

Old School Ties: Schooling and the Construction of Allegiance.

by

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Introduction

In recent times we have been conducting investigations concerning the concept of national identity as revealed in conversations with primary school children. During this work we were led to question the meaning of 'belonging'. In particular how do children achieve a sense of self-identity, not just as individuals but rather as part of a larger social structure? Our initial study (Howard and Gill, 2000) had involved children's understanding of the workings of institutional power in their lives. In this we were able to show that their initial conception of power as a capacity of their parent or care-giver became more complex and sophisticated by the upper years of primary school. This development we likened to the phenomenon of 'the pebble in the pond' with its pattern of ever-increasing concentric circles. Our young informants responded to our questions from their position at the centre of the circle. However they were not social islands, rather they were constantly in interaction with their siblings, their parents, peers, their classes and their schools. For the most part they spoke easily and articulately from this array of multiple positions as though they shared an implicit assumption that where they were was *where they belonged*. The second study in our investigation of children's perceptions of power and politics (Howard and Gill, 2001) involved the move from issues of home and school to those of state and country which was evidently a harder question as it invoked perceptions they had not had much opportunity to voice. The lack of national rituals, once a regular feature of Australian schooling, such as the flag raising, the recitation of the loyal oath, even the singing of the national anthem has largely disappeared from regular schooling practice. And so our young informants had to find their own words to express their sense of what it meant to be Australian.

Thus, in questioning the notion of 'belonging to the nation', we were drawn to think about the ways in which aspects of belonging-ness might be achieved through participation in and identification with social institutions such as the family and the school. The current study adopts a different approach to that of the earlier work. Rather than ask current students about their sense of allegiance and belonging, we began by thinking about the school and how it might be understood to contribute to a sense of belonging and identification within its community of students and teachers.

Schooling and Socialisation

Schooling has long been broadly understood as having a key role in socialisation of the young. In this context 'socialisation' is usually interpreted to mean the generation of appropriately sanctioned attitudes and habits in order to forge a manageable group. This process involved the transition from the child's more intense relationship with parent or carer to becoming part of a class group and having to share teacher attention with a much larger number of peers. There is a sense of 'being done to' in this view of socialisation – the child is subjected to the socialising forces of the classroom and the teacher and peers. This aspect

of socialisation, the modification of behaviour to fit in with the accepted routines, is part of the externally visible regularly rewarded classroom procedures - and it is fairly easy to identify the cases in which this process of socialisation has not been successful. There is a good deal of literature which addresses issues of dysfunctional anti-social student behaviour, resistant learners, students 'at risk' and so on. Most of these people are identified as a consequence of their overt disengagement with schooling process. But there is an internal process at work here too. Young people are being recruited into understandings of 'right behaviour' and 'right mindedness' from their early years in school. School teaches young people how to behave and *how to think about behaviour* - it is this association between actions and the values and attitudes the actions reveal that is an important aspect of school-based socialisation.

The school is usually the first public arena in which the child is invited to forge a sense of belonging to a larger entity than self, immediate family and/or carers. Indeed at school, because of the way that schooling is enacted in western society, children are required to understand themselves as part of a group which can vary in size from that of the classroom, the section and then of the whole school. It is frequently the case that the values and attitudes of the school are unstated and implicit but nevertheless carefully policed - a process which can then constitute areas of unconscious learning in many students. School experience can involve the formation of multiple sets of allegiances in ways reminiscent of the ever-widening circles we wrote of in connection with children's perceptions of power. But is this in fact how it happens? How are students drawn into a vision of themselves as part of a larger whole - a community? The present study attempted to begin the task of understanding just how this sense of belonging to a notional school community might happen.

School and Community

At one level the notion of young people learning to belong to a school is not invoked as much as its parallel concept - that of the school community. In discussions of schooling the term community is frequently heard - from school principals, teachers, parent groups and also in the research literature. And yet it seems that the term occupies a similar position to that of a senior British anthropologist's ironic and memorable comment about the family - 'we speak of families as though we know what they are!' The same comment could well be made with regard to 'community' when writing about schools. Our discussion of the literature begins with the attempt to unpack the meaning of the term community as it is used in the education literature.

