioning the legitimacy of modernist conventions as well as focusing on the interdependence of

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<sup>54</sup> This is an adaptation of Hart's (1992, pp. 8-17) conceptualisation.



the separate levels. Dooley's argument that a level four involvement 'done well' is more useful for children than a level eight participation 'done badly' is not convincing. It does not justify the abandonment of this useful approach, even though it may be somewhat problematic. Moreover, Dooley (2002) observes that a similar critique was levelled at Arnstein's ladder by a research participant in his study, who explained that:

If you look at ... Arnstein's ladder and consultation is somewhere near the bottom and young people making decisions at the top ... . One of the things I have problems with [is] the inference that consultation ... is seen as the lowest form of participation and the lowest form of anything is always going to be negative. (html document)

Consultation features on the lower levels of Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation and Hart's (1992) ladder of youth participation precisely because it is perceived as a more passive form of involvement in decision-making processes. It contrasts with more active forms of involvement higher up the ladder where the status-quo is challenged and formal power is no longer in the sole possession of authority figures. Therefore, genuine children's participation is found at higher levels of participation. As Julie Johnson (2000) explains:

Hart notes that an essential principle of children's participation is choice, where children are able to choose to participate, and are encouraged to do so at the highest level of their ability. . . . The highest rung, . . . conveys situations where children recognize their own and others' competencies as members of a community and seek collaboration with adults to further their goals. (html document)

In contrast to Hart's (1992) hierarchical model, Dooley (2002) advocates the use of a non-hierarchical model such as the one constructed by Treseder (1997, cited in Dooley, 2002) (see Figure 10).

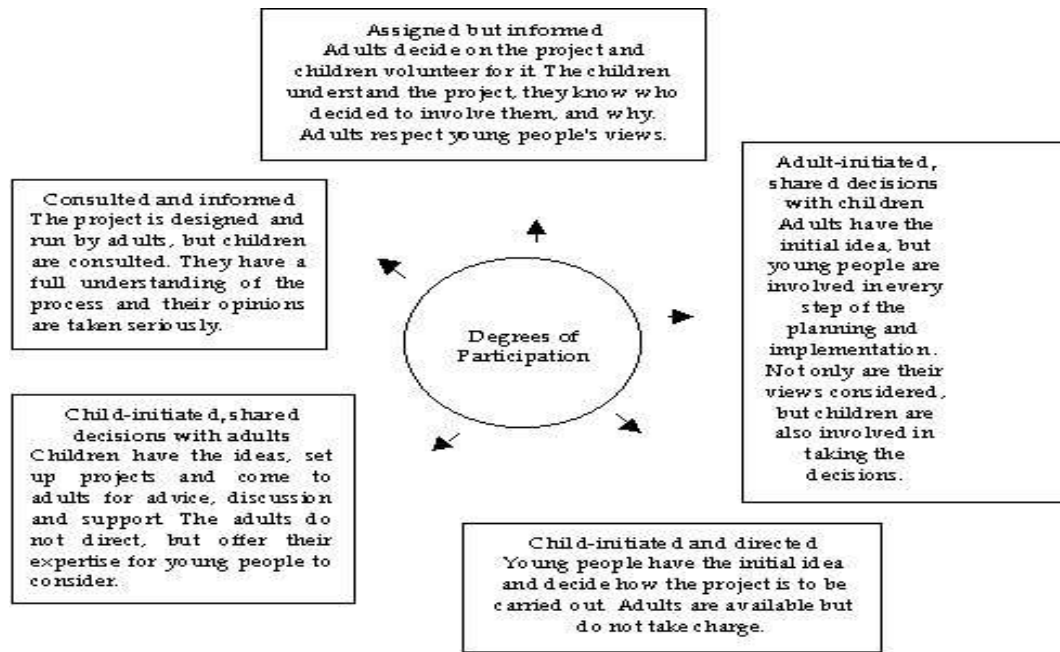


Figure 10: Treseder's Non-Hierarchical Model of Child Participation

Interestingly, Treseder maintained Hart's categories but chose to position them differently, which obscures the axis of power involved in joint decision-making. Thus, Hart's modified model (Table 21) aids my investigation of the effectiveness of political empowerment and student participation in decision-making processes. It facilitates the maintenance of a firm focus on the power-dynamics at the various sites and on the question as to how a changed child-image permits genuine participation in the political processes at the case schools. Rather than being different spokes on a wheel as advocated by Dooley (2002), students' ability to share in formal power, which increases with each level on the ladder (Hart's model), is further emphasised in Table 21.

\*\*\*\*Insert Table 21 \*\*\*\*

In the reminder of this chapter, students' involvement in decision-making processes at the four model schools will be evaluated based on the above table (Table 21) with its explicit classification of students' power experiences. This will include an analysis of the source of power and students' ability or inability to share in formal power and thus contribute in *meaningful* ways to decision-making processes. In this table, levels one to three are seen as non-participation as students at these levels are completely excluded from formal power, while levels four to eight are those characterised as having the most participation, where students share in formal power. As discussed in chapter five, the participating principals suggested that student participation in decision-making processes enhances the social competence and social responsibility of their students. Therefore, those schools featuring levels four to eight will be rated as more effective, with levels seven and eight as the most effective. The benefits of student participation as exemplified at the higher levels of the ladder are the socio-political empowerment of students, which actively aids their development into more competent and confident citizens and members of their community. Moreover, they assist the democratisation of school communities. In other words, my evaluation of the integration of student voices in decision-making processes in the four model schools is guided by the model presented in Table 21, which is based on Hart's (1992) ladder of participation (Figure 9).

### ***The Integration of Student Voices***

The effectiveness of student participation at the various schools and levels (whole school level and classroom level) is explored through the investigation of various events that occurred either regularly or irregularly. For example, cases one and two are examples of irregular integration of student voices on a whole school level, whereas case three (student councils) is an example of regular integration of

student voices that also occurs on a whole school level at all four case schools. The survey data collected further showed that student voices were regularly included at a classroom level in all four case schools. Case four discusses the integration of student involvement on a classroom level in greater detail. Thus, the assessment of the quality of student participation in political decisions at the four model schools focuses on exploring the level of student participation at the various levels. In particular, it reveals existing tensions and inconsistencies between whole school integration of student voices and classroom integration of student voices in government schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) and to a lesser extent in the two independent schools (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School).

### Student Discipline

With the exception of Abernethy Country School, all the model schools implemented a flexible and individualistic disciplinary policy, which intends to take the circumstances and personal backgrounds of children into account. Table 22 provides a brief overview of the disciplinary policies at the model schools.

Table 22: Behaviour Management Policies at the Model Schools

School A	School B	School C	School D
Formal and clearly defined Behaviour Management Plan. Five levels of consequences from 'warning' to 'detention', 'suspension' to 'exclusion from the school' apply to every child at the school equally. Fixed and formal discipline procedures.	Formal behaviour policy. No fixed behaviour management plan, but instead it is emphasised by the principal and within the School Handbook (2001) that "the school policy is always open to review ... and also flexible enough to accommodate children with special behavioural and learning needs" (p. 7). Flexible and individualised discipline procedures.	No formal behaviour policy but instead value statements. Flexible and individualised discipline proceedings.	Formal behaviour policy where rights, responsibilities and rules are spelled out on three pages of the School Handbook (2001). As the principal confirmed in the interview, "an effort is made to avoid the use of many of the traditional discipline strategies that tend to involve negative sanctions, ... [instead] every attempt is made to ensure that the child's self-esteem and peer group standing is maintained at all times" (School Handbook, 2001, p. 22). Flexible and individualised discipline procedures.

These four schools part with fixed and clearly defined behaviour management plans, because they do not take into account factors, such as the student's level of understanding, frequency of offences and personal backgrounds that often lead to the 'breaking of rules'.

Although students were clearly encouraged to reflect on their conduct, the asymmetry of formal power is clearly visible, as formal power was displayed as unequal. Thus, based on the student's participation model as developed in Table 21, I characterise student involvement as, 'assigned but informed', level four. Students are informed about the school rules and the behaviour policy and have decisions for misbehaving explained to them. However, none of the school handbooks or principals mentioned effective and accessible avenues of complaint or recourse for students, which would redress the structural power-imbalance that I deem necessary for greater student agency that would lead to a higher rating. The next case describes and analyses student participation in the formation of the discipline policy, which is identified as an uncommon integration of student voices on a whole school level.

***Case 1: The Scraping of the Resolution Room at Bolton Primary School***

The principal of the Bolton Primary School was committed to introducing some of the organisational benefits open to students of more affluent independent schools. The principal had been working in progressive and independent schools for years before taking up the principalship of Bolton Primary School that is located in a low socio-economic area of Perth. One of the structures that Ben introduced was a new leadership style: *"We have full consultation. My style of leadership is leading from the back rather than the front. I prefer that every decision that is made is a whole school decision"*, explains Ben.

Ben notes that the school changed considerably since his arrival and that *"[together] we came up with what we feel are major changes"* to the governing structure of the school, which previously had *"very rigid structures"* built around *"surveillance and control of students"*. These statements indicate that Ben wanted to dismantle fixed structural power-relationships and introduce more flexible power structures where decisions are negotiated and power is shared.

The scraping of 'the resolution room', where the students *"were sat down in this room facing the wall, away from each other"*, is illustrative of how not only teachers and parents but also students were included in this process and their concerns taken into account when deciding possible strategies for a more desirable school discipline policy.

While Bolton Primary School is a rather troubled site in many ways, the serious engagement with what Ben terms *"democratic reform in the student body"* was very encouraging for practical HRE indeed. Several teachers were visibly committed to enabling students to voice their thoughts on matters that were important to them. Another element of the school culture was the reality that some teachers wanted to preserve the 'status quo' as they resisted some of the structural changes

suggested by the school administration and informed through student and parent consultation. As Ben explains:

*We are going through staff changes at the moment, we actually encourage teachers who have fixed ideas about how they would like the school to be, to transfer to another school, if they're not happy with the change. We are having a good rate of success with that and are getting some good, flexible teachers in that they are prepared to hand over some of the authority and power to the students but it's ... we are three years down the track and we are finding that it's not an easy process. (Interview transcript, 14.11.2000)*

Ben's observations point to serious limitations to the democratisation efforts and possibilities open for greater student participation. Authority figures, such as teachers, often struggle with feelings of disempowerment themselves as they are challenged to examine longstanding beliefs about their authority and status in the classroom and the need to control and manage students in traditional ways. It is outside the scope of this thesis to investigate teachers' feelings of disempowerment, as Ben seems to pursue his ideas of student empowerment. Nevertheless, this is an important issue that is worthy of further investigation.

The following interview extract (see Table 23) presents some of the challenges and possibilities involved in moving towards more democratic and student-centred approaches to decision-making in regard to the school discipline policy. In this analysis I was particularly interested in finding out why only older students were included in the discussions.

Table 23: The Scraping of the Resolution Room – Bolton Primary School

<i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview 14.11.2000 – School B, (Ben)</i>	Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to students' inclusion in decision-making processes
<p><i>Eva: The kids decided [that they don't want a resolution room] – how did they do that?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: We had called all the kids together, that's from years five to seven in a group meeting. ... So what we did is, we discussed it with the kids and they hated the system</i></p>	<p>Students are invited to a meeting and are given an opportunity to express their views. This is an example of the implementation of Article 12 of the CRC.</p>



<p><i>Eva: So you scraped this room or is it still in existence?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: The room has been scraped and immediately the behaviour at school improved just with the scraping of the system</i></p>	<p>Ben suggests a clear relationship between the change in discipline policy and student behaviour.</p>
<p><i>Eva: You said that you consulted children from "upper school" levels. Why didn't you also consult children from middle and/or lower school?</i></p> <p><i>Ben: What happened was, we had a large turnover in staff recently, the last couple of years, we felt that some of the staff wanted the old system where they didn't have to deal with the behaviours. They would leave it up to the administration to do that. Most of that staff is in the junior and middle school. The staff that wanted change is in the senior school. That's why we did it with the senior kids.</i></p>	<p>A 'top-down' leadership style may seem to have its advantages for teachers that may be overworked and emotionally burned out as their involvement with student misbehaviour is decreased. However, this attitude may also rob both teachers and their students of the experience of being heard as both teachers and students relinquish decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them.</p>
<p><i>Ben: But what we did once the senior students actually had a new code of behaviour, they then took it and presented it to the other students in the school, so they went to each classroom and discussed it. So the student counselors took the code of behaviour to each classroom and discussed it with the other kids rather than the teacher doing it.</i></p>	<p>Ben's statement illustrates how older students were involved in the planning of a new disciplinary policy and then in the execution of the policy. This may be seen as an effective student-based initiative. Older students share in the formal power as they take on the role of 'experts' of the new discipline policy.</p>

Under the old disciplinary system at the Bolton Primary School, the teachers would *"look for kids misbehaving and write it in the book"* for the principal or deputy principal to deal with the disobedient child at a later stage rather than *"resolving a situation with a student"*. Fully aware that *"dealing with students' misbehaviour"*, presupposes a willingness of teachers to take on a leadership role with additional responsibilities, Ben acknowledged that some teachers were simply not interested in taking on more responsibility which presented a clear stumbling block in his effort to democratise the school. Nevertheless, there were teachers and students at his school who were willing to share in Ben's vision and worked towards a more democratic governing structure. The students in grades five to seven were 10 to 12 years old. Ben explained that it was a very new experience for these students to be called together

and asked what they "*[felt] about the school rules*", as these children were used to being told what to do rather than invited to reflect on and voice their opinions about existing rules and regulations.

This case example of the involvement of older students in the decision-making processes, which resulted in the scraping of the resolution room and the development of the code of behaviour policy document, is an important one. The potential educational effects of this practice are noteworthy, not only for the older students who had a voice and whose opinions and concerns were heard, but also for the younger students who were not invited to participate in this process. Although the students from the middle and lower primary classes were not directly involved in the discussions that took place, they were, nevertheless, informed by the older students about the processes that occurred. The older students had the opportunity to model the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to be actively involved in democratic decision-making processes. And, the younger students were able to experience the benefits of democratic decision-making processes in their daily lives.

Ben's invitation of older students to help solve the problem of the unpopular resolution room may be rated as a level six, 'adult-initiated and shared decision' involvement in the decision-making process as the older students were sharing in formal power. Although Ben initiated the discussion, the older students were encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation of the new disciplinary policy. The older students were taking the initiative to inform the younger students about the new policy and thus clearly share in the responsibility to communicate the effectiveness of it to younger students. This case example fits the level of 'competent co-operation' between the school administration and students. It suggests that the power structure in this instance is less formal, which allows for a more fluid and

interactive power relationship between adults and students. This form of power-sharing and decision-making enables negotiation of possible and desired outcomes, as displayed in the upper levels of the participation model in Table 21.

The next case example was also identified as an irregular integration of student voices on a whole school level. It discusses the appointment of a new principal at Crystal Montessori School (School C), and analyses not only how effective students' integration in decision-making processes was, but also how students may become part of projects where student involvement was not initially planned. The students in this school had never experienced a change of principalship and were quite unprepared when faced with the resignation of the founding principal of the school.

### School Leadership

An unexpected event that occurred during the course of this investigation was that all four principals resigned their positions after varying terms. The two longest serving principals were both employed at independent schools. Carl held his position at Crystal Montessori School for 11 years and Debbi served as the principal of the Deanmoor Independent School for six years. In comparison, both government school principals resigned their positions after a three-year term at Abernethy Country School and after a four-year term at Bolton Primary School.

In almost all government schools principals are appointed by the Western Australian Education Department. This means that the principals of the two government schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) were replaced by central appointments that are decided at the state department level. Consequently, the students, parents and teachers of the two case study sites (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) were unable to voice their

opinions and concerns about the change of principals at their respective schools. As was the case at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School, neither the resigning or new principals of these two government schools knew each other and the newly appointed principals were only marginally informed about their school's history, latest initiatives and significant events of the school.

By contrast, the resigning principals of the two other case study sites (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) were replaced by long-serving teachers from each of the respective schools who were familiar with the culture, history, government structure, latest initiatives and policy changes at the school. The appointments of the new principals at these sites (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) occurred after extensive consultation with staff, parents and students of the schools. How these characteristics impacted on the educational opportunities of students at these sites and how the structural/cultural changes within the schools enabled or hindered practical HRE in School C will be explored next.

### ***Case 2: The Appointment of a new Principal at Crystal Montessori School***

#### **The Theory**

Carl, the inaugural principal, announced his resignation from the Crystal Montessori School in August 2000 with the intent to leave his position at the end of the school year (in December 2000). Subsequently, Cathy took up the position as principal of the school in February 2001. As Carl decided to give six months' notice of his intent to leave the school and both principals agreed to participate in the study, I was able to gather a substantial amount of data about the change of principalship at this school and in particular about students' participation in the decision to appoint a new principal. The appointment of a new principal was an important event at the

school as this was the first time the school faced this decision. Carl explained that he thought much about how his resignation might affect the school's pupils, parents and teachers. He sought to assist the school to work towards a smooth transition without any unnecessary disruption of the day-to-day operation of the school. Carl decided to inform the school management committee<sup>55</sup>, the teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the students of his decision to leave the school all at the same time:

*I wanted no-one to have to keep secrets and no favouritism. ... I tried to do the right protocol but wanted to do it in basically one hit ... obviously, once parents knew from the letter, ... I thought that it should come from me not parents that I'm leaving. So, [the next day] I went around all the classes and told each class. (Principal Interview with Carl, 07.08.2000)*

As I am primarily concerned with students' participation rights, a particular focus was on exactly what happened in the classrooms and how the children's reactions affected this process of change. The following interview extracts and student work samples give an overview of their reactions and demonstrate how their ideas and concerns were integrated into the process of finding a new principal. The school needed to find a person who would demonstrate a high degree of compatibility with the school's culture, philosophical and educational approach. In the following interview extract (Table 24a) with Carl, one student's question about their right 'to have a say' in who will be chosen as the new principal paved the way for an extensive canvassing of student views on this issue. As in the previous chapter, Carl's responses are provided in the left column and my thoughts and comments are provided in the right column.

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<sup>55</sup> The management committee is made up of parent and teacher representatives as well as the principal of the school.

Table 24a: Principal Interview – Crystal Montessori School: Change of Principalship

<p><i>Transcript excerpt from principal interview 07.08.2000 – School C, (Carl)</i></p>	<p>Thoughts and comments about the content as it relates to students' inclusion in decision-making processes</p>
<p><i>Eva: Can you tell me what went on? So you walked into the classroom and then?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: I told them to all come to the mat because I've got something to tell them. I said something like: "I'm here to tell you that I'm leaving [Crystal Montessori School] at the end of the year for personal reasons. It's been 11 years and I need a break. [Crystal Montessori School] is my favourite school in the whole world, so I don't really want to go to another school but I just need a break from doing what I am doing". Then they asked me questions like: "Will you come back?" "Will you be a relief teacher?" ... the feeling that I got was that they [the children] were really connected to me.</i></p>	<p>How does this feeling of 'real connectedness' impact on student's life?</p>
<p><i>Eva: Why was it important for you that the kids would hear it from you and not from the parents?</i></p> <p><i>Carl: I think it's because I always tried to have an honest, direct relationship with the kids. I did explain, to the best of my abilities, what would happen from now on. Number one question was: Who will be principal. Well, I don't know, I explained to them that they have criteria for writing a report, for example, the school has criteria for who would make a good principal for the school.</i></p>	<p>'Honesty and Directness' seem to be values that are central for Carl throughout his principalship. Although his knowledge of the process of appointing a new principal is limited, he attempts to model openness, direct and honest communication with the children. This seems to reflect Carl's attitude to generally respect children as meaning-makers but more importantly it may also signals that such characteristics may not necessarily be shared by other authority figures within the system.</p>
<p><i>Carl: So one of the boys, he would have been, I guess, a year three, maybe seven or eight [years old], and he said: "Do we get to choose, how do we get to have a say, you know, the new principal?" I felt that's a good question. I said that there will be criteria and a selection panel and I said that maybe there is a way that children – you guys – can make sure that we have the right list of what would make a good principal – so people can use that.</i></p>	<p>Sensing Carl's attempt to openly communicate with children on equal bases, this boy was clearly of the opinion that they have 'a right' to be involved in the decision-making process. The question was therefore not so much 'if' they get to participate in the process but rather 'how' they will participate.</p>
<p><i>Carl: But, I hadn't really thought that through so it made me realise that it was a really good point. It's a really obvious point really. I said that we are not going to sit them on a panel but I think it's a really good point and we should incorporate it and if we plan it well, ... I would just make sure that the children's voice in priorities and areas of expertise is not lost.</i></p>	<p>Carl's intention to be 'honest and direct' in a way that may not normally be the case in education, results in an anticipation of student participation in the decision-making process. Although the inclusion of students in these proceedings were not envisioned, the stating of this claim to the right of participation is not outright dismissed, instead Carl seems to perceive the right to participate as an important right of students</p>

	that needs to be honoured, even though students' involvement in this process may not necessarily be seen as valuable for the community.
<p><i>Eva: So how would you ensure that? What would the next step be?</i></p> <p><i>Car: Small group discussions with input about what key things you would like to see in a principal. The fact, that having something presented, probably via me, from the children, will have an impact, it will be there for that panel to see and it probably does depend on what they actually come up with.</i></p>	That children present 'something' is seen by Carl as 'having an impact'. There is no question that Carl strongly believes that students' suggestions will be acknowledged by the panel, which will have ultimate decision-making powers.

Carl's intention to be 'honest' and 'direct' about his resignation and the consequences this might have on the operation of the school led to the claim of students' participation rights in the decision-making process. That the demands of these students to be included in the decision-making process consistency was not denied, is yet another example of the implementation of Article 12 of the CRC. Carl was genuine in his attempt to involve these students in a meaningful way in the decision-making process and not merely given token consideration as evidenced by the opportunity for 'small group discussions' and the desire to produce acceptable outcomes. Therefore, as a preliminary conclusion, it can be stated that the involvement of these students was genuine on the belief level and may thus be located in the higher levels on the participatory model presented in Table 21.

The problem of student involvement led Carl to consult the classroom teachers, who also agreed in principle that students should be made part of the process of finding a suitable replacement. The serious issue of how students' involvement could work needed further consideration. Consequently, all the classes spent one morning in August 2000 discussing and brainstorming some special attributes children thought they would like to see in the new principal.

### The Practice

I was invited to observe Corinne's classroom. Corinne has been a Montessori teacher for 15 years, and had been working at Crystal Montessori School for the past six years. She is one of two teachers at Crystal Montessori School who agreed to take part in the study. The children in Corinne's classroom are six to nine years old. This year, Corinne has a small class with only 18 students, eight girls and ten boys. A characteristic of Montessori schools is that they all have multi-aged groupings, so Corinne's class had three grade one students, seven grade two students, four grade three students and four grade four students. The following are my notes on the classroom meeting regarding decisions about the new principal.

*It is Thursday morning and the children arrive in the classroom one by one. Some are walking around; others take some curriculum materials off the shelf and start to work quietly. Three girls head straight to the guinea-pig cage and start playing with the guinea pig. After all the children are in the classroom and morning rituals such as greetings and 'news telling' have passed, Corinne informs the children that the first task this morning will be a discussion about the issue of the new principal. "Maybe we can find something that we can give to Carl to hand to the selection panel", suggests Corinne. She invites the children to think about things they would like to see in a new principal. At the beginning of the brainstorming session, the children's ideas are somewhat vague but soon turn into concrete forms as children bounce ideas off each other. The children's ideas seem to form particular patterns, which may be called 'a profile of the new principal'. Indeed, one older child suggests that some of the identified character traits should be included in the job description of the new principal. Corinne, approving of the idea, invites the children to put their ideas on a piece of paper, either individually or collaboratively, so that they can then be handed to the school management committee for further consideration.*

*The children work quietly for about 30 minutes. Sometimes I hear someone giggle but mostly the children work concentrated on their tasks. The majority of suggestions pertained to specific character-traits that children identified. This is what the children had to say:*

Table 24b: Profile of the new Principal – Crystal Montessori School

Character-Traits	Appearance	Curriculum	Organisation/Administration
needs a sense of humor; never tells us off; needs to be a friend; needs to be tactful; needs to be kind, peaceful, honest, respectful, generous; needs to be arty; needs to have ideas; needs to be a good teacher; needs to be funny; needs to have guts; needs to be trusting; needs to know myths (stories); likes laughing; loves to sing; is not shy; is never mean; likes being here; listens to us.	needs cool clothes; needs a motorbike	more sport; more drawing lessons; more science lessons	better books; more computers with Windows 95; needs to be a good relief teacher chooser; needs to be good at writing; needs to have spare time.



This list indicates that these children have a solid understanding of what qualities they would like to see in a new principal. Although a few children made comments about the appearance or suggested changes to the curriculum, most of these children were most concerned about specific character-traits of the new principal. The children wanted the new principal to be committed ('likes to be here') and have an understanding of the culture of the school ('be tactful', 'listens to us'). Further, they want the new principal to be approachable ('is not shy, never mean, trusting'), unafraid and innovative ('have guts') and have good organisational skills ('needs to have spare time'). After explaining to the children what will happen with the suggestions they made, Corinne collected all the children's work and wrote the following note: "*Dear [Carl] and Committee, we have written some suggestions for the new principal's job description and hope you can and will use them*". Then she handed the collected materials to Carl to be passed on. The children seemed content and confident that their views would be considered and their voices heard.

A few months after the children presented their criteria to Carl who forwarded them to the selection panel, I had another opportunity to interview Carl and enquire about the progress of selecting a new principal for the school. This is what Carl had to say in the follow-up interview, concerning the issue of student-participation in the selection of a new principal.

Carl: *[There were] a whole lot of workshops about the criteria and about the selection process. ... And it was even discussed on the management committee meeting of having a student on the panel. It was a good discussion and it was felt that it would be uncomfortable for the people – it ended up, we decided no, but it was considered, it wasn't just dismissed. In fact, at first there were some people quite in favour of the idea and we made sure that what they [kids] wanted in a principal was covered in the selection criteria and job description stuff. ... At the parent-evening brainstorming session there was some division of views ... and there were different people from business who had different models. Like one parent was saying that they find it really strange to have a teacher on the selection panel, which is not strange at all for us, I would expect it. So, he would have felt intimidated by having one of your 'underlings' in a way interviewing you. So, of course, a kid would have been outrageous – [laughing]. (Interview transcript, 17.10.2000)*

*A Reality Check: Consolidating the Desirable with the Possible*

The operationalisation of the students' claim to be included in the decision-making process revealed different levels of student participation and indicated some tensions within the various groups of the school community, as the principal and teachers welcomed greater student participation in political processes at the school but some of the parents did not. In this instance, the levels of student participation are multiple. Within the classroom (on a grassroots level) and on a limited scale, students' authority was clearly established as Corinne invited the students to self-initiate and direct the process of 'finding something that can be handed to the selection panel'. Corinne deliberately refused to take charge of the process, which indicated a progressive stance and the most advanced participation level on Hart's participation ladder (see Table 21). At level eight, 'child-initiated, shared decisions with adults', children are encouraged to develop an idea and involve adults as advisors with specific expertise in managing the process to arrive at a satisfactory outcome, which in this case was a collection of attributes a prospective principal should possess. Corinne intentionally took an advisory role and only shared in the decision-making process when approached by the students. Thus, on the classroom level, students participated to a high degree in the process of finding a replacement principal. The level of student involvement within the classroom was decided primarily by the teacher, but did not impact on the political process of the school. Therefore, the power sharing in the classroom did not pose any threat to the status quo and adult authority within the school. However, the analysis of students' involvement on a whole school level showed a very different, and markedly lower levels of student involvement on the participation ladder.

Although, students seemed confident that their proposals would be considered, there was no formal feedback provided to the students or the participating teacher

about students' submission to the selection panel. So Carl's intention to be 'honest' and 'direct', meaning open communication and respecting children as equally important stakeholders in the political processes concerning this matter, seemed not to have been carried forward and could not be substantiated. This is, an illustrative example of how Carl and the school community as a whole demonstrated a serious commitment to listen to students and how the school as a whole rose to the challenge to ensure that students could have the opportunity to be heard and have an input into the governance of their school but, ultimately failed to complete the process. Consequently, the rating of these students' level of involvement from a whole school perspective falls within the category 'tokenism' (level three). I argue that it is only a level three rating because the process of selecting a new school principal was solely controlled by authority figures within the school, even though students appeared to have been given the opportunity to express their views. In the end, the student submission was largely disregarded or at best only given token consideration. Thus, there is no evidence that these students were able to influence the process or outcome at all.

Despite this somewhat somber analysis, it needs to be noted that the intention to include students in the decision-making process was genuine and the process of devising and producing a formal submission to the selection panel was undoubtedly a valuable political experience for these students and thus the educational impact of this experience for HRE pedagogy should not be disregarded. However, based on the above evaluation of students' involvement in the decision-making process of finding a replacement principal, their participation in the formal political processes in this instance appeared to have been rather limited.

Nonetheless, examples of irregular integration of student voices in decision-making processes such as case one (the scraping of the resolution room) and case two

(the appointment of a new principal) are vital in the discussion of practical HRE as these practices model possible ways of 'doing democracy' and enhancing students' overall understanding of democratic principles and political processes. Moreover, the understanding of the effectiveness of everyday socialising processes for the teaching and learning of DaHR, their limitations as well as possibilities, are important findings. The implications will be further explored in later chapters. These two examples clearly demonstrate that the development of critical consciousness on the part of students must be supported by concrete social actions and genuine engagement and participation on behalf of people of power within a given group, community or society. However, these model schools did not only seek student input on extraordinary matters in schools such as the previously two cases discussed, but they also sought student input into school governing matters by the way of regular integration of student voices through the establishment and operation of student councils. The next section of this chapter, explores how student voices were included by way of regular student council meetings at all the participating schools.

