

**MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY EDUCATION
IN THE GLOBALISED CLASSROOM IN AUSTRALIA**

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ABSTRACT

Australia is no longer an “isolated backwater” island floating around the Asia-Pacific region. It has become a country of great importance as a multicultural hub that continues to flourish in a time of social, cultural, and population growth. With this changing environment the needs of its people, in particular its children, *have* also changed. As multicultural awareness begins to expand and borders cease to define the cultural differences of those around us, the needs of the learners in school are also in a state of flux. This paper tracks the evolution of multicultural and diversity education policies in Australia through seven key documents: these are The National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987), the Asian Studies Council Report – Asian Studies Council (1988), National Agenda for Multicultural Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989), Adelaide Declaration (1999), Melbourne Declaration (2008), Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) and Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship: A Strategy for Victorian Government Schools 2009-2013 (DEECD, 2009). It concludes with implications and impacts of this history and these documents and addresses the need for continued teacher preparation and instruction through recommendation new initiatives.

KEYWORDS

Australia, Education, Multiculturalism, Diversity, Multicultural Education, Diversity Education, Globalised Classroom.

DECLARATION

The following declaration, signed by the candidate: PATRICK ANDREW PRICE

This is to certify that

- I. *the thesis comprises only my original work towards the masters except where indicated in the Preface,*
- II. *due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,*
- III. *the thesis is 20,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices OR the thesis is 20,000 as approved by the RHD Committee.*

Signed: _____

Patrick Andrew Price

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PREAMBLE

There was a time when the lands were not separate but one whole and with it one people, but with time this land broke apart and drifted amongst the vast ocean that surrounded it and consequently separated its people (Wegener, 1912).

This has been the way it was for millions of years, people a drift from one another, fractured. Move forward in time to present day and even with oceans to separate the masses people have defied borders and broken down the barriers that once kept them apart to live *side-by-side* but *still fractured and distant from one another*.

It is a natural instinct for people to go in search of a better life for themselves and their families and more importantly their children, from migrants to refugees each adds to the rich tapestry and diversity of an increasingly globalised world (Babacan, 2007). With *inclusion* becoming an increasingly popular word of modern policies and social communities, it also brings with it stigmas, stigmas that are not always welcome. Babacan (2007) further indicates that with the introduction of new languages, religions, arts and cultures in general, the diversity of the people in our society is on the rise. Consequently the world has become increasingly interweaved and as borders no longer separate cultures, they can no longer be defined by a group of individuals. While many have come together to live as neighbours that coexist, there remains an ever-present challenge. This challenge is the continued cultural difficulties and tensions that are alive and well in modern society. What this represents is despite many cultures coming together there are new complex issues that are still unresolved that subsist under the surface of a so-called perpetrated *cultural harmony*.

At its conception multicultural education was born out of the social and racial stigmas that emerged towards migrants during the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was during this time that the government recognised a cultural divide was occurring, it was also during this time that the 'White Australia Policy' was nearing its end and cultural diversity was becoming very prominent. At the time assimilation was seen as the way in which a nation could absorb its growing migrant population and minimise the effect of its presence on the dominant monocultural environment.

For this reason, new policy initiatives were vital to achieve a notion of '*unified* culture', where cultures co-existed together may need to be reconsidered with an educational context. This is because the way *culture* is defined will directly influence cultural education. Culture is not simply heritage, ethnicity and language and cultural practices needs to be broadened to incorporate and recognise all aspects of what culture is and reflect all its various facets and groups. Thus, the inclusion and recognition of groups like 'special needs', 'social' and 'communities', that are often thrown into their own specific categories and are often not considered forms of cultures in their own right, suggesting they were a separate issue. Rather they are all important as each present their own unique characteristics, which contribute to the acceptance or rejection of *others* in the greater social standing.

Despite the veil of the 'inclusive classroom', cultural disharmony and unease is still present within the classroom. What this signifies is that a dominant culture can manifest itself and overshadow as well as potentially create tension with other minority cultures that are also present. Thus to the *casual* observer the 'inclusive classroom' is representative of exactly that, inclusion, but to look beyond the surface of the classroom it is no longer as clear. The bonds that were once believed to hold the fabric of cultural divisions together in cohesion and harmony are no longer so easily

identifiable. It is this phenomenon that I refer to as '*Cultural Parallel Play*', derived from the notion of parallel play/activity. Mildred Parten (1932), who founded the concept of parallel play. Parten describes this as children that play with one another but have no real interaction, meaning that no child has any influence over another and that the play that takes place is superficial – in a manner of speaking. Cultural parallel play thus represents a state of play between two or more cultural groups within the classroom setting and how these groups interact – are they participating in a state of parallel play or genuine play, where meaningful interactions take place. This notion of cultural parallel play will be examined against the globalised classroom and the evolution of multicultural and diversity education over the last thirty years.

This paper will look at the evolution of multicultural and diversity education in the modern day globalised classroom. This analysis is not an "in classroom research analysis" but an in depth look at the policy shifts and educational understanding of multicultural reform and development over the last three decades. This will be accomplished through an examination of ideas in multicultural education informed by theory and cultural reform through an examination of seven key policy documents from the 1980's to 2010, tracking the development and policy shifts of multicultural and diversity education. Each practice has tried to impact the educational sector or has been a response to cultural diversity in education from diverse angles. The seven documents provided a cross-section of Australia's cultural development from the 1980's to present day. The texts selected consisted of the National Policy on Languages – Lo Bianco (1987), Asian Studies Council Report – Asian Studies Council (1988), National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia – Commonwealth of Australia (1989), Adelaide Declaration (1999), Melbourne Declaration (2008), Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) and the Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship: A Strategy for Victorian Government Schools 2009-2013 – DEECD (2009). All seven texts represent a time in Australia's cultural development with respect to the events and needs of the Australian

society at the time. Each will be further analysed to flesh out the key ideas and shifts in multicultural policy since the 1980's.

Key aspects of Australia's cultural development as indicated by *Multiculturalism in VELS* (VELS, 2009). These aspects covered areas of the diversity of Australians, changing Australian identity, intercultural understanding, cultural similarities and differences of people in Australia. As well as the histories of cultural groups which make up the Australian nation, the histories and cultures of other peoples, increasing global interconnections of people and nations, the principles and values which underpin a harmonious, pluralistic democracy including equality, fairness and respect. With reference to the changing Australian policy and values over time, social and cultural factors which influence the development of identity, exploration and creation of various forms of cultural expression.

Multicultural education will also be considered in the role it plays in *cultural inclusion* through current and past definitions and policies. These include the types of play that can occur within the learning setting, the effects they may have, whose culture is being represented and ultimately are we as a wider cultural body set with a predisposition to adopt a dominant cultural attitude. Each of which have influence over the child, the classroom and the wider community (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2009), and therefore be examined to redefine cultural understanding and multicultural education to enable all individuals child, parent, teacher and members of the wider community the opportunity to break down barriers. Thus will them to take part in genuine interaction and *play* with one another.

Therefore cultural education will be examined in this paper as more than than simple cultural diversity. Rather its scope will be expanded to more effectively encompass the rich tapestry that appropriately reflects the Australian population. As a result with the vast variety of cultures that coexist in Australia there will always be *points of conflict* that arise between culture(s) and society. Therefore an examination between the balance of the cultural scope of the population and what society deems to be acceptable and unacceptable forms of behaviour. This raises the questions of difference verse uniformity – at what point the difference becomes irrelevant in the cultural make up of social harmony and cultural uniformity take its place and ultimately is it necessary that uniformity exist?

Moreover the direct correlations between society vs. culture and the points of conflict that exist when society and cultures interact with one another will be analysed. Society as it With the basis of society vs. culture argument being, the diversity of cultures are the make up of our society but with so many cultures being intertwined which cultures prevails as the dominant? Or can a balance be achieved? Which raises the further question, do cultures interact at all or do a collaboration of cultures make up 'society'? Additionally how these factors can have a direct effect on the interrelationship of difference and uniformity of cultures. Subsequently how cultures interact are built upon these factors and the cultural harmony that evolves from these intercultural relationships.

Multicultural and Diversity Education in the Globalised Classroom is a literature-based discourse analysis of seven key texts, exploring the ideas and impact of cultural reform and the new role multicultural education will have in the globalised classrooms of today.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand where 'we' – as *Australian* people – are, as both a nation and part of a global society, we must go back to the beginning to understand the journey that multicultural education has taken to infiltrate a society of individual and fractured nations.

A Brief History

From its conception multicultural education was born as a result of the social stigmas from racial injustices that emerged towards migrants during the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was during this time that the government recognised that a cultural divide was occurring, it was also during this time that the White Australia Policy was nearing its end and cultural diversity was becoming very prominent. Initial responses from the Australian population to the multicultural presence were that new migrants should simply *assimilate* into the existing monocultural mentality that was the nation. Assimilation was seen as the way in which a nation could absorb its growing migrant population and minimise the effect of its presence on the dominant monocultural environment. Outside of minorities losing their differences from this assimilation, these minorities have also taken on an American philosophy of the 'melting pot' an idea taken from American cultural that merges all cultures into one, this practice was not popular in Australia and not well received. Alternatively cultural *integration* allowed minorities to keep their differences but also participate in the greater social setting.

At this critical time in Australia's policy shift, Whitlam and Fraser (Lo Bianco, 2010) ultimately defined the nations perception of multicultural education. Undoubtable in a time of uncertainty on the forefront of a newly defining Australia they placed emphasis on six particular areas;

- I. Provision of specialist teaching programs of English as a second language for Immigrants and Indigenous children and adults;
- II. First language maintenance for immigrant and Indigenous learners;
- III. Teaching of community languages, i.e. immigrant and Indigenous languages, as second languages;
- IV. Infusing culturally diverse perspectives across all subject areas of the curriculum such as history, geography, citizenship studies;
- V. Parent participation; and
- VI. Active combating of negative and racist depictions of minority populations.

Lo Bianco (2010)

Points i, ii and iii are fundamentally language based and focus on language policy; namely language acquisition and first language maintenance. While the remaining points shift the focus beyond solely language aspects of cultural development. Lo Bianco (2010) recognises that the Australian language remains a significant part of multicultural education.

During this time of increased migration into Australia at the fall of the White Australia Policy it had impact on different areas of Australia. All major cities received an increase in population and were hubs for migrants coming into the country. The significance of this being that multicultural education was adapted and catered to the region that it was being implemented in. An example of this comes from Lo Bianco (2010) that demonstrated this adaptable multiculturalism within the Northern Territory, a state that receives a steady stream of Indonesian and South East Asian immigrants. The impact of this meant that the region's cultural needs are tailored not only to the Indigenous residents but also the Indonesian and South East Asian immigrants that are relocating there.

