

GIL04619**Up the country or down in the city? Working with curriculum and young people's imagined Australias****Judith Gill and Sue Howard, University of South Australia**

Data drawn from our ongoing study of the ways in which upper primary school students think about Australia have provided a rich source of information about their current attitudes to themselves, to Australia and the wider world. While those who live outside the major cities avidly share in contemporary versions of the bush idyll familiar from early twentieth century literature and art, the young city dwellers, while also convinced of the positive features of their lives in this country, prefer to rationalise their privileged position against the 'others' who live in strife torn countries amid the constant danger of war and repression. Having established that the concept of Australia varies markedly between young people who live 'in the country' as opposed to the majority of urban dwellers, in this paper we propose that significant features of their schooling experience do little to counteract these divided views. Following Nussbaum (1996), Abovitz (2002), Feinberg (1996), the paper urges a reassessment of the need for a newstyle civics education and for a new pedagogy involving elements from history and social science in order to generate more appropriate recognition in young people of the place of Australia and Australians in the increasingly globalising world.

Some time ago Australian life seemed to fall into either side of the binary divide between urban and rural, a binary encapsulated in the phrase *Sydney or the bush?* once prevalent in early Australian cultural production. Although the original distinction has waned to a large degree, the phrase lives on in Australian imagery and art work, press releases, even economic prognoses and popular understandings of Australian living and life styles. Is the distinction still extant in young people's constructions of Australia; if so, how is it manifested and is it relevant for the ways in which young people position themselves as Australians, as people living in this country?

Current concern with education for citizenship has tended to take up issues around individual and state rights and responsibilities. Research into what young people already know about their country and their place in its political formation is relatively scarce (Cornbleth 2002; Gill and Howard, 2004). Even harder to find are studies about how young people *feel* about where they live,

their physical location and the meanings they associate with home. With one in five current Australians born overseas and an even higher proportion of school age children coming from families of recent immigrants, such questions emerge as particularly important as we strive to develop citizenship education for our multicultural society.

Long before globalisation became a catchword, generations of schoolchildren learned to understand the world as divided into different realms and territories, often as not the distinctions were colour coded in the primary school atlases. In the past fifty years the original boundaries separating lands and territories have undergone considerable change, requiring the maps to be re-worked and new colours to be added, but the practice of picturing the world as disconnected land masses, some of which are further divided into nations, realms and states, continues. Most of us began to conceptualise the world in this way and the idea is reflected in popular understandings of a world comprised of bounded and representable 'countries'. Not even the graphic and terrible evidence of peoples divided within geographic boundaries such as war-torn Bosnia or the continuing boundary strife in Northern Ireland and Palestine, serve to dislodge the idea that there is a France, an England, a Tanzania and so on.

Part of the project of western schooling was traditionally understood as advocating a sense of allegiance to one's country in an unproblematic and already given way. Hence the connection between schooling and the national flag, anthem singing and even marching to and from classrooms, once normal in schools in English speaking countries. What was perhaps less well understood was that these schooling practices worked to constitute a sense of nation as stable and knowable even as they sought to serve it. In this way schooling has been consistently seen as intimately connected to nation formation and the preparation of future citizens (Said, 1995; Willinsky, 1999).

By the early 21st century in Australia, as in other parts of the world, the notion of national identity has attracted significant critique. Some commentators believe that national identity is a concept that has outlived its usefulness (Castles et al, 1988; Nussbaum, 1996); for some of these writers outpourings of nationalism were centrally involved in most of the major social disruptions of the last century such as the rise of Nazism, the cultural revolution in China, genocidal wars in the Middle East, Bosnia and several African countries. Nationalism thus can be seen as a dangerous force which leads to violent uprising and war. From this standpoint nationalism operates to create and maintain unnecessary and dangerous divisions and differences between peoples, a process which works in direct conflict with movements for greater unification and consensus. Certainly movements such as the current press

towards European Unity would appear to operate against separatist constructions of national identities and in favour of greater understanding of mutual interests. Hence some theorists commend a rejection of the notion of national identity while urging for the development of global citizenry in which local identification is relatively unimportant (Featherstone and Lash, 1995).