### Political Empowerment within the School

All four schools had established student councils, but only three student councils were in operation at the time of the study. The principals took the responsibility themselves for establishing or overseeing the functioning of the school councils. Questions may arise relating to the level of control that principals should have over student councils and what criteria they use to establish the effectiveness of student councils which may result in the discontinuation of student councils as was the case at Crystal Montessori School. The reason that the student council at Crystal Montessori School was discontinued was the perception that the student council's 'successes' were regarded as more token than real, as the student council was

perceived by its members to have little formal power. The question of student council autonomy and power and the envisioned role of the principal or other adult authority figure was perceived differently by the participating principals of the four schools. If student councils are to represent the 'voice' of students within these schools, then the issues of autonomy, power, responsibility and ownership must be addressed. The aim of this section is to illustrate the ways student councils at these sites can integrate student voices in decision-making processes. It concerns itself with the educational opportunities student councils can offer for practical HRE and how students are able or unable to influence specific outcomes, through their engagement and active participation in decision-making processes via student council decisions.

A brief overview of the structure and operation of the student councils at each of the four case study sites is provided foregrounding a more detailed description and evaluation of their operation and effectiveness from the principal's point of view.

### ***Case 3: Regular Integration of Student Voices on a Whole School Level***

#### **Who currently sits on Student Councils?**

Not surprisingly, the main representatives present on student councils are students themselves. All of the established councils (including Crystal Montessori School, where the student council has only recently been dissolved) also include an adult representative as a member. In all but Deanmoor Independent School, the principal or deputy-principal attends the student council meetings and there is minimal representation of teachers or other groups such as parents and school board members, as shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Representation on Student Council

	School A	School B	School C	School D
Students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Principal or Deputy-Principal	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Teacher	No	No	No	Yes
Parent	No	No	No	No
School Board	No	No	No	No

In all four schools, student council members were elected. Some of the younger students were excluded from this process in the government schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School), but not in the two independent schools (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School). Similar to the Abernethy Country School (School A) and the Bolton Primary School (School B), not all classes were represented in the student council at the Deanmoor Independent School (School D). Only at Crystal Montessori School (School C) were students from all the classes, even the pre-primary classes, invited to sit on the student council, as shown in Table 26.

Table 26: Gradelevels on Student Council

Student Representation	School A	School B	School C	School D
Grade 7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grade 6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grade 5	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Grade 4	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Grade 3	No	No	Yes	Yes
Grade 2	No	No	Yes	No
Grade 1	No	No	Yes	No
Pre-Primary and younger	No	No	Yes	No

*How is communication achieved?*

The ability to communicate is a key element in the successful operation of student councils. More effective communication is seen as one of the more important benefits of student councils. The most common device used to exchange information between student representatives are regular meetings. As shown in Table 27, most student councils meet on a weekly basis.

Table 27: Frequency of Student Council Meetings

Meetings	School A	School B	School C	School D
Weekly	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Fortnightly	No	Yes	No	No

*When do Student Councils meet?*

Students are conscious of their free time and may not be readily available to meet outside of school hours. As indicated in Table 28, all but Abernethy Country School organised student council meetings within regular school time to insure that student members have the same amount of free time as other students at the school. At Abernethy Country School, the student council meets during lunchtime.

Table 28: Meeting Times of Student Councils

Meeting times	School A	School B	School C	School D
Class Time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free Time	Yes	No	No	No

*How long do the Meetings last?*

There was not a great deal of variation in the length of the student council meetings. They all run for approximately 30 minutes. The limited time frame for council meetings may have taken into account the limited concentration span of some

of the students but may also indicate a potential for tokenistic input from council members.

*Where are the Meetings held?*

The student council met in different locations at the four schools as is shown in Table 29. It is significant that the student councils at both independent schools (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) met in the staff room where all council meetings were held, whereas the student councils at the government schools met in public spaces, such as the library (Abernethy Country School) or the arena (Bolton Primary School). The two government schools are markedly larger than the two independent schools and thus have larger public spaces. Nevertheless, the location of the student council meetings may indicate that separated adult spaces within the school, such as the staff room are 'off limits' to students in government schools but not independent schools and might signal very different underlying power-dynamics in operation at the government school sites compared to the independent school sites<sup>56</sup>.

Table 29: Meeting Places

Meeting places	School A	School B	School C	School D
Library	Yes	No	No	No
Arena	No	Yes	No	No
Staff Room	No	No	Yes	Yes

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<sup>56</sup> At my school visits I observed multiple times that students were working in the staff rooms at both Crystal Montessori Schools and Deanmoor Independent School but not so at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School.



Who sets the Agenda?

Although the adult representative at the student council meetings facilitated the meeting, the agenda was set in all case schools by the students themselves. The students brought issues from their classrooms to the meetings to be discussed. The students in all the schools were responsible for the minutes of the meeting and fed back the resolutions and proposed actions to be taken to their fellow students. While the adult representative was present to guide the process and assisted the students, the decisions the student representatives made and actions they sought were owned by the students themselves (see Table 30).

Table 30: Setting of the Agenda

Agenda set by	School A	School B	School C	School D
Students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adults	No	No	No	No

Aims and Objectives of Student Councils

To gain an accurate picture of the operation and effectiveness of student councils, specific questions concerning their aims and objectives, development, operation, meeting times, advantages and shortcomings were discussed with the participating principals. Instances in which concrete examples of recent events were discussed, or where people pointed to the advantages or potential shortcomings of their student council, were of particular relevance to this study. At the time of the study, all four schools operated student councils with the exception of the Crystal Montessori School (School C), where Cathy, the new principal, decided to cease the student council because *"a lot of students were feeling that what they wanted was not what was happening. So there was, in the past, a lot of talk and not much happening*

*of what they wanted"*. Despite this caution on behalf of the new principal at Crystal Montessori School (School C), most principals thought that their student councils were successful in the way in which they fulfilled their primary objectives. These were identified as: a) to engage students in thinking about school policy, planning and governing issues; b) to give students a forum for formal debate and discussion of issues that directly concern them; c) to aid the development of communication and negotiation skills; and d) act as a learning experience for the practice of democracy. Anna (Abernethy Country School) explains this in the following way:

*The classroom representatives bring back their [ideas] from the classroom and share them at the youth parliament. If there is any specific issues that they believe [are important] – issues to do with policy or strategy or planning – . . . we discuss them and we make further recommendations to our school council. (Interview transcript, 23.11.2000)*

At all four schools, student involvement in the student council was not only seen as valuable but was also entirely voluntary.

#### *Student Council at the Abernethy Country School*

The Abernethy Country School (School A) operated what they referred to as a 'leadership program' for students, which was only recently developed. As stated in the School Handbook "this program aims to encourage and develop senior students in [the] school who demonstrate that they have leadership skills and potentials (2001, p. 22). Anna, who has been closely involved in the development of the youth parliament, notes that: *"I believe we have quite a democratic process for student discussion, involvement and planning in our school"*.

#### *Student Council at the Bolton Primary School*

There was a student council in operation at the Bolton Primary School for a number of years and was well established before Ben became principal. According to Ben's evaluation, the student council *"works very well"*. Unlike the Abernethy

Country School, where students from grades four to ten were encouraged to participate in the youth parliament, only students from the upper primary classes (grades six and seven) can become student council members at the Bolton Primary School. Ben explains the model operating in his school in the following way:

*We have student counselors from [grades] six and seven. ...We have about eight [grade] seven counselors and we have about four [grade] six counselors. So, the four [grade] six counselors are learning how to be a counselors from the other councilors and they automatically become [grade] seven councilors and the other four councilors are elected at the end of the year by the students. (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000)*

Half of the older student council members were expected to model to younger council members what is expected of them in terms of attitudes and tasks, even though they may themselves be novice council members. The four grade six counselors were first and foremost expected to learn what it means to be a student council member and what kind of responsibilities they have. So, when the grade seven council members leave the school at the end of the year to further their education at the high school level, the four grade six council members are expected to share their knowledge and expertise with the eight newly elected council members. For students who may not be accustomed to taking up leadership roles and responsibilities within their groups and/or communities, this may not be an easy task. The student council meets every second week with the deputy principal and is foremost responsible for the organisation of the assemblies.

#### *Student Council at the Crystal Montessori School*

The student council at Crystal Montessori School (School C) was well established and in operation for a number of years. This is the only model school where students from all classes are invited to the student council. As in all other participating schools, the student council members were elected to the council, which met weekly in the staff room. The student council was in operation in November

2000. However, Carl noted that he was not entirely happy with the way the student council was operating. On the process level, he seemed content and notes that especially "*the younger kids ... really enjoy coming to the meeting and getting a sense [of what it is all about]*", but on the content level he was more skeptical and raised the issue of power-dynamics. Carl posits: "*I think the issue with student council is: What real powers do they have with decisions?... the older kids, they need to see that they've got real power*". Carl seemed to sense the paradoxical position of student councils. If their primary aim was process and/or skill building focused, then the student council may well deliver its aim. If, however, the primary focus was on the outcome and how effective student council decisions were, then the student council at this school did not appear to fulfill its promise. Concerns about the effectiveness of the student councils led to the decision to dissolve the student council after Cathy took up the position as the new principal at the Crystal Montessori School because she felt that the student council as it had been operating was not successful. How different principals rated the advantages and/or disadvantages of student council models operating at their schools is discussed below.

#### *Student Council at the Deanmoor Independent School*

The Deanmoor Independent School has had an established student council since its inception in 1974. The student council had two representatives from each class, except the pre-primary and the year one/two classes as these students were deemed to be "*a little bit too small for it*", explains Debbie. The student representatives, who were elected each year, met on a weekly basis in the staff room. The student council was involved in projects that furthered the interests of the students at the school. For example, Dolores a participating teacher and acting vice-principal explains: "*Last year, the project was soccer goals and they [student council*

*members] started making up little snack packs that they sold at morning tea time and retained the money for those"* (Teacher-Interview, Dolores, 07.03.2001). After earning enough money, the student council members went to procure the soccer goals. The student council at Deanmoor Independent School was not only involved in fundraising activities, but they also organised *"wheels-days, where students can all come and bring skate boards and bikes etc to school, [or] they get involved in inviting people [to the school] to talk to the students"* (Teacher-Interview, Dolores, 07.03.2001).

### ***Process Focus of Student Councils***

The student council is seen by the majority of these principals as valuable because the students are able to develop and practice certain skills, such as communication and interaction skills. Further, they gain a sense of the processes that are involved in democratic decision-making. This point was substantiated by Anna (Abernethy Country School) when asked what kind of issues the students discussed recently. She notes:

*A recent big issue we discussed this year was our school uniform. This is the first time our school council made our school uniform compulsory. So one of the suggestions from students, once they canvassed student opinions, was actually to increase the number of uniform options. So, for example, [the] school council's compulsory uniform was navy blue tops and bottoms and our youth parliament had made a recommendation to the school council that we have navy blue tops but we add black bottoms as an option as well. And that recommendation was presented to the council ... . The council, through their due process, like the youth parliament, discussed the issue and ... got parent ... and staff ... feedback on that ... and discussed it again. And, unfortunately for the students, part of the democratic process [laughing] doesn't mean that you always get what you want and feedback has come back [to the youth parliament] to say "Thanks for the suggestion, we've decided not to meet your request. So the uniform stays as navy blue". But that's been a longtime process and for this term there was a compromise that we would just leave black as optional but for next year, it would be compulsory navy blue only. So that's an example. (Principal-Interview, 23.11.2000)*

The students set the agenda and school uniforms was a central issue for these students. As a government school, this school had compulsory school uniforms, but it was up to the discretion of the school's governing body to decide the uniform policy. Black is quite a fashionable colour, especially among teenage students and their

request for greater choice seemed reasonable. Democratic processes were utilised and formal recommendations were made by the students. The issue was discussed among adult decision-makers of the school and the students' request was subsequently denied. I tend to agree with Anna that this was an excellent example of how students can voice their concerns and issues, deliberate upon them and decide to formulate and submit a formal request to the school council. However, I believe that an important opportunity was lost here for further investigation of the kinds of alternative possibilities open to students to truly engage in democratic deliberative processes and challenge the 'status quo'. Political processes usually do not end with the denial of a request. Indeed, this may be only the beginning of the teaching and learning of peaceful conflict resolution processes so important in contemporary society and practical HRE.

Like the experience of the students at Abernethy Country School (School A), where the students displayed active interest and participated in political processes at the school, via the student council, with the desire to effectively change the school's uniform policy, Cathy explained, that students at Crystal Montessori School (School C) experienced something similar. While students were able to bring an issue to the attention of the student council, which deliberates and arrives at a decision, there was a sense that the student council was unable to effect change and influence the outcomes of political decisions with the school. Carla reflects:

*When I was in the classroom, one of the incidents was that the boys were really unhappy with the boy's toilets and they have been bringing this up at a number of times and it had gone through the student council and nothing had happened about it. They told me lots of times and I ended up saying that the only thing we can now do, is go straight to the management committee so we need to write a letter to the management committee so that they know. It's an interesting dilemma and it's a learning process for all of us that lots of things create a decision to be made and in this case it was money that would stop people or they think that they had to put it on the backburner ... [but] that was actually really important to the children. So I think where I am personally at now is, I really want the children to feel that they can make a difference... and it's finding a way for that [to happen].*

Experiences such as this one led to the conclusion that the student council is virtually ineffective when it comes to political decision-making, and led to the dissolution of the student council at Crystal Montessori School, after Cathy became principal.

### ***Outcomes Focus of Student Councils***

Although the student council at Crystal Montessori School (School C) was well established, Carl was aware of the dissatisfaction of staff and students<sup>57</sup>. Nonetheless, he was convinced that although there were problems with the way the student council was operating, the council members, especially the younger students seemed to enjoy the experience and its educational impact should not be dismissed. The dilemma was that from a process point of view, all students involved may gain valuable democratic skills, however, from an outcomes point of view, the student council was not seen to fulfill its objective. Carl posits:

*What real powers do they have with decisions?... I think with the younger kids, ... like for the children's house kids (5 year old children), they think it's great and I don't know how well this translates into the class. On the junior primary level, it's a two-way interaction. I think it's the older kids, they need to see that they've got real power. (Principal-Interview, 15.11.2000)*

The need to balance process and outcome issues led to the following innovative idea at Crystal Montessori School:

*This year, I'll tried it another way, I said: Here you've got \$300. — a term allowance for the playground, for outside equipment. . . . I think that this was a good experiment, to give them money, I mean they will bring up non-money issues, but otherwise it is just talking. And while that was useful, I do think, especially for the older kids, it actually showed that they can do things.*

Carl's reflection on the usefulness of the student council was particularly informative. It demonstrates his awareness of the limitations of the powers of the student council, as it had largely only an advisory status in the school. At the same

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<sup>57</sup> In 2000, when Carl was principal, there was still a student council in operation. It was dissolved only at the beginning of 2001, when Cathy took up the position of principal. Although the student council is no longer in operation, Carl's reflections are important for the present discussion.

time, it also shows how the experience of being a student councilor may be important in different ways to students, depending on their age and maturity. Even though the experience of student councils from a process point of view was valued and democratic skill-building possibilities acknowledged by Carl, he felt that the process, although valuable in itself, needed to be balanced with tangible outcomes to make the process meaningful for the older students and increase their political powers. To have access to monetary resources was seen to increase the power of the student council as they were suddenly no longer 'just talking', but instead the student council's decisions resulted in concrete outcomes. This was seen as important as it demonstrated to students that they had 'real decision-making powers' within the school, as "*it actually showed that they can do things*".

### ***Effectiveness of Student Councils for Political Empowerment***

The student councils at the four schools gave a number of students the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes concerning the governance of the school. At the majority of these sites only students from middle and upper primary classes were eligible to be considered for participation in the student council. The representatives were elected by the student body. The student councilors brought issues that concerned students in individual classes to the student council to be discussed and debated.

Although the student councils were perceived by the majority of participating principals as an effective way for students to be heard, there were still some concerns regarding them. A central apprehension at Crystal Montessori School was an awareness of the virtual nonexistence of political power of student councils within the school, which led to the dissolution of the student council after the change of principalship.



By assisting students at Abernethy Country School to search for different possibilities, especially when their recommendations to change the school uniform policy was denied, the staff facilitator could have been in a position to engage the students in a dialogue about power and how schools might not necessarily be sites of domination. Serious engagement with democratic processes could have resulted in a critical analysis of 'the uniform incident' at the student council level and given sufficient emphasis to students' potential to resist the decision and search for alternative ways to keep this matter on the agenda of the school council until a compromise was negotiated and all parties were satisfied with the outcome as well as the processes involved.

In this way, student councils could become places where particular forms of knowledge and social relations could be taught to educate students to take their places within society from a position of social and political empowerment rather than a position of social and political subordination. This analysis of the operation and effectiveness of student councils illustrates that schooling in general and education in and for DaHR in particular are involved in the production and reproduction of cultural values through which particular forms of experiences are sanctioned.

Focusing on process issues and democratic skill-building as primary objectives of a student council as practiced at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School, and to a certain extent at Crystal Montessori School, does not lead to political empowerment as students were effectively curtailed from the sharing of political power within the school. From a political empowerment point of view, the effectiveness of the student council at Bolton Primary School can be rated as 'decoration', level two (see Table 21), where the issues debated and decided at the student council level are firmly controlled by the school principal and limited to the

organisation of assemblies. Ben's explanations<sup>58</sup> lead to the conclusion that students appear to be taking part in the political process at the school via the student council, but do not have much independent input into the matters discussed and decided. Thus, meaningful political participation appears not to be encouraged or possible. By contrast, the student council at Abernethy Country School encouraged a meaningful role for students in the decision-making process and decisions that were contrary to the student council's recommendations were explained to council representatives. Therefore, student representatives at Abernethy Country School appear to have had a 'voice' and an open sharing of information between adult and student groups at the school was in place. However, the student council's political participation could be improved. It was unfortunate that the council's input was virtually ineffective and power was firmly retained by adult decision-makers. This finding leads me to rate the effectiveness of the school council at Abernethy Country School as 'consulted and informed', level five (see Table 21). The student council at Crystal Montessori School was provided with financial resources to purchase play equipment and was, thus, able to effect outcomes in a limited way. Although this was an adult-initiated decision, the student council members were able to decide how the money would be spent. The independent use of monetary resources may be viewed as an important step in students' ability to share in the power of decision-making and effect concrete outcomes. Although the political decision-making powers of the student council at Crystal Montessori School were limited, I rate it at level six participation, 'adult-initiated and shared decision' (see Table 21). Carl, the principal, initiated the idea of purchasing outside play equipment and then the student representatives were seen as partners in the planning and execution of the project. The student council at

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<sup>58</sup> I was unable to attend student council meetings but was able to extensively discuss its nature and operation with Ben.

Deanmoor Independent School had the highest level of participation out of the four case schools, as the student council members were able to brainstorm initial ideas, design and manage the project themselves. The adult representative had only an advisory role with specific expertise. The project was owned by the students who negotiated adult involvement. Therefore, this form of participation attracts the highest rating, level eight, 'child-initiated, shared decision-making with adults'.

It is significant that there seems to be a relationship between socio-economic status and students' political empowerment as illustrated in Table 31. The interrelationship between monetary resources of parents and students' possibilities to engage effectively with political processes at the school and its educational impact for practical HRE is further discussed in the next chapter.

Table 31: Socio-Economic Status and Level of Participation

Level of Participation	Socioeconomic Status	School
Level 2	working class	B
Level 5	marginal middle class	A
Level 6	affluent middle class	C
Level 8	elite class	D

Having gained a solid understanding of what the ideas and actions of school principals are at the four case study sites, I was curious to listen to what students and teachers had to say about student involvement in decision-making processes on a day-to-day basis on issues that directly affected them. Thus, the next section of this chapter will concern itself with students' rights and freedoms within the classroom. Some core questions posed include: How do the participating teachers create a classroom conducive to practical HRE? How are students included in political decision-making processes within the classroom? What is the level of involvement of

students' in decision-making processes within the classroom? What are the educational effects of students' involvement in the governing procedures on a classroom level?

### Political Empowerment within the Classroom

The fundamental principle of democracy is that the ends of freedom and individuality for all can be attained only by means that accord with those ends.

John Dewey, cited in Schutz, 2001, p. 283

A school's political and social life is intertwined with cultural values and is also expressed in the social organisation of its classrooms. The study of classroom dynamics, through a close investigation of classroom rules and regulations, lays bare daily processes and practices and the classrooms' individual models of organisation. Identified as 'good' democratic sites, it may be expected that students at these four sites are involved to a high degree in the political processes at the classroom level. This means that they should actively participate in decision-making processes, through, for example, the negotiation of classroom rules and regulations to enhance understanding and appreciation of the concept of 'lived democracy'.

#### ***Case 4: Regular Integration of Student Voices on a Classroom Level***

A questionnaire was devised and administered to participating students and their classroom teachers to investigate the specificity of the dynamics of power and decision-making within various classrooms at the four case study sites. In all sites, but Abernethy Country School, two teachers agreed to take part in this study. The questionnaire was handed to 142 students and seven teachers from the four schools in term 2, 2001, of which 120 were returned. However, 23 questionnaires were found to be invalid, as some of the younger students (grade one at Bolton Primary School) either missed the majority of the questions or ticked all of the boxes. The teacher and

student questionnaires from this class were subsequently excluded from the analysis. In total 97 questionnaires were evaluated. Thus, questionnaire results from Abernethy Country School (School A) and Bolton Primary School (School B) are based on one classroom and results from Crystal Montessori School (School C) and Deanmoor Independent School (School D) are based on two classrooms (see Table 32).

Table 32: Participating Teachers

<i><b>School</b></i>	<i><b>Classroom</b></i>	<i><b>Teacher</b></i>	<i><b>Grade</b></i>
<b>School A</b>	--	Alice	7
<b>School B</b>	--	Brendan	6-7
<b>School C</b>	C-1	Claudia	5-7
<b>School C</b>	C-2	Corinne	1-4
<b>School D</b>	D-1	Dolores	6-7
<b>School D</b>	D-2	Dylan	3-4

The survey investigated student and teacher perceptions on the level of active student participation in decision-making processes on issues directly affecting them during the course of ordinary school days, and the level of well-being and personal autonomy of the students. The implicit relationship between students' ability to partake in decision-making processes and their feeling of personal autonomy and well-being is prominent in this context. As students are potentially encouraged to embrace high levels of responsible social and moral conduct, they are, across all grade levels (grade one to seven), engaged in "the production of good habits of thinking" (Dewey, 1966, p. 163) and education in and for DaHR.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, multiple-choice questions and questions where individual comments were sought. All of the multiple-choice questions were scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Always' or 'Often' to

'Seldom' or 'Never'. 'Sometimes' was put into the middle of the scale<sup>59</sup>. The classroom teachers of participating students were also invited to indicate, using the same instrument, how they thought the students would rate their classroom. In this way, both the participating teachers and their students could be heard. This enabled an analysis of possible echoes and contradictions in teacher/student perceptions. On average, there was agreement between the teachers' and the students' perceptions. Nevertheless, there seemed to be some level of disagreement between the teachers' and students' perceptions on certain questions.

*Rights to Self-Determination and Independent Decision-Making*

The results of the questions are discussed in clusters. The analysis begins with questions one, eight and nine, as they were all concerned with teacher and student perception of student freedom of choice within the classroom and are deliberately formulated as 'I decide'-questions (see Table 33).

Table 33: Freedom of Choice - Questions

Q1:	In this teacher's class, I get to decide what work to do;
Q8:	In this class, I decide where I sit;
Q9:	In this class, I decide with whom I would like to work.

First, teachers' responses (TR) are analysed followed by an evaluation of students' responses (SR) and an evaluation of the correlation between TR and SR. No teacher responded that students are 'Always' able to choose what work to do. Instead, all but one TR to Q1 are located in the 'Often' (School A; School C-1) and 'Sometimes' (School B; School C-2; School D-1) columns. Only Dylan, (School D-2) responded that students in his class 'Seldom' to decide what work to do as illustrated

<sup>59</sup> See Appendix A for Questionnaire

in Figure 11a. Unlike the TR to Q1 where none of the responses were located in the 'Always' column, two teachers (School A; School C-1) responded to the question if students are able to decide where to sit (Q8) as 'Always'. The responses from all the participating teachers to this question are located exclusively in the first two columns as the remaining four teachers responded that students are allowed to 'Often' decide where to sit in the classroom (see Figure 11b). Whereas TR to Q8 are the least diverse in this cluster of questions, they varied the most to the question (Q9) which asks if students are able to decide with whom to work. One teacher responded that students are 'Always' (School A) or 'Seldom' (School C-1) allowed to choose with whom to work, whereas the other four teachers responded that students are able to 'Often' (School B; School C-2) or 'Sometimes' (School D-1; School D-2) decide with whom to work. It is interesting that in the two public school classes, which are both upper primary classes, the teachers thought that they would allow students to choose 'Always' (School A) or 'Often' (School B) with whom to work. This is significant, as students in these two schools seem to enjoy lesser levels of participation rights at a whole school level than their counterparts from the two independent schools. Like with the previous two questions (Q1 and Q8), none of the teachers responded that students are 'Never' able to choose with whom to work as illustrated in Figure 11c. It is also significant that none of the teachers responded 'Never' to the three questions and the majority of TR to these three questions are located in the 'Often' column (eight responses). This indicates that the freedom of choice that students in these classrooms enjoy is not necessarily dependent on the socio-economic status of students or the location of the school.

\*\*\*insert graph Figure 11a-c\*\*\* TR Q1-9 – Landscape p. 267

These results indicate that the participating teachers thought that the students were generally given ample choices to decide what work to do, with whom to work and where to sit. All of these teachers believe that they allow the students to decide either 'Always' or 'Often' where to sit (Q8). Whereas no teacher thought that they would allow students to decide 'Always' what work to do (Q1), and only two teachers thought that they would allow students to decide this 'Often', none of the responding teachers thought that they would allow students 'Seldom' to choose their own work (Q1).

Next, student responses (SR) to how they rated their decision-making powers related to these three questions was sought. Students' participation rates varied considerably. Whereas only eight students from Bolton Primary School (School B) were able to participate<sup>60</sup> in this study, 32 students participated from Crystal Montessori School (School C) and 31 students participated from Deanmoor Independent School (School D) as illustrated in Table 34. Responses to the multiple-choice questions are shown in percentages.

Table 34: Number of Participating Students

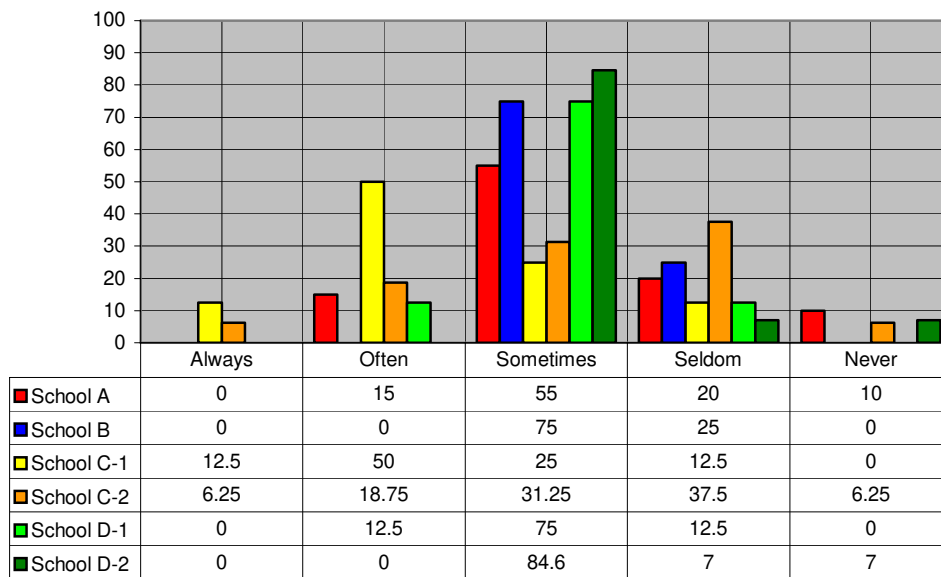
School	No of Students
School A Class 1	20
School B Class 1	8
School C Class 1	16
School C Class 2	16
School D Class 1	16
School D Class 2	15

<sup>60</sup> Although all 30 students in Brendan's classroom indicated that they would like to take part in the study, only eight 'Consent Forms' (see Appendix) were signed and returned on time.



*Q1: In this teacher's class, I get to decide what work to do*

**SR - Q1**



**Figure 12: Student Responses to Q1**

While the responses range from 'Always' to 'Never' in at least four of the six classrooms, the majority of students in all but one classroom responded that they were 'Often' (School C-1) or 'Sometimes' (Schools A, B, D-1 and D-2) able to decide what work to do. The surprisingly similar responses to this question across the four schools and six classrooms may be indicative of a trend that there is less discrepancy between students' decision-making powers on a classroom level than on a whole school level. The next set of Figures (Figures 13a-f) compares TR and SR from each classroom individually.

\*\*\*\*Insert TR-SR Comparison Q1 – 5\*\*\*\* Figure 13a –f , pp. 270 and 271

Only two teachers (Alice, School A and Claudia, School C-1) responded that students were 'Often' given the choice of what work to do. The comparison of TR and SR at an individual classroom level reveals that there is some disagreement between teacher and student responses, especially in these two classrooms. Nevertheless, in all but School A the majority of students responses are equal or higher than the teacher response. Whereas 75% of students agreed with Brendan's (School B) and Dolores's response (School D-1) that they were 'Sometimes' able to decide what work to do, a significant number of students seemed to disagree with Alice's (School A) and Claudia's (School C-1) responses that they were 'Often' able to choose what work to do. Although more than half (62.5%) of the students' in Claudia's classroom agreed with her assessment, the majority (85%) of Alice's students disagree with her assessment and rated their decision-making powers concerning their choice of work as less than she did.