Definition of Culture

By definition 'Culture' is the way in which a society is portrayed at a particular time and place, more so the way in which that society articulates elements such as; its desires of art, music, attitudes and behaviours towards others. Multicultural understanding emerged from various global and local factors. The most notable stemming from a post World War II understanding of the impact racism can have on not only a nation but a global society as well. More so how the discrimination and belittling of a others can have a profound effect on the way in which people treat one another. As well as the way in which they perceive them as people, meaning that when cultures are treated as lesser *species of men* then the equality of people is imbalanced and the quality of life bestowed onto these cultures becomes substandard to that of the superior class/culture. A secondary factor that contributed to the multicultural movement was the 'White Australia Policy', which in itself contributed to a national monoculture that sought to 'weed out' all the undesirables to maintain its standards of culture that reflected the European lineage that Australia was built upon (Lambert, Moghaddam, Sorin & Sorin, 1990).

Cultural recognition and equality of all cultures is often the prevailing message that multiculturalism aims to promote but what is not mentioned is that the role of multiculturalism is governed by one of two ideals. The first is 'multiculturalism' in its purest form, seeks to promote all cultures as equal partners in society with respect to each other and society as a whole. Adversely the second of these ideals is 'monoculturalism'; monoculturalism manifests itself within multiculturalism in way that does not dismiss the existence and place of other cultures rather over shadows them and becomes the dominant culture. What this dominant culture – or monoculture – mentality echoes is the assimilation of minority cultures, each being absorbed into the larger cultural body that becomes representative of all, but only represents the powerful (or dominant) (Welch, 2006).

It wasn't until the 1970's that the 'Australian' population mindset shifted and the notion of monoculturalism began to crack under the pressure of an increasingly diverse population, where individual and equal rights were at their peak of national interests. Prior to this – Australia as an imperial nation – governing bodies sought to protect themselves from an impending onslaught of migrants by creating laws that would restrict their ability to enter Australia. This was achieved through the introduction of the White Australia Policy that reigned from 1901-1973. While the White Australia Policy saw that migrants were restricted into entering Australia, it also stipulated discretionary tactics that would allow migrants of a suitable pedigree to enter the *Australian population* (Windschuttle, 2005). Through this migrant policy it reinforced and upheld the monocultural mindset of the Australian government and the nation it represented. A further example of this monocultural approach was the acts of the *invading* British nation who saw fit to remove indigenous children from their homes and families so they could be brought up in a proper manner namely a British Christian Cultural value that represented Queen and country – in itself a monocultural identity that reflected unified ideals and characteristics of what culture should represent.

Cultural interaction also plays a critical role in greater social multicultural understanding. For this reason there is a fine balance that exists between social and cultural understandings and because of this delicate balance there are subsequent conflicts that are present between society and culture. In saying this, it begs the question 'At what point does cultural freedom infringe upon social standards of decency and human rights?'. As cultures continue to interact, the validity of multicultural awareness and multicultural education come under further scrutiny as to their ability to shape not only individual and national agendas but also their ability to help shape global attitudes towards diversity and cultural difference.

Moreover even with multiculturalism awareness and multicultural education, cultural dominants can arise and overshadow smaller minority cultures that are also present; a phenomenon denoted by Burnett (2007) as '*othering*'. Therefore the argument can be made that no matter the tolerance of a society, nation or world there will always be points of cultural difference and it what we do as not only individuals but as communities, nations and a global society that will define the treatment of others (Burnett, 2007). Thus the goal that is being defined is not so much a multicultural awareness or education; it is a process, that is working towards a future that is able to overcome times of cultural and social ambiguity where all people are seen as equal in the eyes of the individual and the greater society.

Current Multicultural Policies

Approximately six million migrants have settled in Australia since World War II. The diversity of the Australian society is a standpoint of Australian Cultural Policy, a fact that is reiterated by Rudduck (Australian Government Publishing, 2006) the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. The policies are geared towards meeting and overcoming the challenges that multiculturalism may encounter in the future. One of these challenges that modern society has faced is the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. This was a critical event that reshaped the focus of multiculturalism awareness and education in recent history. A focus that shifted away from simple *tolerance of all people* but towards education of cultural difference meaning that cultures were relegated to inferior and labelled as harbourers of terrorism. Thus a re-education became necessary for multiculturalism to survive in a society that denoted a cultural hierarchy.

As a direct result of these events over the last decade educational policy has gone through significant shifts with the underlying aim being to create awareness and promote multicultural

awareness which in turn informs educational policy. Namely; New Agenda for Multicultural Australia: Strategic directions for 2003-2006, Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity and Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship have been the most recent policy initiatives from the Australian government and Department of Education.

Multiculturalism is in itself a number of policies that has been adopted by governing bodies in hopes of creating a society that is free from intolerance and accepting of all individuals no matter their background, ethnicity, religion, language or cultural background. The evolution of multicultural policies has been well documented and its manifestation over time has seen the development of not only a social understanding of multiculturalism but also the realisation that multicultural diversity is ever increasing phenomenon that is globally bound. Key elements of the policy documents are that:

- ➔ Policies are aimed at addressing challenges that are faced in building a multicultural society.
- ➔ Working towards a 'shared future', a commitment to building a nation that is diverse in its cultures and strives towards the ideal of a 'shared future'.
- ➔ Policy is embedded with the relationship between culture and society and the balance between them is how multicultural harmony is achieved.
- ➔ An underlying factor of multicultural policy is that citizenship plays a key role in multiculturalism, hence the role of the citizen and citizenship education is important in building a culturally diverse society.
- ➔ The policy documents do not stipulate how to achieve this cultural diversity. In saying this, the dream of cultural harmony is beneficial but there is no backing to the policies. There is no *substance* to the policy as it promotes the benefits of multiculturalism but no *real* plan of action.

Policy initiatives that have been undertaken by the Australian government are; Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity (2006) document which outlines that the aim of policies and programs is to unite all people as 'Australian', but in doing so, don't we as an inclusive society create the 'Australian' dominant culture that creates an 'othering' effect (Burnett, 2007) towards the minority cultures that are also present within the *Australian Society*. The argument can be further made that these minority cultures are essentially a necessary evil of the inclusive environment/culture/society. Moreover the case can be made that an overarching *umbrella culture* is necessary for multiple cultures to co-exist in a 'multicultural society'. This notion further recognises the relationship between society and culture and the middle ground that needs to be formed to achieve multicultural success.

It further outlines the 'Living in Harmony' (c.1998) initiative, with the aim of providing local solutions to local problems. Community based approach to cultural harmony ultimately putting the onus on the individuals to create programs that include all people to build cultural harmony which in turn alleviates the government of developing lasting solutions to a national problem of cultural disharmony. A further approach the government has undertaken, as part of its 'Living in Harmony' initiative in 1999 is Harmony day. Harmony day is fundamentally representative of a 'Food and Flags' festival, not actually addressing the cause of the problem just again reiterating that we must all live together in harmony and treat each other equally and with respect (Australian Government Publishing, 2006). A further strategy that the government has undertaken is 'Access and Equity' the intension of this strategy is geared towards programs that are "attuned to the realities of diversity in Australian society" (Australian Government Publishing, 2006). With significance given to new migrants and refugees to better integrate into the greater Australian multicultural society. Again this depicts those *new* cultures that enter the umbrella of the dominant Australian culture rather than making them a balanced and equal part of the cultural mix.

The documents also illustrate that multiculturalism is a valuable resource that is essential to building a society that is equipped to function and move forward in a global society. Presently with continued global movement, societies can no longer distinguish a discernable cultural identity as with increased migration and global shifts, cultural boundaries are no longer present and national identities are evolving into global identities. Furthermore multiculturalism is depicted as a stepping-stone for greater economical stimulation within both foreign and domestic markets. It was believed through increased linguistic diversities the Australian business sector is becoming increasingly diverse in building in its cross-cultural “social and business networks” (Australian Government Publishing, 2006).

The aim of multicultural policies and programs is to unite all people in an inclusive national environment that welcomes all. In contrast to the notion that Australia was built upon cultural diversity but when British settlers first set foot on that land we now call Australia they proceed to exterminate and assimilate all indigenous people in the British cultural ideals. A significant shift in the way dominant cultures perceive minority has been perpetrated as this assimilation is still present only now it exists under the disguise of multicultural harmony.

Multicultural Education Policies

Multicultural Education has never been more vital in the quest to create the best learning environment for all students regardless of their cultural backgrounds. As the academic needs of students are continually evolving so are the requirements to maximise student learning. One such requirement is a teachers understanding and ability to navigate the vast cultural nuances, heritages and understandings that multicultural students bring with them into the classroom setting. As a

result a move is needed towards educating the educators in order to adequately prepare them for the challenges they face on the horizon of increasing student and school diversity.

At present the research surrounding multicultural education centres on student understanding and awareness in the particular areas of English as a Second Language (ESL), adjustment, tolerance, respect, family and community (EducationVic, 1997). While all these areas are of significance in the development of student understanding of multiculturalism and multicultural education there is an area in which research has yet to shed any real light. This area falls under the scope of the educators themselves and how their journey through from pre-service teachers to practicing qualified teachers has equipped them to value, appreciate, relate and grasp the intricacies of the multicultural diverse backgrounds and personalities these students represent.

Over the last two decades multicultural education has been gaining significance within the educational realm, increasing its presence over the years just as the diverse nature of the classroom has been increasing as well. With this rise in awareness it has become evident that policy, understanding and education of multiculturalism are critical in order to successfully meet the needs of students so they are able to achieve the best education possible.

Presently the Australian and Victorian government's outlook of Multicultural Education is that all children regardless of background, race, ethnicity or language should receive the same educational opportunities as any other student within the learning and social environments (DEECD, 2009). The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and the Victorian government's Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 further support this outlook of equal and just

education for all student diversities. The *Act*, denote the need for greater understanding of the diversities that all people bring to not only the school environment but also the greater community and that in order for harmony to reigns supreme a '*mutual respect*' and understanding is fundamental to building a just and harmonious society (Multicultural Victoria Act, 2004). It is from this mutual respect and understanding that all children's diverse backgrounds are welcomed and utilised to enhance education for all.

