

This article was downloaded by: [Universiteit Twente]

On: 26 May 2011

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 907217944]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Early Years

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713422238>

Children as citizens: literacies for social participation

Sue Nichols^a

^a University of South Australia,

To cite this Article Nichols, Sue(2007) 'Children as citizens: literacies for social participation', *Early Years*, 27: 2, 119 – 130

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/09575140701425217

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575140701425217>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Children as citizens: literacies for social participation

Sue Nichols*

University of South Australia

The last decade has seen, in the policy arena, a broad global push for children to be treated as active participants in society rather than as the passive recipients of adult decisions and interventions. The topic of literacy learning and teaching has, however, been absent from much of the policy and literature on children's social participation. This paper is an exploratory foray into possible connections between literacy and citizenship from the perspective of young children and those responsible for their education. Drawing from both sociocultural and semiotic perspectives on literacy, this analysis crosses between institutional texts, ethnographic accounts and children's own representations of their places in the world. A hierarchical model of literacy development, which emphasises the teaching of basic decoding skills in the early years, is associated with a view of young children as future citizens rather than as active social participants. Recognising children's agency, and supporting their meaningful participation, requires literacies of social participation.

Keywords: *Children; Literacy; Citizenship; Social participation*

Introduction

The last decade has seen, in the policy arena, a broad global push for children to be treated as active participants in society rather than as the passive recipients and targets of adult decisions and interventions. The UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12 which states that children have the right to be consulted in matters directly concerning them, has prompted a range of responses from national and local governance entities, such as the formation of the Children and Young Peoples' Unit in the United Kingdom. Those at the forefront of developing social participation programs for children stress that strategies should enable children to express their particular standpoints, recognise the diversity of children's situations and interests, connect children with powerful policy networks, and not be limited to adult-sanctioned versions of representative democracy (Prout, 2001, 2002; Hill *et al.*, 2004; Tisdall & Davis, 2004).

These policy initiatives and programs are based on the notion that children should participate 'on the basis of who they are, rather than who they will become'

*Corresponding author: University of South Australia, Hawke Institute for Sustainable Societies, Lorne Avenue, Magill, SA 5062, Australia. Email: sue.nichols@unisa.edu.au

(Moss, 2002, p. 6). In other words, children are considered as social citizens in their own right rather than as future citizens in waiting. This represents a significant shift in thinking about social systems and services which impact on children, such as education and health. Interventions targeted at children have often been motivated by a futures perspective – particularly the prevention of negative features of adult futures such as ill health, criminality, drug dependence or too-early pregnancy. However, these interventions have frequently failed to accord children status as social agents in the present. Children's own views, either about their futures or about the interventions aimed at delivering particular futures, have rarely been sought.

In this paper, I want to explore the implications for literacy learning and teaching of recognising young children's citizenship. Literacy here is understood from both a sociocultural and a semiotic perspective. From a sociocultural perspective, literacy is considered to be a social practice, the precise character of which is contingent on such contextual factors as the relationship between participants, the purposes for which texts are produced and the resources that are available (Gee, 2002). The multiplicity of social contexts within which literacy is practiced means that the plural term 'literacies' is often employed. From a semiotic perspective, literacy is considered to involve the manipulation of signs and technologies for producing signs; it is thus inclusive of linguistic (print and speech) and nonlinguistic (e.g., visual) modes of representation (Labbo, 1996; Kenner & Kress, 2003). The semiotic view of literacy recognises the impact on literacy practice of technologies for the production of multimodal and digital texts.

The topic of literacy learning and teaching has been absent from much of the policy and literature on children's social participation. The specific literacy practices which are involved in participating in different forms of citizenship are rarely analysed or described. However, attempts to encourage children to take up forms of citizenship, whether at local or broader levels, all involve them in the use of language and other meaning-making resources. For example the Children 5–16 Project, a major child consultation and research program in the UK, involved participants in activities such as drama, art, email, discussion groups, interviews and questionnaires (Tisdall & Davis 2004, Prout 2001). These activities would have incorporated a range of literacy practices and a variety of semiotic resources including print and spoken language, nonverbal communication, visual images and digitally mediated texts. If we are to consult with and involve children in this way, there are implications for the kinds of literacy competencies they will need to develop.