Historically there are all sorts of indications that traditionally schools were seen as forging close relations between students and the wider geographical and socio-cultural communities in which they were located. In this sense, community meant nation. This view is implicit in the much quoted maxim that both world wars in the first half of the twentieth century were "fought and won on the playing fields of Eton", thereby enshrining the position of that very privileged boys' school in the patriotic task of saving the Empire. The image is of course in keeping with the patriotic function of schools so common in the early 20th century in which schools and teachers understood that a significant part of the education they dispensed was to involve inculcating a sense of national loyalty and pride. Writing in 1971, Connell noted:

The Australian state communicates a tradition in the same way (as formalised tradition.) Its principal catechists are the infants' school and primary school teachers, who are instructed to teach young people about the Queen, the flag, the national anthem, the British Commonwealth and the national history. This they do and elements of this formal nationalism are acquired by children.

(Connell, 1971, P.236)

The social control evident in such practices has come in for sound critique (Freund, 1975) and as we begin the 21st century they have largely disappeared, along with the understanding that it is part of the teacher's and the school's role to inculcate such feelings of patriotism. Today's schools are broadly understood to be committed to the fulfilment of individual student potential within environments that are safe and respectful of individual differences, possibly best summarised as national goals of education in the Adelaide declaration:

Australia's future depends upon each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society. High quality schooling is central to achieving this vision [...] Schooling provides a foundation for young Australians' intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development. By providing a supportive and nurturing environment, schooling contributes to the development of students' sense of self-worth, enthusiasm for learning and optimism for the future.

(MCEETYA, Adelaide Declaration, 1999)

The reference to the school being a 'supportive and nurturing environment' here suggests a notion of 'community' that is quasi-familial, in other words it exists to serve and support individual students in much the same way as a family would its members; there is little recognition here that school can be a 'community' in and of itself or in ways more befitting an educational institution. And while this concept of the school community, as supportive of individual endeavour and personal security, is frequently invoked by school principals, in advertising brochures and spoken of by parent groups, it does not appear to have been the focus of very much educational research.

School as Distinct from Community

In reviewing the literature about schooling and the sense of community it became immediately clear that in much of the literature the *School* is viewed as an entity separate from the *Community* and there has been considerable discussion of and some research into the relationship between the two (Arum, 2000; Brunner, 1998; Kerr, 1999). (This situation parallels that rather odd distinction that is frequently made between the world of school and 'the real world' – a distinction that wilfully disregards the fact that the world of school is experienced as intensely real to many of the people involved in it, most especially the students.)

Another version of community that occurs in the research literature involves the term community being used to refer to subsets of students within the school usually in relation to subsets within the wider society. And so questions of the school and the community were most frequently encountered in reviews of multicultural education in which case the term 'community' referred to a particular ethnic group whose needs were seen as being met to more or less a degree by the school in question. Similarly with the issue of indigenous education, in which case 'the community' refers to the indigenous community as though it were a homogenous stable whole, a proposition we would suggest as equally fallible as the notional ethnic community in the multiculturalism work.

Another area of investigation with regard to school and community concerned questions to do with health and special education, again areas somewhat removed from the point at

issue. Similarly 'community' was invoked in discussions of 'at risk' or dysfunctional students, in which case the school community was seen as a marginalising hegemonic force from which these particular students were separated out.

School as Community

Significantly less often was there discussion in the research literature of the *school as a community* in itself. It is interesting to note that there appears to be a renewed interest in this aspect of schooling in recent times with more articles appearing in the last two years than had been in the previous twenty!

There have been some attempts to theorise the school as a community in terms of student attributes that emerge in such a context. In a large 1989 study which promoted the idea of social bonding and school membership in theorising schools as effective caring learning organisations Wehlage et al. wrote:

School membership occurs through social bonding which is generated by attachment, commitment, involvement and belief in the institution. One of these bonding elements, involvement, is particularly important to any conception of effective schooling

(Wehlage et al. 1989, P. 176)

In this study, social bonding is understood to include a sense of belonging to the institution, having a personal stake in its affairs and being involved.

Individuals involved in the activities of an institution are likely to view them as legitimate and valuable. For students, involvement means engagement in school activities ... academic ... and other school sponsored activities.

(Wehlage et al. 1989, P. 118)

Working from evidence from a range of case studies of schools with varying numbers of students 'at risk', the writers identify the sorts of students who are less likely to drop out as follows:

Students who feel a sense of social bonding to school or teachers are less likely to reject school and more likely to conform to certain otherwise unappealing rules and procedures associated with schooling. Students who exhibit a high degree of social bonding tend to identify with the institution, its actors or norms and see themselves as having a role or a stake in the outcome of the institution's or the individual's efforts.