What's more the notion of a cultural diverse classroom understanding is signified by the Victorian Education Learning Standards (VELS) in which they first define multiculturalism as:

- The diversity of Australians
- Changing Australian identity
- Intercultural understanding
- Cultural similarities and differences of people in Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and globally
- The histories of cultural groups which make up the Australian nation
- The histories and cultures of other peoples in a range of other places and times
- Increasing global interconnections of people and nations
- Principles and values which underpin a harmonious, pluralistic democracy including equality, fairness and respect
- Changing Australian policy and values over time in relation to immigration, citizenship and rights

- Social and cultural factors which influence the development of identity
- Initiation and maintenance of positive social relationships with a range of people in a range of contexts
- Exploration of a range of perspectives and review and reflection about beliefs and assumptions
- Recognition of a range of opinions and using evidence to justify opinions
- Connections between language and culture and the influence of culture in students lives
- Culturally appropriate values, responses and behaviour
- Exploration and creation of various forms of cultural expression.

(Multiculturalism in VELS – VELS, 2009)

It is from this definition that teachers can incorporate these notions into students' learning. To do this VELS has incorporated various entry points into the curriculum in which a global understanding and multicultural awareness can be taught and discussed within the classroom (DEECD, 2009). These areas of entry include but are not limited to civics and citizenship, history, english and languages other than English (LOTE) as well as value education which are all part of the VELS curriculum and serve to enhance multicultural education.

Prior to the government and the DEECD's current position many scholars over the years have expressed their own understandings as well as perceptions of how multicultural education should be shaped in the years to come. Of the many scholars that have contributed to this growing field of educational understanding in our ever-expanding multicultural society and how the two interrelate, there have been areas of similarity and agreement as well as areas of contention. What I have found

is that a common thread that is interwoven through all the literature on multicultural education is the need for reform within the education system (Vuckovic, 2008, Vavras, 2002 and Banks, 1997 & 2001). This reform calls for existing and pre-service teachers to redefine the way in which multicultural education is administered and thought of within the classroom (Horsley, 2003) as previous multicultural initiatives were short lived and brought about no significant change (Crozet, 2008). Thus the approach to redevelopment of the current way multiculturalism is thought of is to redefine what multiculturalism really consists of in order for it to have any real impact on the educational needs of students.

Multicultural education consists of a deeper understanding by all students that goes beyond students' racial, ethnicity and cultural issues (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2007) as all students bring their own culture and diversities into the classroom whether they are immigrants or from an ethnically diverse background, as each student represents a larger community that is present in the classroom. It is this 'larger community' which consists of students own lives, parents, families, local communities as well as their background, heritage and history that play an important role on students' understandings (Coelho, 1998 & Horsley, 2003). It is necessary for educators to be able to recognise these differences and use them to effectively teach and relate to students (McInerney & McInerney, 2006 & Vuckovic, 2008). More so teachers need to be able to use not only students existing knowledge but also their own existing cultural knowledge in a manner that is significant to students so they are able to make connections with learning and solidify understanding (Lucas & Villegas, 2002).

Leading from this another reoccurring factor that plays throughout the journals, texts, articles and policies is that a mutual respect, understanding and openness of all students' diverse cultural

backgrounds, communities and notions of multicultural education is fundamental to the success of all students (Vuckovic, 2008, Multicultural Victoria Act, 2006 & DEECD, 2009).

Of the various literatures there are common strategies that are put forward by the authors (Coelho, 1998, Banks, 2001, Banks & McGee-Banks, 2007, Banks & Lynch, 1986, Horsley, 2003, Power, 2007 & Vavrus, 2002) these encompass the various ways in which multicultural understanding can be used to improve the education of all students and allow teachers to more effectively communicate concepts and ideas with students in a way that will achieve better understanding and solidify learning. Some areas are highlighted by Coelho (1998), Banks (2001), Banks & McGee-Banks (2007), Horsley (2003) & Vavrus (2002) who suggest incorporating the lives of the students into the learning environment in addition to the student's cultural knowledge and backgrounds, communities and families. All of which can enhance the learning potential for all students.

Looking beyond the classroom, educators play a significant role in students learning and understanding thus the notion of 'educating the educators' is fundamental in the development of multicultural education (Lucas & Villegas, 2002). McInerney & McInerney (2006) suggest that the way in which a teacher is able to develop their understandings of multicultural awareness and multicultural education is to incorporate various strategies throughout the teaching process. This means that multicultural education can begin during pre-service teacher training which is further promoted through the approaches of Horsley (2003) and continue through professional development throughout the career of an educator as suggested by Power (2007). Doing this allows teachers to continually evolve their understanding of various cultures and people to be able to effectively incorporate it into their own teaching, and their ability to teach students of all culturally diverse backgrounds (Blair, 2005 & Vuckovic, 2008). Lucas & Villegas (2002) put forth the notion that

to achieve this field experience is critical, a theory that is further supported by O'Connor, Toric & Fardsavar (2004) & Horsley (2003) as it provides exposure, hands on experience and opportunity to develop the skills to not only interact with, but also build relationships with students from various cultures that can be used in future classrooms. For practicing teachers who are unable to re-engage and learn from their pre-service teaching practicums, Power (2007) suggests that professional development should be seen as vital in the development of these cultural understandings and awareness. Although from these areas of agreement there is an area of contention, this contention is when the development of teachers' understandings of multicultural education should occur. The contention centres on whether this understanding should take place during pre-service teacher training or once a teacher has become part of the education system and develops their sense of multicultural understanding from within the classroom environment and professional development sessions.

Additionally there is the continued notion of the *White Classroom* (or the Eurocentric Classroom) and that it continues to represent the current [dominant] mindset of the classroom environment. This means that currently learning is taking place in a generic environment that is tuned to the needs of the last half-century and its 'British ancestry' and that it represents an inadequacy to meet the needs of the culturally diverse classrooms that reside in schools today (Banks, 1997, Banks, 2001, Banks & McGee-Banks, 2007, Coelho, 1998 & Vavrus, 2002). This in turn calls for the reform of multicultural awareness and education in today's classrooms and teacher training. While this is strongly supported by American academics and is evident through their research, there is no reinforcement within the education system to fall into the dominant '*white*' Australian classrooms of the past.

While the literature clearly states there is a need for multicultural understanding through the various areas of family, community and the students themselves the literature does not state clearly how teachers are to acquire this newfound understanding. Essentially “Teachers can’t teach what they don’t know”, although authors elude to areas in which teachers can gain insight there is no concrete methodology that can be – or has been – implemented for the benefit of pre-service and existing teachers meaning that is paramount new pre-service teachers need to be properly informed and prepared for the intricacies and needs of multicultural students (Banks & Lynch, 1986, Horsley, 2003 & Power, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology undertaken here includes a critical discourse analysis of key policy texts of two distinctive periods in Australia's multicultural development. These periods span the 1980's from 1980 to 1990 and the 2000's from 2000 to 2010. Each presenting significant policy documents that illustrate the journey that cultural diversity has taken over the last half century. During these two periods in Australian's multicultural history there have also been several government shifts, namely a Liberal to Labor shift that occurred during both time periods, as depicted below:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ▪ 1980 – 1989/1981 – 1990 | ▪ 2000 – 2009/2001 – 2010 |
| → LIBERAL to LABOR | → LIBERAL to LABOR |
| ▪ Malcolm Fraser 1975 – 1983 (LIB) | ▪ John Howard 1996 – 2007 (LIB) |
| ▪ Robert Hawke 1983 – 1991 (LAB) | ▪ Kevin Rudd 2007 – 2010 (LAB) |
| | ▪ Julia Gillard 2010 – Present (LAB) |

This critical literature-based discourse analysis will explore the way in which power, social inequalities, dominance and policy have influenced the cultural make up of Australian history (Van Dijk, 1998). The analysis is based upon a deconstruction of policies and progressive multicultural documentation that span decades of learning and knowledge to build an approach that is not only cultural relevant but also appropriate to its audience. Furthermore it also addresses the way in which the message of multiculturalism and multicultural education has been crafted to meet the *socially acceptable* standards of its audience (ultimately insight change) and harmony amongst all people. This critical discourse analysis will provide further scope into critical factors within multicultural education, and the awareness and understanding that have been identified through the literature (MGSE, 2009A & Wilson, 1996)

The result of a literature-based critical discourse analysis is to have a comprehensive understanding of multiculturalism and the way various industries approach – like that of government and education, cultural reform. Moreover an underlying aim is to seek and identify the understandings of both new and existing governmental policies and educational methodologies to increase multicultural understanding and cultural perspective. It addresses how these cultural programs perceive the ever changing needs of students and classrooms and the way in which these insights can help to better educate not only future generations of teachers, but also the ‘Australian people’ to be better prepared to meet the needs of a globalised society and an increasingly globalised classroom.

The fundamental context of the paper is to gain insight into the way in which the notion of multicultural education can be brought to the forefront of an educator’s understanding to create a more harmonious learning environment in which all students are able to achieve their greatest potential without prejudice of their background, culture, ethnicity, religion or social status (O’Connor, Toric & Fardsavar, 2004).

The policy documents that will be analysed are the National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987), Asian Studies Council Report – Asian Studies Council (1988), National Agenda for Multicultural Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989), Adelaide Declaration (1999), Melbourne Declaration (2008), Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) and Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship: A Strategy for Victorian Government Schools 2009-2013 (DEECD, 2009). Additionally this paper will examine the patterns and trends over the last half century of Australian multiculturalism and multicultural education, examining the merits, themes and style of these policies and how they interrelate to one another and the effect they have had on the greater

social make up of the Australian people. Through an analysis of two key periods in multicultural reformation:

TITLE (DATE/SOURCE/TEXT)	REMIT	SCOPE	CONTENT	STYLE
National Policy on Languages – Lo Bianco (1987)	National Policy on Languages was a discussion document to garner the importance of language in education and the development of the Australian cultural.	The identification of underlying language principals that underpin the Australia’s National Language Policy. A policy that is ever evolving and changing to cater to the needs of the ever-changing Australian population.	Teaching and learning languages; English as common language, English as a Second Language, and literacy, as rights; multilingual services; community ecologies of languages; broadcasting, libraries, research and policy.	Negotiated between professionals and community interests, national interest established participatory; collaborative style/coalitions of interest.
Asian Studies Council Report – Asian Studies Council (1988)	Commissioned by the Australian Government. Reported by a newly formed Think Tank – Asian Studies Council. A report for a National Strategy in education to equip Australian’s to plan for and manage its future as part of the Asian region.	The development and sustainable introduction of Asian education into the Australian Education system – with a focus on developing future generations of Australians to be able to compete and participate within the Asian culture and region. This was significant as Australia is located in a densely Asian part of the world and as a part of the Asia-Pacific region Australian’s should have an understanding of the world around them.	The report is set out in consecutive points that develop a strategic plan for the inclusion of Asian students into the Australian education system.	The Asian Studies Council delivers a report on the state of and implications of Australia’s need to develop an understanding of the Asian region, culture and language.