*Q8: I decide where to sit – SR*

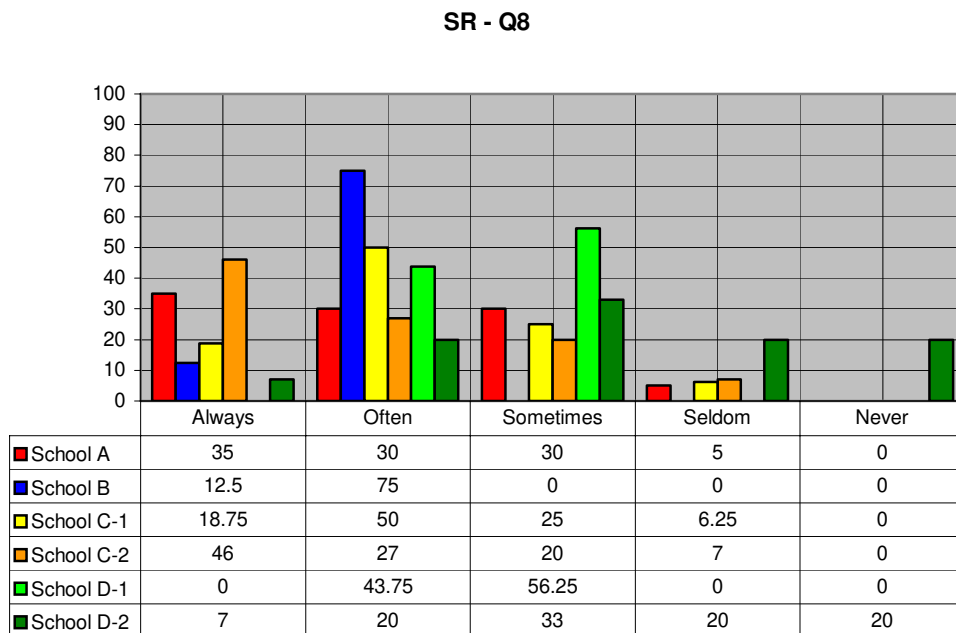


Figure 14: Student Responses to Q8

Similar to SR to Q1, the variety of SR to Q8 ranged from 'Always' to 'Never'. The majority of SR were equally divided between the 'Always' (Schools A and C-1), 'Often' (Schools B and C-2) and 'Sometimes' (Class 1 and 2 in School D) columns. Whereas all TR were located solely in the 'Always' and 'Often' columns, SR were more diverse and ranged from 'Always' to 'Never'. Only in one classroom (School D-1) were there no 'Always' responses from students. In School C-2, almost half of the SR were located in the 'Always' column. Even though a substantial number of students rated their decision-making powers concerning this question lower than their teachers, the overall agreement between TR and SR on the relative high level of freedom of choice across the classrooms and schools is striking. Nonetheless, comparing TR and SR at an individual classroom level (see Figures 15a-f) reveals that except for Schools B and D-1, there is sizeable variation among the student responses. Even though the majority of students seem to agree overall with their teachers' assessment, in the two classrooms (Schools C-1 and A), where the TR was 'Always' only a minority of students 18.75 % (School C-1) and 35% (School A) of students agreed with their teacher's assessment.

\*\*\*\*insert TR/SR in comparison – Q8 – Figure 15a-f – Schools individually, pp. 274 and 275

It is possible that the multi-aged grouping and the young age of the pupils in Schools C-2 and D-2 may have contributed to the variation in student responses. Similar to Q1, high levels of disagreement between TR and SR were noted in Schools A (-65%) and C-1 (-81.25). Interestingly, students in these two upper primary classes rated their abilities to choose in this instance again much less optimistic than their teachers. As with the previous question, 75% of students in School B responded the same way as the teacher. However, unlike the strong correlation between TR and SR in School B, only 18.75% of Claudia's students (School C-1) and 35% of Alice's (School A) students agreed that they are 'Always' able to choose where to sit in the classroom. Nonetheless, 50% of SR in School C-1 were located in the 'Often' column which indicates that almost two-thirds (69%) of students thought that they are 'Always' or 'Often' able to choose where to sit. Similarly, 65% of students in School A thought that they are 'Always' or 'Often' able to choose where to sit as illustrated previously (Figure 21). It is significant that except for School D-2, none of the students indicated that they are 'Never' able to decide where to sit and except for Dylan's class only one student responded 'Seldom' to this question.

Except for School D, the SR for all the classrooms is well above 50% when combining the 'Always' and 'Often' responses. The relatively high level of 'Always' and 'Often' SR is an important finding and is demonstrated in Figure 21. As this finding seems to be indicative of a trend of relatively high levels of 'Always' and 'Often' responses not only from teachers but also students, the combined 'Always' and 'Often' SR is shown in a separate Figure to each individual question.

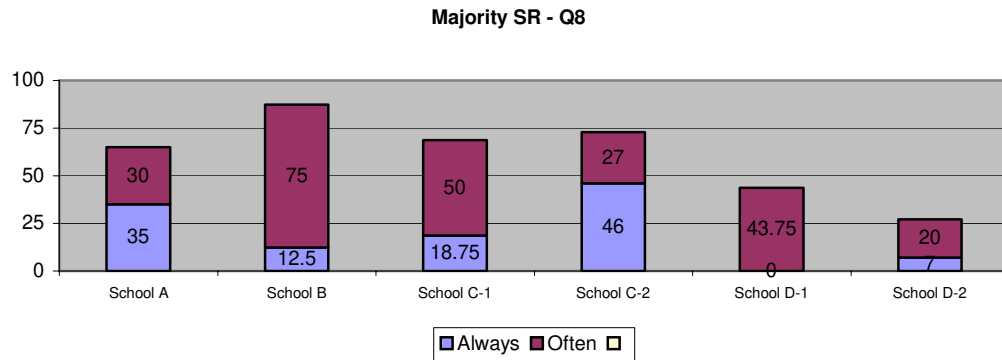


Figure 16: Majority SR to Q8

The surprisingly consistent SR across the four schools is noteworthy and seems to confirm the trend pointed out above. The greater than expected correlation between TR and SR among the four model schools is important, especially given the substantial discrepancies among the government schools and independent schools on whole school levels.

*Q9: I decide with whom to work – SR*

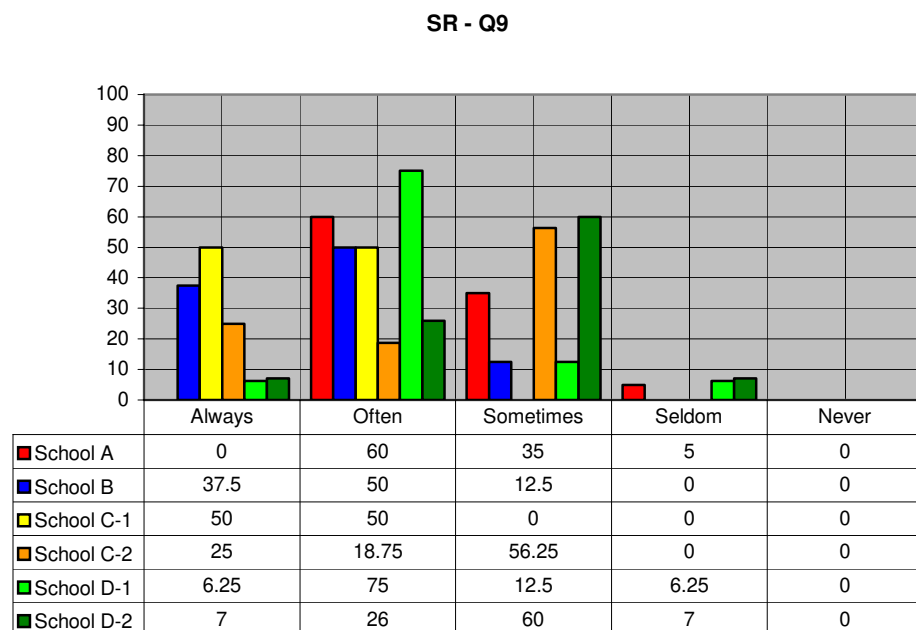


Figure 17: Student Responses to Q9

Similar to the previous two questions, the majority of students, except for the two classrooms with the younger pupils (Schools C-2 and D-2) thought that they were 'Always' or 'Often' able to decide with whom to work (see Figure 18). This is interesting given that half the teachers' responses were located either in the 'Sometimes' (Schools D-1 and D-2) or 'Seldom' (School C-1) columns. Another interesting observation was that both government teachers rated their students' freedom of choice concerning this question as high, 'Always' in School A and 'Often' in School B. This indicates that there is considerable freedom of choice within the classroom, even in the two government schools located in less affluent areas of Perth.

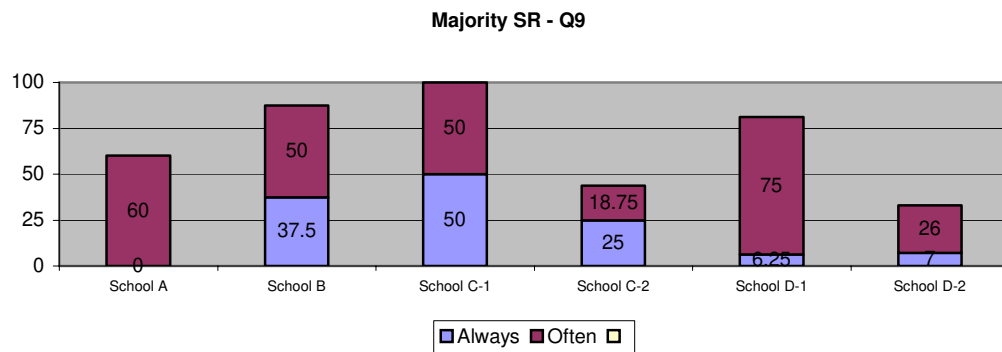


Figure 18: Majority Student Responses – Q9

Comparing TR and SR to this question at an individual classroom level (see Figures 19a-f) confirms the trend that there is a similarity between TR and SR across the schools. Only in Schools C-2 and School A rated more than 50% of students their freedom of choice as less than their teachers.

**\*\*\*\* Insert Figures 19a-f, pages 279 and 280 \*\*\*\***

Overall, the concurrence between individual TR across all schools and in relationship to the majority of SR on students' decision-making powers within the classroom indicates agreement on the issue of student agency and students' ability to choose their course of action within the classroom.

*Restrictions to Students' Rights to Self-Determination and Independent Decision-Making*

The next cluster of questions concerns itself with classroom rules and regulations and restrictions placed on students' rights to self-determination and independent decision-making. These questions (see Table 35) were designed to elicit responses about the level of awareness, comfort and involvement in the governance of the self within the classroom context. Of particular interest to this study is teacher and student perceptions of the awareness and fairness of the classroom rules on the one hand and the consequences for misbehaving on the other hand. Internalised values through which students are constructed and regulated find expression in school and classroom rules and consequences for not following the rules. Being aware of classroom rules and committing oneself to cooperation are expressions of specific values and beliefs of the good (including good citizenship) as students demonstrate their valuing and respecting of other people's rights and needs and therewith actively practice the development of democratic attitudes and skills.

Table 35: Levels of Awareness, Comfort and Involvement - Questions

Q5:	I am aware of the class rules;
Q6:	I think the class rules are fair;
Q7:	I have a say in helping to make new class rules;
Q10:	I am aware of the consequences if I misbehave;
Q11:	I think the consequences for misbehaviour are fair.

Similar to the analysis of the previous cluster, the teachers' responses to these questions are discussed first, followed by an evaluation of students' responses and an evaluation of the correspondence of TR and SR. Teachers' responses to this cluster of questions were again strikingly uniform. To the first question in this cluster (Q5) four out of the six teachers responded that their students were 'Always' aware of the class rules. Only those teachers teaching younger pupils in Schools C-2 ('Often') and D-2 ('Sometimes') suggested that their students would not at all times be aware of the class rules as illustrated in Figure 20a-e.

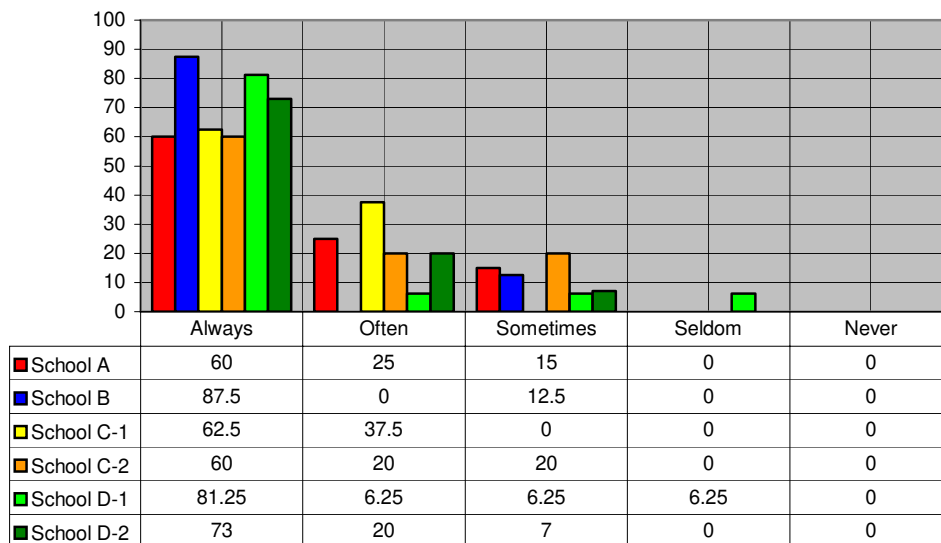
\*\*\*insert graph Figure 20a-e – TR Q5-11, pp. 283 \*\*\*



These teachers indicated that the students have a solid understanding of the consequences of misbehaving (Q10) and they further believed that the consequences for misbehaving are 'Always' or 'Often' fair (Q11). As the student responses demonstrated, the students did not necessarily agree with this perception. As with the previous cluster, the questions are listed individually and student responses are shown in percentages.

*Q5: I am aware of the class rules - SR*

**SR - Q5**



**Figure 21: Student Responses to Q5**

Unlike the TR for Schools C-2 and D-2, the student results demonstrated that even young primary students responded that they are well aware of the class rules. There seems to be the least disagreement on this question across the schools. In the next set of Figures (Figures 22a-f) TR and SR from each class are compared individually. The data demonstrates that there are only minor disagreements between TR and SR across the various schools on the awareness level of the class rules.

**\*\*\*\* insert Figures 22a-f) pp. 285 and 286 \*\*\*\***

The high level of agreement among the students of all classes on this question is further illustrated in Figure 23. In all the classes, the SR is over 75% when combining the 'Always' and 'Often' responses.

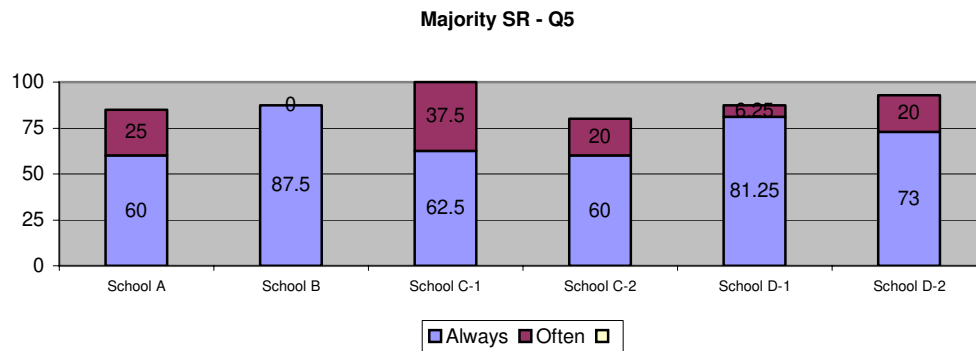


Figure 23: Majority of SR to Q5

Even though Dylan (School D-2) responded that his younger pupils (grades 3-4) were only 'Sometimes' aware of the class rules, the SR from his and Corinne's (School C-2) students indicate that young students are also quite aware of the class rules.

*Q6: I think the class rules are fair – SR*

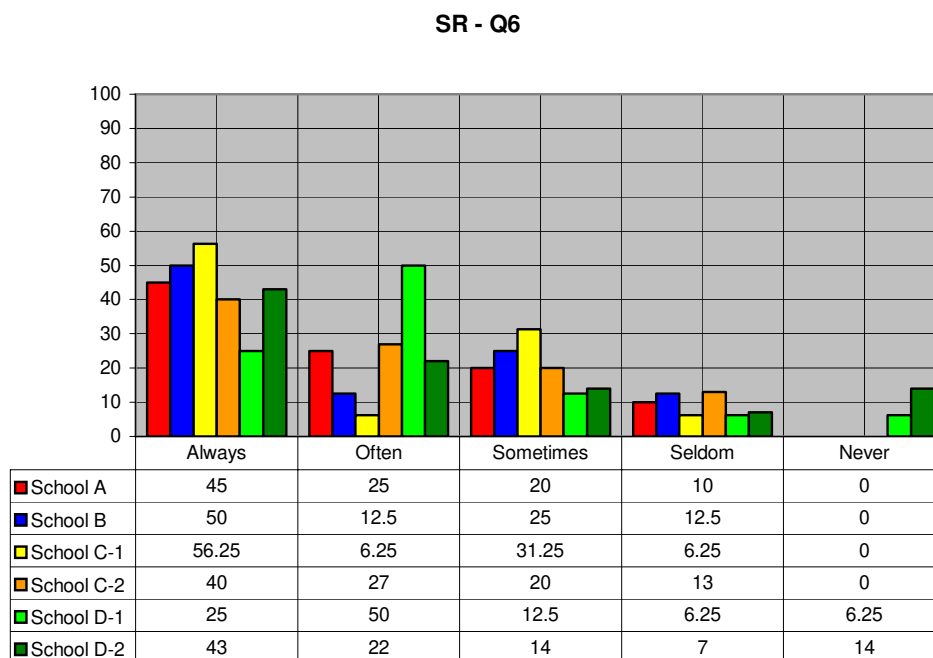


Figure 24: Student Responses to Q6

SR to this question are more diverse as fewer students agree with their teachers on the fairness of the class rules. Nevertheless, slightly more than half (56.25%) of students in Corinne's grade 1-4 classroom and almost half (45%) of Alice's grade 7 students agreed with their teachers' rating that the classroom rules as 'Always' fair. As with previous questions, TR and SR from the individual classes are compared in Figures 25a-f.

**\*\*\* insert Figure 25 a-f, pp. 289 and 290 \*\*\***

As with previous questions, students 'Always' and 'Often' responses were combined and shown in Figure 26 to elicit the variety of SR across the schools and classrooms.

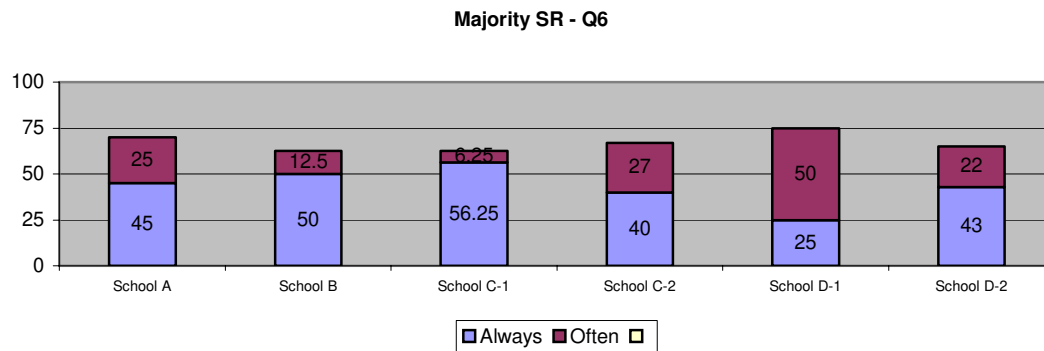
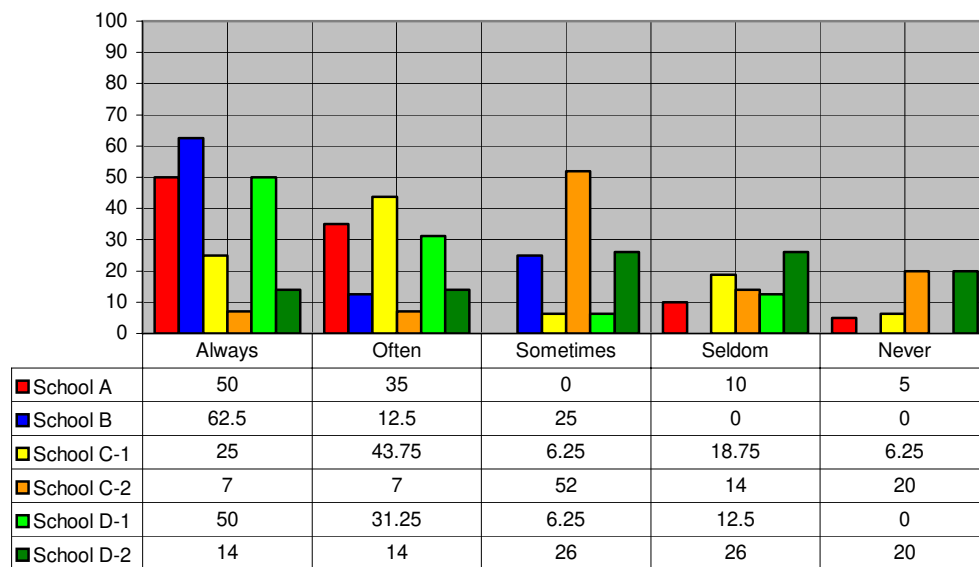


Figure 26: Majority SR to Q6

The significant uniformity of SR across the schools is clearly visible in this Figure as the majority of students agree with the TR that the class rules are 'Always' (Schools A and C-2) or 'Often' (Schools B, C-1 and D-1) fair. Significantly, even 65% of Dylan's (School D-2) students agreed with this assessment as only two students (14%) responded that the class rules are only 'Sometimes' fair. Yet, it is noteworthy that 62.5% (five students) of students in School B responded that the class rules are fair, but only 37.5% (three students) responded that the consequences of misbehaving were 'Always' or 'Often' fair (Q11). This mixed response may be due to the small number of participating students in this class and one particular rule that was introduced by the teacher of this class. Brendan's 'special rule' is discussed in detail below.

*Q7: I have a say in helping to make new school rules – SR*

**SR - Q7**



**Figure 27: Student Responses to Q7**

Student responses to this question seem more diverse than SR to the previous question (Q6 – I think the class rules are fair). More students seem to disagree with their teacher's response that students are 'Always' (Schools A, B, C-1 and D-1) or 'Sometimes' (Schools C-2 and D-2) able to contribute to the development of new class rules. The following Figures (Figures 28a-f) compare TR and SR at an individual classroom level. It shows that there is substantial agreement between TR and SR, despite the higher levels of disagreement displayed in Figure 27 as a great number of students indicated that they are 'Often' instead of 'Always' able to help develop new class rules.

\*\*\* insert Figure 28a-f, pp. 293 and 294 \*\*\*

Similar to previous questions, 'Always' and 'Often' responses from students are combined in Figure 29 to illustrate the level of agreement between students responses across the schools and grade levels.

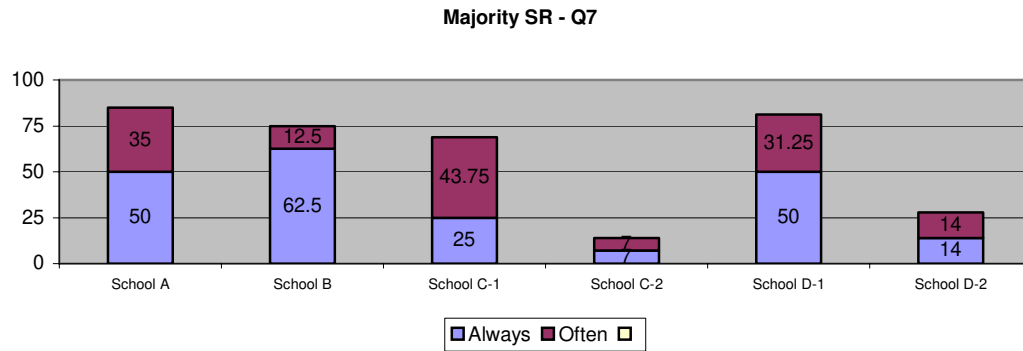
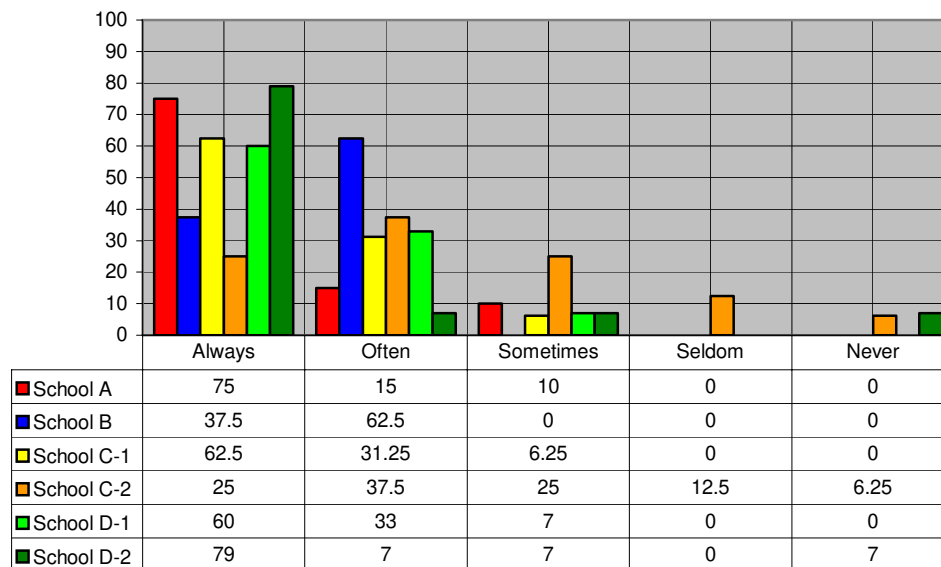


Figure 29: Majority SR to Q7

Joining 'Always' and 'Often' student responses to this question showed that the disagreement between TR and SR was not that prominent after all. Two thirds of students' responses corresponded with the TR in these upper primary classes that students are 'Always' (Schools A, B, C-1 and D-1) able to help in the making of new class rules. The two teachers from lower and middle primary classes responded 'Sometimes' (Schools C-2 and D-2) to this question. The results displayed in Figures 28 and 29 are important as they confirm the trend noted earlier that students seem to have similar levels of participation rights across the four schools. Whereas the school's socio-economic context or philosophical orientations were not relevant here, students' age level was. These results show that the younger pupils were less able to participate in the rule-making at the classroom level than older students.

*Q10: I am aware of the consequences if I misbehave – SR*

**SR - Q10**



**Figure 30: Student Responses to Q10**

Similar to TR the majority of student responses are located in the 'Always' column, except for Schools B and C-2. The next set of Figures compares TR and SR for each individual school (Figure 31a-f).

\*\*\* insert Figure 31 a-f, pp. 297 and 298 \*\*\*

However, combining students' 'Always' and 'Often' responses as with previous questions shows that even in these schools and classrooms the students seemed to be well aware of the consequences of misbehaving (see Figure 32).

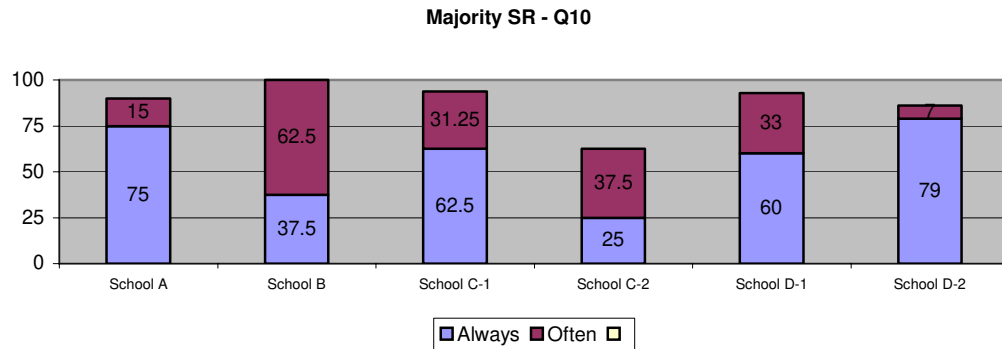


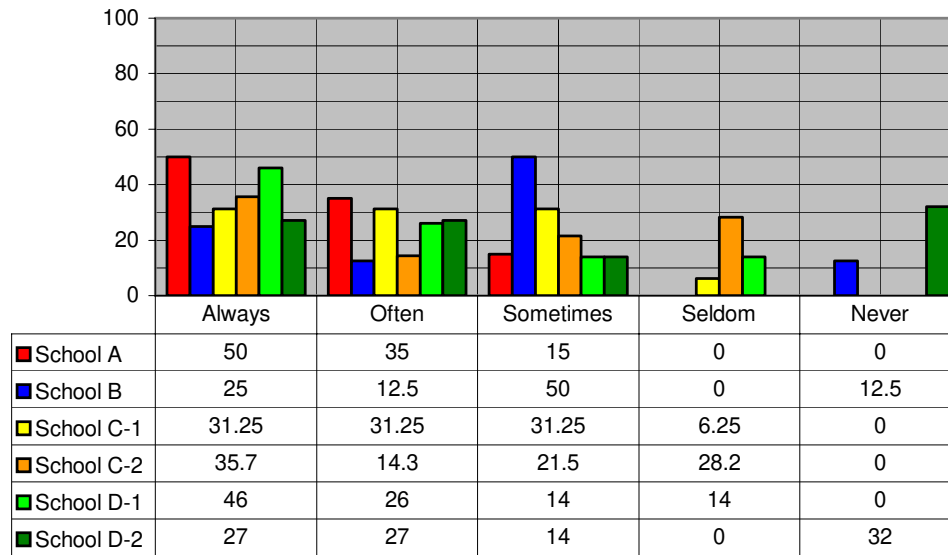
Figure 32: Majority Student Responses – Q10

To note the uniformity to TR and SR is important as it further confirms the trend that there seems to be much agreement between TR and SR in the four model schools. Only younger students in School C (Corinne's class, C-2) indicated that they seemed to be slightly less aware of the consequences if they misbehaved than older students.