One problem with such a position is that it fails to recognise the different positions of different countries in terms of their cultural and ethnic mix (Cogan and Derricot, 1998). While mono-cultural nations, relatively secure in their traditions and culture, may choose to move towards a position of global citizenship, smaller less developed countries may be threatened by the possibility of cultural genocide in the move to the idea of a world village. Some research has identified a realignment with the local and the national at the same time as the incursions of globalisation attempt to overthrow borders and former boundaries in the interests of world trade. In these studies the participants appear newly identified with their particular part of the world, their culture and language as a way of maintaining a sense of self and community within an increasingly disparate and diverse global society (De Cillia et al, 1999). Ultimately the reader is left with a sense of oppositional movements: one reaching out beyond old lines of demarcation and the other working in the opposite direction pulling people back into a closer identification of home culture in ways that may be much more localised than the national boundary.

For countries whose populations are undergoing significant change through migration patterns and the influx of refugees, the situation is even more complicated. Self-proclaimed multicultural countries such as Australia are faced with the problem of attempting to create a new style of belonging to the nation or political entity as a whole in ways which recognise and celebrate cultural differences and at the same time urge an allegiance to the country of adoption (Cogan and Derricot, 1998). This development is necessary for the successful democratic governance of the country in the immediate future. For schooling, whose traditional practices were seen as involving the promotion of allegiance to country, the task is less clear in the newer social and political configuration. How is schooling, then, to effect its commitment to produce 'each citizen having the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society' (Adelaide Declaration, 1999)?

The initiatives in citizenship education are evidence of the government's desire to establish a better educated citizenry in terms of democratic rights and responsibilities. Voting remains compulsory in Australia, a practice that

depends on the vision of each citizen as informed and capable of exercising democratic choice at election time. The citizenship education curriculum has endeavoured to provide learning experiences that might lead young people into a developed understanding of the political structure and system of governance. However, young people's current levels of awareness of the country as a whole, their attitudes to the idea of Australia, their understandings of nation and their felt responses to living here remain largely unexplored.

Youth and the feeling for nationhood

Fully participant citizenship means more than having the right to vote. It requires that people *want* to exercise their right in full knowledge of the policies and positions of political parties within a general understanding of the structure and conventions of government. While we have addressed the question of young people's knowledge of political dimensions elsewhere (Howard and Gill, 2000), the current preoccupation is with the question of their felt relation to the places in which they live, the degree to which they choose to identify with Australia and their desire to be a part of its processes. Of course, citizenship education involves more than democratic values and morally correct positions. Such an education, in our view, needs to be grounded in knowledge and understanding of sociopolitical events. This is a tall order for primary school but we contend that the groundwork for the development of such knowledge should be part of the primary school experience.

Our data base comprises recorded conversations with over 400 upper primary school children, the majority of whom were 12 years old. The children came from a range of backgrounds, both rural and urban, in proportions commensurate with the spread of schools in the state of South Australia. Some schools had considerable numbers of children from different racial and ethnic backgrounds while others were almost all monolingual Anglo Australians. The discussions were held in small groups of 4 – 6, led by one of the researchers. After establishing that we were not testing for knowledge or opinion and that all responses were welcome, we used a series of key questions to initiate thinking and discussion.

The particular focus of this investigation was on the ways the young informants identified images of Australia to constitute a 'national imaginary' (Hall 1996). Hence we engaged in conversations with them about a range of topics to do with 'being Australian'. We asked the children to participate in the generation of an imaginary collage which represented how they felt about Australia. In this task they were asked to present their pictures of Australia in

a form that was both familiar (primary school children are used to the idea of collage) and strange – they had never been asked before what they thought about the country as a whole. Thus they were encouraged to engage in levels of abstraction which would probably have been beyond their typical usage. So the children talked about concrete objects they would put on their collage – mostly in the form of pictures – and why they felt that these things belonged there. Some of the children invoked notions of ‘representation’ and ‘emblem’ showing that they could deal with this level of abstraction; many also chose to construct their images as positioned on a map of Australia – once again using a familiar form of representation for the social, political and geographical imaging of country.

In this work we are not proposing to offer an accurate picture of youth attitudes and feelings as fixed. Rather we attempt to show the ways in which young people engage with the discourses of nation that are made available to them through their interactions with family, peers, media and of course their school learning experiences. Our argument is that the words and images used by the young people provide evidence of the ways in which discourses of nation are mobilised in popular culture as evidenced in media, school processes and daily talk and then refracted in these discussions. Our analytical standpoint derives from Foucault, specifically that discourses structure the possibilities for thought and action. Thus the constructions of nation picked up by the young people are centrally implicated in their potential to act as citizens in the future.