National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia – Commonwealth of Australia (1989)	The Agenda was commissioned by the Commonwealth of Australia and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet <u>National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia...Sharing our Future.</u>	The 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia presented a definition of multiculturalism, and eight goals that government should pursue.	The agenda is a chapter lead document that depicts the critical points and goals of determining and defining multiculturalism in Australia.	The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia defines the Commonwealth Government's multicultural policies and the goals that underline them.
Adelaide Declaration (1999)	The Adelaide Declaration (1999) arose from a Discussion Paper (1998) reviewing The Hobart Declaration (1989) and supersedes these earlier documents. It was commissioned by Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).	Ministers endorsed a new set of National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century. The new goals were released in April 1999 as The Adelaide Declaration (1999) on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century.	The Adelaide Declaration sets out the importance of schooling in the development of cultural understanding and multicultural education. It defines the educational goals necessary to achieve social, cultural, and economic development both local and globally.	The Adelaide Declaration sets out new policy for a new era of multicultural education.
Melbourne Declaration (2008)	The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) now supersedes the Adelaide Declaration. It was commissioned by Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).	An initiative to focus the role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society – that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse. With Indigenous cultural as playing a key role in the Australia's past, present and future.	The declaration is goal orientated. The forward sets out the clear goals and key elements of each. Which is followed with an action plan to implement and achieve the set out goals.	The policy declaration is a goal orientated format that outlines the direction and implementation of the Melbourne Declaration policy initiatives.

Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008)	The Blueprint is a Victorian Government Initiative to bring together Early Childhood and Education sectors for a joint future that develops the whole child from birth.	The coming together of two education sectors to redefine the Victorian education system for whole child development.	The incorporation of the child from birth to adulthood and the inclusion of families and communities to improve learning opportunities for all children.	A strategic action plan setting out the vision, mission, priorities, goals of the Blueprint for its implementation and incorporation into the education system.
Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship: A Strategy for Victorian Government Schools 2009-2013 – DEECD (2009)	Commissioned by the Victorian Government and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.	A renewed vision for global and multicultural education in Victorian Government schools.	A strategy to align Victorian Government schools with current legislative, policy and curriculum frameworks.	Chapter lead guide for action across schools, regions and the Department of Education.

Adapted by Price from Lo Bianco 2001

These documents represent significant stages in the development of Multiculturalism and the way it has shaped the Australian social, cultural and educational agenda. Each document depicts a different stage of the multicultural and diversity movement of Australia over the last three decades. They demonstrate the mindset and rationale of government bodies in the development of multicultural policy and education since the fall of the *White Australia Policy*. As such they illustrate the change in thinking and social and cultural development of Australia moving towards the 21st century and the classrooms of tomorrow.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Over the last forty years multicultural education has made many significant changes to the way Australians perceive and interact with the diverse cultural population. These changes are governed by policy, strategy and initiative to educate; and create greater community awareness, respect and understanding for the acceptance of all people regardless of cultural heritage and beliefs.

Three distinct papers underpinned the reshaping of Australian cultural perceptions during the 1980's. The policy documents were the National Policy on Languages – Lo Bianco (1987), the Asian Studies Council Report – Asian Studies Council (1988) and The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia – Commonwealth of Australia (1989) and will be discussed in the following.

National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987)

Remit

National Policy on Languages was a discussion document to garner the importance of language in education and the development of the Australian culture.

Scope

A discussion and identification of underlying language principals to adequately meet the needs of the ever evolving and changing Australian population. The National Policy on Languages put forth by Lo Bianco (1987), presents an Australian future that is not only envisaging its cultural and economic futures but has transitioned from a primarily European history. Australia was fast becoming a nation that was breaking away from its European heritage and engaging itself with its Asian neighbours.

In a world which is becoming more dependent on language, its skilled
and proficient use is a key factor in economic and social opportunities.

Democratic societies have a major obligation to ensure their citizens attain the highest levels of skill in language to protect and promote the rights and enhance the opportunities of individuals and groups.

Lo Bianco (1987)

Thus addressing the core sentiment of multicultural education during this time, multicultural education is seen as tool for future development – as Australian was still populated primarily by a European ancestry. This notion would later shift and the priorities of multiculturalism and multicultural education would re-align itself to more accurately depict the needs of a nation, its cultures and its *predominant* society.

At this time language learning at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels was not seen as a necessary life skill. While at the primary and secondary level it was mandatory to undertake a language, however the languages on offer were often European with a focus on German or French. What's more these two languages did not serve to build any economic or social futures within the Asian centred region that Australia was situated (Asian Studies Council, 1988). More so statistical data shows that at tertiary levels only 7% of university of students study a language course (Lo Bianco, 1987 & Asian Studies Council, 1988). Signifying that there was a need to promote language studies as well as increase the amount of language courses available to students. Lo Bianco also recommends an increased language proficiency of students and states how the study of foreign literature and written skills is not adequate enough to produce proficient oral language abilities. Again this is a reflection of the economic opportunities that language, particularly Asian language abilities, has in the foreign market.

Content

The policy that Lo Bianco presents depicts four central ideas that underpinned its goals and ultimately reflected the times it shaped. These four governing principals sought the '*Enrichment* of the cultural and intellectual social understanding of the region', '*Economic* growth through foreign trade and an expanded job market', '*Equality* to overcome disadvantage and create social justice amongst all people' and finally the '*External* in which Australia's role in the region and the greater global society is made clear'.

Furthermore there was a social stigmatism that also existed amongst the English speaking population and the non-English speaking population – it created segregation and subsequently created a culture that isolated foreigners (that did not speak English) from the larger *English speaking* cultural and social group(s).

Lo Bianco (1987) sets out several policy initiatives in the hopes of improving language acquisition and language proficiency. These policy initiatives aim to heighten the ability of not only the educator but also the individual at all levels of learning. Lo Bianco is ultimately aims to create a culture that continually seeks the improvement and development of language abilities that is further supported in all aspects of life. These being from government language centres, adult education, ingrained language development from primary to tertiary levels, teacher development and language centres all working together to build English and foreign language skills.

All members of the Australian community should have the right, within the law, to enjoy their own culture, to practice their own religion, and to use their own language, and respect the rights of others to their own culture, religion and language.

(ROMAMPAS, 1986:79)

Style

- Negotiated between professionals and community interests, national interest established participatory; collaborative style/coalitions of interest.

Asian Studies Council Report (1988)

Remit

As Lo Bianco (1987) outlined in his National Policy on Languages, even with its European heritage, Australia was located in a primarily Asian dominated region of the world. During this same time the Australian government came to the realisation that 'Asian Studies' was fundamental to global success both culturally and economically – considering the close ties between the nations (Asian Studies Council, 1988). Commissioned by the Australian Government. The Asian Studies Council Report was delivered by a newly formed think tank – the Asian Studies Council. It was a report for a National Strategy in education to equip Australians to plan for and manage its future as part of the Asian region.

Scope

The Report outline the development and sustainable introduction of Asian education into the Australian Education system – with a focus on developing future generations of Australians to be able to compete and participate within the Asian culture and region.

This was significant as Australia is located in a densely Asian part of the world and as a part of the Asia-Pacific region Australians should have an understanding of the world around them.

The rise in the 'Asian Studies Council' can be said to have contributed to the ending of the British influence over the Australian culture. As Britain's interests, society and culture did not accurately represent Australia and its geographical location in the world. In particular it excluded Asia from its *National Growth* (Australian Studies Council, 1988). Hence the downfall of British Imperialism over the Australian society allowed for the economic and cultural expansion into other parts of the world; namely Asia. It was these factors with the continued strength and momentum of multicultural education that brought the Asian Studies Council to the forefront of Australian political and economic awareness.

The economic benefits that the Asian-Pacific region represented also presented a barrier – namely a linguistic and cultural barrier (Lo Bianco, 1987). Accordingly language acquisition of Asian languages became a priority. What this indicated was a shift in the relationships of foreign trade moving from Europe to the Asia-Pacific region that bordered Australia. As a result it also became evident that to succeed in this new market – Asian studies would need a significant reevaluation at all levels of education.

It was at this time that the national strategy was reassessed to reflect the needs of Australia's political and economic move towards the Asian-Pacific region and accordingly defined through the policy document 'A National Strategy', and outlined by the Asian Studies Council (1988). Prior to this strategy document, a rift existed between the *significants* of Asia and education and business. Additionally the cultural recognition of languages other than English was not a significant part of the education system during the early and mid 80's. It was at this time that the economic workforce needed individuals that could perform in Asia, linguistically, socially and culturally, not simply have a *general* understanding of its *generalised* culture. It was not until the National Strategy was released in 1988 that the realisation was made that previously Asia had *not* been considered an

integral part of education sector despite Australia being situated in Asian dominated region of the world. This is in contrast to other parts of the world who embrace their geographical neighbours and their culture not only in general society but also within the classroom. As a result the “British education model became largely irrelevant to current Australian needs” (Asian Studies Council, 1988).

This came at a time when the Australian education system was dominated by a British imperialistic value system that did not adequately reflect the needs of an emerging multicultural society. A notion that is reflected in the *National Policy on Languages* (1987) that the recognition of all languages is important but as a nation that is in an Asian region a focus must be given towards Asian studies and Asian languages (Asian Studies Council, 1988). With this revelation also came the realisation that teachers were not adequately equipped to teach to a multicultural approach let alone a multicultural setting. Thus a re-education of the educator also needed to be addressed; hence a need for qualified teachers was crucial. Qualified teachers were only a small part of a larger puzzle to successfully integrate Asian studies into the classroom and curriculum.

Teachers also required resources that were available to them and their students, all of which would be used to form a high standard of excellence that would be upheld by all and most importantly that Asian languages, culture and social sciences are taught in an Australian context that students are able relate to, a shift away from a primarily Western focus.

Ultimately what was needed was continuity of how, Asian studies were taught from primary to tertiary school levels.

At the heart of the Asian Studies Council's *National Strategy* (1988), language acquisition is fundamental to the development of any cultural understanding and consequently calls for increased language opportunities at all school levels. In saying this the strategy also recognises that cultural understanding is a dynamic process and that while Australia is located in the Asia-Pacific, Asian countries must also meet the Australian people half-way and encourage the development of English language abilities amongst all its people (Asian Studies Council, 1988).