*Q11: I think the consequences for misbehaving are fair – SR*

**SR - Q11**



**Figure 33: Student Responses to Q11**

Although the TR were again strikingly uniform and similar to Q10 with four 'Always' (Schools A, B, C-2 and D-1) and two 'Often' (Schools C-1 and D-2) responses, SR to this question were generally mixed. The next set of Figures (Figures 34a-f) shows TR and SR in comparison for each individual school.

\*\*\* insert Figure 34 a-f, pp. 301 and 302 \*\*\*

Despite the great diversity of SR to the question of whether students think the consequences for misbehaving are fair, the following Figure (Figure 35) combines students' 'Always' and 'Often' responses and shows a different pattern.

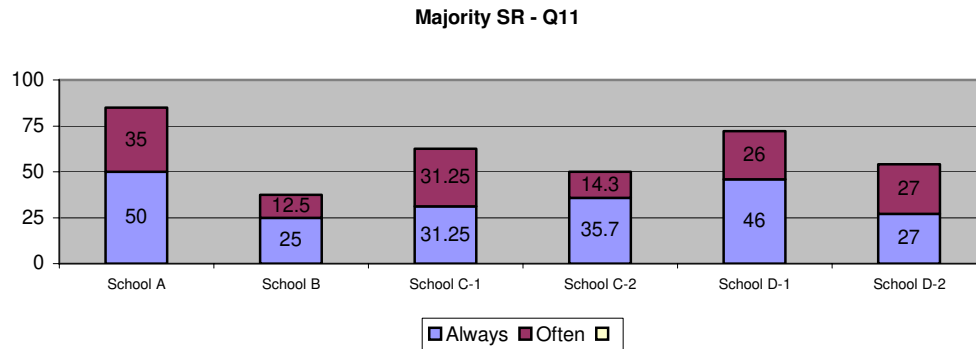


Figure 35: Majority Student Responses – Q11

Reviewing the pattern for 'Always' and 'Often' responses illustrates a higher level of SR agreement with TR than might be expected. Nevertheless, students' 'Always' and 'Often' responses were less uniform than to the previous question. Except for School B, at least 50% of students in all the model schools agreed with their teacher's view that the consequences for misbehaving were 'Always' or 'Often' fair. The low level of 'Always' and 'Often' responses (37.5%) in School B is interesting, especially as these students seemed to agree with Brendan's assessment to a high degree on all the previous questions. This result may reflect students' disapproval of Brendan's pedagogical approach concerning late-coming students and his 'special rule' that is discussed in some detail below. The students in School D-2 were greatly divided in their opinion on the question of the fairness of the consequences for misbehaving. The majority of these students (32%) thought that the consequences for misbehaving were 'Never' fair; however, almost equally as many students (27%) thought the consequences were 'Always' or 'Often' fair. It is not clear why these students seem to disagree with each other to this extent. As the responses to

some open ended-questions in the next section demonstrates the level of contentment was generally high among all the students, also in this classroom. In this particular classroom, there were slightly more girls (60%) than boys (40%) who thought that the consequences for misbehaving were 'Never' fair. When reviewing their responses to the open-ended question that asks: *What would you like to change about this classroom?* some of these students responded 'nothing', whereas other students mentioned cleanliness and noise levels. Surprisingly, none of these students referred to the consequences for misbehaving as something that could be changed.

Reviewing the cluster of student responses to these five questions, it appears that they confirm the pattern established with the previous cluster. TR and SR appear to be similar and no distinction can be made between high and low socio-economic areas, government or independent schools. Nevertheless, there were also some disagreements between TR and SR as students agreed with their teacher's view on some questions, but not on others. The biggest disparity in teacher/student responses was in relation to the question on the fairness of the consequences for misbehaving (Q11). Whereas teachers thought the consequences for misbehaving were 'Always' or 'Often' fair, the students' responses were more diverse. In all but School A, some students responded that they were 'Seldom' or 'Never' fair. This disparity of TR and SR may seem surprising and is not reflected in the SR to the open-ended questions where students from all the four classrooms display a feeling of contentment.

### ***Implications of the Findings***

An important finding is the high level of agreement between TR across all schools and between TR and SR within each school. The implications of the responses as outlined above become clear when the levels of students' decision-making powers within the classroom are compared to the level of students' ability to

partake in the governing responsibilities at a school level. Figure 36 shows the frequency of TR to all eight questions<sup>61</sup> and demonstrates that the majority of responses are located in the 'Always' (21 responses) and 'Often' (16 responses) columns.

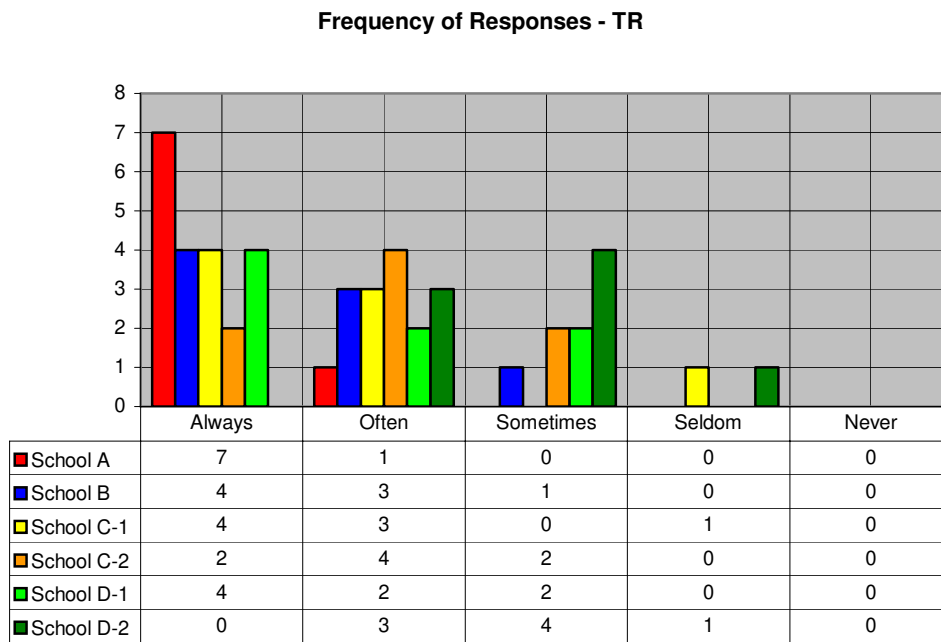


Figure 36: Frequency of Responses – TR

Reviewing TR to the eight multiple choice questions which asked about students' active participation in decision-making processes in the classroom, it seems that these teachers rate their classrooms as highly democratic in the sense that students seem to have significant input in decision-making processes at this level, irrespective of socio-economic background or grade level.

This is a significant finding and the high level of agreement between these teachers, which was somewhat unexpected, is further illustrated in Figure 37. This

<sup>61</sup> For example, Alice responded to seven questions with 'Always' and to one question with 'Often'.

Figure shows all teachers 'Always' and 'Often' responses to the eight questions in percentages.

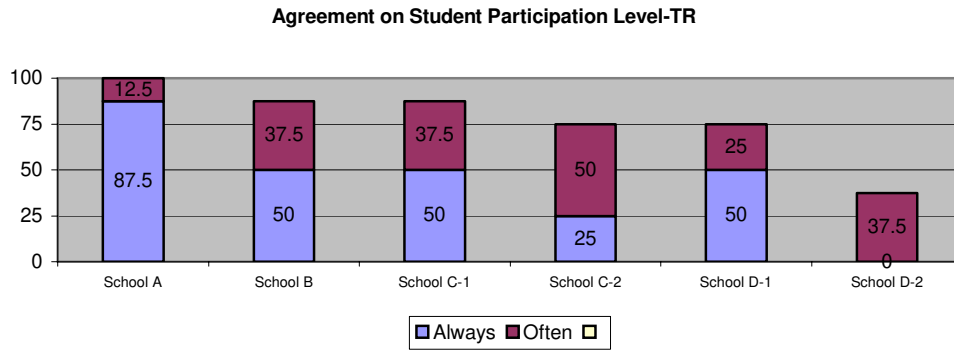


Figure 37: Agreement on Student Participation Level - TR

The above figure demonstrates that except for Dylan (School D-2) all teachers agreed that they aspire to let students participate in the governance of themselves and the classroom to a high degree. However, for certain questions there were some age level differences as Alice at Abernethy Country School, Brendan at Bolton Primary School, Claudia at Crystal Montessori School and Dolores at Deanmoor Independent School most strongly indicated that students in their classrooms were, based on these questions, able to participate to substantial degrees in decision-making processes within the classroom. As Alice (Abernethy Country School) responded seven out of eight times with 'Always', I would rate Alice's response as a cross between a level seven and level six, 'child-initiated and directed' and 'adult initiated and shared decision' participation, where students are considered as sharing in the power of decision-making to a substantial degree. Students, at these levels and in her classroom are perceived as competent citizens who are able to use rational reasoning in the governance of themselves and are seen as willing to uphold the common good of this classroom community with a high regard of other people's rights. Similarly, Brendan's (Bolton Primary School) and Claudia's (Crystal Montessori School) and Dolores's

(Deanmoor Independent School) responses may be seen as fitting a level six participation of students' rating. In these classrooms, students were equally seen as competent co-organisers of their daily activities and accountable for responsible social and moral conduct. The middle and lower primary class teachers at Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School were more cautious and less optimistic in their responses about their students' participation abilities in decision-making processes in their classrooms. Corinne (Crystal Montessori School) and Dylan (Deanmoor Independent School) rated their students' participation in decision-making processes as slightly more constrained than the teachers of upper primary classes in their schools or Schools A and B. Therefore, I would rate the responses of the lower and middle primary teachers at Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School as a cross between levels five and six, 'consulted and informed' and 'adult-initiated and shared decision', where the frame of reference of student participation is firmly in the hands of the teacher but students are able to share in the decision to a substantial degree. In these classrooms, student participation in the decision-making process is perceived as somewhat less likely than in the upper primary classrooms.

Comparing teachers' responses with those of the students and rating them accordingly, reveals as discussed before, that students seem to be slightly less optimistic about the participation abilities within their classrooms as shown in Figure 38<sup>62</sup>. Nonetheless, it is significant, that students' participation levels in all the six classrooms as perceived by the students themselves seem to be substantial and may therefore be rated as occupying upper rung levels.

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<sup>62</sup> For this comparison, the mean response to a particular question was used.

As with TR, Figure 38 shows the frequency of SR to the eight multiple-choice questions.

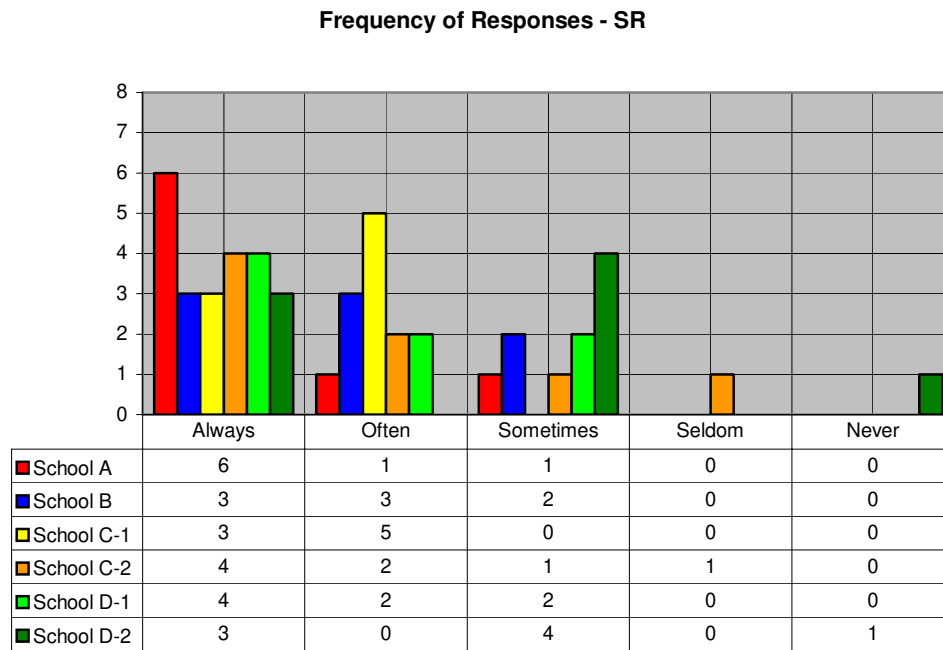


Figure 38: Frequency of Responses - SR

Similar to TR, this Figure demonstrates that the majority of responses are located in the 'Always' (23 responses) and 'Often' (13 responses) columns. Although slightly more students than teachers responded 'Always' (23 students and 21 teachers), the number of 'Often' responses from students is slightly less than TR (13 students and 16 teachers). Nevertheless, the high level of 'Always' and 'Often' responses from both teachers and students across the schools and questions is a significant finding. The agreement between SR across all schools is further illustrated in Figure 39, which shows students' 'Always' and 'Often' responses in percentages.

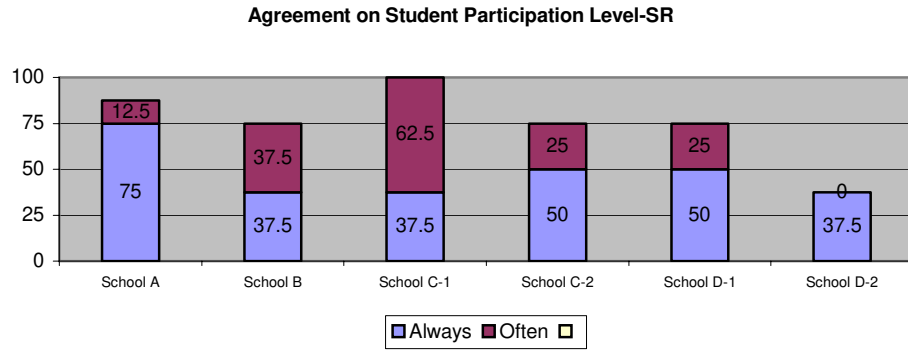


Figure 39: Agreement on Student Participation Level – SR

Although students in a number of classrooms rated their participation abilities as slightly less than their teachers, the agreement between TR and SR is noteworthy. The correspondence between TR and SR and students' overall agreement with their teacher's assessment of their abilities to participate in decision-making processes within the classroom is illustrated in Figure 40. Only 'Always' and 'Often' responses were considered for this comparison and combined<sup>63</sup>.

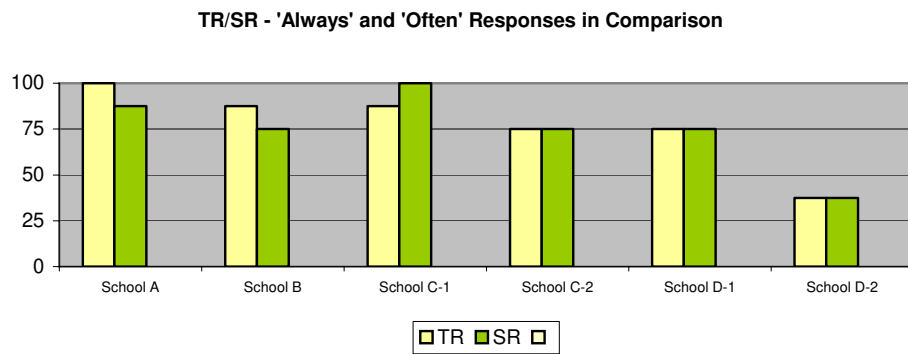


Figure 40: TR/SR – 'Always' and 'Often' Responses in Comparison

These results are indicative of the trend that the students in all the case study sites are perceived as social agents and accorded substantial rights and responsibilities within the bounds of their classrooms. The school's location and socio-economic

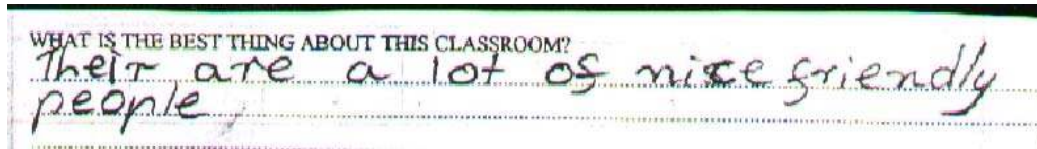
<sup>63</sup> For example, TR for School A was 87.5% 'Always' and 12.5 'Often' to all eight questions, combining 'Always' and 'Often' answers equals a 100 percent. The majority response from students in this school was 37.5% 'Always' and 37.5% 'Often', combining these two responses equals 75%. Therefore 75% of all majority student responses to the eight questions were located in the 'Always' and 'Often' columns.



status of students seems to have an effect on students' ability to participate in the political processes on a whole school level, but was not identified as influential on a classroom level. Based on the overall student results, it is less clear that age and maturity are definite factors, in the decision to accord students the right to participate in decision-making processes within the classroom. Although TR to some questions (Q5 and Q7) pointed in this direction, SR did not seem to indicate differential treatment on the basis of age or maturity. It is considerably more difficult to rate the students' responses according to Hart's participation model, however, based on students' overall responses and majority responses located in the 'Always' and 'Often' columns (see Figure 40), I find that students in Schools A, B, C-1, C-2 and D-1 are able to share in the decision-making process which is equivalent to a level six rating, 'adult-initiated, shared decision-making' and students of the lower primary class in School D (D-2) as equivalent to a level five rating, 'consulted and informed'. From the analysis of the above data, I am in agreement with the views expressed by the principals that these teachers treated their students as subjects of rights and responsibilities. Therefore, I was curious to see if the principal's and teacher's perceptions of a genuine sense of 'lived democracy' in their school and the view that students at their schools are being treated with dignity, integrity and respect was corroborated by the students in the open-ended questions of the survey.

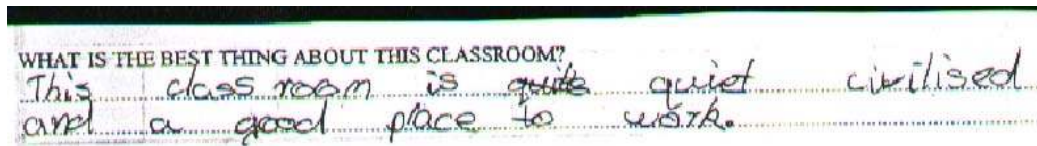
When asked: *What would you like to change about this classroom?* a great number of students responded that they were quite content with the rules and regulations of the classrooms and how they were able to partake in the governance of themselves and the community on a classroom level. The same feelings of general well-being and contentment were conveyed in responses to the question: *What is the best thing about this classroom?* The students responded again overwhelmingly in the

positive. Responses, such as 'everything' (Boy, grade 3) (School D, Class 2), and 'a lot of nice people' (Boy, grade four) (School D, Class 2) were common. For instance, some commented as illustrated in Figures 41a-h:



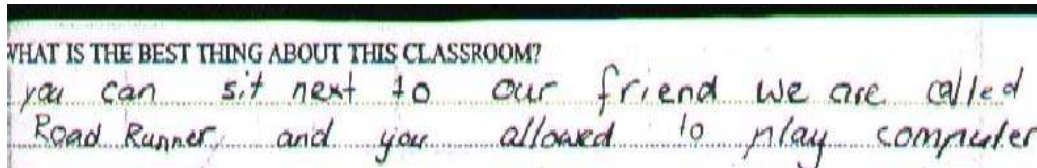
[There] are a lot of nice, friendly people.

Figure 41a: Student Response to open-ended questions - School A, class 1, girl, grade 7.



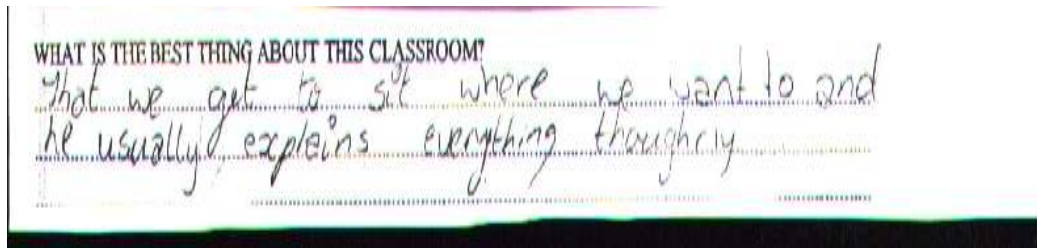
This classroom is quiet civilised and a good place to work.

Figure 41b: Student Response to open-ended questions - School A, class 1, boy grade 7.



You can sit next to a friend. We are called Road Runner and you are allowed to play computer.

Figure 41c: Student Response to open-ended questions - School B, class 1, boy grade 7.



That we get to sit where we want to and he (the teacher) usually explains everything thoroughly

Figure 41d: Student Response to open-ended question - School B, class 1, girl grade 7.

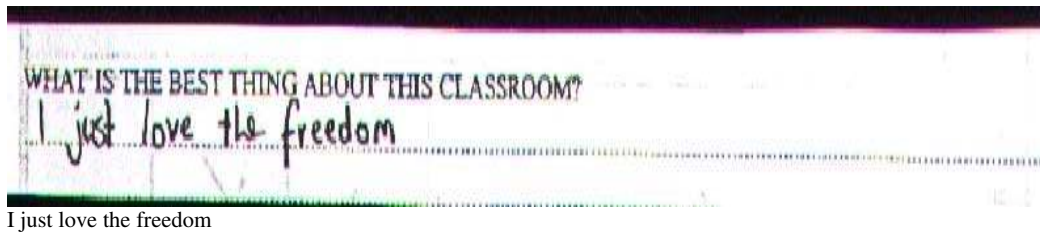
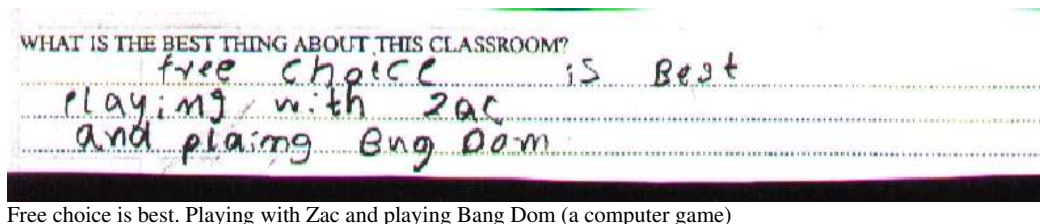
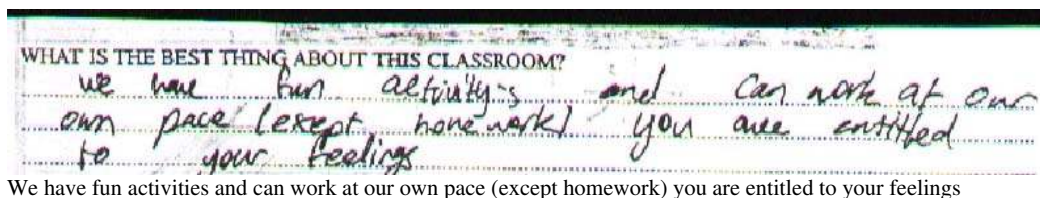


Figure 41e: Student Response to open-ended question - School C, class 1, girl grade 5.



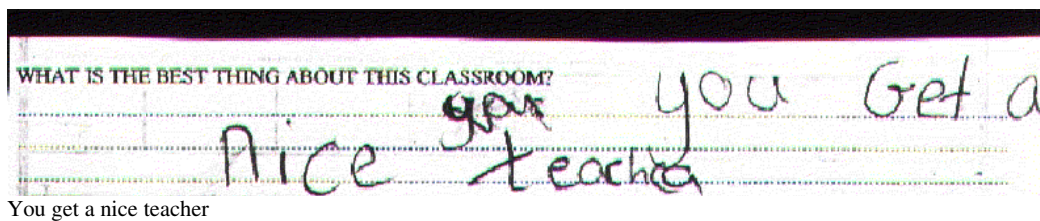
Free choice is best. Playing with Zac and playing Bang Dom (a computer game)

Figure 41f: Student Response to open-ended questions - School C, class 2, boy, grade 3.



We have fun activities and can work at our own pace (except homework) you are entitled to your feelings

Figure 41g: Student Response to open-ended questions - School D, class 1, girl, grade 6.



You get a nice teacher

Figure 41h: Student Response to open-ended questions - School D, class 2, girl, grade 3.

Interestingly, students also indicated in this section of the questionnaire that their school occupied an exceptional position within the educational landscape as they commented on how the pedagogical practices in their schools and classrooms differ from traditional schooling. Therefore, it can be concluded that these students shared the principal's and teachers' conviction that their schools were different from 'ordinary

schools'. One student from School C observed: "*We are more free to roam around more than other people in other schools*" (Girl, grade 3) (Class 1, School C, Fieldnotes, 26.02.2001). This view may indicate a comprehension of disparity of student's rights and responsibilities in some schools with different philosophical approaches, cultures, different make-ups and clienteles. This is seen as the result of a general attitude towards children that leads to more democratic, student-centred practices and a heightened awareness of students' human rights which was shared among the four case schools. Despite the general agreement within and in between the participating teacher's responses to the multiple-choice questions, the binary situation of students from different socio-economic backgrounds was noticed and could be exemplified in Figures 42a and b:

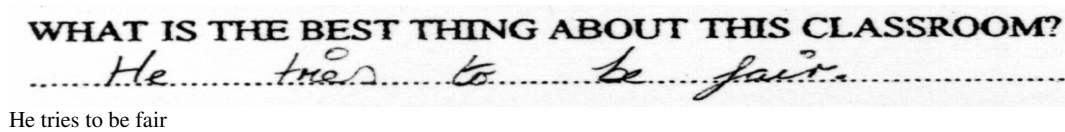


Figure 42a: Student Responses to open-ended question - School B, girl, grade 7.

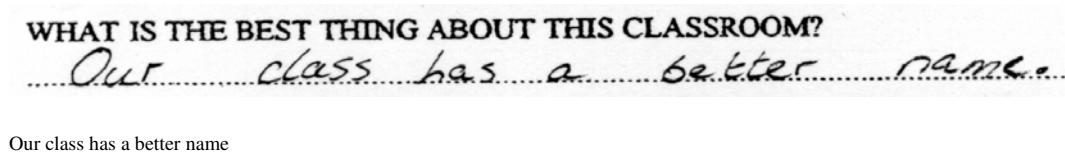


Figure 42b: School B, boy, grade 7

In the above Figures students talked about what they perceived to be 'the best thing' about their classroom. The students from Bolton Primary School, which is located in a low socio-economic area of Perth, were appreciative of the fact that their teacher cared about them and displayed a genuine interest in their welfare. This means that they felt good about themselves and their situation, because their human rights to protection and participation were recognised, respected and upheld by the classroom teacher and even comparatively small amounts of choice and ownership of learning

were greatly valued by these students. These students even felt privileged in comparison to other students within the same school as the response of one boy suggests: *"Our class has a better name"* (Boy, grade 7) (Bolton Primary School). In other words, the responses of the students from Bolton Primary School implied an awareness of what might be called 'a privileged position' within an otherwise harsh environment. The effectiveness of practical HRE through the modelling of respectful behaviour of powerful authority figures, such as the teacher in this classroom who actively demonstrated democratic attitudes and behaviour and respect for students' dignity and rights, is clearly established here. In this way, Brendan, the teacher at Bolton Primary School, as all the other participating teachers in this study, embraced and enacted democratic principles, pushing boundaries of restraints and resistance, and therewith enabled unique techniques and schooling practices to emerge.

***Case 5: Irregular Integration of Student Voices on a Classroom Level***

***Practical HRE and Classroom Rules: Brendan's Pedagogical Approach***

Lived democracy within and outside of a classroom can only work when citizens actively commit themselves to understand and value some basic social rules that enable democratic civic life. Democratic life is not only impossible when rights and powers are abused by authority figures such as teachers, which is, according to Ben, a commonly understood form of abuse of power in the local community in which Bolton Primary School is situated. To demonstrate the interconnectedness of abuse of power and resulting suffering at the classroom level, Brendan employed a somewhat controversial pedagogical practice. Clearly, Brendan's 'special rule', which was brought to my attention at one of my observation days by two disgruntled students, aimed to facilitate the development of more democratic attitudes in some of his students.

Table 36: Classroom Rules – School B: Comparison of Teacher/Student Responses

	<i>School B - Teacher</i>	<i>School B - Students</i>
<b>Q5: I am aware of the class rules</b>	Always	Always
<b>Q6: I think the class rules are fair</b>	Often	Always
<b>Q7: I have a say in helping to make new class rules</b>	Always	Always
<b>Q10: I am aware of consequences if I misbehave</b>	Always	Often
<b>Q11: I think the consequences for misbehaving are fair</b>	Always	Sometimes

As I observed a number of times, Brendan displays much passion and seems to care deeply about the welfare of his students (Classroom observation, 06.03.2001). His high regard for social justice and equality was corroborated by the students who indicated in the questionnaire that they regarded the classroom rules to 'always' be fair and the consequences for misbehaving to 'sometimes' be fair, as illustrated in Table 36. A pedagogical practice employed by Brendan was, however not favoured by some of his students. Brendan's 'special rule' and its effect on them was explained by two female students as follows:

*Betty: When someone comes back late from recess or lunch, we all have to stay in after school and he [Brendan] times it by three. If someone is three minutes late then we all have to stay in for nine minutes after school. It's really unfair (said in a very angry voice).*

*Brigitte: Why do we try to be good if we still get punished?*

*Betty: I get busted twice! I have to go and pick my little sister up from school, she is not old enough to walk home from school by herself so if I have to stay in, I get basically double-busted [punished]. One, I get busted by my mother [for being late]. My sister starts walking [home] if I'm not there and – by the teacher as well for doing nothing [wrong] (Now she is really upset).*

Brendan's unusual pedagogical practice seems to stem from a high regard for the democratic ideals of shared responsibilities. This example may be illustrative of his stern attempt to instil a sense of democratic responsibility and concern for the welfare of fellow students in the notorious latecomers in his classroom. Brendan's 'special rule' is effectively teaching students valuable HRE lessons. Firstly, it

unmistakably exemplifies how the democratic ideal may effectively be undermined when powers are abused and social responsibility is thought to be dissociated from social rights. Secondly, it effectively illustrates that other people may suffer and their rights may be curtailed when social contracts are broken. Thirdly, Brendan's choice to enact this 'special rule' further demonstrates that structural power will be utilised when the policing of behaviours may be necessary to coerce a change of behaviour. The real experience of injustice as displayed in this example, may be successful in instilling an appreciation of the understanding that undemocratic behaviour can only be rectified by the people who abuse their rights and disregard social responsibilities. Brendan's 'special rule' is able to make transparent the fragility and shortcomings of the democratic ideal and further illustrates Brendan's commitment to this form of government.