Earlier visions of Australia had been structured around the rural/urban divide, the binary captured by the phrase ‘Sydney or the bush’ and this distinction resonated through much 19th and 20th century Australian arts and literature. In our discussions the children revealed a vocabulary of nation that both reflected some of the early Australian versions and constituted new and remarkably current visions as well.

Themes

In many of the groups the children came up with the idea of a map of Australia to constitute the background for the collage. Some of them worked out the idea of a map in novel ways, for example, by ‘going up in a blimp and looking down’ or in other cases it was a spaceship journey that allowed them the overall vision of the shape of the country. In these constructions it was clear that the whole country in terms of its island status as a geographical entity formed their frame of reference. The lines of division between states were rarely mentioned, the states were not named as separate entities and nor was there mention of capital cities. The children’s vision was of the country as

a whole. Moreover there was no mention of the national capital, Canberra, the seat of the federal government – any political frame of reference was starkly lacking in these responses.

People – the country is its people

The most common theme to emerge in the collage discussions - among both urban and rural children - concerned the depiction of people as constituting the preferred image of the nation. Most frequently the children suggested pictures of themselves as Australians accompanied by family, friends and others enjoying themselves.

Q : And Jason, would you put anything on this collage?

Jason : Myself

Q : Yourself. Okay. Why's this?

Jason : Because I'm Australian.

Jeremy : Me.

Q : Now why would you put you in it?

Jeremy: Because I'm a proud Australian.

Some wanted to include family in their collage of Australia:

Breanna : Cut out photos of people in your family.

Q :How would that show how you feel about being Australian?

Breanna : Having your family here ... family people.

Q : Just family people?

Natalie : And friends.

Q : Anything else?

Nathan : Me.

And they included themselves as central, thereby producing a fusion of self identity and country.

Noah : I would have a photo of myself.

Rebecca : Put your home, town on there.

Q : Okay why would you put your home town on there?

Rebecca : Cos it's a good place.

Natalie : I'd put in like where specific like specifically where you lived, and remember that ..

Brian : The name, and a picture of the house.

Natalie : And then like take pictures of when you drive in and it says NARACOORTE.

In many cases the children tended to claim the right to position themselves and their space on the collage, a move that can be seen as a claim to place themselves, their family and friends within a populous sense of nation.

Different people

Again, both rural and urban students insisted that their collage would include pictures of visibly different people in terms of colour and place of origin, thereby demonstrating the multicultural message which has been keenly advocated in many schools. In these collages young people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds were to be seen shaking hands and joining in a celebration. This is an interesting phenomenon because in many of the rural schools the diverse ethnic mix, so common in urban schools, was largely missing.

Mia : People from everywhere.

Jim : Faces of all the different colours that people look like.

Annie : The different countries that people come from.

And there was evident pride in their commitment to a peaceful coexistence with difference:

Q : Okay, what else would go in this collage?

Sam : People who have come from overseas, and are now settled in Australia, and are very proud to be here.

Jon : A peace sign.

Q : A peace sign, why would you put a peace sign on it?

Steve : Planes, and other people coming in from countries and ...

Jon : Because we've got all different kinds of people in Australia.

Sam : Like heaps of Chinese people in Melbourne

Jon : Like, we got, yeah we got, nearly every single one, nationality in Australia.

Leo : It's where people from other countries come.

Jon : Yeah, and hey, we got every one.

Alan : I'd have like all the people from different nations like some Chinese people or some aboriginal people or some ...

Indigenous people

The indigenous people were mentioned in the majority of these discussions, nearly always accompanied by the idea of 'they were here first'. Interestingly, the urban children were in schools which had no Aboriginal students, compared with some of the rural schools where there were high numbers of Aboriginal students enrolled. The children were aware of the indigenous

people's long time of habitation and acutely aware that they pre-dated the European settlers. For example:

Casey : Aboriginal paintings.

Q : Uh huh, why would you put those in Casey?

Casey : Well because the Aboriginals have been here for so long, in Australia.

Q : Uh huh, and how does that make you feel.

Casey : Good, cause, I don't know, makes you kind of want to respect them, cause they've been here so long.