It was at this time that the Council also voiced that Australian growth couldn't continue without (or the support of) Asian cultural understanding – an understanding that would be ingrained into the Australian way of life. This signified that the Australian people are not simply travellers passing through, thus we must become a part of their society just as much as they must become part of the Australian society. What this meant was that cultural awareness can only go so far, what was further needed was the inclusion of “media coverage of Asian current affairs, social issues, science, technology, sport, film, drama and music” (Asian Studies Council, 1988) all of which is geared towards helping the Australian people and culture gain insight and understanding towards the importance of Asia and its direct relationship to Australia that “lies beyond the snapshot and the headline” (Australian Studies Council, 1988). This occurred in a time when the white Australia Policy had been abolished (1973), that Australia's ties to our Asian neighbours began to increase and migration to Australia from these Asian countries was on the rise.

While the inclusion of Asian studies represented a necessary step in Australia's cultural and social evolution, it also presented the problem ‘of what part of the curriculum needs to be offset to accommodate the inclusion of Asian content and languages’. The Asian Studies Council (1988) argues that the education curriculum does not require the redundancy of

Western philosophies or languages but a medium that balances both cultural needs and interests.

Content

The report is set out in consecutive points that develop a strategic plan for the inclusion of Asian students into the Australian education system. The report outlays the objectives of the study and breaks down them down into their purpose and place. Outlining the relative timeline, obstacles and requirements to implement its strategy in the Australian cultural mindset and education system.

Style

The Asian Studies Council delivers a report on the state of and implications of Australia's need to develop an understanding of the Asian region, culture and language within the Australian education system. The report is written in an authoritative voice, affirming the Councils newfound position as a recognised and authoritative body on Asian studies.

National Agenda For Multicultural Australia (Commonwealth Of Australia, 1989)

Remit

The Commonwealth of Australia and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet National Agenda commissioned the Agenda for a Multicultural Australia...Sharing our Future.

The National Strategy (1988) presented a significant case for the inclusion of Asian studies at the economic and educational levels. What it lacked was that it did not offer any *concrete* procedures, initiatives or methodology for the implementation of these new practices into the Australian culture, society or education system. Rather it only offered idealist

approaches of using “Commonwealth funds as a catalyst to produce enough activity of the right kind” (Asian Studies Council, 1988).

Following the National Policy on Languages (1987) and the National Strategy (1988) documents the Commonwealth of Australia released the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (1989). Its purpose was to outline a national agenda that would stipulate the guidelines and goals necessary to achieve multicultural and multicultural education success. The Agenda begins with a simple definition of the umbrella term ‘*Multicultural*’, defining it as;

...the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia...

(Commonwealth of Australia, 1989)

It goes on to say that Australia will now and forever be a *multicultural society*, a statement that took almost two decades to be written into the policy after the abolishment of the ‘White Australia Policy’.

Scope

The 1989 National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia presented a definition of multiculturalism and eight goals that government should pursue.

It is from this newfound *diverse* outlook coupled with the increased migration from non-European countries the government sought to address the increased diversity that these migrants represented. It resulted in a Multicultural Policy Agenda that had three main themes from which, it could address the broad nature of multicultural diversity. These themes were again defined as *Cultural Identity*, *Social Justice* and *Economic Efficiency*:

- *Cultural Identity*; signifies that all individuals regardless of their place of birth have the right to express their individual cultural heritage, practices, language and religion within “carefully defined limits” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989).
- *Social Justice*; every individual has the right to live free of harassment in any form – racial, religious, cultural, language – and be treated fairly and not be undermined by difference, equality amongst all people.
- *Economic Efficiency*; that all people regardless of ethnicity, religion or heritage is given equal opportunity within the work force.

Content

The agenda is a chapter lead document that depicts the critical points and goals of determining and defining multiculturalism in Australia.

These key ideas of Multiculturalism are further governed by eight fundamental goals that were put forth by the Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs (Commonwealth of Australia, 1988) that outlined:

- Regardless of cultural background there must be an allegiance to Australia and the principals and values that make the nation what it is so to contribute to its best interests. Australia being the dominant culture that exists to reside over all other – meaning that despite equality of all cultures and people, the *Australian Culture* and its interests will remain dominant. This also serves the purpose of allowing individuals to feel part of the greater whole which is symbolic that all things have balance.
- The basic right of freedom is attainable to all, and no one should be held back on the basis of language, religion or culture.
- Equality of all is fundamental to Australian society – every person is able to enjoy the rights to all aspects of life from employment to education.

- Every person has the right to take part in the democratic process and have an equal say in the direction *their* nation takes and the choices that it makes.
- All Australians will have access to resources to improve their standard of life and achieve their maximum potential both economically and socially.
- Every Australian has the opportunity to learn and expand their 'cross-cultural understanding' as well as acquire secondary languages abilities, whether it be English or foreign.
- There should be a mutual respect and opportunities for sharing of cultures amongst all Australians.
- "Australian Institutions should acknowledge, reflect and respond to the cultural diversity of the Australian community".

(Commonwealth of Australia, 1989:1)

These goals represent the initiatives that the government will undertake to achieve multicultural success. While they represent a starting point, the Agenda, again outlines broad plans that have yet been established and refers to "a number of initiatives" that will be incorporated to achieve success but does not stipulate the way in which these initiatives will be executed or specifically what they will address.

Additionally with most policy and strategy initiatives there are limitations, the National Agenda further identifies these. The Commonwealth Government (1989) outlines these limitations as such: firstly that all Australians have a commitment to Australia and its principals and values. This suggests that an dominant culture exists and that all minority cultures that are present in Australia have equal right but must still respect the greater cultural values that are defined by the *Australian way*. Secondly all individuals are governed by the same *Australian* principals, values and laws with particular reference to "tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the nation language

and equality of the sexes” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989) in addition to their own unique cultural practices and values as long as they fall within the guidelines of the above principals and values. This resembles a ‘Society vs. Culture’ argument; at what point does society no longer tolerate the individual cultural identities and idiosyncrasies of foreign cultures. The argument can be made that individuals are allowed freedom of their own diversity only as far as it does not encroach on the values of the Australian culture and society. Finally, these policies come with certain responsibilities, namely that all cultures need to be treated with mutual respect of one another. Which again raises the issue of; at what point does culture become wrong by social or individual standards which in turn solicits the bigger question ‘by whose standards will this be measured’. It is at this crossroad that the argument of multiculturalism no longer becomes about diversity and respect of others but more simply a balance of cultures across a society. It serves as an explanation as to why different social/cultural groups congregate together. It simply allows them to share their own cultural practices without fear of retribution or condemnation of other because those they are surrounded by also share the same if not similar beliefs.

Style

The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia defines the Commonwealth Government’s multicultural policies and the goals that underline them. It is a chapter driven authoritative piece that introduces the Commonwealth Government’s new policy initiative.

These documents offer a glimpse into the early stages of development of Australia’s multicultural awareness and education. Ultimately these policies, strategies and initiatives reveal that a shift was underway, most notably a break from European/British influences towards a greater Asian-Pacific focus. Moreover the policies during this time illustrated that while equality initiatives were mentioned and given a specific focus throughout these documents all three failed to generate any

substantial strategy that could be utilised to create a multicultural society effectively. This is in contrast to the economic benefits which were outlined with much greater definition. Programs that were subsequently generated from these policies documents recognised that Multiculturalism and Multicultural education will play a vital role in Australia's future. However they have also come to the realisation that the economic benefits of foreign trade with Asia are a much more desirable outcome of multicultural relation. Thus policy initiatives are geared towards developing individuals that are capable of effectively working in an Asian market. As a result a focus is given towards educational prospects of language acquisition with an emphasis on Asian languages and cultural awareness so individuals are able to create meaningful connections and have an understanding of their working environment. For this reason multiculturalism and multicultural education was ingrained with an economic focus during the early stages of multicultural development.

Following the initialisation of the multicultural policy movement during the 1980's, diversity was still met with reluctance and hesitation. As a result to encourage the acceptance of others and educate the public to the economic and social benefits of diversity and the inclusion of all people into the greater Australian culture.

The Department of Education (1997) released the *Multicultural Education Policy for Victorian Schools*, at a time when the notion of multicultural education was still considered a menial task that existed outside the realm of the schooling environment. The policy set out to solidify diversity within the learning environment and create a culture of mutual respect of all individuals and their heritage (Department of Education, 1997). This was the first significant step taken to dynamically attack the problem of isolation and stereotypical discrimination of individuals not from the dominant social and cultural group. Language again played a central focus for ESL (English Second Language) initiatives were implemented to educate migrants so they are able to live, work and learn as part of the Australian culture (Department of Education, 1997). It was at this time that immigrants were

incorporated into the *Australian Way of Life*, however their cultures while being important to Australian society were still considered to be minority cultures that enhanced the diversity of Australia and its people but had no influence over the larger more dominant culture. Thus the policy saw to shift this understanding and reflect the needs and cultures of those individuals at the schooling level with an aim to culturally enhance curriculums by the beginning of the Twenty-First Century.

Adelaide Declaration (1999)

Remit

The Adelaide Declaration (1999) arose from a Discussion Paper (1998) reviewing The Hobart Declaration (1989) and supersedes these earlier documents.

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) commissioned the Declaration.

Scope

Leading on from the National Agenda the end of the 20th century saw the introduction of the *Adelaide Declaration* (1999). Its purpose was to outline the state's position of multicultural inclusion that would influence policies and initiatives of years to come. The goals stated that parents are vital to a meaningful education, in conjunction with schools. They provide a basis for the development of a sound multicultural understanding that students are able to incorporate into their learning and personal development. Moreover the declaration sets out the role schools play in initiating and moulding cultural change. With the desire for students to be able to compete in an ever-expanding cultural bond, it further allows individuals to think and act with a cultural understanding of their local and global

communities. Hence the role of education develops citizens that are capable of contributing and functioning in a globalised society that is driven by cultural diversity.

Content

Two decades later cultural diversity was noteworthy, as the borders that once kept people apart were no longer significant in the migration of the world's people and language was again becoming a core issue of multicultural education and multiculturalism. What had shifted over the last twenty years was that Asian languages were no longer the central focus of language acquisition strategies but global languages and cross-cultural understanding were at the forefront of shaping a global society. The beginning of a new millennium saw a shift in multicultural policy, a shift that moved away from economic growth as a primary focus and a move towards multicultural education. This realignment came from an understanding that educating future generations has a direct result on the workforce. This means that to embed young learners with cross-cultural understanding early on they would carry knowledge and understanding to all aspects of their life. In the future this would include the workforce and would in turn improve their ability to interact and compete on a global scale.

The Adelaide Declaration set out the importance of schooling in the development of cultural understanding and multicultural education. Defining the educational goals necessary to achieve social, cultural, and economic development both local and globally.

Style

The Adelaide Declaration sets out new policy for a new era of multicultural education. This was outlined as a set of national goals and initiatives that stipulated its purpose for the development of multicultural education.