(Wehlage et al. 1989, P. 156)

In this way the study has generated a comprehensive theory about the ways in which school works for certain students in terms of generating social bonding along with a sense of commitment, an attachment to their peers and to the institution. This, the writers term 'school membership', a feature they see of fundamental importance to school's working effectively and successfully:

The concept of school membership helps interpret and explain much of the data about social relations School membership occurs through social bonding which is generated by attachment, commitment, involvement and belief in the institution. ... Membership is particularly important for those students who have histories of school failure and who lack the support in their homes and outside communities.

(Wehlage et al. 1989, P. 176)

But what was going on inside the schools themselves that gave rise to the social bonding, the faith in the institution and ongoing relationship with it? Wehlage et al. (1989) make some fairly general suggestions here: the importance of caring teachers who have opportunities in terms of institutional arrangements to have space and time to get to know their students, the resourcing implications and so on. Their most significant and much repeated claim concerns the importance of school membership for students who, in Australian terms, may be classified on any of the criteria of disadvantage.

What is missing from this writing is any sense of critique of the goodness of conformity to the dominant attitudes and values of the schools concerned. It is seen as useful and productive to have students involved with the school organisation, to believe in it as an institution and to identify future hopes in terms of what the school has to offer. The emerging picture is one of conformity and homogeneity – a model of institution that may not be appropriate for Australian schools in the 21st century.

What does Community Mean?

At a more philosophical level there has been recently a spate of writing about 'school as community' from the point of view of appropriate democratic practice. Several commentators have questioned whether or not schools *can* be communities, given that community has been understood to imply homogeneity of attitudes and values (Strike, 1999, 2000; Alexander, 1999; Riehl, 2000). Noting that community is often associated with benefits such as a sense of membership, rootedness and belonging, Strike questions the clarity of the concept of community

...it is not always clear what it means for a school to be a community or whether the aspiration for community involves any distinctive vision of a good education. Sometimes the desire for community does not go very far beyond the suggestion that schools should be more caring and intimate. In such pictures the idea of community gets reduced largely to its affective dimensions.

(Strike, 2000, P. 618)

Strike proceeds to delineate four metaphors for the troubled notion of community in schools. These he identifies as 'congregations', as 'guilds', as 'families' or as 'participatory democracies'. While Strike is arguing against any simplistic notion of school as community he does admit the idea of the democratic community as potentially analogous to ideal school operations. While noting the processes of democratic deliberation are constitutive of a democratic-style community he warns that democracies also include '*the possibility of durable and serious disagreement over substantive matters and that this disagreement will tend to dissolve community or generate a tyranny of the majority*' (Strike, 2000, P. 623). Strike concludes with the proposition that the idea of community can still be useful for schools, so long as it is accompanied by a vision of a good education and the practices and

social values such a vision generates. Schools are seen, in Strike's view, as institutions necessarily dedicated to and purposefully directed towards the promotion of learning. The paper sounds a clear warning against any simplistic assumption of the 'goodness of community' as a schooling ideal, at the same time as presenting an argument for school-as-community not very different from that of Wehlage et al. noted above. To some degree the paper stands as an antidote to some of the more saccharine claims of the need for schools to be 'caring communities' reiterated in this literature (see for example Baker et al. 1997). Themes of caring and of democratic process thread through the literature with very little attention to potential conflicts between these orientations other than that raised so clearly by Strike (1999, 2000).

Others have called for a redefinition of the notion of community that would reject homogeneity and celebrate difference as a cornerstone of newstyle community building (Shields, 2000). In this view the diversity present in western society tends to be amplified in the public school systems and thus schools are required to acknowledge diversity as a strength in their efforts at community building. There are strong Australian voices in this call too, for example Singh's commendation for teaching '*so that ethnic and indigenous diversity is recognised as being at the core of Australianness*' (Singh, 1998, P. 56).

Much of this literature is carefully argued and clearly analysed. Most of it is also speculative and hypothetical. It is clear that the case for schools as certain sorts of communities has been made, and that this case is most convincing in the situation of disadvantaged students. What is missing from most of the literature is any student voice speaking of the actual experience of being a student in a school that is or is not attempting to generate allegiance to the project of schooling in its students.