### Student Participation in Comparison

Comparing school cultures in the previous chapter uncovered some similarities between the four case schools. A major commonality between the four case schools is their desire to socially and politically empower students and allow them to partake in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them. Following on from this investigation, I was curious to find out how substantial students' decision-making possibilities are within the school and the classroom. Investigating how students were able to voice their opinions on issues affecting them and how effective their political involvement was in effecting change at the policy level of the school uncovered considerable differences between the four model schools.

The effectiveness of students' political empowerment in the form of irregular integration of student voices was closely analysed in cases one (the scraping of the

resolution room at Bolton Primary School) and two (the appointment of a new principal at Crystal Montessori School). These cases explored the ways in which students at both Bolton Primary School (School B) and Crystal Montessori School (School C) were included in the decision-making processes related to the restructuring of their respective schools. Although it seemed that students in the second case (the appointment of a new principal at Crystal Montessori School) had considerable input in decision-making processes, the effectiveness of their input was rated higher at Bolton Primary School than at Crystal Montessori School in this case. Interestingly, this finding seems to present a counter trend, as other data presented above suggested a significant correspondence between the effectiveness of students' input in decision-making processes and parental socio-economic status.

After a close analysis of students' level of input in the scraping of the resolution room at Bolton Primary School (case one), I rated students' degree of participation at a level six, 'adult-initiated, shared decisions with children' participation. Case two, which also explored an irregular integration of student voices in decision-making processes on a whole school level at Crystal Montessori School, investigated in some detail how students were included in institutional governance issues, even when such inclusion was not initially on the agenda. Although no student representative was invited to sit on the selection panel as initially proposed by the principal, the students' views were canvassed and students were able to prepare a formal submission to the selection panel. Regrettably, it was not clear if their submission had any impact on the final decision of the selection panel concerning the appointment of a new principal. This case example is interesting, as it revealed different levels of student participation within the school and pointed to different kinds of tensions than the previously discussed example where teachers seemed



reluctant to challenge the status quo. Even though the students' input was effective from a political empowerment point of view at the classroom level, as they were able to share in the decision-making power of the project on a whole school level, their involvement amounted to 'tokenism', a level three rating on Hart's participation ladder and was thus not particularly effective from a political empowerment point of view. Regardless of the low rating, it was apparent that the principal and the participating teacher demonstrated a serious commitment to involve students in decision-making processes. The evaluation of this case resulted in the conclusion that they did not intentionally fail students. Hart (1992, p. 10) observes that "such contradictions seem to be particularly common in the western world because of progressive ideas about child-rearing which are often recogni[s]ed, but not truly understood" (p.10). He continues this analysis by pointing out that this is a serious problem, "because children are not as naive as usually assumed, they learn from such experiences that participation can be a sham" (Hart, 1992, p. 10). Assessing this case example from a practical HRE perspective, it cannot be rated as effective as case example one (Bolton Primary School).

A significant finding of this investigation is that all four case schools attempt to involve students regularly in decision-making processes on whole school and on classroom levels. These pedagogical practices are important in the democratisation efforts of these schools and teach students valuable lessons in democracy and human rights. However, a more interesting finding is how similar student involvement in decision-making processes are on a classroom level but not on a whole school level. Such processes of student empowerment may be viewed as presenting practical HRE possibilities because they involve strategies, which contribute to democratic knowledge and skills. They also reinforce existing relations of domination and control

and legitimate a particular representation of social and political 'reality' within the school that is mirrored outside the school and in the larger social order of Australia's capitalist society. The diverse practices and the variety in the quality of student involvement in decision-making processes on a whole school level indicate ideological beliefs about what is 'realistic' versus what is desirable. The data presented show that at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School, the student council's attempt to seriously influence political decision-making at the school was not particularly successful as adult decision-makers held on to their powers to decide. They were content that students were able to voice their concerns and that involvement in the student council contributed mainly to the development of democratic knowledge and skills in students. At Abernethy Country School, it was made explicit that it is not uncommon in political processes that although people's concerns were heard, their concerns may not be shared and policies not changed. Adult decision-makers at the school thought that it was a valuable lesson in democracy for students to experience that political processes may well be upheld but one's wishes may not be realised. Although agreeing with this assessment, I was critical of the educational value of this experience for practical HRE as there was no attempt made by adult decision-makers to let students' share in the power of decision-making and explore avenues, which would enable students to challenge existing power structures and thus question the finality of decisions made by the school council. This conclusion was the cause of a level five rating, 'consulted and informed' on Hart's participation ladder at Abernethy Country School, located in a rural town. At Bolton Primary School, which is located in a low socio-economic area, student council occupy, from a political empowerment point of view, a 'decorative' role, as the student council's frame of reference is firmly controlled by the principal and thus

attracted a level two rating on Hart's (1992) participation ladder. I concluded that meaningful political participation of students via the student council was not particularly encouraged at the school and only remotely possible. At Crystal Montessori School, which is located in an upper middle-class socio-economic area, the effectiveness of students' political empowerment was rated at level six participation, 'adult-initiated and shared decision'. Carl, the founding principal at the school enabled students to independently decide how financial resources, which were at the student council's disposal were used. The new principal's perception that the student council was ineffective in its attempt to sufficiently influence political decision-making processes at the school led to the dissolution of the student council. Deanmoor Independent School is located in a high socio-economic area and, following the trend of the correspondence between parents' financial resources and students' political empowerment, it does not seem to come as a surprise that this school attracted the highest rating on Hart's participation ladder, level eight, 'child-initiated, shared decisions with adults'. The student council at this school is able to brainstorm initial ideas and design and manage their projects themselves. The adult representative was at the council in the capacity of an 'animator'. "Animator is the term used in some countries to describe the kind of professional who knows how to give life to the potential in young people", explains Hart (1992, p. 17). As the teacher had only an advisory role but was still seen as someone who possesses valuable expertise, the project was not taken over by the adult representative but was instead fully owned by the students themselves.

Data gathered from the classroom surveys indicated that not only principals but also teachers showed great commitment and tried hard to find educational approaches that work towards the achievement of democratic ideas and the cultivation

of democratic values and attitudes in students. Further, it seems a significant finding that there is overall much agreement between teacher and student perceptions on student involvement in decision-making processes within the classroom. This finding leads to the conclusion that student's political empowerment was relatively high on a classroom level. A somewhat unexpected, but nevertheless significant finding was that there was not much variation among the teacher ratings of student involvement in the political processes in their classrooms, irrespective of contextual differences such as public/private school settings, low/high socio-economic background school or lower/upper primary levels. This finding was particularly interesting as on a whole school level, the trend suggested that students from the two government schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) experienced more restrictions to their political empowerment than students in the two independent schools, which were located in more affluent areas. Although students in a number of classrooms rated their participation abilities as slightly less than their teachers, as discussed before, these findings were indicative of the trend that the students in all the case study sites perceived as subjects of rights and accorded substantial rights and responsibilities within the bounds of their classrooms. In all the model schools, students were seen as competent citizens with considerable autonomy and freedom. Although the teacher ratings revealed that upper primary students seemed to have more freedom to choose appropriate courses of action than middle and lower primary students. However, based on the student results, it was less clear if age and maturity were factors in the decision to accord students the right to participate in decision-making processes within the classroom. Based on both teacher and student responses it appears that students in these classrooms enjoyed significant levels of political

empowerment which were rated as either level five or six, 'consulted and informed' and 'adult-initiated and shared decision', on Hart's participation ladder.

The importance of democratic attitudes in teachers was also acknowledged by Ben (Principal, Bolton Primary School) who emphasised that especially younger teachers shared in his vision to transform the culture of Bolton Primary School from a 'factory-style' education to a more empowering student-centred education approach. And he affirmed, *"we are getting some good flexible teachers in"* (Principal-Interview, 14.11.2000). Brendan was such a teacher who was recommended by Ben and subsequently agreed to take part in this research. Brendan was in his mid-twenties and had less than five years teaching experience. Brendan's notable pedagogical approach powerfully illustrated how he endeavoured to facilitate students' democratic development through personal experiences. He pressed his students to think of themselves as 'free choosing agents' and thus as subjects who had the ability to influence outcomes in one way or another and therewith come to the realisation that they actively shared in the power of decision-making in the governance of themselves and the classroom. This teacher at Bolton Primary School deliberately decided to let all the students feel the consequences of some students' failures to embrace their social responsibilities to exemplify not only the value of democracy as an ideal which had gained global acceptance as one of the more suitable governing approaches, but also its limitations that could be very frustrating indeed. Many of the teachers and principals participating in this study felt that they were doing things differently. But the data on the effectiveness of student participation in decision-making processes gave a contrary message. Student empowerment strategies such as student councils may be offered with the intention of giving students power to share in political decision-making processes. They also further democratic skill-building in students.

But these findings show how limited students' possibilities are to effect outcomes on a whole school level by the way of their active political participation in three out of the four schools. Pre-existing cultures of adult domination and control are hard to change and involve a changed mindset. Given time and resources, students ought to be able to productively contribute to political decision-making processes, not only on a classroom level but also on a whole school level.

## Conclusion

The various kinds of pedagogical practices employed at the four case study sites that seek to model democratic life on an everyday basis were critically analysed and their effectiveness rated according to criteria developed in Table 21 which was adapted from Hart's participation ladder (1992, p. 9). It is important to discuss how these schools actively seek to aid the development of democratic knowledge and skill-building and attitude production in students through the modelling of democratic life. The effectiveness of the pedagogical practices for students' social and political empowerment and practical HRE are also of great interest. The data analysed in this chapter suggest that the principals and teachers found a number of ways to successfully include students in institutional governance as well as the governance of the self. The case examples of irregular and regular integration of student voices at whole school and classroom levels illustrated some of the limitations to democratisation efforts of the school principal. It pointed to some serious challenges faced by one principal who was committed to changing the culture of his school from a 'factory-model' of education to a more student-centred, democratic education approach by introducing novel ideas and pedagogical practices that would aid the process of democratisation of the school. These challenges exhibited the tension between the protection of students and participation of students and some teachers'

preference for traditional educational practices. Changing the mindset of some adult stakeholders was particularly hard. Although, some principals struggled to instigate a paradigmatic shift in the attitudes of some of the adult decision-makers at their schools who resisted the changes, their proactive approach and the educational opportunities these presented were seen as valuable for practical HRE.

An important vehicle for regular student participation in decision-making processes on a whole school level was student councils. Notably, all four case study sites had a student council operating at one point of this study and all student councils operated on slightly different models. Although some principals thought that their student councils operated satisfactorily, others did not share this view, which led one principal to abandon the operation of the student council at her school altogether. According to Hart's (1992) participation ladder, the political participation in the student councils was identified within the 'participation' range (levels four to eight) as opposed to the 'non-participation' range (levels one to three). The effectiveness of student councils was rated by almost all principals as high, with the exception of Crystal Montessori School. A critical analysis of student council's ability to co-control outcomes revealed interesting issues that influenced the principal's evaluation of the effectiveness of their student councils. A particularly noteworthy finding is that the principals from the two government schools (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School) thought that their student councils were effective because these principals focused on process issues when rating their student councils as successful. The facilitation of students' understanding of democratic processes and skill-building, such as communication and shared problem solving, was seen by these principals as a primary goal of student councils. On the other hand, the principals of the two independent schools (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School),

rather than focusing on process, focused on content issues when commenting on the effectiveness of the student council at their school. When evaluating the quality of the student councils and their ability to empower students socially and politically, there may be a need to focus more on outcomes rather than processes if students' involvement is amounting to greater power-sharing and more effective participation. An interesting finding of this analysis was that there seemed to be a relationship between parents' socio-economic background and students' abilities to participate effectively in the political processes of the school via the school council as evaluated in this study by outcome. The higher the parents' socio-economic status, the higher I rated the level of participation in political processes. It may be significant that students from the school that is located in the highest socio-economic area (Deanmoor Independent School) attracted the highest rating and therewith may be seen as enjoying the highest level of socio-political empowerment. Further research is needed to substantiate this finding, given the limited sample size and length of the study.

Following on from the investigation of a regular integration of student voices on a whole school level, student inclusion in the decision-making processes on a classroom level was analysed. This was seen as another regular integration of student voices in political decision-making, albeit on a less influential level. The data suggest that students in all the case schools were involved to a great extent in the decision-making processes at this level. Students in all the participating classrooms had substantial decision-making powers on a number of issues. It seems that these students were encouraged to 'cultivate good habits of thinking' and were expected to consider the personal needs and desires of their peers as well as their own when deciding on a particular course of action. In sum, in all the surveyed classrooms, control and restraint was internalised and the common good prioritised. Therefore, I



conclude that the comparatively democratic nature of all the studied classrooms and personal responsibility expected of students contributed to the perception that these schools were somewhat 'special'. The expansion of individual freedom was only possible with the recognition of personal responsibility to not infringe on the rights of others within the community.

The case examples illustrate that students at the participating schools were given a number of opportunities to develop democratic knowledge and skills by, for example, producing formal submissions to selection panels and school boards. These opportunities, although varying in degrees of effectiveness, are nevertheless seen as useful political experiences. Therefore, the educational impact of such pedagogical practices for practical HRE should not go unnoticed. The examples demonstrate that these schools provided multiple occasions where students were able to participate regularly or irregularly in decision-making processes at different levels. The unusual or even radical pedagogical practices were valuable teaching and learning events for education in and for DaHR. They were able to forcefully illustrate the delicate relationship between individual justice and social justice and individual rights and collective responsibilities. They are able to show how active political and social education is effectively taught on a daily basis even if it is not consciously perceived as such. This may lead to the conclusion that the democratisation of schools may well be one of the more effective HRE education approaches. The educational implication of other key findings which were discussed above and in the previous chapter will be further explored in the next chapter that investigates the development of 'the good citizen' and the interrelationship between social, political and moral empowerment of

students, all of which can contribute to a general feeling of well-being and contentment as expressed by the principals and students of these case schools.

Table 21: Eight Levels of Student Participation: From Manipulation to Empowerment

Level of Participation	Description	Formal Power
<b>Level 1: Manipulation</b>	Manipulation is an adult initiated approach. Adults have total power and control while children are perceived as not understanding the issues being dealt with or the actions taking place. Adult decision-makers pretend that students are a viable parts of the education system, yet they are not being consulted or given a chance to voice their opinions.	Decision-making power is held solely by adults. No avenue of complaint.
<b>Level 2: Decoration</b>	Decoration is similar to manipulation in that it is an adult initiated approach omitting the input of students in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them. Students are part of the education system, but have not much to say as they are not being provided with the information they need to form an informed opinion and have meaningful input in the decision-making process. No avenue of complaint.	Decision-making power is held solely by adults.
<b>Level 3: Tokenism</b>	Tokenism is seen as an adult initiated and controlled approach in which students appear to have a 'voice' and may be provided with information to make meaningful contributions, but nevertheless may find that their views are disregarded or given only token consideration instead of being taken seriously.	Decision-making power is held solely by adults. No avenue of complaint.
<b>Level 4: Assigned but Informed</b>	Assigned but Informed is defined as an adult initiated approach. Even though adults set the frame of reference, children understand the objectives of the project and are given an opportunity to actively participate and express their views on the issue at hand. Thus, students are encouraged to play a meaningful role in the decision-making process. Children are informed of the outcome of a decision and have decisions that are contrary to their wishes explained to them.	Decision-making power is held solely by adults. No avenue of complaint.
<b>Level 5: Consulted and Informed</b>	Consulted and Informed is a participation level where adults initiate an issue and the frame of reference is also set by adults but children are consulted and informed about all the steps taken and an open sharing of information between adult and children groups is in place. Children are encouraged to express their views freely and their opinions are treated seriously. Similarly to level four, children are informed of the outcome of a decision and have decisions that are contrary to their wishes explained to them.	Decision-making power is shared between adults and children as outcomes are negotiated and children can effect change. No avenue of complaint.
<b>Level 6: Adult-Initiated and Shared Decisions</b>	Adult-Initiated Shared Decisions with children is a participation level where children are considered as sharing in the power of decision-making. Although adults may initiate the project, children are encouraged to participate as partners in the planning and implementation of the project. Children's views are not only considered at this level, but they are also involved in taking the initiative to find possible solutions. This is seen as the first level of competent co-operation between adults and children.	Decision-making power is shared between adults and children as outcomes are negotiated and children can effect change. Avenue of complaint developed and made known to children.
<b>Level 7: Child-Initiated and Directed</b>	Child-Initiated and Directed is a participation level where children have an initial idea and design, implement, and manage the project themselves. Adults may share in the decision-making process but do not take charge. There is competent co-operation between adults and children.	Decision-making power is shared between adults and children as outcomes are negotiated and children can effect change. Avenue of complaint known to children.
<b>Level 8: Child-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults</b>	Child-Initiated, Shared Decision with Adults is a participation level where children have initial ideas and involve adults as advisors with specific expertise in the planning and/or managing of their projects. Adults take an advisory role and the decision-making power is with children. There is competent co-operation between adults and children.	Decision-making power is held solely by children. Adults have an advisory status. Avenue of complaint known to children.