Melbourne Declaration (2008)

Remit

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) commissioned the, The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) now supersedes the Adelaide Declaration.

To achieve the goals outlined by the Melbourne Declaration re-evaluation and redirection of policies and strategies was necessary. To begin this redevelopment towards a culturally educated society a revision of the Adelaide Declaration (1999) was undertaken and the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) was introduced. This document outlined a new era of multicultural understanding and multicultural education. It was governed by the simply philosophy that;

As a nation Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society – a society that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse, and that values Australia’s Indigenous cultures as key part of the nation’s history, present and future.

(MCEETYA, 2008:4)

From this the policy document further sets out that the notion of cultural and social recognition will expand beyond the traditional linguistic, religious and ethnic context and include groups that had previously gone unattended. With particular recognition of the Indigenous people and their culture as well as the acknowledgement of individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds, disabilities and national status. What this expansion of cultural and social groups implies is the government’s ability to re-identify itself to the needs of its people and the role that multiculturalism plays in the education system.

Scope

The Melbourne Declaration was an initiative to focus the role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society – that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse. With Indigenous cultural playing a key role in the Australia's past, present and future.

The Melbourne Declaration (2008) sought to distinguish itself from previous multicultural initiatives with an appreciation and inclusion of the broader community. The inclusion of the wider community into the learning environment allowed students to identify with what they were being taught and make more meaningful connections to solidify learning. What's more is the initiative further strives to improve the learning conditions of indigenous and low socioeconomic students and did not reflect the vast state of diversity that Australia represented. This raises the question as to why the improvement of education of all cultural groups is not high on the agenda, moreover it also exemplifies an alarming lack of movement with the educational system to recognise the needs of its students to improve learning standards. This could be due to the lack of Indigenous education improvements that have not been made or not given such significance before this declaration (MCEETYA, 2008).

The objective of the Melbourne Declaration was to create an awareness of those around them and the values, beliefs and ideals they represent. An understanding of these concepts allows individuals to not only gain further insight into other cultures but it also gives way to the individual having a better understanding of themselves, those around them and ultimately a sense of their place in the wider community and the greater global society. To accomplish this, students need to feel a sense of belonging to the school environment and to create, appropriate attitudes towards school must also be manifested in students. These attitudes towards school come from the home, thus a partnership must be made between the home and the school to "maximise student engagement" (MCEETYA, 2008).

A notion that has carried over from the introduction of the Multicultural movement – Asian Studies Council (1988) – is the call for qualified teachers, a practice that is again supported two decades on (MCEETYA, 2008). Teachers are fundamental in shaping and creating the learner, the individual and the citizen of tomorrow. They have the responsibility of having to have foresight into the diverse needs of the students and their future as well as having to shape students learning to be able to meet these demands. The policy initiative goes onto incorporate that education should be a culturally diverse learning environment in which all students are able to achieve success.

While individualism is celebrated and cultural diversity is a core component of the active and engaged learner's curriculum, it must also include elements of the wider cultural body that represents Australia. Additionally the recognition of the dominant 'Australian' culture is built into all aspects of a child's cultural understanding. This symbolise that to exist in a multicultural society, you must first have an acceptance of the *dominant* culture that also exists in parallel to *minority* cultures, which again calls reference to the struggle between *culture vs. society*.

Improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

(MCEETYA, 2008:15)

While the improvement of Indigenous education is important, it is also important to have focus on the educational improvement of all students' cultural diversity. As new immigrant children are also *falling-through-the-cracks* of the education system. Thus for these students not to end up like the 'educationally poor' indigenous students they must also be factored

and acknowledged by the continued educational improvements for all students that include the Indigenous and culturally diverse.

This new commitment to action also calls for the Strengthening of Accountability and Transparency from State and National testing. This is important, as data is extremely useful if used correctly to improve the learning standards of students by distinguishing the areas in which students need help and improvement. Unfortunately this does not seem to be how the collected data is being utilised, rather at present it seems as though data is being used to primarily rank and alienate schools that are not achieving academically – the question can then be asked is the school failing the students or is the government’s undecided position failing the schools and the educators. Moreover are young Australians being given a fair go at achieving success as this goal is being somewhat compromised by the use of data to scrutinize schools to increase performance. The effect this then has is that schools teach to the test to improve data but does not accurately depict the abilities of its students and where they can be improved.

With commitment and hard work – from children and young people and their parents, carers and families, from schools, teachers, communities, business and all Australian governments – all young Australians will be provided with the opportunity to reach their full potential.

(MCEETYA, 2008:18)

This statement contradicts the Declaration, as it makes no mention of all the various cultures that make up the Australian people and its classrooms. Rather it focuses on the Indigenous culture and disregards the importance of also equally representing the many

other cultures that are also in need of help – so that all students are able to achieve their maximum learning potential.

Achieving these educational goals is the collective responsibility of governments, school sectors and individual schools as well as parents and carers, young Australians, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community.

(MCEETYA, 2008:7)

Content

The declaration is goal orientated. The forward sets out the clear goals and key elements of each, and is followed with an action plan to implement and achieve the set out goals. The Declaration sets out two major objectives that multicultural education hopes to achieve. The first goal sets out the underlying message and direction of the Declaration, this being that all students are to be treated fairly and with respect. The goals set out by the Declaration endeavour for all students to have a greater Indigenous understanding and appreciation, additionally the inclusion of local and community cultures that reflect the attitudes and experiences of its students. More importantly, all students work together to build a culturally harmonious environment that reflects the needs of all its members, that uses every student's individual backgrounds, talents, cultures and heritage to enrich the learning environment and achieve success.

The second goal aims to shape the way in which students perceive multicultural education and utilise student's abilities and backgrounds to create learners that are able to succeed academically and socially, are confident in themselves and are free to express themselves. Most importantly that they are informed and aware of their place in society and the world

as a citizen. Students are further encouraged to be active learners that are able to work independently as well as collaboratively in a respectful manner. Using these skills students will be better able to understand their place as individuals, in their community and as citizens of a wider social and cultural body and having an understanding of how to build and maintain meaningful cross-cultural relationships. The Melbourne Declaration (2008) also points out that students will endeavour to develop the ability to distinguish between their own cultural identities and the wider social culture that comes as part of being an Australian citizen.

Style

The policy declaration is a goal-orientated format that outlines the direction and implementation of the Melbourne Declaration policy initiatives.

Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008)

Remit

The Blueprint is a Victorian Government Initiative to bring together Early Childhood and Education sectors for a joint future that develops the whole child from birth.

Scope

The initiative saw the coming together of two education sectors to redefine the Victorian education system for whole child development. Blueprint offered an insight into the development of the child but lacked any substantial multicultural education policy. What it offered was a move towards the government's understanding that the world was becoming increasingly interconnected. Hence, the priority of education was to prepare students for modern life – the argument can be made at this point multicultural education was also a factor of modern life but multicultural education is not explicitly mentioned as key

component of *Blueprint* (2008). The primary aim was higher achievement of learning standards, performance and development and school accountability for the improvement of student education in general and within early childhood development.

Content

The Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) sought to incorporate of the child from birth to adulthood and include families and communities to improve learning opportunities for all children. It depicted that its implementation will be undertaken in three specific areas. The first delves into *System Improvements* that consists of the wider educational system putting systems in place to effectively teach multicultural and global citizenship at the government, regional, district and school levels. The second examines the *Partnerships with Parents and Communities* through the links schools have with their local and wider communities, putting in new initiatives to help build and strengthen these bonds as well as increase parent involvement in the learning environment. As a strong learning culture that is fostered in school and home setting increases students learning potential. The final phase involves *Workforce Reform* in which educators are given professional development to improve their ability to create a diverse learning environment that encourages multicultural and global citizenship education. While this is a noble plan of implementation, what it lacks is the realisation that the role of a teacher is the most critical factor of creating a learning environment that relishes diversity and encourages students to have an understanding of multicultural and global citizenship. Therefore teacher re-education should not occur solely through professional development but begin from the first day of pre-service teacher training, as it reduces the possibility of teachers cultivating institutional behaviours and stereotypes. This should then be supported by system improvements that ultimately promote teacher development and parent and community involvement. Educational change begins with teacher education and understanding.

Style

The Blueprint is a strategic action plan setting out the vision, mission, priorities and goals for its implementation and incorporation into the education system.

Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship: A Strategy for Victorian Government Schools 2009-2013 (DEECD, 2009)**Remit**

March of 2009 saw the release of the 'Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship: A Strategy for Victorian Government School 2009 – 2013' policy initiative, commissioned and released by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and the Victorian Government.

Scope

The Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship set out a renewed vision for global and multicultural education in Victorian Government schools. The policy outlined a strategy that effectively redefines the education of multiculturalism and citizenship in Victorian government schools. The policy is best described by Bronwyn Pike – Minister of Education – (DEECD, 2009) who inferred that the *global and multicultural citizen* is the next evolution of the everyday citizen. Thus it is necessary to educate tomorrow's leaders how to function in a world that is distinctively diverse while being respectful, understanding, compassionate and ultimately open to the needs of others (DEECD, 2009) and as a result also opened themselves to new forms of cultural exchange. Despite this new found attitude to the equality of all people and the acceptance and respect of every person, the policy still holds the sentiment that as a nation that is made up of a diverse cultural background, there must remain an all encompassing cultural understanding that is defined by the Australian way of

life or culture that is further defined by the Indigenous culture. To ultimately achieve this state of ideal education is considered critical.

The policy took the position that all students as *citizens* contribute to their local and global communities. This means that governments, schools, policies and curriculum should align themselves to achieve this goal. The policy initiative goes onto state that to achieve global and multicultural citizenship the Victorian Education Learning Standards (VELS) should be utilised (where relevant). In particular the inclusion of intercultural literacies that reflect the diversity of students, parents, teachers, schools and communities, the inclusion of social diversity as elements of learning that can be incorporated into the learning environment from the wider local and global communities, increased engagement through the inclusion of cultural diversities that are contextually sound and relevant to all children's learning.

The strategy was informed and built up by several past initiatives, policies and strategies namely *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* (DEECD, 2008), *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) and the *Multicultural Education Policy* (1997).

Context/Themes

Moreover the education of global and multicultural citizens involves the creation of a learning environment that is engaging, inclusive and most of all linked with local communities to enhance the learning environment which reflects the ideals of acceptance, tolerance and inclusion and cultural harmony (DEECD, 2008). Additionally schools educate students, teachers, parents and communities members "to identify and address overt, subtle and *institutionalised racism*, stereotyping and other forms of prejudice" (DEECD, 2008). This is necessary as to maintain cultural harmony and requires constant monitoring

and education to continually shift attitudes and develop a global and multicultural citizen. Additionally this strategy aimed to align Victorian Government schools with current legislative, policy and curriculum frameworks.