While respect was frequently mentioned in this connection some of the groups engaged in talk about racism and its variants too.

Adele : I would do mine (the collage) like in Aboriginal colours and like, Aboriginals because they were the first ones here, and-

Q : Uh huh, and they actually-

Adele : They could have, like they let us into the country.

Jo : They tried to kill them.

Adele : I know but, the Aborigines like- they didn't fight back as much as they could have.

Jo : I disagree

While the young informants were keen to recognise and include indigenous people, their knowledge of the history of post-European settlement was decidedly vague. They knew that racism was wrong but they didn't appear to understand what had happened. For instance when the topic 'stolen generation' came up the following interchange was recorded:

Claire : Well, I personally thought white people should have thought a little bit more before they went ahead yeah, like they, they just thought they were doing the best for them, but they didn't actually ask them, and they just took them away.

Shelley: They didn't look at their points.

Q : So how does that make you feel?

Claire : A bit sad.

Shelley: Horrible.

Annette: To think about what they've been through and everything.

Claire : Well they didn't know that they were doing it wrong at the time, they thought they were helping ..., but in the end they realised.

Shelley: It's just, they mainly, like, they think the Aboriginals are different because of their coloured skin, they're just totally different, but they're not actually-

Claire : Because, they're Australian too, we're all part of one big group.

Shelley: They were actually here first, too.

In this sequence the children are reiterating their version of a very public discussion about the 'stolen generation' which had filled the print and TV media following the report of a Royal Commission in 1997 and subsequently re-told in the popular and award winning film *Rabbit Proof Fence*. In the conversation above we see Claire struggling to reconcile actions she believed to be wrong in terms of her conviction that the authorities involved believed they were acting in the best interests of young people at the time. Shelley's position is more straightforward – they were racially motivated from a belief that skin colour constituted fundamental and irreconcilable difference. While most of the children's responses were sympathetic, they appeared to stop at acknowledging Aboriginal people and their longstanding connection to country which rendered them worthy of respect. Very occasionally some more insightful comment occurred:

Charlie: How the past has made us so glad to be Australians.

Q : Okay, in what way?

Charlie: Some of, like with the aborigines, like, how they've, how the aborigines have made us think more.

Elsewhere the concept of Australians as a people produced the following:

George : There's aboriginal people, there's English people, there's ...

Jem : Italian.

George : Yeah, as well.

Q : Why do you think it's important to show that?

Emory : That we're the main ones around here.

Sam : No, that's just being racist or something.

Q : Why does it feel good to see all of these different people in Australia?

Emory : Cause you get to meet a lot of people and get to make friends with a lot of people and that.

Q : Okay, making friends ... and Annie?

Annie : Because people have come here at their own will ... and people like it in our country.

George : I know, because, probably because they think our country's better than theirs or something like that.

Here the children rationalise their preference for showing diversity in Australian people in terms of a national pride in being recognised as a desirable place to live. They are also aware of negative connotations of

'racism', but many tended to speak readily of 'we' and 'our', regardless of their own background.

Questions of race and racism came through the discussions with some children ready to accuse others of racism, as with Emory above "we're the main ones ...". Others engaged in questions of how one is raced in fairly traditional ways:

Scot: Yeah, because my dad's full Aboriginal, I think my mum is but I don't know, but I'd be fully Aboriginal because my mum might be full and my dad is definitely.

They also wanted to include pictures and artefacts from indigenous peoples, some including the word SORRY in their collage – a trope indicative of the degree to which debates around the Stolen Generation have permeated the schools and media.

The past is another country!

The lack of any formal historical knowledge against which to locate their understanding of the current cultural mix of the Australian population was not limited to discussions about the indigenous peoples. While the traditional Australian histories with their stories of the 'discoverers', the early pioneers, the taming of the land and its riches have been deservedly criticised for their white supremacist male-ordered overtones, it is not surprising that they no longer appear as standard primary school curriculum. However there did not seem to be much in the children's schooling that had replaced them other than consciousness raising efforts to make the students aware of social justice issues surrounding racism and diversity. Only very rarely did the children mention any of the actors whose stories once made up Australian history, and inevitably these accounts were vague, for example:

Sam : I think it was Captain Cook or someone, came over from England and they said, there's too many people here in England and that sort of stuff, and then, so he went for a trip around the world and then he saw like, a little piece of Australia, so he just got ships and brought people over and aboriginals got killed because of most of the English people were just invading their territory.