TR-Q1

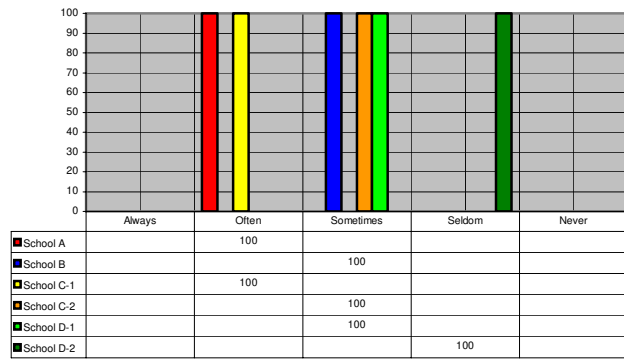


Figure 11a: Teacher Responses to Q1

TR-Q8

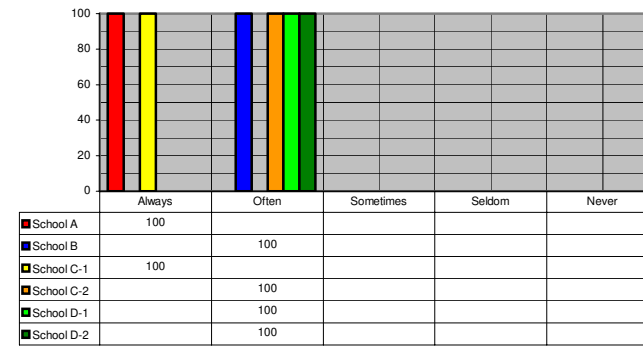


Figure 11b: Teacher Response to Q8

TR-Q9

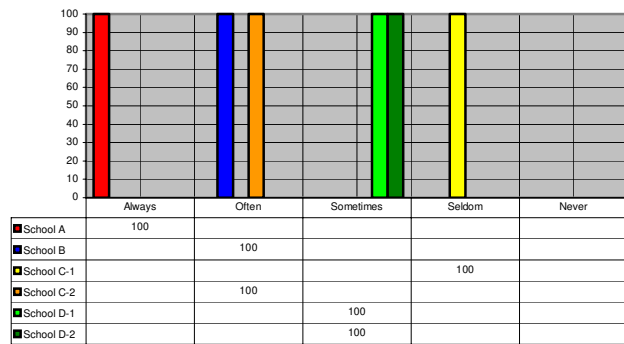


Figure 11c: Teacher Responses to Q9

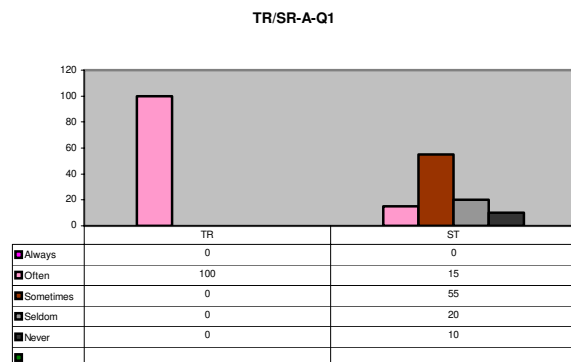


Figure 13a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

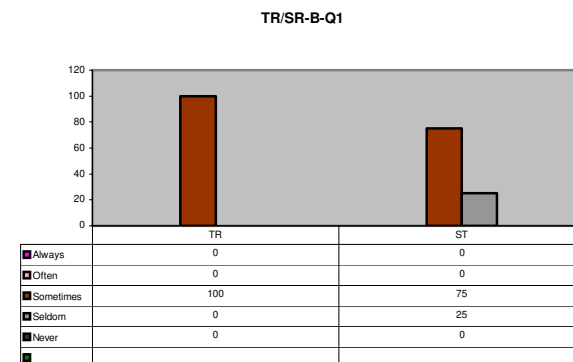


Figure 13b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

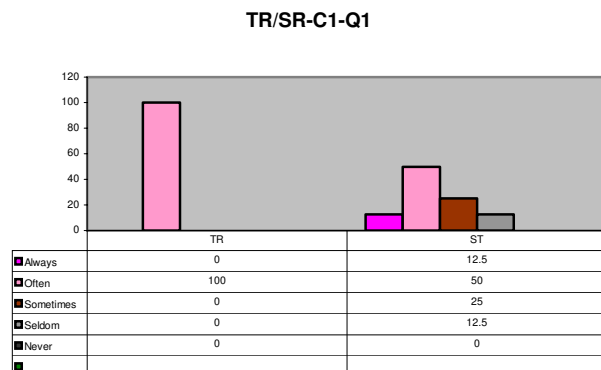


Figure 13c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

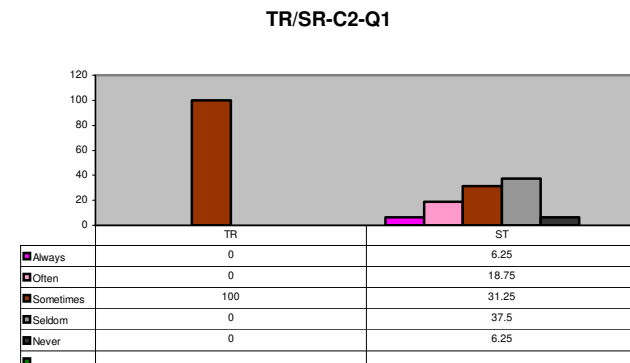


Figure 13d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2

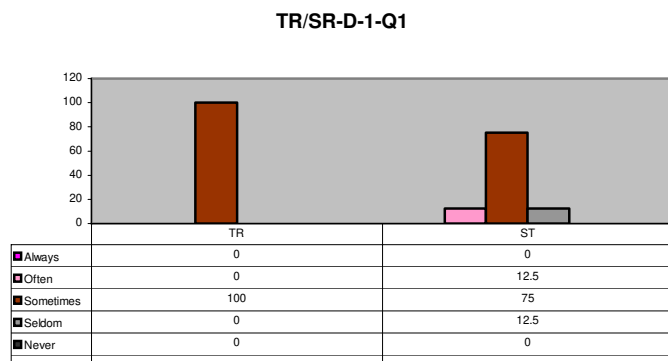


Figure 13e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

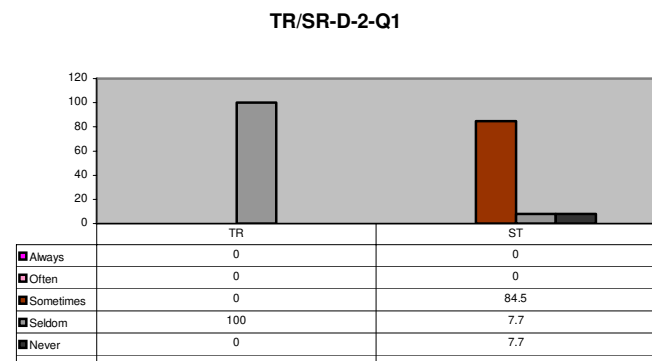


Figure 13f: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-2

TR/SR-A-Q8

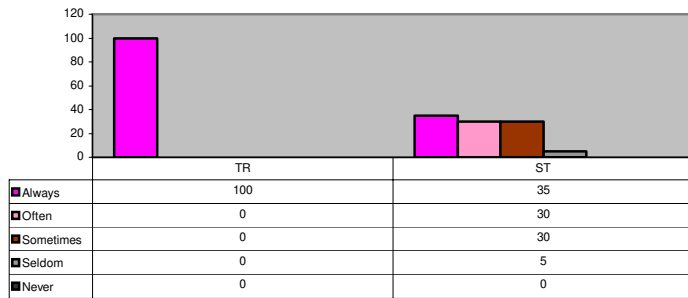


Figure 15a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

TR/SR-B-Q8

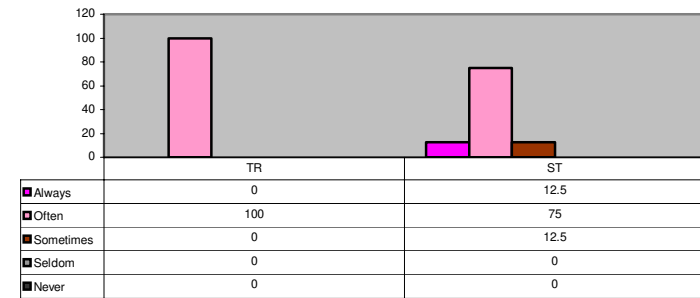


Figure 15b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

TR/SR-C1-Q8

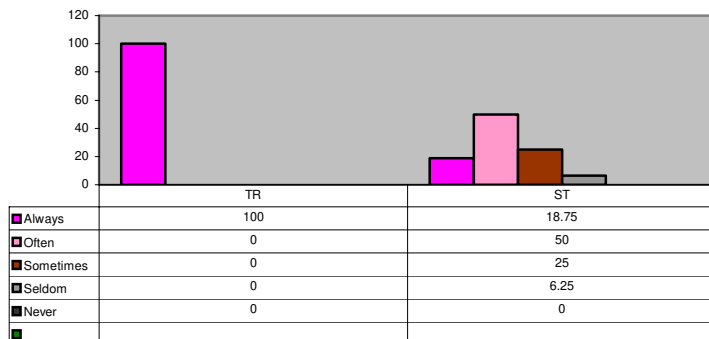


Figure 15c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

TR/SR-C2-Q8

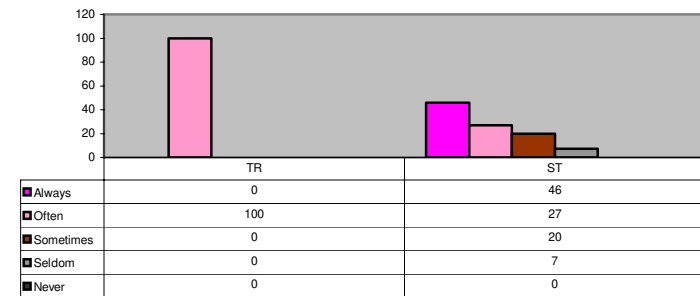


Figure 15d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2



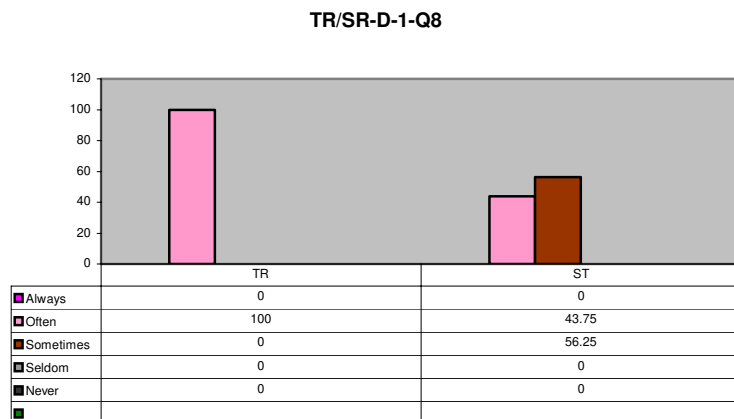


Figure 15e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

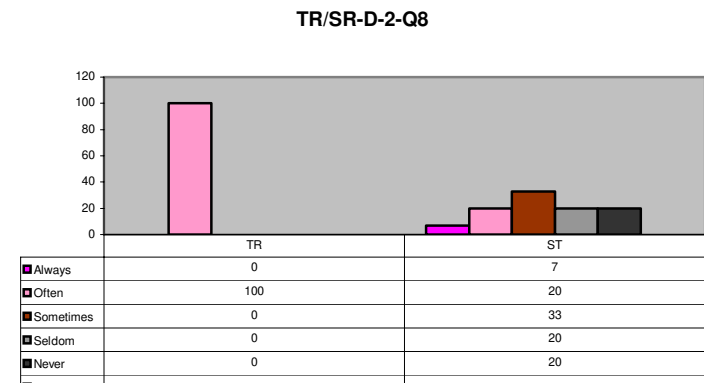


Figure 15f: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-2

TR/SR-A-Q9

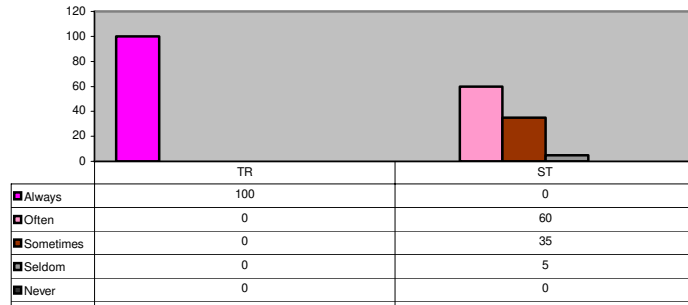


Figure 19a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

TR/SR-B-Q9

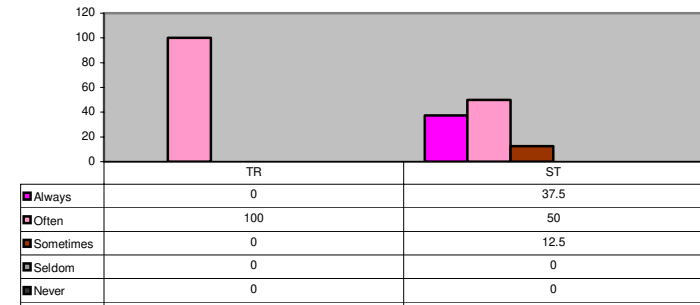


Figure 19b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

TR/SR-C1-Q9

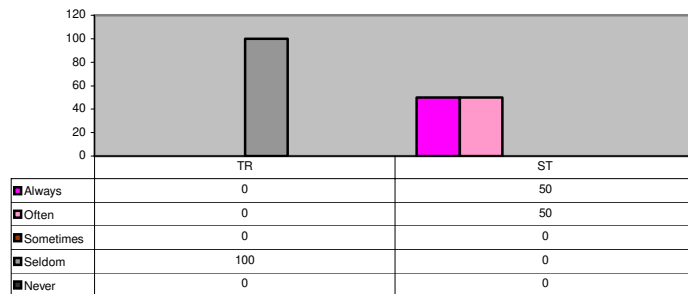


Figure 19c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

TR/SR-C2-Q9

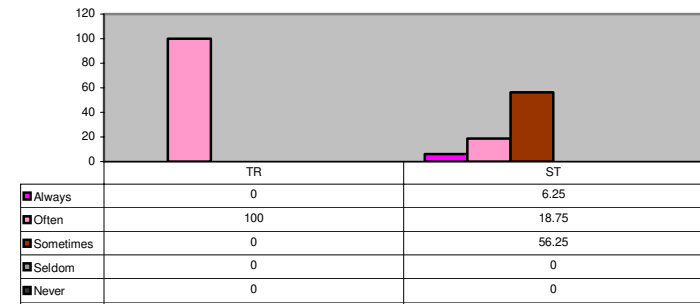


Figure 19d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2

TR/SR-D-1-Q9

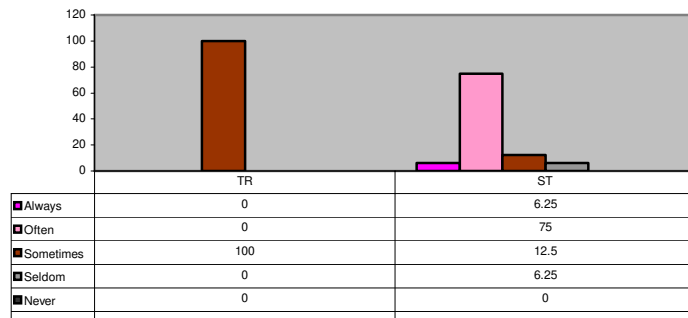


Figure 19e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

TR/SR-D-2-Q9

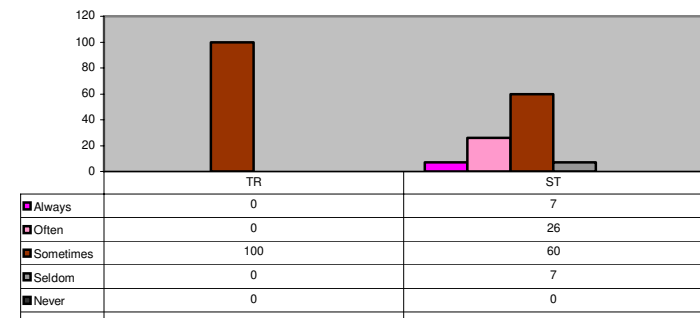


Figure 19f: TR/SR in Comparison – D-2

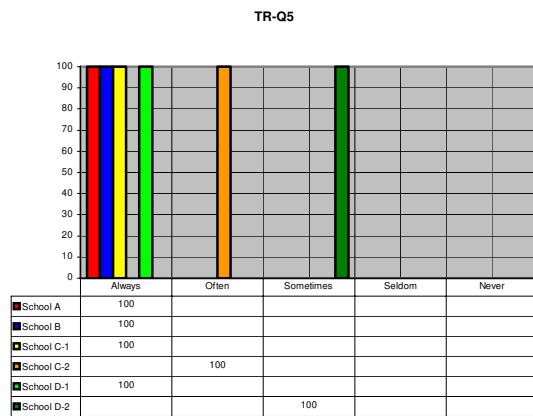


Figure 20a: Teacher Responses – Q5

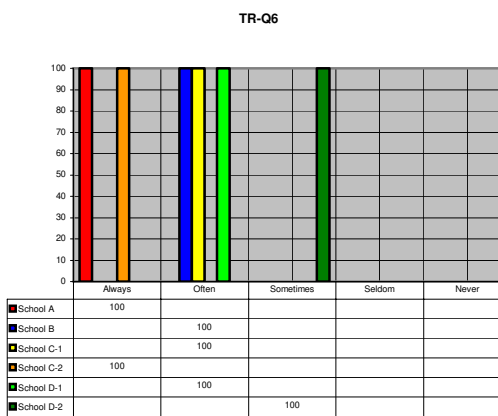


Figure 20b: Teacher Response – Q6

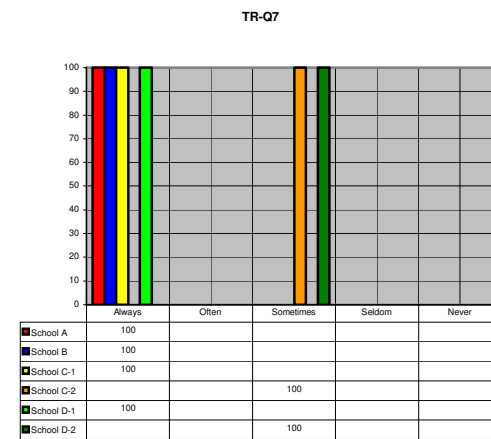


Figure 20c: Teacher Response – Q7

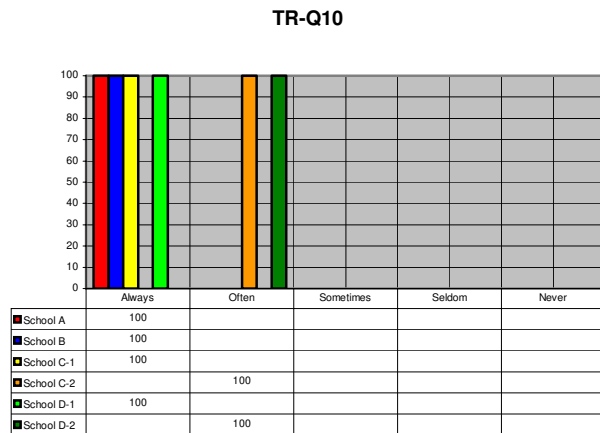


Figure 20d: Teacher Responses – Q10

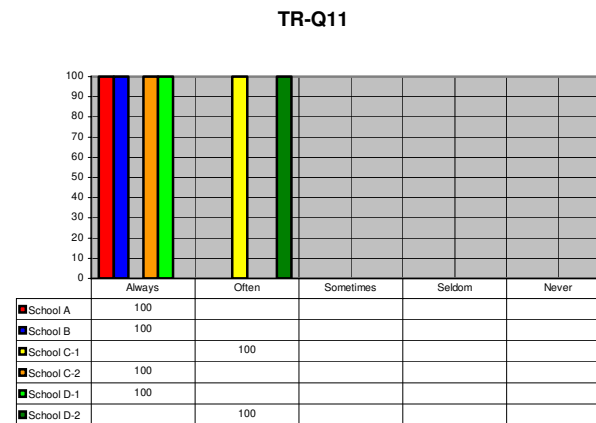


Figure 20e: Teacher Responses – Q11

TR/SR-A-Q5

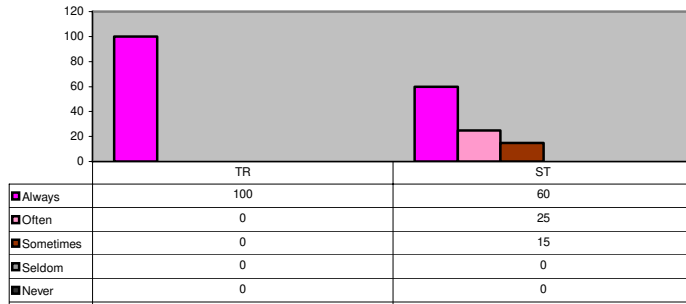


Figure 22a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

TR/SR-B-Q5

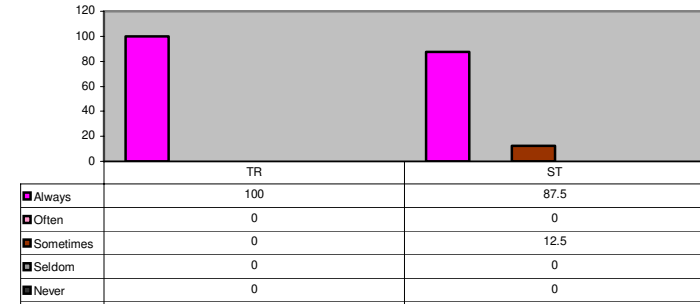


Figure 22b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

TR/SR-C1-Q5

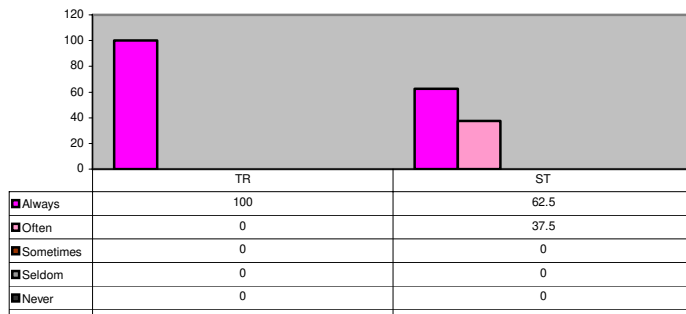


Figure 22c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

TR/SR-C2-Q5

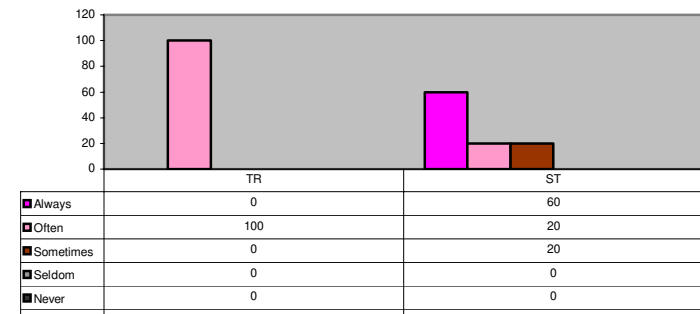


Figure 22d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2

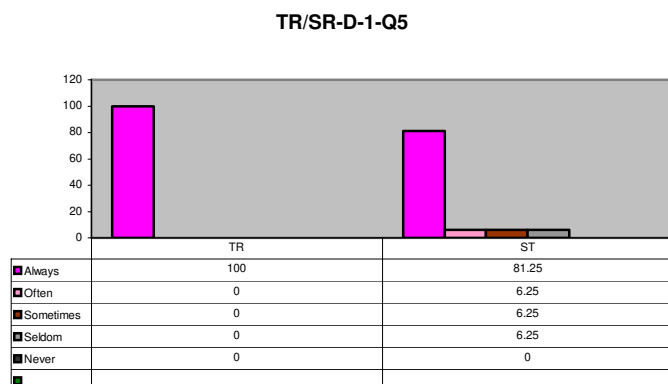


Figure 22e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

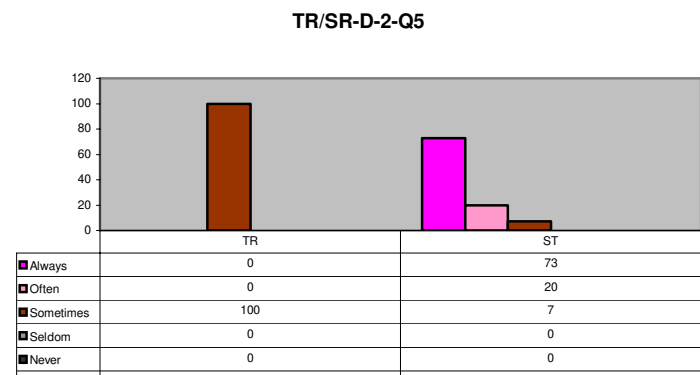


Figure 22f: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-2

TR/SR-A-Q6

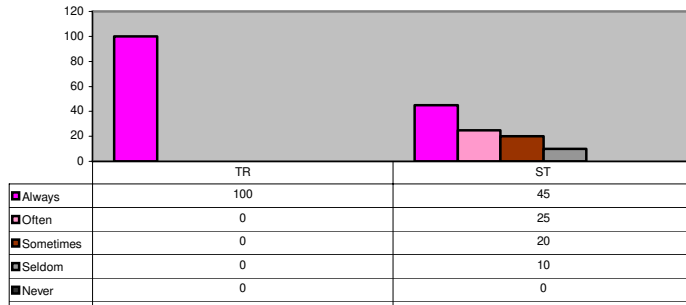


Figure 25a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

TR/SR-B-Q6

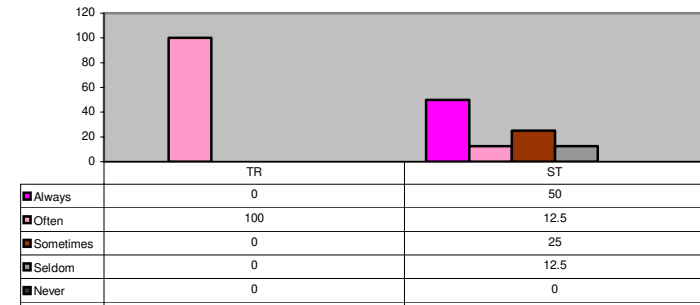


Figure 25b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

TR/SR-C1-Q6

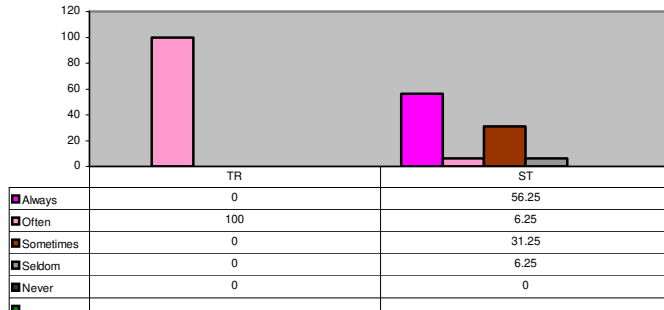


Figure 25c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

TR/SR-C2-Q6

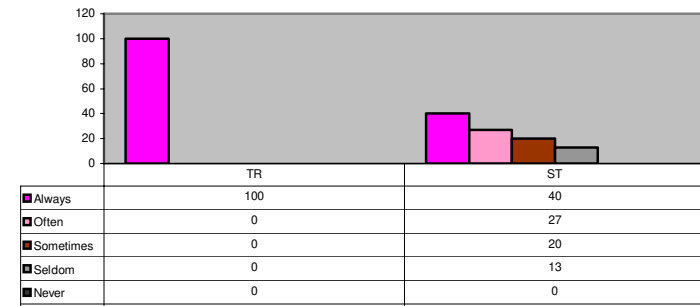


Figure 25d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2

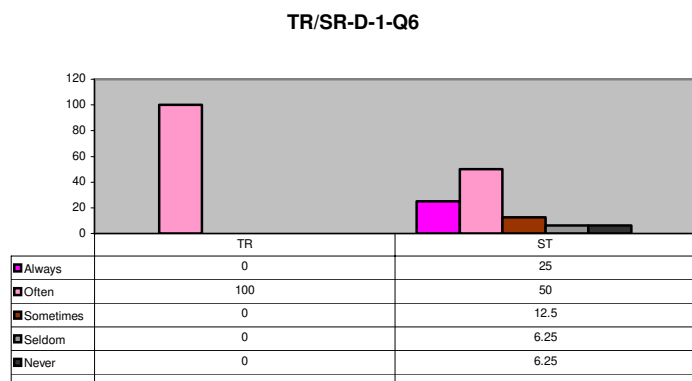


Figure 25e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

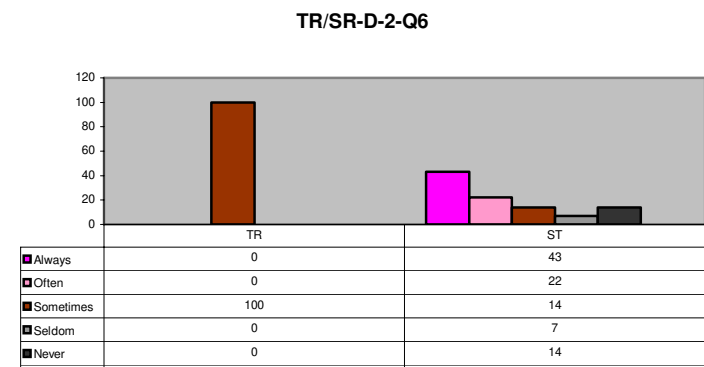


Figure 25f: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-2



TR/SR-A-Q7

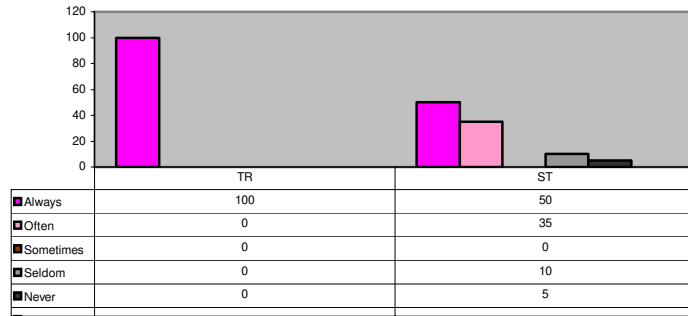


Figure 28a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

TR/SR-B-Q7

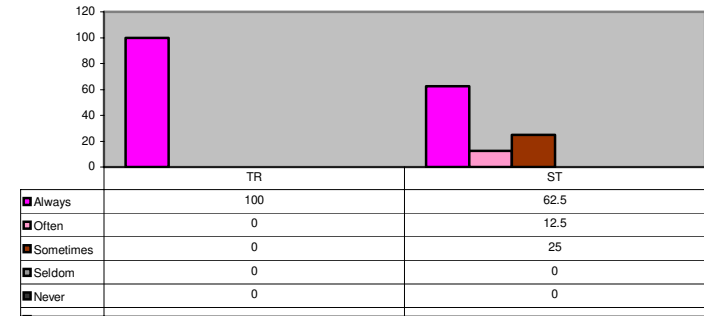


Figure 28b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

TR/SR-C1-Q7

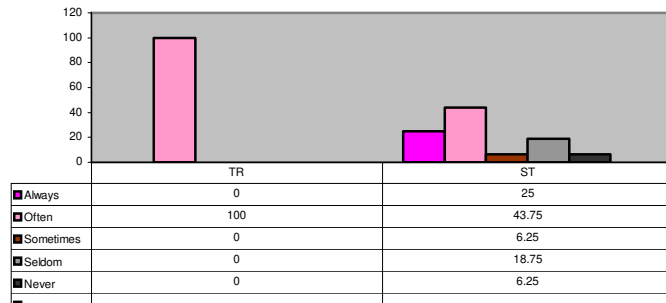


Figure 28c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

TR/SR-C2-Q7

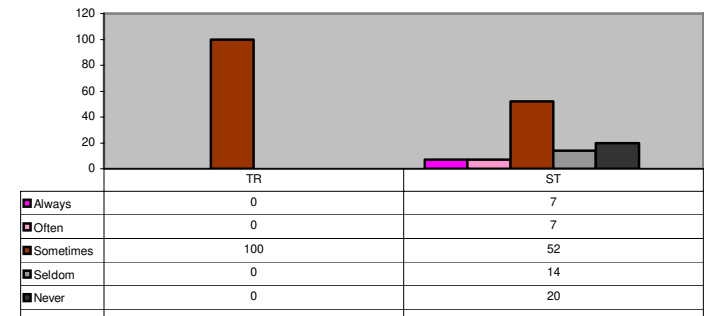


Figure 28d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2

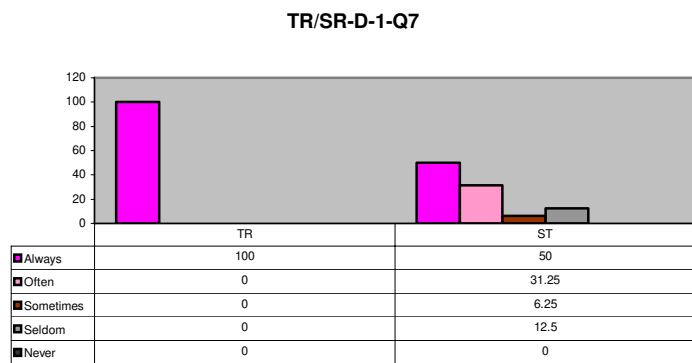


Figure 28e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

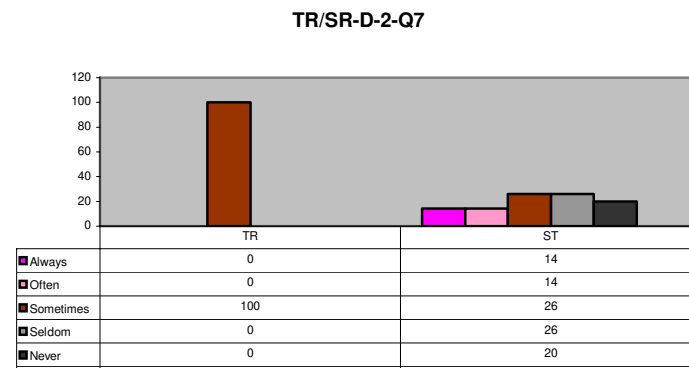


Figure 28f: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-2

TR/SR-A-Q10

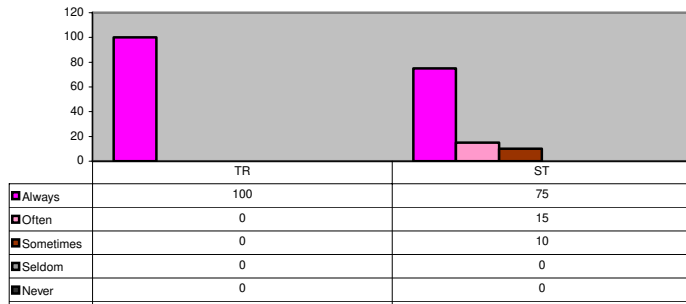


Figure 31a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

TR/SR-B-Q10

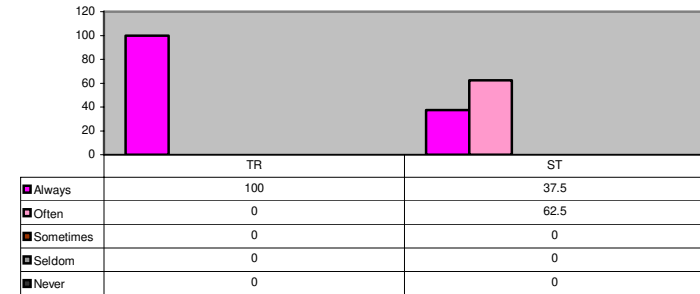


Figure 31b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

TR/SR-C1-Q10

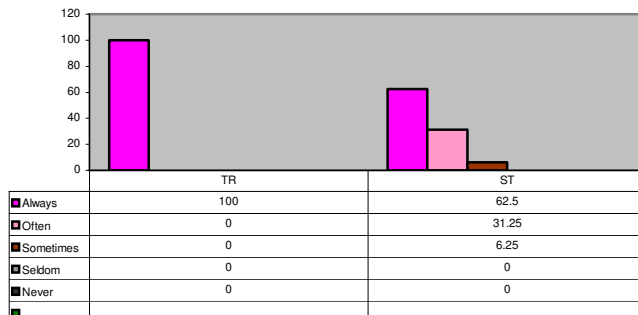


Figure 31c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

TR/SR-C2-Q10

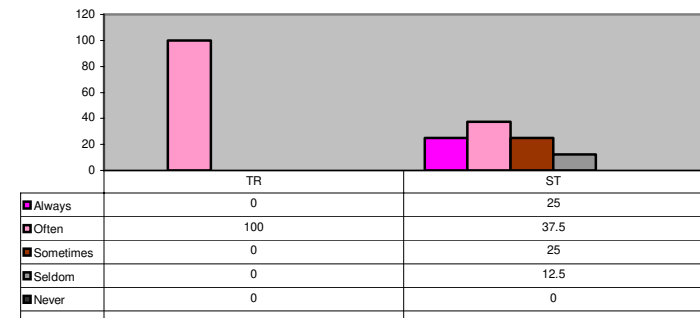


Figure 31d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2

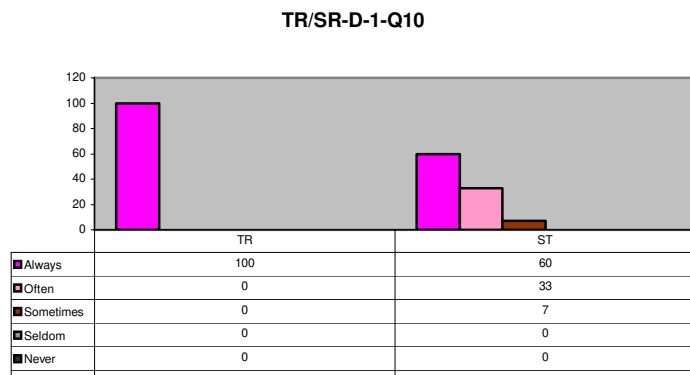


Figure 31e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

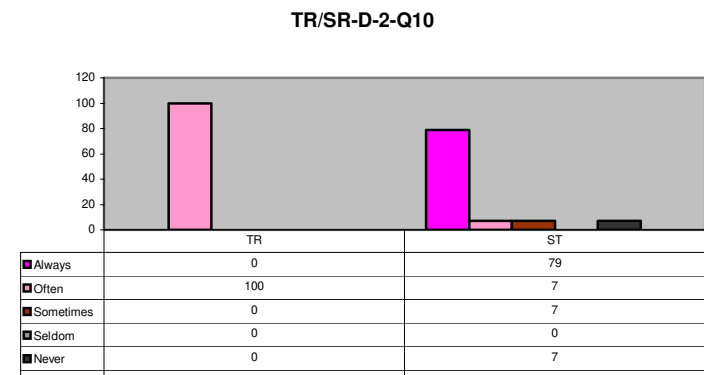


Figure 31f: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-2

TR/SR-A-Q11

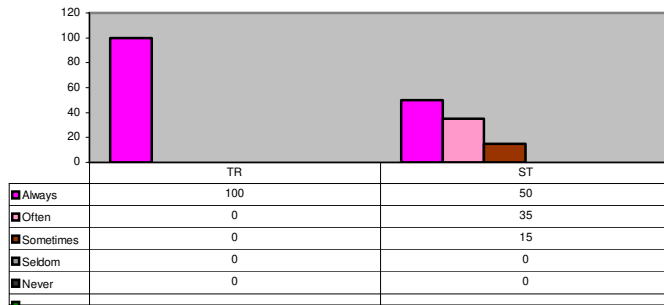


Figure 34a: TR/SR in Comparison – School A

TR/SR-B-Q11

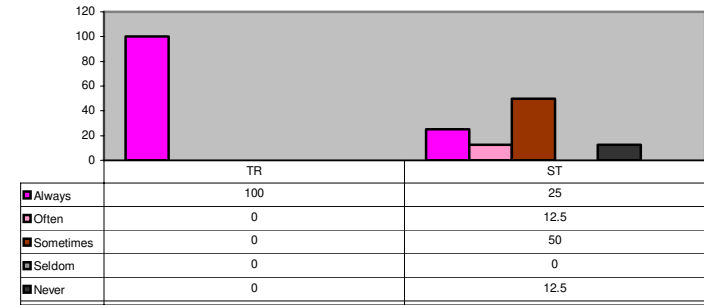


Figure 34b: TR/SR in Comparison – School B

TR/SR-C1-Q11

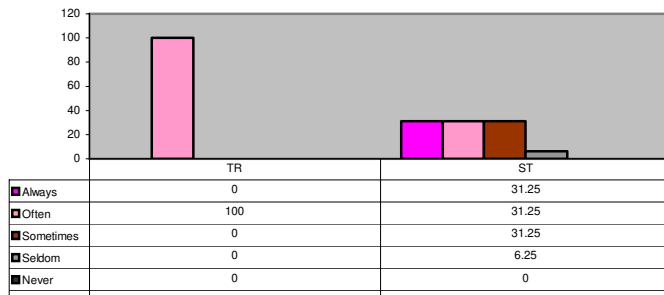


Figure 34c: TR/SR in Comparison – School C-1

TR/SR-C2-Q11

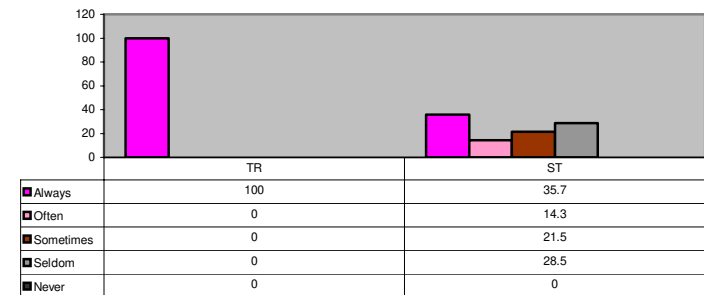


Figure 34d: TR/SR in Comparison – C-2

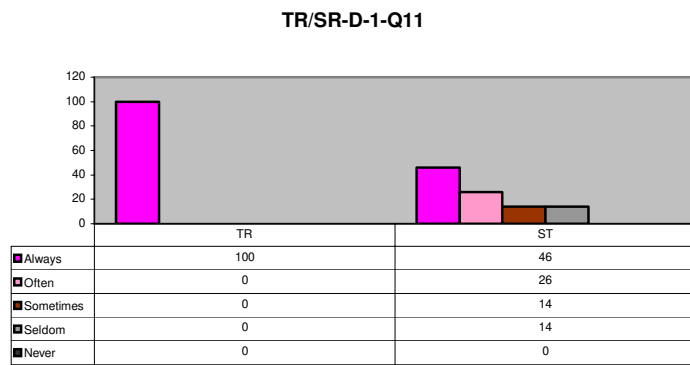


Figure 34e: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-1

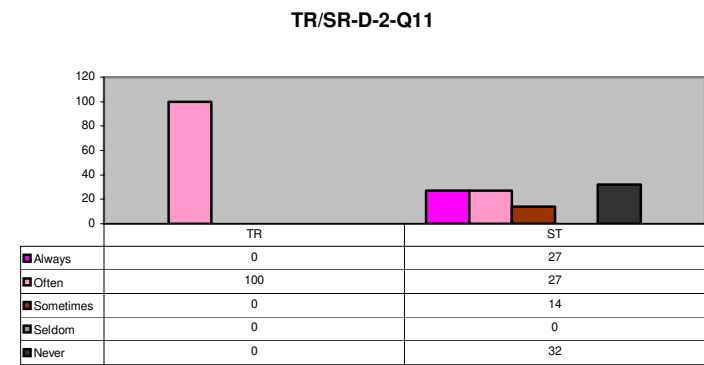


Figure 34f: TR/SR in Comparison – School D-2

## CHAPTER 7

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### **Nurturing the Good Citizen: Primary Students' Development of Civic Proficiency**

The will of individuals must be joined ... after all, we are all governed [by the self and others] – and, as such, we are in solidarity.