The Study

In order to get some student accounts of school experience along the dimension of school allegiance we conducted a survey with final year classes of teacher education students, none of whom were presently being taught by the writers. Most respondents had left school four years earlier and most had attended Australian schools in both their primary and secondary education. We told them we were interested in whether they had ever felt attachment or a sense of belonging to any of their schools and if so, what had made them feel that way. To this end they were asked to give written replies to a series of open-ended questions about their school experience. Questions asked them to recall their happiest and unhappiest moments of schooling, their sense of attachment to and/or alienation from certain schools and the extent to which sport or school rituals (e.g. uniforms, songs mottos) had had any effect on these feelings. We also asked each respondent about the type of school(s) attended (religious, state, private, single sex, co-ed), whether it was rural or urban and the length of time spent at each school. Participation was entirely voluntary and no identification of the informants was involved in the survey responses.

Several features of this methodology warrant comment. First, the respondents were teacher education students and as such are likely to have more positive than negative memories of schooling. It seems reasonable to expect that young people who choose teaching as a career might be more favourably disposed towards school and schooling and might be more likely to have felt happy at school, to have engaged with it and felt they belonged there. They may thus be expected to demonstrate a stronger form of allegiance to their old school than would the general population. Despite these caveats we felt that finding out what their memories of schooling were like would be useful in developing a picture of contemporary Australian school experience in terms of school allegiance.

Second, in using memory work we were aware that the results would likely provide more of an overall sense of the writer's felt response to the events described than actual accurate detail (Haug, 1989; Errante, 2000). By asking for personal narratives we were consciously looking for the role schooling had played in generating their felt responses to school as institution. We were much less interested in the truth of any claims made – that someone had starred in basketball, that another had topped the class in year 9 or that another had been 'picked on' by a particular teacher, for instance – than in the feelings that were generated by the task of thinking back over schooldays in the fairly recent past. Long enough ago to be recalled without embarrassment but not so long that the sensations of being 'of the school' would have faded altogether.

Results and Discussion

In all, 38 students completed the questionnaires. In the following discussion, excerpts from the students' writing are quoted verbatim. The names are pseudonyms.

By and large the students' memories of schooling were very much bound up with the personal. They wrote easily about their own experiences with much emphasis on the individual encounter with friends and teachers. School as a goal-oriented educational institution did not feature in their accounts nearly as much as did the people in it.

- *Friends*

'Friends' emerged as the most important dimension in these school memories. Indeed, the majority of respondents insisted that their sense of belonging to school was most clearly related to having friends.

[It] was not so much the school but the students who were mainly friendly and accepting. (Erin)

I don't think my school had any practices which fostered allegiance. It was a great time of my life, but only through peer friendships and the fun we had with other peers that made it so. (Robert)

Your friendship groups make you feel like you belong. (Angela)

While many of the respondents' happiest memories of school involved their friendships, fights with friends and the difficulties of negotiating friendships featured frequently in unhappy school memories with many reports of '*teasing*' '*bullying*' and '*having petty fights with friends*'. For some, finishing Year 12 was an unhappy memory because it meant '*leaving all my friends*'. For others, moving from one school to another (most commonly the shift from primary to high school) involved unhappiness because of initial loneliness and the effort needed to re-establish friendship groups.

- *Involvement*

Much of the respondents' talk about belonging and community involved shared experiences. Being part of something, usually a team or a group involved in extra-curricular activity, was seen as important in producing a sense of belonging which, in some instances, developed into a sense of being part of the whole school as Jane and Harriet indicate here:

When I was performing in the school play (Yr 12). It was an amazing experience. I felt like a great part of the school and I was so sad on

the last night, but it was definitely my happiest memory of school. (Jane)

Classes and achievement don't help you feel attachment, but I found being involved in the school community through extra-curricular activities did. For me, music helped me to be part of the school and feel as though I belonged. After all, I was an important member of both band and choir. (Harriet)

Those who recalled having leadership positions in the school and those who had been part of victorious teams often reported that they had felt proud of their school.

I was very involved in the school community, extra-curricular activity, leadership and decision-making. I guess that I felt proud to be a part of the school (Deborah)

Grace, who spent some of her school years in America, clearly articulates her sense of pride in her team's victory and in doing so captures the feeling of being swept up in a sense of belonging to the larger whole:

[My happiest memory of school] was standing on the High School oval at the end of the football game. In the frosty air, the crowd blended into a great roar with the band somehow blasting through with a rendition of 'We will rock you'. I was frozen, surrounded by my friends and grinning from ear to ear. My Junior Varsity team (I took stats and got to travel to all the games) had just won their division. The cheerleaders were ecstatic and it was wonderful!