While Sam's version of history is in a distinctly revisionist mode, his was almost the only mention of Captain Cook in the children's accounts. In other discussions the children used the word history to refer to their own personal stories, as in:

Amy : My home, the country that I grew up with and everything that felt right to me.

Q : Such as?

Amy : I don't know, just the town you grew up in and everything like that. Like all your history's here.

And even more explicitly:

Carla : My history. My family.

Q : When you say your history, what do you mean?

Carla : Like my background.

For still others the idea of history was connected to other countries, especially European ones. In response to the question about where they would consider living if not in Australia:

Q : England. Why would you live there?

Sam : Its history and 'cos my parents, my parents used to live there.

And in a group from the Riverland, when asked where they'd like to live if not in Australia:

Gail : Okay, Egypt.

Q : Why?

Gail : Because of all the history in Egypt, Egyptians there, and all the stuff that happened.

In particular the lack of any historical knowledge was reflected in the children's repeated perception that the reason people from other countries came to live in Australia was because of all the good things Australia has to offer rather than as a result of persecution in their home country. Their responses echoed the pattern established by American researchers who found that the young people in their study held to 'an image of the country's continuous and beneficial progress' (Barton et al, 1998, 3). While it is commendable that they shared a very positive view of Australia and the living possibilities here and they were invariably positive about the cultural mix, the need to welcome new people to share in what they had, it would seem important that their education provided some historical insights as well as the injunction to treat all people properly. For many of the young people interviewed other places were regarded as different strange and dangerous. The broad sweep of historical events; some longitudinal perspective on how and why we have arrived at this point in history is missing.

Rural/Urban divide

While by and large all the children shared similar positive attitudes to the country in which they live and they were very ready to credit Australian uniqueness, usually in terms of flora and fauna which they described proudly as 'ours' and 'doesn't belong to anyone else', there were also some interesting differences which operated broadly between the two groups. For instance, while many of the rural children, along with their city based peers, appeared to regard other countries as different and inherently dangerous, for the country dwellers the city itself became the dangerous other too. Country children viewed the city as the source of crime and insecurity and repeatedly offered lists of reasons why it was better to live in the country. In this they were probably echoing parental opinion, but the claims were very similar across a range of rural locations. The country was preferable because it was a cleaner greener environment, because you could have lots of animals for pets, because the people were more friendly and above all because here in the country you were 'free'. We have developed this point in another paper (Gill and Howard, 2004) but want to reiterate here that the children in these discussions echoed longstanding Australian discursive practice in which the country is presented as oppositional and preferable to the city, even though the poetry, literature and art work of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in which these ideas originated has long gone from the primary school curriculum.

Traditional national imagery – heroes, flags

Irrespective of being in urban or rural settings, our young informants were not unaware of the traditional trappings of nation. The flag appeared reasonably often on their collages. When asked about their felt response to the flag they offered:

Q: So what do you feel when you put it up?

Andrew: You feel like you are a part of something, that you're doing something for Australia.

Some seemed to recognise the role of flags as indicating a community of countries, an ideal type of world citizenship:

MaryAnn: 'Cos Australia is part of other countries too and the flag, that's what makes Australia.

Others spoke of national heroes in terms of the wars of the last century and thought about how they would portray a sense of debt they felt to those who had fought to preserve what they had:

Kate: Like people that like fought for our country like the war and stuff, because they like our country, and they just want it to remain this Australian country so that we can live in peace.

Here too there is an alarming degree of vagueness about the war – never in these conversations distinguished by a name which could have been WWII, Vietnam, Korea or the present incursions which have involved Australian troops. It is war as a concept they refer to rather than any particular war, the exception being the following in which an enemy is named:

Fred: If they wouldn't have defended us, then we would be coming from another country ... it could have overtaken by Japan, and quite possibly it wouldn't have been called Australia.

They speak of a sense of indebtedness, thereby echoing some of the familiar rhetoric around war:

Mary: So I might just put people closing their eyes and just like remembering the people that fought for us and kept our country.

George: I would give the people a very nice grave.