Michael Foucault, cited in Wilson, 1996, p. 53

Learning about political participation seems hollow if one is unable to exercise political participation. ... [this] might make educators nervous ... but one cannot be committed to democracy and also expect to retain full control of everything; democracy is fundamentally about the sharing of power.

Ben Levin, 1999, html document

Central to democratic governance are people's appreciation and understanding that they have a right and are given the opportunity to regularly participate in the making of public decisions. This freedom of choice presents a range of challenges specific to primary and secondary school contexts in which the obligations of teachers and staff to protect and control students can conflict with their mandate to enable students to *develop and practice* skills and attitudes as, for example, valued members of school governing bodies who participate regularly in democratic decision-making deliberations and actions. Accordingly, students' right to participate in decision-making processes on issues which directly affect them, as outlined, for example in

Article 12<sup>64</sup> of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), necessitates commitment and engagement from people in power to reevaluate their perceived obligation to protect and control students to enable meaningful participation to occur. Equally, it necessitates commitment and engagement from students to not only understand the value and functioning of democratic governance but to actively engage in the development of civic proficiency and share basic democratic values. As a consequence, students' scholastic opportunities to develop civic proficiency and democratic values by the way of day-by-day educational experiences may be central to the outcomes of effective education *in* and *for* democracy.

The last two chapters introduced various case narratives that described the ways in which the four case schools approached the development of 'the good citizen' through the formulation of democratic educational principles and their incorporation into the pedagogical practices of the schools. The cultivation of 'good habits of thinking' and the development of democratic values such as civic respect, civic engagement and civic responsibility among primary school students nurtures character traits that allows even young children to question their existing economy of needs and wants. These considerations relate to contemporary debates about the relationship of the 'right' to the 'good'. The focus on the right underpins the questioning of values, upon which judgments about equality and justice rest. It means, in the context of a democratically organised group, community or society, that the protection and promotion of people's human rights has not only political but also moral significance.

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<sup>64</sup> State Parties [including school administrators and teachers] shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.



The aim of this chapter is to consolidate 'the theoretical' with 'the practical' by fusing some of the arguments made in the background chapters with findings from the empirical investigation pertaining to institutional political and moral socialisation. Political and moral concerns are closely related and highly complementary. In this chapter, the relevance of some key findings of this study is discussed, with a particular focus on the interrelationship between political and moral socialisation.

### Commonalities of Political and Moral Education

Not long ago, with the intended distinction and separation of state and church, moral and character education was thought to be beyond the realm of formal education altogether. However, with the renewal of interest in the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights in established as well as new democracies, people are questioning if contemporary education is fulfilling one of its primary mandates, namely to enable students to develop the necessary ethical and moral understandings, attitudes and behaviours to be effective and contributing members of a democratic society. It can be argued that there are basic virtues of citizenship that cross cultural and religious boundaries. Qualities such as civic respect, civic engagement, civic responsibility, civic understanding and civic commitment may form some of the core civic virtues that have been discussed at length in the past by liberal philosophers and continue to be debated at present. Virtues of democratic citizenship depend on the extent to which democratic groups, communities, and societies honour basic human rights and then encourage a fair distribution of power, benefits and burdens among citizens. Moreover, virtues of democratic citizenship require that people be encouraged, from a young age, to develop understandings and skills that enable them to effectively participate in collective self-rule in line with the principles of democratic citizenship.

The concept of democratic citizenship and the teaching and learning of democratic citizenship are both fuelled by conceptual and ideological controversies. Here, an argument is made that the moral implications of political education ought to be made explicit to avoid a common, albeit serious fallacy. This is the belief that political education can be almost unconditionally related to the subject area of history, consisting largely of the memorisation of large amounts of historical data<sup>65</sup> rather than being connected to an active political and moral education. It is argued that political education ought to be viewed not necessarily as the teaching and learning of historical events but instead it should be part of the pursuit of a holistic child-centred education approach that develops political attitudes and practices. Or, as a critical history of how knowledge/power operates specifically through dynamics of democratic processes or lack thereof.

In chapter two, the significance of the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was discussed. This was seen as an important historical event that enabled the development of a new international moral code of conduct. A primary element of this moral code was the demonstration of unanimous supports for the idea of the 'inalienability' of basic human rights and of fundamental freedoms for all humanity. The underlying principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as outlined in Article 1, and those of many other subsequent treaties, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), are compatible with primary goals of education *in* and *for* democracy. They all emphasise the liberal democratic ideas and values of freedom and equality (Table 37).

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<sup>65</sup> With the introduction of constructivist ideas, history and civics education teachers may, of course also employ interactive and student centred approaches with their students, which may not be inconsistent with a process-oriented, human rights-based approach to education for democratic citizenship.

Table 37: Emphasis of Liberal Democratic Ideas and Values

<b>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</b>	<b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>	<b>Education in and for Democracy and Human Rights</b>
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and right (Article 1).	The rights of children shall be respected "without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status" (Article 2).	To enable students to be knowledgeable, active, responsive and engaged democratic citizens, who are able and willing to bring about structural and systemic changes to increase equality of opportunity and social justice. <sup>66</sup>

This table demonstrates that these three statements are based on an indiscriminate respect for the freedom and dignity of every person, irrespective of class, ethnicity, gender, age or any other attribute. International agreements that acknowledge equality of rights and of opportunity for all humanity demonstrate the importance of agreeing upon certain basic moral benchmarks.

Further analysis of the case study narratives highlights the close relationship between political education and moral values based on democratic ideals. In the framework of this chapter, the discussion is limited to three key findings of this study: a) school culture and students' development of self-regulation, impacts on students' ability and willingness to engage in social, political and moral agency; b) socio-economic background and civic proficiency, explains some of the differences observed between public and private education in relation to education in and for DaHR; and c) democracy and conflict, investigates the problem of legitimate authority in democratic decision-making processes.

### School Culture and Students' Development of Self-Regulation

A key finding of this study is that the participating schools see themselves as occupying 'special places' in the Western Australian educational landscape. All the

<sup>66</sup> Adapted from Table 15, Chapter 3 (The Teaching and Learning of Democratic Citizenship, p. 101)

principals with the exception of Ben (Bolton Primary School) in this study stress the uniqueness and friendliness of their school. All of these schools, including Bolton Primary School (School B) have created niche practices for themselves by offering educational experiences to students that these principals perceive to be identifiably different from traditional educational practices. The students at all of the case study sites seem to experience practices which enhance understandings of civic rights and civic responsibility and feelings of solidarity and moral obligation to uphold the common good, which enhance students' willingness for co-operation, political and moral agency.

The overall conception that democratic educational practices are preferable to autocratic practices is increasingly common, especially with the introduction of constructivist educational ideas. However, as a number of recent studies show (Wilson, 1996; Godfrey et al., 2001), the culture and environment of many schools do not yet seem to include attributes that would make them identifiable as 'democratic schools'. The identification of governing practices as democratic is explained by Frithiof Bergmann (1977, p. 197) in the following way:

The most fundamental cause ... derives directly from the one characteristic which from Plato's Republic on was regarded as the defining quality of a democracy, namely that it is a government not just for and of but by the people . . . . That is a government by us, that we participate in it, means in the main that its eventual policies and decisions will be informed by the knowledge and ideas which collectively we have brought to bear on it.

Case narratives introduced in the previous two chapters corroborate participating principals' views that these four model schools employ practices that are perceived as more democratic in a number of ways than may be expected from traditional schooling. The question is, why do these principals perceive their schools to be friendlier places because of these practices? Carl (Crystal Montessori School) believes that it has to do with students' ability to experiment with self-regulation. His response to the question why it is, in his opinion, important for students to have a high

level of control and decision-making powers on issues that directly affect them, is illustrative in this regard. Carl explained that students need "*practice of training the will*". He further observes:

*I know schools have changed but I know teachers who said: "I gonna break this kid, I gonna break his will". So the notion being that the will is not something to break but something to develop, it's an asset. And we need practice with that because we can all lack will and discipline and effort. (Interview transcript, 15.11.2000)*

Equally, Cathy who took over the principalship at Crystal Montessori School after Carl resigned notes:

*I know that the practices we have here are suitable for a lot more people than are here and in some ways it would be lovely to think that there were a lot of [democratic] schools ... so that it would be accessible to more people and if I would have a little dream for the state government, this would be it. (Interview transcript, 27.02.2001)*

All four participating schools envision developing civic proficiency in their students by the way of modeling and promoting processes of democracy in day-to-day practices. The granting of participation rights enables students to become active and responsive citizens, where they are encouraged to enter into a social and moral dialogue and be exposed to a variety of viewpoints and opinions that may not be in agreement with their own. The power of negotiation and open-mindedness, tolerance for other perspectives and trust that basic human rights will be respected by all members of the community, including basic human rights of the least powerful, are virtues which prepare children for a responsible life in a democratic society. Montessori forcefully states, "discipline comes through liberty" (1964, p. 86). Exploring the ever-present topic of school discipline, Montessori noted that the student was commonly considered disciplined "only when he [sic] has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic" ([1912] 1967, p. 86). For Montessori, such a child is "an individual annihilated, not disciplined" (1967, p. 86).

A key feature of democratic education is the motivation of people to learn new skills in voicing their opinion, negotiating understanding; new values such as courage to express personal opinions and novel ideas, resilience when these are rejected and persistence in solving problems, and trust, tolerance and generosity in acknowledging the ideas and beliefs of others in and outside of school contexts. Genuine democratic learning happens in the midst of purposeful activity, in which knowledge enters "as a factor into an activity pursued for its own sake" (Dewey, 1916, p. 208). Learning through interactive experiences of this kind does not produce merely conscious understanding of connections, instead, most learning involves the formation of what Dewey called a 'habit', which he defines as "an ability to use natural conditions as means to ends. It is an active control of the environment" (Dewey, 1966, p. 46).

Being able to walk around barefooted (Deanmoor Independent School) or decide when to get a drink (Crystal Montessori School) or when and with whom to work on what (all four case study schools) are 'habits', as they represent certain practices that encourage self-rule and self-regulation. These students are enabled to make practical decisions that give them some sense of control over themselves and over aspects of their social and physical environment. According to Dewey, such habitual opportunities provide students with increased understanding of social life and encourage them to engage in meaningful contributions to the social and political life as engaged and effective citizens (Dewey, 1966, p. 226).

Moreover, through motivation and the development of positive attitudes, students may show a greater willingness to engage in the development of socially responsible behaviour and self-regulation that accompany such autonomy. However, it is not only a school's cultural situatedness that frames what possibilities students have. Possibilities are also constrained by socio-economic factors as the findings of

this study demonstrate. In the next section, I discuss how cultural and social constraints of the school context bear on the possibilities a school's constituency has to self-regulate and seriously enhance or limit people's freedom of choice.

### Socio-Economic Background and Civic Proficiency

There is a noticeable similarity of the participating principals' and teachers' intentions to create student-centred, empowering schools and classrooms where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal actions and take part in decision-making processes on a whole range of issues. A key finding of this study, however, demonstrates the great deviation of possibilities in the private and public education system to ensure the continuity of a school's culture and educational approach and the interrelationship between educational opportunities and parents' financial abilities to purchase the education of their choice. Or to put it differently, the principals' and teachers' efforts to democratise schools and classrooms is not simply a process relating to the change of educational principles and practices by the way of a change in the distribution of power between principals/teachers and students alone but one which involves a dispersal of power in relationship to socio-economic status of parents and their ability to purchase different kinds of education for their children.

An important finding of this study is that Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School, which are independent and private schools, located in affluent regions, are better placed with a range of choices to ensure a high level of continuity in school cultures, the school's philosophical approach and a high level of educational outcomes, irrespective of the change of education or administrative staff than Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School, which are bound by strict government regulation and located in less affluent regions. Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School are inescapably limited in their possibilities to experiment

with new and innovative educational approaches, the employment of teaching and administration staff and the offering of educational opportunities, over which they have little strategic control.

Both independent schools (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) are so called alternative schools as both adhere to non-traditional educational philosophies. The Crystal Montessori School follows a Montessorian approach, whereas the Deanmoor Independent School employs a Deweyan philosophical approach. Both educational philosophies can be identified as being primarily student-centred learning approaches with a distinct focus on independent learning. The question of participation rights and ownership of learning is at the centre of student-centred learning environments.

Both Montessori and Dewey aimed at making their schools small-scale examples of the kind of society they wished to promote, a society engaged in processes of democratic practices that value democracy and basic human rights. A democratically organised community, ought to aim for all schools to achieve such goals. However, this ideal society has not yet emerged.

In Australia as elsewhere, social inequality impacts on democratic educational practices. As exemplified in this study, there are obviously fewer opportunities for less affluent people. For example, parents' abilities at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School to choose schools that have a reputation to employ student-centred education is seriously limited. When the principal of the school leaves or the culture of the school changes, these parents are unable to send their children to different schools. This was clear at the Bolton Primary School, and at the Abernethy Country School where there is no alternative to public schooling. In other words, a not unexpected, but nonetheless somber, finding is that the unequal financial powers of



parents strengthen social divisions and impact on the educational experiences of students. This finding leads to an important question: Is the development of civic proficiency and democratic values in students increasingly reliant on socio-economic background and the wishes of parents rather than the efforts and attitudes of students? It is particularly significant and disquieting that market forces may have such great effects on the teaching and learning of democracy of Western Australian students.

There is no denying that a number of educational principles and practices employed at the case study sites seem to set themselves apart from traditional education and seem to be more democratic in many ways. Moreover, it cannot be refuted that these practices seem to have significant educational effects for the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. Still, there is an issue that becomes increasingly important in contemporary democratic life and the discussion of effective teaching and learning of democracy and human rights. This is the issue of conflict resolution in relation to democratic principles and practices. As yet this issue has not been tackled by these schools in any serious way.

In the next section it is argued that to challenge social and political inequality and injustice in Australia and elsewhere, people must be educated in democratic conflict resolution. The exploration of democratic conflict resolution practices is of vital importance to prepare students to become active democratic citizens who are prepared to stand up for their rights and grapple with the complexities of social actions and change.

### Democracy and Conflict: the Problem of Legitimate Authority

Democratic action cannot avoid conflict. If students are to learn to value democracy and human rights then they need to be provided with opportunities to do something when they feel that they are being treated unfairly. They must understand

that they have rights and possibilities to pursue their views even when they clash with the views of the dominant group within the school community. Or, to put it differently, schools ought to provide students (as the least powerful members of this community) not only with opportunities to develop and practice democratic understanding and skills but more importantly, schools must also provide students with opportunities to develop and practice understandings and skills that would allow them to act effectively to alter the options currently open to them.

Students need safe spaces in which to learn how to pursue their beliefs in ways that uphold the commitment to democratic principles and practices. The extent to which schools fall short of providing effective learning opportunities and safe spaces for students to test the limits of their rights and possibilities may result in the failing of a key purpose of education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights, namely the development of civic proficiency and a deep understanding of the value of democracy and human rights.

The idea of a common or generalisable interest is a contentious issue for democratic theory. The deliberative democracy model requires participants to continue deliberating an issue until an agreeable and rational decision emerges on which common understanding and agreement can be reached. Jurgen Habermas explains:

Democratic procedure, which establishes a network of pragmatic considerations, compromises, and discourses of self-understanding and of justice, grounds the presumption that reasonable and fair results are obtained insofar as the flow of relevant information and its proper handling have not been obstructed. According to this view, practical reason no longer resides in universal human rights, or in the ethical substance of a specific community, but in the rules of discourse and forms of argumentation that borrow their normative content from the validity basis of action oriented to reaching understanding. In the final analysis, this normative content arises from the structure of linguistic communication and the communicative mode of socialisation. (Habermas, 1996, 296-97)

Democratic deliberation involves people with different histories, life experiences, and viewpoints, but most importantly with different relations to power

and authority. Thus, the struggle to find legitimacy for one's opinions and beliefs is set in an environment of power and authority, where different viewpoints and knowledge are valued differently. There are also cultural norms of inclusion and exclusion, which can affect the deliberations. For citizens to remain engaged and perceive their contribution as valuable, it is imperative to not necessarily achieve a common moral good through force and power, but instead to work toward a dedicated civic ethos that values the political process with a clear regard for the legitimacy and authority of different viewpoints, life experiences and moral values. It is the acceptance of and adherence to democratic deliberative processes that will hopefully lead to a transformation of viewpoints and beliefs through the process of deliberation.

Students, parents, teachers and school administrators need to be engaged in constant negotiation, while at the same time seeking to understand what might constitute 'fair' negotiation in a particular place/context at a particular time. Although principals and teachers need to maintain a sense of coherence within the group or community, they also need to be willing to tolerate (and even promote) much more contention and conflict than they currently tend to allow. Students, parents and teachers in democratically organised schools need to get used to working with other people without illusion that all participants somehow 'understand' each other, or even see their goals in the same way. The effort to understand and value the concept of unity in political rather than moral and/or cultural terms means becoming skilled in the process of deliberation. In this way, the group actively engages in an effort to reconstruct itself in response to new challenges and to understand the limits and potential risks inherent in engaging democratic processes.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study support the fact that principals and teachers have significant influences and are able to drastically change the culture of a school despite serious social and economic disparities. It is particularly encouraging to report how Ben (School B), for example, was able to improve the educational experiences of a number of students in his school. However, schools need to be considered as part of a complex of circumstances and practices and cannot simply be seen as isolated social institutions that construct their own destinies. Independent schools are less restricted in regard to educational and administrative policy decisions than their public counterparts. This may be a central factor as to why independent schools seem more able to maintain coherence concerning school culture and educational environment as well as teacher and parent attitudes towards their educational outcomes and practices. The finding that the two participating independent and private schools enjoy greater autonomy in a number of areas may be viewed as a form of legitimating inequalities and thus inherently undemocratic.

The social and political goals at all the four case study sites were similar. They all sought to break down the barriers between individuals and groups and find a variety of ways to engage students in shared projects of school governance to fight commonly perceived political disinterestedness. They instead offered spaces for student participation in the public dialogue.

As students are better informed about their participation rights in decision-making processes, they are more able and willing to take action on things they feel are important to them. The result may be a demand for more consultation and input from students. The uniform incident at the Abernethy Country School is an illustrative example of a school culture that shows great willingness to democratise their practices

but is still caught up in practices which demand compliance from students and respect for the school's authority structure. School A's success in achieving an agreement with its uniform policy is remarkable given that government schools under the School Education Act 1999, and School Education Regulations 2000 are denied the right "*to enforce a compulsory uniform code*" (Telephone Interview with Steven Glow from the Education Department of Western Australia, 05.11.2002). In addition, Wilson (1996, p. 194 and 196), who discusses the contentious issue of school uniforms in Western Australian government schools, explains that:

The Ministry of Education issued a memo to the Executive Director of Schools and Directors of Operation which clearly reiterated the position that government schools were not permitted to enforce uniform policy. . . . Generally, people in Western Australia assume that it is normal for school children to wear uniform and, in so doing, they identify the lack of a uniform as, at the least, unusual. This expectation is sanctioned by legislation which in *absentum* gives private schools the freedom to enforce uniform codes whilst structurally denying this freedom to government schools. This legislation and the general expectations are . . . the result of the exercise of power and ideology which makes possible the identification of difference.

A discourse of deliberative democracy as practiced in these case study sites is quite appealing for collective decision-making processes where collective aims must be decided upon and pursued by a number of different interest groups within the school community. The student councils at the participating schools consist of student representatives that canvas the views of the student body. These student councilors then deliberate issues of collective concern and common interest to come up with a recommendation that is then forwarded to a different polity with different legitimacy and authority. This process seems to be viewed by the majority of principals as fair and the decisions reached by the polity with higher legitimacy and power as binding. In this way, various decision-making processes within the various groups (school councils and student councils) may be perceived as democratic as they adhere to democratic principles of equality, fairness and inclusion of all individuals affected by the decision. What is missing in this model is the acknowledgement of difference and

the tension that exist in between the various lobby groups and community interests within a school. Through this omission, important possibilities were lost to experience what it means to grapple with interpersonal/intergroup conflict and the delicate issue of legitimate authority.

As the uniform incident at Abernethy Country School poignantly illustrates, the simplicity of this view belies a plethora of underlying social complexities. In the face of early twenty-first century social pluralism and identity politics, social and moral conflict is to be expected. Educational practices of political engagement need to embrace dialogue and political deliberation in a way that sees conflict as a constructive part of the process. This commitment to a civic ethos to value democratic deliberative processes may open up possibilities that may enable the development of tolerance and pluralist perspectives on moral issues. It may further result in the change of personal social and cultural perspectives as a result of engaging in a democratic dialogue with others and an understanding that people's views have legitimate authority even when they are not shared with the majority of people. Such procedural deliberative practices in classrooms and schools may enable the actualisation of students' participation rights in collective decision-making processes that would empower students equally as democratic citizens in schools.

## CHAPTER 8

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### Conclusion: Fostering Democracy and Human Rights in Education

Democracy can be served only by the slow day-by-day adoption and contagious diffusion in every phase of our common life of methods that are identical with the ends to be reached and that recourse to monistic, wholesale, absolute procedures is a betrayal of human freedom no matter in what guise it presents itself.

John Dewey, (cited in Schwinn & Schwinn,  
undated html document)

Essentially, there has to be a shift in fundamental attitudes on respect for children's rights. Theoretical teaching on the values of human rights and democracy serve very little purpose, if they are not also put into practice at the same time.

Eugeen Verhellen, 2000, p. 110

The idea that education transmits values is widely accepted. In this thesis, I have argued that the nurturing of the 'good' citizen through democratic educational practices ought to be recognised and receive greater attention than is currently the case. Despite recent attention given to the cultivation and practice of democratic values as an educational aim, it is by no means clear how this aim is to be pursued or how far it can be achieved. In the early chapters of this thesis I have argued that the development of democratic attitudes and skills in students might not necessarily be achieved through the introduction of a new curriculum such as the *Discovering Democracy (DD)* programme. However, structuring students' learning experiences and facilitating conscious reflection on them might be able to teach students valuable

lessons of what the concepts of 'democracy' and 'human rights' might mean in practice. Instead of promoting prescriptive civics education programmes such as the Australian *DD* curriculum, I conclude, on the basis of this study that democratic educational practices are effective means of achieving educational aims of civics and citizenship education programmes. Day-to-day educational practices are able to provide ample learning experiences that build civic knowledge, skills and dispositions in students, irrespective of students' grade levels or socio-economic backgrounds. Indeed, the case study data confirms that education *for* Democracy and Human Rights (DaHR) can be effectively achieved through the fostering of DaHR *in* education. Nevertheless, students' socio-economic background may have some impact on the way day-to-day educational principles and practices are implemented in different schools.

The way democratic educational practices are effectively teaching students valuable lessons in DaHR is described in the first section of this chapter. Two key themes are briefly revisited and summarised, a) my preference for and use of the concept education *in* and *for* DaHR and the advantages of a process approach to the teaching and learning of DaHR and, b) the validity of children's participation in political processes on a day-to-day basis in schools and classrooms as valuable civics and citizenship learning that I termed practical HRE.

In the second section of this chapter I discuss how the knowledge gained in this study is a valid contribution to the field of democratic education. In particular, I explore the implications of the findings and assess the effectiveness of practical HRE on the basis of this study. The case study results describe the ways these schools struggle for democratic pedagogy and yield the socio-political empowerment of students and validate students' participation rights as set out in Article 12 of the CRC.



Through specific case examples I illustrated how these four model schools translated democratic ideals into actual educational practices. The key findings of this empirical investigation demonstrate that transforming entrenched educational practices is not easy. However, an identifiable similarity between the model schools was the principals' strong leadership and their conception of students as subjects of rights and responsibilities. Embracing the struggle to move from utopian ideals of 'democracy' and 'human rights' to grounded practices saw a shift in the balance from student protection, control, and correction to student participation. Significantly, the findings of this investigation also reveal substantial differences among the schools that lead to differences in the educational possibilities and the quality of practical HRE at each school.

The final section of this chapter points to future areas that need investigating to build on the results of this study.

## Key Themes of the Study Revisited

### ***Education in and for Democracy and Human Rights***

The implementation of Australia's recent civics and citizenship education programme called *Discovering Democracy (DD)* and the passing of the first decade of Australia's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provided a useful occasion upon which to reflect on the effectiveness of new initiatives and education programmes for primary school students' political and moral socialisation. Although some educators distinguish between *education in* DaHR, and *DaHR in education*, the two concepts are closely related. The former<sup>67</sup> refers to content issues and the need for a curriculum programme, such as the *Discovering*

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<sup>67</sup> education *in* DaHR.

*Democracy* programme, whilst the latter<sup>68</sup> refers to context issues and the need for awareness of the effects of a school's culture, philosophical approach, school rules and regulations. To emphasise this close relationship and the fruitfulness of discussing them together, I use the phrase 'education *in* and *for* DaHR'.

The interrelationship of the two concepts, particularly when examining school policy and structure, is important to understand. For example, educational practices, such as the canvassing of student opinions on special issues or the operation of student councils in schools, provide students with excellent opportunities for the development of political understanding and skills, while simultaneously ensuring rights to freedom of expression (CRC, Article 13), to freedom of association (CRC, Article 15) or to participation in decisions and exercising the right to be heard (CRC, Article 12). These are some of the building blocks and moral foundations of a human rights culture. Further, such work in understanding the educational potential of democratic pedagogical practices ensures that Australia's international and constitutional obligations are met. Moreover, such work provides insight into how granting children 'a voice' is not only in keeping with the provisions of the CRC but is, more importantly, able to illustrate how local practices in education for DaHR provide lasting benefits for children and adults alike.

### ***A preference for pedagogical practice***

The last few decades saw a revival of awareness of issues relating to civics and citizenship education in Australia. This resulted in an increase in debate about the importance of human rights education and children's rights issues and their relevance for a new civics and citizenship education curriculum. In the past, the study of civics and citizenship in Australia was embedded in history lessons. More recently, with the

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<sup>68</sup> DaHR in education or education *for* DaHR.

nationwide introduction of the *Discovering Democracy* curriculum, civics and citizenship has been taught as a separate curriculum subject. However, history as a subject is still seen as a central component of this civics and citizenship education programme. As has been discussed extensively in this thesis, the nexus between history and citizenship is based on a perceived overlap between the aims and objectives of history and citizenship education. However, this taken-for-granted association may be questioned. Interpretations of notions such as 'citizenship', 'democracy' and 'human rights' are contested and consequently the desire to 'educate for democratic citizenship' contains a number of ambiguities and tension. The empirical exploration of the potential of the day-to-day realities of life in democratically organised school for education *in* and *for* DaHR was seen as a way to flesh out some of the ambiguities and tensions that are rooted in ideological viewpoints and long-standing social and political disputes.

HRE, focusing on particular processes of social life in schools is essential to active citizenship. The ways in which students are enabled to participate in democratic decision-making processes as part of school and classroom pedagogy has, thus, been described as practical HRE. In this thesis, I outlined my preference for a process-oriented, human rights-based approach to the education of future citizens. I argued that HRE consists of a full range of interdependent and interrelated rights and freedoms, accounting for the protection of non-dominate groups or individuals in society or community. This move from a "politics of needs" to a "politics of rights" make a redefinition of the very meaning of concepts such as childhood, learning and knowledge necessary.

The analysis of case study data showed that the principals of these four model schools were aiming to shift their perceptions of children. They had a strong tendency

to define children as active participants and negotiators, as competent, productive and creative rather than receiving, passive and lacking. Thus, this study establishes a clear relationship between increased social and political empowerment at a whole school level, and a classroom level through increased participation in decision-making processes and effective civic learning does exist and is contingent on a number of contextual factors, crucial to its success. This supports my observation that active citizenship also means participating in the democratic process and is motivated by a sense of personal responsibility for promoting and protecting the rights of all in daily school and classroom life. Democratic pedagogy as practical HRE enables the development of critical thinking skills in students that link rigorous understandings of issues pertaining to DaHR with a moral sensibility that serve in the development of students' political conscience.