Style

The document is a chapter lead guide for action across schools, regions and the Department of Education. It utilises case studies to outline its position and illustrates the roles of each person and/or organisation in the development and implementation of the policy initiative.

The section has broken down the seven key texts of the analysis to establish each paper's key implications, initiatives, goals, discussion points and guidelines to develop and maintain multicultural and diversity awareness in education over the last three decades.

DISCUSSION

This paper has thus far discussed and analysed the merits of seven key policy documents from the 1980's to present day, 2011. The following section will discuss these seven documents and larger implications they may have on the education system and the development of multicultural and diversity education in schools.

What is evident from these texts is that cultural bias is built into the education system. Martin Nakata (1997) believes that imperialistic values that have been incorporated into the learning environment are reminiscent of the way in which culture is represented and approached. This represents multicultural understanding and acceptance is moving towards being infused into all aspects of learning; teaching respect and tolerance of individuals, people and cultures. It further represents politically motivated cultural acceptance. For example during the 1980's the National Policy on Languages (1987) and the Asian Studies Council (1988) were directly reflective of the times. Asian language acquisition was considered multicultural understanding and a key focus of multicultural education. While language acquisition was a key component of multicultural education it was used as a derivative of a greater economic focus to build trade and gain Asian trading partners. The education system as Nakata (1997) summarises it is a mono-cultural learning environment that has a dominant culture focus.

One such element that can reinforce this mono-cultural atmosphere is 'language', but language can also play an important role in the continued development of diversity education. Languages are critical in that they allow opportunities for all cultures to be represented and more importantly allow cultural expression. There has been significant change that has occurred in the way languages are thought of over the last thirty years. While there is still a focus on Asian language acquisition there

has also been developments in the importance of global languages. As the world continues to become interconnected, education and economic sectors in particular have adapted to the changing needs of the global market.

It is this recognition of the importance of language that also plays an important role in the development of student identity. While national languages are important, individual voice is far more crucial in the development of cultural, social and individual identity with the learning environment. Thus student voice is an important factor in building a harmonious and inclusive learning environment. Thus according to Elliot (2010) in a time of increased globalisation peoples' individual identities, let alone cultural identities are at risk of being lost. At present student voice is considered to be a reflection of each students' individual identity thus student voice is critical in that it allows students to re-identify with themselves and gain perspective not only on their own individuality but others within the classroom as well. What's more the social identity that stems from these individual identities are grounded in the beliefs, knowledge and most importantly the experiences of each student (SoundOut, 2006).

Stemming from the importance of student voice and its positioning of equality amongst teachers and students it also gives rise to contextual learning – meaning that students are better able to relate to information and make meaning from their learning for greater understanding. This occurs for a number of reasons the first is that students are better able to relay information for understanding to one another as there is greater sense of awareness between peers; secondly students are able to contextualise concepts for others within the classroom for greater learning retention thus making teachers navigators in the classroom rather than lecturers. This is indicative of a move towards students as partners within the classroom is important when trying to develop a

new student dialogue and break through stereotypes that perpetuate difference and to create a harmony and understanding that engages the majority rather than preconceived Anglo-Saxon 'middle class' type cast that teachers can believe to be the majority (Pekrul & Levin, 2005 & Fielding, 2007). It is from this that recognition of student voice that can help create an inclusive classroom environment. This is achieved through student's understanding of one another that comes from the awareness of their social identity and not only recognising their own voice but the ability to hear those around them and comprehend the differences of their peers and thus reengage with them in ways that will achieve understanding. Furthermore there is need for teachers to be able to identify these differences and challenges that students *voice* and use them to create curriculum that is contextually grounded to their needs (Biggs, 2003) which can ultimately lead to concrete learning and "lasting school improvement" (Pekrul & Levin, 2005).

This is significant as student voice can build inclusion within the classroom. As an understanding of student's ability to interpret others voices but the ability for teacher to be able to internalise and incorporate all voices into the collective social (identity) voice, is an important factor in the development of meaningful inclusion. This further suggests that true inclusion comes from a teacher's capacity to use the environment and student's knowledge and awareness that is gained from their voices and incorporate them into social Identity of the classroom and into the curriculum (Craven, Purdie & Marder, 2004). Through these elements a teacher has the opportunity to guide their students to a learning environment that is grounded in relative content that is aimed towards the students within the classroom to have maximum learning potential and achievement.

While student voice celebrates diversity it does not truly address any conflict that can arise from such a mix of diverse cultures. What student voice presents is the opportunity for understanding to

be achieved not just understanding of the various identities but provides opportunity to work through issues that also may be present in their personal lives, their local communities as well as the schooling environment (DEECD, 2008:8). With that being said it is this dominant culture, the Australian culture, the way in which we define our culture vs. society argument. Or is it the way we rationalise the give and take of cultures which in turn allows the Australian culture to remain dominant. This notion is explored through Martin Nakata's research. From the realisation that during the late 1980's Asia was considered to be the frontier of cultural exploration. It was not for another three decades when cultural borders were broken down and cultures mixed amongst one another freely that all cultures, languages and religions were thought of with respect and appreciation (Lo Bianco, 1987 & Asian Studies Council, 1988). Nakata's work highlights that while this sentiment is true in modern society in one sense it is also wildly inaccurate. As cultures do have a greater appreciation and respect for one another there is also an animosity that exists between some cultures and individuals. A stigmatism that is associated with individuals or groups despite the efforts of government and educational bodies to curbe these attitudes. It is reflective of the wider community that we as people exist in and are ultimately shaped by.

Nakata (1995) further implies that government and educational bodies have taken the approach that 'a multicultural attitude and focus is all that is needed' to successfully engage with the ever present growing diversity. This is significant in that it portrays multicultural education as a futile exercise that doesn't actually address issues of multicultural diversity, hence a non-multicultural approach is needed that focuses its efforts on the problems that have been and are currently present in society. What this means is that the approach of cultural inclusion can only achieve so much to break down barriers of difference, mistrust and cultural exclusion. While the Adelaide Declaration and Melbourne Declarations called for a greater community and family incorporation of education to build stronger multicultural and diversity equity and understanding to create social harmony. Nakata

(1997) thought a more radical approach was needed and went on to say that a crucial problem that continues is that cultural issues that are of significance and need to be addressed are simply put to the side in place of 'issues' that are thought to be of more significance by a group of individuals that are often removed from the group or people that it supposedly represents.

It is from this sentiment that a '*conflict resolution*' strategy can play an important role in addressing these issues that are important to the individuals and groups that are faced with them in day-to-day life. The approach sees individuals and groups addressing 'important' issues working through by addressing them head on and working towards a solution that is grounded in acceptance, respect and mutual understanding. Ultimately it is a transition from recognition of diverse cultures to facing issues that are relevant to the individuals and groups that it affects.

Government bodies have taken the position that respect, tolerance and acceptance is enough for all cultures to live harmoniously together. We as a society would not be thirty years in our multicultural development and no closer to bridging the gap between cultural disharmonies. As there will always be a struggle between the balance of culture and society, conflict is a natural by product of human interaction. Thus a more appropriate course of action is recognition of this conflict and its inclusion into the bridging process. Conflict resolution has the power to build relationships by addressing the issues that are under the surface and 'bring them out into the open' to work through and develop understanding.

Building from this the role of the citizen and citizenship education can play an important role in the development of cultural and social cohesion. For this reason through the understanding of others, the expression of individual voice (student voice) and identity and the addressing of conflicts that can be present in the classroom, community and society it gives students the potential to gain an understanding of themselves, others and the wider communities.

Presently the classroom and schooling environment is a sea of diversity and culturally vibrant individuals and with this there is a need for teachers to be able to address the needs of *all* students (Mills, 2008). From the above examples it can be seen that the roles of citizenship, identity and multicultural education are key components of creating an inclusive environment. Citizenship is at the forefront of bridging the gap between cultures as a person's understanding of who they are and their place within their world is critical in building their identity (Anderson, 2003), a sentiment that was also reflected in by the Education for Global and Multicultural Citizenship (2009). Thus to achieve an sense of self and place a reform of multicultural education is called for a sentiment that is echoed by Ladson-Billings (2004) and Anderson (2003) who believe that within the education realm teachers need to incorporate new forms of diversity and social justice through conflict recognition and multifaceted cultural education that represents various cultural perspectives. Identity then becomes an integral part of an individual's citizenship in that identity is formed by those around us and is fundamentally multifaceted in its makeup. Thus a move in multicultural education is needed from an understanding of 'cultures' to 'understanding of people' which is necessary in creating an inclusive classroom environment. This was reflected in the whole child approach of the Blueprint document (2008), as Blueprint offered strategies for the development of the child but need to be further developed in terms of multicultural education policy. It is the interrelationship between these components that can move a society or classroom from cultural parallel play to cultural harmony.

Moreover currently multicultural education is ineffective in creating new roles of social identity that represents, accepts and welcomes all individuals both within the classroom and the wider community (Ladson-Billings, 2004 and Osler & Starkey, 2005B). Rather what occurs is a recognition of all cultural identities within the greater social identity, as a result a manifestation of a redefinition of 'who is a citizen' occurs and thus citizenship becomes a fluid concept that can incorporate all

individuals, cultures and identities that further promotes the UN's '*A World Fit for Children*' document that address and highlights that all children are equal and deserve an education that is free of discrimination (Osler & Starkey, 2005B). Building from this identity becomes an integral factor in breaking down the barriers of indifference and creating genuine cultural interaction that address issues, concerns, feelings and behaviours that can have adverse effects on the inclusion of others. As a result multicultural education is in need of reform in hope to crafting a safe classroom environment that aims to work through conflicts and usher in resolution and foster inclusion (Ladson-Billings, 2004). This is necessary as traditional borders no longer govern society and the world is now transition towards becoming a global society and multinational perspectives and voices need to be taken into consideration. More so this global society is also representative within the classroom hence wider perspective must also be incorporated at this level to adequately represent all individuals, cultures and groups.

Osler & Starkey (2005A) further foster the opinion that that the 'scope of the citizen' is in a constant evolutionary process and should be dynamic in its nature. If the notion of the citizen were to become static what would happen is that it would only categorize a subset of the *whole* and it is when this arises that cultural parallel play becomes apparent and people and cultures are excluded from the *realm* of citizenship. So to shift this power of citizenship and redistribute it amongst all students, students' understanding of not only their own identity but their place through citizenship plays a pivotal role in this change and the move towards social equality (Hayes, 2007). Consequently all of these aspects contribute to the development of the citizen. Thus the role of the citizen is a critical part of creating any sense of social cohesion and cultural harmony.