- *Location*

Some respondents explicitly invoked a familial notion of community. Those who had attended boarding school were the most likely to offer this impression. Others, especially those whose schooling had taken place in a country town, wrote warmly about the sense of being known by the school and the wider community. In these cases the sense of shared location – having grown up in the town in which their schooling had taken place – afforded a special sense of belonging. Here Tara, a country girl who boarded in town expresses both these feeling:

I was attached to my primary school in the country. The majority of the students were also from rural settings. We all enjoyed the same things. I then went to an all-girls' boarding school where we lived on the school grounds. I lived with all the country girls so we all felt like sisters after five years of living together.

On the other hand, those whose schooling had involved moving from one school to another were more likely to recall feelings of dislocation and alienation, both from the school and the wider community.

My first high school was a school we moved house to be able to attend. It was a great school and my education was good but it was detached from feelings of community I was used to. I had not grown up with the same experiences as the other students, the area was different and the school felt more like a chore than a natural place to

*be. I felt like an outsider looking in – especially with socialising.
(Geoff)*

For some it was the fact that their parents had been active in the school community or that that their siblings had attended the same school which gave them a sense of belonging.

While attending primary school I felt attachment to the school because I had a brother and sister there [...] I had grown up around the school and felt that being part of the school was being part of the community, it was a natural place to be. I had grown up with the same people and we all shared the same experiences [...] Parents taking an interest was a strong factor. At primary school my mother was often involved in classroom/excursion activities and she was on the School Council. My father was coach of all my sports teams and we even had the Principal over for dinner. This sense of community made me feel very attached and a part of the school. (Greg)

- *School Uniforms and Rituals*

Our informants were divided as to the worthwhileness of school rituals in establishing community. Some saw the wearing of uniform, regular assemblies, school mottos, logos and a school song as instrumental in provoking allegiance while for others these things were dismissed as irrelevant, boring and, particularly with regard to the school song, 'corny'.

The private school I went to was big on school identity. School uniforms, inter-school sports etc. I didn't want to be part of this identity. When you create an identity this is often reinforced by ridiculing students from other schools, bullying. It can set up bullying and racism eg our school is best and the other school is full of poofs and let's go beat them up. (Hayden)

For many of the students, uniforms were seen as a good idea as they made everyone equal, worked against students trying to outdo one another in being fashionable and 'cool' and helped create a school identity. Some female respondents also wryly mentioned that uniforms did relieve them of having to make daily decisions about 'what to wear'. For one respondent at least, the uniform was not seen as sufficient to establish a sense of belonging:

Other than our school uniforms I never felt like I belonged to a particular school as a whole. I felt like I belonged to a certain peer group and to certain classes but never a whole school (Rebecca).

- *Sport*

There was disagreement with regard to the importance of sport in fostering allegiance and a sense of belonging. For some respondents sporting activity had formed a central part of their enjoyment and involvement with school whereas for others it was regarded as unimportant if not downright off-putting. Ian, for example was enthusiastic about the role played by sport:

For me and my friends sporting events were very important for feeling attached to the school. All through school I and the same group of friends were involved in successful sporting teams and we bonded together and this went into the classroom. We were proud of ourselves, our teams and when recognised by the school, proud to

have contributed. I found myself being proud to wear the school colours/logo when visiting other schools.

Whereas others were much more low-key:

Most schools place a lot of importance on [sport] but there is only a small percentage of students who are exceptional athletes – what other virtues do they have? (Patricia)

Sporting events (swimming and sports) were valued more than rituals etc. However, we still had a large proportion of students who were not interested in one or both of these events. (Jane)

For those for whom sport did function to align them with school values, the significance of Wehlage's proposition about the positive outcomes flowing from identification with the school was abundantly clear. However for those non-sporting types the importance of his caveat that not all students will respond to calls for identification with school was also very clear.

- *Teachers*

Good relationships with teachers were mentioned fairly frequently as reasons for individual students feeling a sense of attachment to school. Good teachers, teachers who 'cared' were seen as essential to students' sense of belonging.