### ***The Legitimacy of Children's Participation in Political Processes***

The UN Children's Fund in its latest annual report, *The State of the World's Children 2003*, points out that (school) children have a right to participate in political processes and to be heard on issues affecting them because it is essential to their development and the creation of a more humane and democratic world.

Authentic, meaningful participation prepares children for their stake in the future ... With all the understanding it brings to the children involved, participation is a keystone for cohesive societies, which, in turn are the keystones for peace in the world. (United Nation's Children Fund, 2003, html document)

This statement points to the importance of children participating in the democratic life of the classroom and the school. That the international community is taking children's and adolescents' participation rights seriously is exemplified by the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children that was held from 8 to 10 May 2002. This assembly, which attracted more than 7000 participants, was flagged as "a landmark" because it was "the first such Session devoted exclusively to children

and the first to include them as official delegates"(United Nations Children's Fund, 2003, html document). The report further notes, "four governments (the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Tongo) had youth representatives address the General Assembly on behalf of their respective countries". This is yet another example to illustrate that there is a widely shared and genuine desire to empower children to participate in political decision-making processes. This assembly points to a progressive view of children and young people and their transforming place in democratic contexts. Children and adolescents are no longer seen as objects of care, protection, control and correction, but instead they are perceived as young citizens with democratic rights and responsibilities. As newly recognised social agents, (school) children have a right to be heard which brings with it the need to also recognise that rights of citizenship are always connected to social responsibilities.

The development of awareness of the interrelationship of citizenship rights and responsibilities and the development of democratic skill-building necessitates young people's engagement in collaborative actions with adults who have more experience in the governance of self and the community. While recognising that the school is a primary agent in a child's socialisation, a student's freedom of expression and right of participation in the governance of self and the school community is often contrary to the educational attitudes of important stakeholders within the educational establishment. Due to this, I investigated sites of democratic practices with regard to primary school children's formal education. The conviction that a progressive view of children which recognises them as meaning-makers is a precondition for schools to enable greater student involvement in the decision-making processes that facilitates students' learning about the value of DaHR prompted me to develop the following research question:

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*What conditions are conducive to creating and sustaining democratic school cultures and educational practices?*

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The endorsement of democratic values and changes to the images of the nature of children ought to find their ways into school and classroom pedagogy, irrespective of a school's context. A conscious choice to target reputable democratic schools was made in the hope of uncovering important pedagogical practices that may be transferable to other settings. The findings of this study suggest that changing entrenched pedagogical practices may seem simple but is by no means easy to accomplish. Nevertheless, working towards more democratic educational practices proves to be rewarding.

### What is possible?

The earlier chapters of this thesis discussed the conception of 'the democratic ideal' that was followed by an exploration of 'democratic practice' in purposely chosen case study sites. Theoretically, the participation rights of (school) children as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have been recognised as leading to political empowerment. There are ideals in terms of children's rights but the focus was on what is possible in formal educational practice. The conclusion of this study is that for practical HRE to be effective, there needs to be:

- ❑ a view of children as subjects of rights and responsibilities;
- ❑ a culture of listening to children;
- ❑ effective participation of children in political decision-making processes at various levels of the school hierarchy.

The ways in which schools attempt to balance students' right to protection with their right to participation can be analysed by evaluating school policy documents and investigating how principals/students and teachers/students relate to each other. The

close analysis of pedagogical practices at the four model schools provided a framework for understanding how students are allowed to be involved in governing processes within the particular schools. The recognition of students as political agents as specified in the CRC<sup>69</sup> and its relationship to a school's philosophical approach, culture and physical environment was essential for this research. The data reported in this thesis demonstrate that education in and for DaHR is a complex issue. The democratisation of schools is not an easy process and requires much attention and a holistic approach. It involves tensions and great challenges. Grappling with issues of education in and for DaHR leads to the questioning of the amount of control school administrators and teachers ought to have over students' bodies and minds. The extent to which both students' behaviours and the teaching and learning environment are in need of regulation by authority figures that have a duty to protect students is an ongoing issue. The tension between protection rights and participation rights of students needs to be addressed. Despite a clear direction to protect (school) children, the CRC points out that authority figures, such as principals and teachers, ought to provide "appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognised in the present Convention" (Article 5, CRC, United Nations, 2001, p. 18).

For example, Article 12 (1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express these views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views or the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (United Nations, 2001, Fact Sheet No. 10, p. 20)

In Article 13, it is further argued that:

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression, this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. (United Nations, 2001, Fact Sheet No. 10, p. 21)

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<sup>69</sup> A special reference is made here to articles 5, 12, 28.1.e and 29.1.d. of this Convention.

As the case narratives in this thesis illustrate, this right to participation in decision-making processes on issues affecting the school child is potentially one of the more complex and controversial elements of the Convention. It raises questions of how best to balance teacher/school authority and student protection while supporting student autonomy and freedom.

A key feature of democratic education is the motivation of people to acquire *an understanding* of the interrelatedness of the democracy/human rights nexus and the power/knowledge nexus within a community which informs an individual's sense in membership in a democratically organised polity. This demands an understanding of the ownership of knowledge and how certain individuals and groups within a community may or may not be effective in influencing political decisions and change in policy and practice. Such an understanding entails the need to equip both adults and children with *attitudes* and *skills* that motivate them to cultivate and engage in collective practices that allow them to make their schools, communities, and society more democratic places. Primary students' competence to form valid opinions and take part in decision-making processes on school governing issues is often underestimated in practice. Adults (principals, teachers, parents) have traditionally decided matters affecting students according to their own reasoning of what might be in the best interest of the primary school child, exercising their obligation to ensure the protection rights of students.

To accord a voice to students and to give appropriate weight to the opinions and views expressed by students means to recognise that they have the capacity to reason and conceptualise the issues at hand, whatever these may be. This entails a paradigmatic shift in understanding the power/knowledge nexus and a change to a culture of listening to children. It requires that authority figures in society regard



children as evolving social agents and involves a conscious decision by adults "to relinquish some of their own power before a new culture of listening seriously to children can develop" (Van Bueren, 2000, p. 205). To develop this 'new culture of listening' may not come easily to adult decision-makers, such as principals, teachers and school board members. These groups may not be accustomed to engaging in a meaningful dialogue with primary school children so as to ensure consequential participation in decision-making processes. It is thus a sobering but not necessarily unexpected finding of this study that the four model schools perceive themselves to occupy a niche-place in the education landscape. All four identify themselves as 'out of the ordinary schools' where decision-making processes take into account the voices of children.

### Key Findings of the Study Revisited

#### *The value of day-to-day pedagogy for practical HRE*

This investigation concludes that these four model schools, although idiosyncratic in their composition and contexts, share similar features of a changed child-image and seem to be effective in contributing to the teaching and learning of civic values, attitudes and skills through their day-to-day pedagogy. Although the quality of practical HRE and the problems faced by principals implementing democratic educational principles are different at the four sites, the evidence presented in this study establishes the potential of democratic educational practices for civic learning. A process-focus in the development of democratic values rather than the more conventional 'content' focus enables students to effectively experience democratic life with its possibilities and constraints.

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**Key Finding 1:**

The study provides evidence of the value of pedagogy for civic learning applicable across communities throughout different educational systems and educational levels.

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'Doing' democracy rather than 'hearing' about democracy may be a more effective process for instilling a deep appreciation for democratic values. This understanding informed my critical position that a process approach to the teaching and learning of DaHR is a more desirable educational approach than a more traditional content approach. This further prompted a critical analysis of the Australian government's *Discovering Democracy (DD)* programme that was developed to improve students' political understandings and capacities. The purpose behind a critical analysis of this approach was twofold: firstly, it was intended to provide the basis for a rethinking of the *DD* programme. Secondly, and more importantly, this analysis was targeted at developing another approach to democratic education. It was also aimed at developing a different approach to combat problems of civic apathy among Australian students by promoting the advantages of an integrated rights-based education approach.

The concrete educational practices described at the four case schools demonstrate that day-to-day pedagogical practices offer a multitude of possibilities of developing civic competencies. The case narratives provided a variety of rich examples of how students are able to gain deep understandings of the concepts of DaHR through the involvement in problem solving processes at both whole school and classroom levels.

### ***Child-Image, Student Participation and Power***

Montessori (1964), Dewey (1967) and Freire (1970) proposed an 'emancipatory pedagogy' for political and social empowerment of students. A major goal of emancipatory pedagogy is to increase awareness of connections between personal experiences and hidden power structures at a variety of societal levels that are reflected in schools and classrooms. The findings of this study suggest that students' political and social empowerment through increased participation in decision-making processes at whole school and classroom levels at the four case schools is related to the views that adults have of children at these schools. The importance of modeling respect for human rights by adults (principals and teachers) was an important theme that emerged from the interviews with principals and observational data. The examples set by principals and teachers and their views of children redefines the very meaning of childhood, formal learning and knowledge. The study provides evidence of a changed child-image among all five participating principals. All participating principals had a strong tendency to define children as active participants and negotiators as productive, creative and competent rather than receiving, passive and lacking

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#### **Key Finding 2:**

Effective civic learning based on practical HRE is contingent on a non-traditional view of children.

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### **Child-Image**

A striking similarity between the four model schools was the non-traditional child image shared by all five participating principals. The empirical evidence presented in chapters five and six clearly establish that these principals view students as social change agents with rights and responsibilities rather than as objects to be

cared for, protected and controlled. Further, these principals are in agreement that their view of children is the exception rather than the rule within contexts of formal primary education.

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**Key Finding 3:**

The study provides evidence that a non-traditional child-image paves the way to democratic educational practices that were accountable for their reputation as 'out of the ordinary schools'.

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All five principals interviewed have a conviction that this is a preferred view of students and leads to unique educational opportunities and also contributes to a general state of well-being among students. Evidence from the principals' interviews indicates that a changed child-image, which leads to more democratic educational principles and practices at the respective schools, made the principals believe that their schools were 'out of the ordinary schools'. All schools share child-centred education approaches that are child and context dependent. Thus differential treatment of students and situations are the norm rather than the exception. The examples presented in this study illustrate that participating principals do not advocate that students should not be held accountable for their behaviour, rather these principals exemplify serious attempts to acknowledge children as bearers of rights that need to understand that they also have corresponding responsibilities towards themselves and society.

*Student Participation and Formal Power*

Student empowerment through participation in collective decision-making may lead to students understanding that they have democratic rights and responsibilities. The essential characteristics of student empowerment was defined as processes of enabling individual students or larger student groups to achieve greater

influence in political decision-making at the school. The empowered individual or group, through democratic decision-making and problem solving, matures into people or groups capable of interacting individually and collectively with the school and classroom authority. Although these schools seem to share a particular child-image where students are perceived as agents of social change, the assessment of the quality of student participation in decision-making processes pointed to substantial differences within the four case schools. Even though the principals of three of the four schools were content with the quality of the student councils as a model for student empowerment on a whole school level, my assessment differed from that of the principals as I equated quality with effectiveness as it related to outcomes. My findings pointed to an interesting relationship between the quality of students' participation in decision-making processes on a whole school level and both parents' social class and private school or public school distinctions.

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**Key Finding 4:**

The study provides evidence that despite the similarity in views of children and childhood, educational practices in the model schools differ on a whole school level but not on a classroom level. The limitations that are placed on students' power at a more influential whole-school level indicated a relationship between the socio-economic background of their parents and their possibilities to participate in a meaningful way in decision-making processes.

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If student empowerment is seen as a negotiation of control over decisions and actions between adults and students and a partial transfer of control from adults to students, then the findings suggest that possibilities of students to share in the power of decision-making at a whole school level differs in the four model schools. The subsequent finding makes apparent the relationship between student possibilities to share in the power of decision-making on a whole school level and a classroom level

in the different schools. It is of importance that the findings of this study reveal that students' possibilities to share in decision-making processes at the classroom level were similarly significant across all four schools but were significantly dissimilar at a school level. In other words, the results suggest that there is a high level of power-sharing within the classroom between teachers and students. From both teacher and student perspectives, the students at all four case study sites enjoyed a high level of control over their lives within the classrooms. This willingness to share power at a grassroots level makes possible the realisation of students' participation rights to achieve greater independence, self-determination and political influence within the classroom but not necessarily on higher levels of the social structure of the school. Therefore, student empowerment takes place in distinct places and in hierarchically delineated levels within a community. The limitations that are placed on students' power at more influential levels of school decision-making is an especially significant finding as it points to the tension between the desire to empower students on the one hand and the desire to preserve the status quo of a hierarchically structured institutional organisation on the other hand. Giving power to students at the classroom level is practiced more widely than in more influential whole school contexts which may mean that school authorities may not feel threatened by increased students involvement in decision-making processes on a classroom level but may well feel uneasy about students' potential to unsettle delicate power balances and established ways of organisational management and control within schools.

From a political empowerment point of view, although students seem to enjoy a substantial amount of freedom of choice within the classrooms at the four case schools, they have, by and large, remained on the margins of institutional power. The case narratives presented in this study demonstrate that school cultures were

remarkably resistant to change. To involve students to a greater extent in decision-making processes means that adults must agree to share some of their decision-making powers with children. The findings presented in this thesis pointed to multiple factors that may hinder this process. This may firstly require a serious re-evaluation of current child-images that underlie epistemological and educational beliefs of various stakeholders at the school that lead to the adoption of dominant educational models. Secondly, the tension between educators' mandates to care and protect students with a desire to include them more in decision-making processes needs to be seriously addressed, as students' right to participation needs to be balanced with students' right to protection in education.

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**Key Finding 5:**

The study provides evidence of existing undemocratic practices in schools that lead to substantial difficulties in enacting HRE.

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Despite the rhetoric of students' political empowerment, this study documents how the existing exercise of power continues to frame the discourses of students' involvement in decision-making processes. Adult authority is not questioned and students' participation possibilities are firmly controlled and directed by adults. Student-initiated, shared decisions with adults are not practiced in any of the model schools, except perhaps for Deanmoor Independent School. In this school adults seem to be more willing to take on advisory roles more than directive roles that enable the possibilities of non-hierarchically organised co-operation between adults and children. In all the other model schools, the rules of student engagement in political processes are firmly controlled by the principals. They are conveyed in the ways the 'partnership' is defined and structured, because these are the norms to which everyone

at the schools assumes they have to conform. The existing and taken-for-granted power structure inevitably frame the ways the students, as the least powerful group within the school community, understand their involvement. While there is evidence that the examples discussed in this thesis point to a form of partnership between adults and children that can be termed democratic, the democratisation of schooling often does not go far enough. The findings discussed in chapter six point out that children's ability to share in formal power at the school is limited as principals firmly control the processes of the adult-child partnership. This results in the re-inscription of existing non-democratic power structures and further reinforces top-down definitions of what student empowerment is.

*The Simple Gift of Pedagogical Privilege*<sup>70</sup>

The shock of going from one of the poorest schools to one of the wealthiest cannot be overstated. ... The dual society, at least in ... education, seems in general to be unquestioned.

Johnathan Kozol, 1991, pp. 2 and 4

To establish an accurate picture of the effectiveness of students to be heard in their respective schools, students' recent involvement in political decision-making processes on specific issues, the functioning of student councils and classroom rules and regulations at the four model schools were investigated. This led to an assessment of the educational practices in operation at the model schools for the educational opportunities these may provide for democratic education and was related to the socio-economic context of each school. The findings discussed in chapters six and seven demonstrate that the possibilities of students to share in the power of decision-making on the higher levels of Hart's (1992) participation ladder at the four case study sites depended not so much on students' age and maturity but more on the school's location, philosophical orientation and parents' financial capacities. Despite John

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<sup>70</sup> Johnathan Kozol, 1991, p. 177



Coon's remark as stated by Johnathan Kozol (1991) that "'children in a true sense are *all poor*' because they are dependent on adults"(emphasis added) (p. 176), the children in this study are far from experiencing the underprivileged position in society based on their age and maturity to which Coon refers as equally unpleasant and significant.

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**Key Finding 6:**

The study provides evidence that the two small autonomous and fee-paying schools, which serve an affluent and well educated constituency, were able to include students more substantially in decision-making processes on whole school levels than the two larger public schools that serve children from middle to lower socio-economic backgrounds.

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Empirical results show that the educational practices at Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School, which are independent fee-paying and alternative schools, located in affluent areas seem to noticeably engage in more democratic practices than at Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School, which are government schools located in less privileged areas. These findings were discussed in chapters six and seven and illustrate that although the school principals hold similar child-images, they have translated into very different educational practices and educational opportunities for students at the four case study sites. These differences markedly correspond to the socio-economic context of the student body. Students' possibilities to practice democracy and human rights and engage in practical HRE are not only dissimilar at the four case schools but are also clearly dependent on factors which connect the nuclear school firmly to the larger social matrix of Australian society. These findings add to the canon of evidence that parents' financial resources are able to purchase for their children educational opportunities not open to children from less affluent backgrounds (Wilson, 1996). Although it does not come as a surprise that progressive independent schools (Crystal Montessori School and

Deanmoor Independent School) grant students greater possibilities to effectively practice HRE than government schools located in less affluent areas (Abernethy Country School and Bolton Primary School), it is rather striking that Kozol's observations of American societal inequality written a decade ago seem to resemble Australian societal and educational reality at the beginning of the new millennium so well. Kozol notes:

[Some] private, affluent sub-urbanites concede that certain aspects of the game may be a trifle rigged to their advantage. 'Sure, it's a bit unjust', they may concede, 'but that's reality and that's the way the game is played.... This, in turn, enables them to give their children something far more precious than the simple gift of pedagogic privilege. They give them uncontaminated satisfaction in their victories. Their children learn to shut from mind the possibility that they are winners in an unfair race and they seldom let themselves lose sleep about the losers. (Kozol, 1991, p. 177)

Children from underprivileged backgrounds such as School B, and to some extent School A, are well aware of the injustices and "the consequences of unequal education [that] have terrible finality"(1991, p. 180). These findings point to an urgent need to further investigate this problem so that educational reform may be more effective in its attempt to close the increasing gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

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### **Key Finding 7:**

The study points to an indicative trend that schools in underprivileged areas may profit to a great extent from practical HRE as behavioural problems of students in the two model public schools were positively affected.

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Even though it has been outside the scope of this thesis to explore the educational impact of poverty as related to democratic education in greater detail, the findings of this study may be indicative of a trend that students in schools that are located in poor areas, such as Schools A and B, should benefit to a greater extent from an increase in the democratisation of the school and the classroom. This is because it has the potential to translate into more positive educational experiences for students

and a sense of greater well-being. It may further result in fewer behavioural problems of students at school and also improve students' social and political competencies. This line of inquiry needs urgent attention as the results of this study add to the findings that are indicative of the fact that equality of education opportunity for Australian school children is only a sad myth and also point toward a disturbing trend that there are no indications that this is about to change.

The core themes and finding and their relationship are summarised again in the following figure (Figure 25):

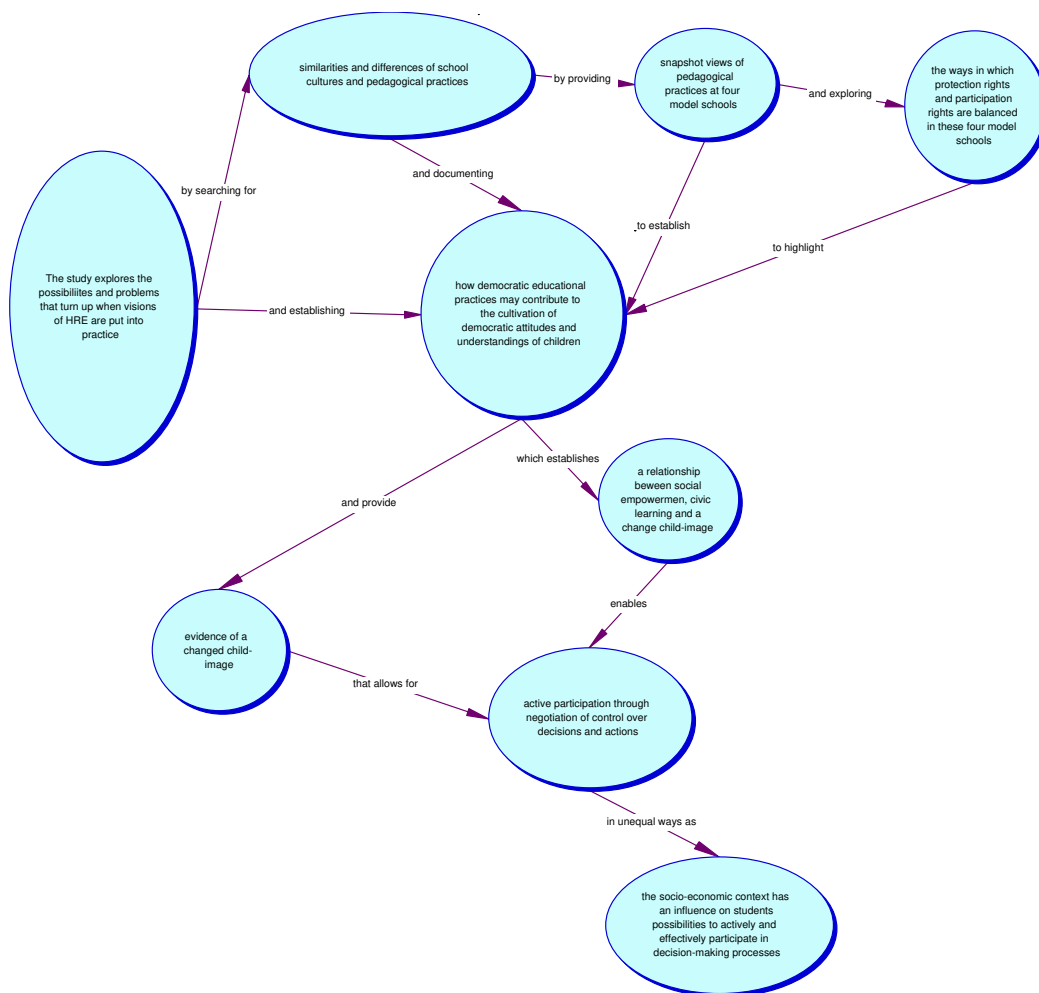


Figure 25: Summary of core themes and findings of the study

## The Effectiveness of Practical HRE: Implications of the Findings

### *The struggle to democratise schools*

This thesis argued that student participation in school governance requires a new approach that views students as capable agents of social and political change. Practical HRE also requires new approaches to the production of democratic attitudes and skills in students, to capacity building in classrooms and school communities and to understand the ways in which knowledge is generated for governance of the self and governance of the community. Students have significant knowledge resources that have been consistently undervalued in the past. Much has been written about the need to develop democratic attitudes, skills and capacities in students, but relatively little attention has been given to building democratic skills and dispositions through formal democratic educational experiences. There remains a strong tendency to assume that students' democratic understanding and appreciation can be increased and the civic deficit in Australian students successfully remedied through the administration of sophisticated curriculum programmes, which do little to question the inherently unequal and autocratic nature of traditional schooling.

It is perhaps not surprising that in affluent schools (Crystal Montessori School and Deanmoor Independent School) in which there is a history and tradition of student-centred approaches to education, the dialogue between adult and student bodies seems more likely to work effectively and power-sharing was more appropriate. It is my conviction that similar to the strategies needed to empower other marginalised groups in society at large, students' only route to influence at the whole school level is to have a say and be heard. The findings of this study demonstrate that although child-images are changing, much work remains to be done to re-engineer existing education systems and power structures within schools in ways that can

respond to more student-centred processes. This enables a different flow of power that would gradually replace a 'top-down' flow of power with a 'two-way' flow of power, where students' voices are equally valued as adult voices. Although students need adult guidance and advice, adult voices ought not to enjoy 'exclusivity' in the sense that their authority is unquestionably accepted based solely on an implicit relationship of age to maturity in children but not necessarily in adults. Student-centred education approaches and more democratically organised schools cannot only provide ample opportunities for practical HRE but can also provide the opportunity to test the effectiveness and possibilities of democratic schooling. Despite the rhetoric and good intentions, there is still considerable evidence presented in this thesis that points to top-down traditional control even in these 'out of the ordinary' schools which dampers the optimism.

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### **Core Finding:**

The findings presented in this study unmistakably illustrate that the recasting of power relationships between adults and children in education requires a substantial rethinking of the mandate of formal education. The resulting new partnership between adults and students forms the basis for the development of essential new understandings, skills and capacities among educational professionals that can aid the establishment of innovative pedagogical practices.

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### ***The Move from Rhetoric to Reality***

Education systems and school authorities may need to reconsider their priorities regarding the efficacy of daily school and classroom processes and practices specifically for education *in* and *for* democracy and human rights. They need to ensure that adequate time and resources are made available for the desired changes to occur. Democratic educational principles and practices can be viewed as tools of political and social empowerment by enhancing students' awareness of political and moral attitudes and practices on both the whole school level and the classroom level.

These combined characteristics may promote a culture of listening to students and increase the possibilities of broad social and political empowerment over time. Of equal importance is the need to ensure that teachers, at both the pre-service and in-service levels, are made aware of potential benefits of democratising their schools and classrooms. Democratic schools and classrooms are not only beneficial for political socialisation but also affect social and moral education and school and classroom management issues. Hence, the findings of this study can encourage some school principals and educational administrators to review current educational policies and practices. This is especially so as school administrators, teachers, students and parents are often not aware that reviewing and debating educational principles and practices are actual and viable lessons in DaHR. To further this awareness and the importance of an integrated, process-oriented, rights-based approach to the teaching and learning of democracy and human rights, school principals, other educational administrators and educational researchers may wish to explore a few key questions such as the ones listed below.

- ❑ How is the school's culture defined by its principal, teachers and students?
- ❑ Are there identifiable relationships between a school's culture and the SES status of the school?
- ❑ How are schools already finding effective and appropriate ways of including students in decision-making processes on issues that directly affect them on a) the classroom level and b) the whole school level?
- ❑ What is known about the relevance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to local educational practices?
- ❑ What forms of justice are operating within the school?
- ❑ How does this relate to the form of justice advocated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child?
- ❑ How does a school's social class impact on current educational practices at the school in general and on its disciplinary policy and practice in particular?

- ❑ What are the identifiable benefits and limitations of these educational practices?

As school principals, teachers, parents, and students start thinking about the potential benefits of reflecting on the above questions, they will find that ordinary school days provide ample opportunities for students to acquire citizenship-related attitudes and skills. Taking part in decision-making processes has important benefits for the development of political attitudes in individual students and for their school communities as a whole. As this study demonstrates, democratic educational practices that aids the empowerment of students by granting them 'a voice', have major repercussions for the school. These practices can, on the one hand, upset existing power relationships between adults and children and therewith threaten the status quo at the school. On the other hand, they can also enhance student satisfaction and contribute to a general feeling of well-being and contentment among students and positively affect suspension rates and discipline problems in schools, which is a positive effect.

### The Need for Further Research

My decision to research 'good practice schools' is a limited approach to civics and citizenship education and a much more extensive investigation is required. This thesis has opened up avenues for a range of further studies using democratic education as their main theme. Other studies could follow this investigation that build on the results of this research. In particular, an Australia-wide study that would incorporate case study schools from different states may result in data and case examples that could add to a much needed documentation of educational principles and practices of 'good' practice schools. Moreover, the potential reciprocal influence between democratic educational practices and fewer behavioural problems should be explored

in greater detail. For example, this study described how principals found that the changes they introduced in their schools, such as no bell in School A and the scraping of the resolution room in School B, led to a reduction in student suspensions. However, this study did not explore the extent to which working in a democratically organised school can be an empowering experience for teachers as well as students. Further, this study did not investigate the ways in which a continued relationship between politically empowered teachers and students can be mutually beneficial. Students can offer important perspectives based on their lived experiences and teachers can offer important perspectives based on their knowledge and professional training. The reciprocal influences that the teachers and the students might offer each other and how this may contribute to greater teacher satisfaction was not explored in this research. With further analysis of these dynamic processes an understanding can be gained of the mechanisms by which political and moral socialisation works and political empowerment of Australian youth can be fostered in schools and classrooms. Nonetheless, a research priority that was recognised as an urgent need for a more thorough investigation is the lack of equity in educational opportunity in Australian schools and its potential educational, social and political ramifications. Given the importance of discovering whether there is a relationship between socio-economic background and possibilities of civic learning through practical HRE, the exploration of further structural factors, including gender and ethnicity, is urgently needed.

### Concluding Comments

This study suggested that it is possible for schools to educate effectively *in* and *for* democracy in day-to-day educational practices that inspire political and moral empowerment. This work is about closing the gap between the current situation and visions of utopian ideals. As Ruth Levitas explains:



Utopia is about how we would live and what kind of a world we would live in if we could do just that. ... Sometimes utopia embodies more than an image of what the good life would be and becomes a claim *about what it could and should be*: the wish that things might be otherwise becomes a conviction that it does not have to be like this. *Utopia is then not just a dream to be enjoyed, but a vision to be pursued.* (1990, p.1) (emphasis added)

Instead of simply implementing compulsory new civics and citizenship, human rights or multicultural education programmes, one might start questioning what consensus there is in the local community/society on the idea of basic human rights for all. What is meant by the notions of 'democracy' and 'human rights', what do we understand as the 'basic' human rights of school children? What are the attitudes and abilities that are thought of when we talk of human rights? Clarification on these issues would further people's capacity for meaningful cooperation both to promote what is agreed upon and to pursue dialogue on issues of difference. Such processes can be highly empowering, especially for the underprivileged and marginalised. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that this is a highly political enterprise and thus requires deep understanding and appreciation of political due process procedures. It is not enough for (school) children to have internationally agreed upon basic human rights; students have a right to know that they have such rights and educators have a duty to ensure that students are adequately informed about their basic human rights inside and outside of school contexts. There are choices to be made and it is up to the individual person to act according to moral principles and to force those in power to do the same. This thesis is a testimony of how much has already been achieved in the struggle towards the democratisation of schools and the development of the 'good' citizen and how social change remains well within the grasp of the individual person.

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