Additionally Welch (2007) puts forth the notion that "not all cultures are equal" and that the dominate culture holds a sense of power over lesser represented cultures within the classroom, it is

because of this sentiment that the role of student voice plays a pivotal part in the development of social equity as previously mentioned social identity comes from the ability to hear all voices across the student body not only the majority and using them to develop their own equally rooted idea of self or social identity, this process is fundamentally guided and encouraged by the teacher in order for it to be successful. Meaning that rather than assimilation of other cultures and voices into the dominant culture transpiring in its place a new culture is formed one in which each new voice is absorbed into the whole and a new evolution of the social identity (culture) emerges. This sentiment is supported by Hayes (2007) and Vinson (2009) who believe the relevance of student voice is that it further promotes a sense of equity through the schooling environment this comes from an understanding of that all children regardless of background, creed or colour they are entitled to an education in which they can be heard and a curriculum that is geared toward their needs and is relevant to their lives and the individuals they are. Moreover an invaluable by-product of building equity between all students and teachers is that it also develops social inclusion, inclusion that intertwines the needs and abilities of all its members which makes social equity a noble goal of the classroom teacher (Vinson, 2009).

This point is further exemplified by Welch (2007), who asks the question of; whose culture is being taught and on what terms are they being taught? Symbolizing that within the classroom there is a struggle being waged over how culture and identity are represented and taught by teachers. Most significantly do these teachers use an assimilation approach in which the dominant survive and subcast other cultures a view that is supported by Burnett (2004) or that all cultures are represented equally in a way that respects and dignifies each with a level of understanding and welcomes them to create a classroom culture that utilizes all students knowledge, values and heritage to increase learning opportunities and make education accessible to all students that is representative of a greater 'social identity' that is culturally inclusive (Stets & Burke, 2000).

While the phenomenon of cultural assimilation in the classroom can be denoted by the concept of 'othering' a belief that has been introduced by Burnett (2004), which suggests that despite the various and numerous cultures that are present in our society there is a gross inequality that is also present. What this implies is that despite the multitude of cultures present they are diminished in their importance and subjugated as a secondary or 'other' (Burnett, 2004) culture when compared to the dominate culture, an example of this is the Australian cultural compared to that of the vast migrant population that exists and the dominance in which the 'Australian' culture has, a theory is further supported by Welch (2007) and Joseph Schumpeter who eloquently expressed this phenomenon as "cultures in the global age are destroyed *because* new one are created" (Elliot, 2009). Moreover this level of engagement of social cultures within the classroom denotes that 'othering' is occurring within the classroom setting as well. This exemplifies an assimilation practice in which students of the less dominate culture are essentially absorbed into the greater more encompassing culture in which the greater society aligns itself with and therefore emulated within the classroom. Sanderson (2006) identifies that at this level, stereotypes of students' cultural identities are also held-up and taught to within the classroom culture. Biggs (1999) further illustrates through his *'Three Levels of Teaching'* that at an initial level the ideologies held reflect a larger cultural stereotype and support is focused on students that are perceived as higher achievers and propel similar held stereotypes of cultural groups and are deemed to be on the lower end of the spectrum. These beliefs stem from larger social stereotypes that teachers can also bring into the learning environment. What this concept of 'othering' also puts forth is that in a society that is deemed to be multicultural there exists a subconscious sub-society in which all the good and harmony that multiculturalism has achieved is relatively undone as cultures are no longer equal and the more prevalent of these cultures minimises the validity and importance of *others* (Burnett, 2004).

“Assimilation would be complete when nobody noticed the newcomer”

Jupp, 2002, p. 22 – From Welch, 2004

A further analysis of multiculturalism and multicultural education at this stage in our development as a community, as a state, as a nation, as people, and as a global society we are still at an early stage in our development of the way we interact and treat people that are different and represent difference. It is because of this understanding of our own development that we can liken our social growth to John Biggs' (2003) *Three Levels of Teaching*. Biggs' (2003) understanding comes from the recognition of teacher's own development of understanding and inclusion of culturally diverse students in the classroom. An undertaking by Sanderson (2006) analyses the merits of Biggs's theory by postulating that the first approach educators assume is that students simply assimilate into the dominant culture present, the second being a classroom in which a teacher 'accommodates' the needs of the various students and finally the third level represents a teacher that "teaches in context" (Sanderson, 2006). What this suggests as well as implies is that teachers approach classrooms in a way that is linked to their own ideas of cultural diversity and identity meaning that the social constructs teachers make about the wider cultural spectrum can have influence over how a teacher approaches the classroom and the various cultural identities present as well as which cultures, values and students – background – knowledge to employ in the classroom learning environment (Welch, 2007).

It is these sociological concerns that have drastic effects on the way teachers not only interact with students but how they approach these culturally diverse students in the classroom and the learning approach embraced. Additionally teachers' individual understandings of cultural identities can also stereotype students learning potential as 'social norms' can dictate or project that certain individuals

(i.e. students) are incapable or unable to achieve in certain areas. Thus like Biggs (2003) suggests, it can allow a teacher to pigeon hole and merely accommodate their needs rather than work to move them forward, if not simply ignore them all together and assimilate them into the dominate class culture. Whereas the goal of all educators should be to create an environment in which all students' backgrounds, cultures and identities are utilized to create a learning environment that respects others and welcomes their diverse learning abilities to enhance all students' understandings. What this signifies is that in a time of increased globalisation peoples' individual identities, let alone cultural identities are at risk of being lost (Elliot, 2009). This point is even greater considering that students have not fully identified with their own identities and the risk of these students losing their own cultural identity to a more dominating cultural identity that can also be present in the classroom is of greater concern.

These levels of teaching can be likened to the current state of multicultural education and multiculturalism as a wider social body. The early years of multiculturalism can have a direct correlation to the first level of teaching of dominant culture assimilation. This time is representative of the 1960's and 1970's during this time there was an early understanding of the inclusion of others but as a whole cultures were incorporated in to the greater social make up and *forced* to adapt to the ways and customs of their new adopted community, society and nation.

Ultimately the 1980's saw a shift in social understanding and change in policy towards a more inclusive society. Thus a shift is underway, a shift towards the second level of teaching – what this means is that we as a society have began to 'accommodate' the needs of all the various people and cultures that are present. This stage of development is critical as it lays the groundwork for the ultimate contextualised environment that is reminiscent of the third and final level of teaching. As a

greater social society Australia is currently in a state of learning to balance everyone's different needs. This in itself is representative of the *culture vs. society* argument. Hence Australia at present is in this second phase of cultural development, as a people we are continually looking to better themselves and moving towards a greater cultural harmony, with the third and final phase of our cultural development on the horizon.

CONCLUSION

This paper has documented and analysed seven key policy and initiative texts from two key periods of Australian education and tracked the development of the multicultural education movement in Australia. It has demonstrated the continual refocusing of Australia's position and understanding of multiculturalism and the way it effects not only the schooling environment but also the families, communities and the nation as a whole.

What can be concluded from this discourse analysis is that while each text represented a specific time in Australia's multicultural growth it also represented the needs of that time. Whether it is the needs of the Commonwealth Government, the Victorian Government or the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development they represented the needs of the larger community and education sectors. Ultimately what they represented were the bureaucratic ideals that best suited the educational climate to best develop international and economic relations for Australia. It wasn't until the cultural migration became a significant factor of the Australian way of life that these governing bodies shifted their focus on the needs of children to be able to survive in an culturally diverse society that is representative of all people not only the culturally dominant.

Ultimately what has been presented from the examination of these seven key texts is that there is little to no *lasting* substance to any of the initiatives that have been suggested. Each of which call for action and a renewal of teaching and learning practices but lack any dynamic discussions or follow through to say how these initiatives will continually be achieved for the benefit of future learners. While each text has a significance place in Australia's multicultural education development, each is also tailored to the needs of its specific period in Australian history. Currently insufficient for the needs of today's classrooms they are important in the overall development of Australia's

multicultural understanding as each has contributed to the current state of multicultural and diversity education. These have formed the building blocks for continued multicultural and diversity education development and renewal.

Hence there are many forms of cultural integration but it is necessary to have an understanding of all to adequately include and cater for the educational needs of the future generations of children that have to live in the world of tomorrow. It can be surmised by Gewirtz and Cribb (2009) who postulate that once inclusion and equality are established in the classroom it does not mean that it will be consistent, rather Gewirtz and Cribb state that inclusions and exclusions within the classroom occur on a “moment by moment” basis and it is from student voice that these moments can be directed and shaped towards a consistent inclusive environment. Student voice is able to achieve this by giving all students the opportunity to interact through meaningful and contextualised discussion that is grounded in their individual and varied opinions and from this a classroom is shaped in way that represents and acknowledges all that contribute to it. This is representative of a positive inclusion attitude as it allows students to talk through and discuss varying opinions instead of being dismissive and negative to other students’ voices (Fielding, 2007). Building from this foundation it further constructs the social identity of the classroom as a shared experience of identities that are equal not simply a dominant identity that reigns over minority opinions and encourages assimilation into the overarching classroom culture (Elliot, 2010).

Furthermore there is a need for understanding of the interconnectedness of multiculturalism, citizenship, education, schools, teachers and students are the baseline of success. All elements play an important role the success of social cohesion and cultural harmony. As education does not begin and end at the school fence rather it continues out into the communities and homes of all learners.

This concept is important, for in order to bridge the gaps between cultural difference, communities and society and culture there is a need to expand beyond the traditional educational bounds and build a new curriculum that implements these changes. This represents only one part the greater struggle for cultural development, as if teachers are not sufficiently prepared in their understanding of these cultures they will have no chance in adequately meeting the needs of their increasingly cultural diverse classrooms.

In addition every cultural is important and while indigenous culture is a significant part of Australian history it is no longer the only minority cultural of education merit. Meaning that while there is an importance to educate all students on '*Australian History*', there is now a need to educate all students on the multitude of cultures that inhabit Australia, its communities and most importantly its classrooms.

Australian is in a continual phase of multicultural and diversity education development and will continue to be so for a long time to come. Australia is in a constant cultural evolution that if it were to ever stagnate would find itself in a state of cultural unawareness, one that no longer sought the inclusion and acceptance of others. When you stop trying to better the whole and improve education, community or society for the greater good, the minorities can be lost and forgotten and the majority will reign supreme.

Therefore it undeniable that the future of multicultural education will see countless more policies, initiatives, discussions, conferences and absolute goals all of which are necessary in the continued goal of cultural inclusion and harmony amongst all people and cultures.

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