Year 7 camp we had a teacher who loved us all as individuals and who developed a class identity and a strong class unity. We all cried at this camp at the thought of leaving him and the class as a whole. I don't think any of us had felt such a strong sense of belonging and attachment to a group and a teacher before. (Jackie)

It was the teachers who formed a bond and made learning rewarding.

Supportive teachers encouraged us and made school a great place to be. (Hayden)

All teachers in high school knew your name – this made you feel like you belonged. (David)

I think caring staff make a more 'belonging' school ...(Lucy)

On the other hand 'bad' teachers, teachers who acted unfairly or neglectfully or without respect for students and their feelings, were recalled in the accounts of the unhappiest times at school.

Writing out the phone book every art lesson after I had poured out heart and soul into a piece of art work which he thought was crappy. (Erin)

Being told I was useless by my year 8 teacher and being physically threatened when answering her back – the result was I threw the desk at her and spent several hours in the Deputy Principal's office. (Gretel)

Wetting my pants at assembly in year 3. I had put my hand up but wasn't noticed until it was too late. I was either too shy or too scared by the authoritarian system (or both), to dare to just leave and go to the toilet without permission or leave the line while assembly was in progress to see the teacher who stood at the back of the line. (Karen)

Not understanding a question in a test and being ridiculed in public for the answer I wrote down. (Megan)

Interestingly, the stories about teachers generally referred to individual teachers in relation to individual students. There were very few comments about teachers as a group, teachers as a school staff, teachers as representing the school or even teachers as teachers of children and subjects. In the positive accounts of teachers they were generally identified on the basis of their individual personality characteristics rather than with any particular school subject, although the year level was mentioned in recollections of primary school teachers. There were very few stories of teachers as subject teachers: no wonderful teachers of maths or memorable teachers of PE.

Conclusions

In general these young people recalled their schooling in a positive light – as was to be expected from a group of teacher education students. It is notable that their stories are inflected with current 'good teaching' rhetoric, possibly a discourse they have encountered in their university classes. In addition, the choice of data gathering through personal narrative called on them to produce material that was self-oriented. Thus they tell of individual triumphs – and individual disasters – reflecting too the stress on 'the individual' and 'treating them as individuals' which is still a favored dictum of post progressive late 20th century schooling. Our informants remembered their schooldays in terms of their personal friendships and individual development rather than in terms of group engagement with an institution.

Lying not far beneath the surface of these accounts, are some worrying issues for teacher educators. For instance the picture of community proffered by our young informants aligns very closely with Strike's 'school as family' metaphor in which community rests on a sense of sameness and unity in an atmosphere of warmth and nurturance. Our respondents wrote of being part of a closely-knit group as young people in small country towns, as boarders at school, as players in teams. These experiences were readily identified as binding, as constitutive of 'the school' – even if some among them said it was the group really and not the school at all.

This study of what makes 'community' at school presents us with some insights consistent with some of the theory canvassed earlier. As cautioned by Strike (2000) and others, we can see how in these accounts the very process of building togetherness also worked simultaneously to constitute others as outsiders. These others were the ones who didn't play sport, whose parents weren't on school council, who had no siblings at the school, who weren't able to relate to the teachers, much less see them as caring. The presence of these others operates at the edges of these accounts and are only sometimes allowed to come to the fore. '*Good - if there's something for everyone*' comments Kelly about her perception of sport in the school, thereby reminding us that the teams and the cheering and the triumph and the fun are not universally enjoyed.

Clearly there is a task for teachers and the school as a whole to build understandings of mutuality and respect so that all school members can share in the project of schooling, albeit in a range of different ways. The old-style familial notion of community reproduced in these

accounts is not likely to be applicable to many of the schools and classrooms the graduating teachers will encounter in their workplaces. Rather than abandon the community concept, we urge the development of schooling practices that involve a sense of belonging such as has been shown to be important in achieving positive schooling outcomes. These practices will require a new concept of community, one that is built around a recognition of diversity and conscious of the value of difference in the life of the school and that of the wider society.

As noted earlier, Strike made a crucial observation about a warm caring environment in schools as possibly necessary but certainly not sufficient for the 'vision of a good education'. The accounts of our teachers in waiting appear to underscore a schooling experience characterised more by the former than the latter. One would hope that in their aspiration to be great teachers they will see their roles not only in terms of creating a warm, caring environment for their students but also in terms of generating a love of learning in their school communities. Because, as Strike reminds us, at the end of the day that is what schools and teachers are for and that is the vision around which the school community should surely thrive.

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