These quotations are redolent of the discourses around ANZAC day – the annual holiday each year during which remembrance services are conducted around the country. These rituals have been enjoying some sort of resurgence in recent years along with the commitment to provide citizenship education. Certainly the country children, possibly as a result of the ubiquitous war memorial in Australian country towns, appeared familiar with the rhetoric of war heroes and respect for the fallen, tropes of a more traditional discourse of nation. The city children were less likely to speak of wars and war heroes as connected to Australia or Australians; for them wars took place in other countries as seen on the television.

Implications for education

It is clear that young Australians around the state share in many of the responses identified here. They do identify with the country in which they live which they credit in a range of ways as being a good place to be. At one level the privileging of and identification with the local and immediate has been seen to be an important element in developing a sense of place and belonging (Abovitz,2002), and our young informants echoed their American

counterparts in a generally positive orientation to their country. As Feinberg (1996) has argued these sorts of identifications are probably necessary precursors of a properly located global world view. However it seems that this celebration of the local should also be accompanied by an introduction to the wider world in terms of history and culture. In particular the situation in Australian society broadly and in many Australian schools in particular would seem to require more than a simple welcoming of strangers. In order to build the sort of socially inclusive environment needed in a multicultural society, a recognition of the different histories and cultures that go to make up multicultural Australia would seem to be a necessary part of Australian education. Equally necessary would be an introduction to this country's history which acknowledges the Eurocentric limitations of much of the textually recorded past and incorporates some of the oral histories of different indigenous peoples. In this way history would then be understood as comprising the personal stories but also allowing some insights into the ways of the world and thereby explaining how we came to be the amazing mix of peoples that we are.

There are particular distinctions between the responses of the urban children as compared with those from the country which give rise to some educational concerns. For example the suspicion and disregard for life in the cities as evinced by the rural children appears to be derived from media produced images of crime and general mayhem but has little relevance for the mainstream life in the city for the majority of people. Indeed, given the current population prediction which indicates that one half of the existing country towns will have disappeared in ten years time, there is a strong likelihood that many of the rural children will soon move into the cities in which case their fears about and rejection of life in the city will prove dysfunctional. Educational experiences that challenged their existing prejudices and that involved them in more sharing of different lifestyles could go some way to rendering them more flexible in their beliefs about the country and its people. The issue for the city children was that life in the country hardly rated a mention. For these young people the notion of 'living on the sheep's back' was totally unknown, along with so much of the history of this country in the past hundred years. Their narrow urban based vision culminating in symbols such as the Sydney Opera House or the Harbour Bridge served as an antithesis to the excessively idealised notion of the bush myth and mateship of earlier generations.

None of the children interviewed mentioned the state as a geographical or political division within the nation as a whole. No doubt this reflects the general lack of knowledge about the ways in which Australian political life is organised which gave rise to the press for civics and citizenship education in

schools. However rather than plunge these young people into a set of rote learnings about the mechanisms of government and the mysteries of preferential voting, we would argue that it is of primary importance that they are given some introduction into the histories and cultures of all the people who make up contemporary Australia, along with the history of the nation as a whole. Such an introduction would necessarily privilege the stories of the indigenous peoples and their involvement with the land. It would also identify the stories of migration starting with the Europeans in the late eighteenth century and continuing in the present. In this way education would supply a knowledge base upon which the common good for the whole society could be recognised and established.

Conclusion

Our young informants have demonstrated that there are commonly held meanings about being Australian and commonly held versions of Australia, along with some different Australias particularly related to the location of the speaker, for example the difference between the rural children's responses to some questions as compared with those from city based children.. Like their American counterparts all the children appear to share a positive orientation to the country in which they live and they envisage a story of continuing progress as more people come to share in the good things Australia has to offer. However, for the vast majority of the 400 children we interviewed, this position derives from blind faith with a good dash of optimism rather than from a balanced account of the story of this country as set within a particular time and place. Their talk resonates with currently accepted progressive discourses about social justice, discourses which include promoting the value of multiculturalism and socially inclusive attitudes towards the indigenous peoples. In their talk at times there are strains of older more prejudicial positions and occasionally the children attempt to reconcile these with their currently 'politically correct' attitudes. However what they actually know about global insurgency or indigenous hardship is extremely vague. Our point is not to change the ways in which the children view themselves and different social groups – their attitudes are largely commendable – but rather we would wish to provide them with a better understanding that relates their attitudes to the socio-historical events which have shaped them. Without a more developed knowledge base they are not well placed to do the intellectual work which will lead to their accounts of a socially just and inclusive society being realised.

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