In this emergent area of inquiry, I here engage in an exploratory foray into possible connections between literacy and citizenship from the perspective of young children and those responsible for their education. My method is neither a systematic textual analysis nor an ethnographic account, but a critical reading across policy and institutional texts, examples of practice and theoretical perspectives. In that sense, it is an example of critical literacy practice working across the three dimensions identified by Lankshear (1997), which involves taking a critical perspective on *literacy* per se (i.e., as an object for critique), *texts* (i.e., those in which 'citizenship' and 'literacy' occur as key terms or are implied by visual representations) and *social*

practices (e.g., adults' ways of working with children, children's peer activities). Critical readings begin with critical questions and the key question in this case is: How do ideas of children's rights as present and future citizens impact on the literacies which they are seen to need to learn?

What follows are three perspectives. First, a promotional pamphlet about children's literacy, produced by a national government, which positions children as future citizens and literacy as a foundational skill, is analysed. Second, ethnographic studies of classroom life show children actively constituting themselves as members of a class collective and, in one case, teachers promoting literacy as a means of achieving local citizenship. Third, children's social agency beyond the school, as members of their local and global communities, is considered from the perspective of policy documents and children's visual texts.

Your Child's Future: literacy without voice

Citizenship and literacy are clearly linked in a pamphlet for parents produced by the current Australian federal government's Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Entitled *Your Child's Future: Literacy and Numeracy in Australia's Schools*, this A4 tri-fold leaflet can be found in school foyers, libraries and community centres. The text begins by adopting the letter genre, with 'Dear parent', and the first paragraph reads:

Literacy and numeracy are the most important foundation skills our children need during their education. These skills are vital to ensure our young citizens are able to fully participate in Australian society once they leave school.

While children are referred to as 'young citizens', this is clearly not associated with 'full' social participation – which can only happen once children leave school. The child, this implies, is a developing, partial or novice citizen. Childhood is the time to learn basic foundational skills which will enable future citizenship. Literacy and numeracy are key foundational skills.

Literacy is defined in this document as 'the ability to read, write, speak and listen to language in a way that allows people to communicate with each other and make sense of the world' and it is acknowledged that literate competence is changing with the impact of 'new technologies such as computers, the Internet and calculators'.

Given this fairly inclusive definition, it is interesting to examine the visual representation of literacy expressed through the photographs on the pamphlet. There are 11 photographs, five clearly depicting a literacy activity and three a numeracy activity. The five literacy photographs depict: mother and daughter looking at a book; father and son reading newspaper (dad is dark-skinned); a boy alone writing in an exercise book with a pencil; three young women in a library sitting at a table and looking at a book together; and child drawing with father (same as in previous photo) pointing to something on the page; the background shows a classroom wall.

These photographs emphasise parental participation in children's literacy, inclusive of fathers and cultural minorities. Reading is depicted as an interactive activity, consistent with the appeal for parental involvement; children are not shown

reading alone. Perhaps the text producers feared that if a child was shown reading alone, parents might believe this could happen without their help. Despite the definition of literacy given in the text, only conventional print-related activities are shown; drawing is included but not the use of ICTs.

The numeracy activities, in contrast, all depict a single child with some kind of object or apparatus: a girl looking at plastic objects in a container; a boy using a calculator and writing figures on a piece of paper; and a girl weighing a bag full of plastic objects. Numeracy is not presented as social or as requiring child–adult interaction. Rather, the message appears to be that parents should leave children alone to manipulate objects and discover mathematical concepts for themselves.

Thinking about these depictions in relation to the concept of citizenship and social participation, and in relation to a definition of literacy that emphasises communication, I notice something that is not evident at first glance. No-one in any of these depicted events is speaking. There are no open mouths and no appearance of eye contact between participants. All eyes are on the page (in the case of literacy depictions) or the object (in the case of numeracy depictions).

To reinforce the importance of the page, two photographs show exercise books without any activity context or participants; one book has a pencil resting on it and the other a pencil, ruler, compass and eraser. It seems reasonable to assume that one of these books represents literacy and the other numeracy (which is associated with the use of equipment, consistent with its object-oriented depiction).

Writing on the subject of civics education, Brennan argues:

If citizenship is about sustaining public life ... then schools have to be seen as places of public life themselves.... Yet schools are expected to treat their members as only 'in preparation' for later public life. For most students and staff, schooling is an overwhelmingly interactive and social experience. (1996, p. 29)

Literacy in this government-produced text is clearly seen as a preparation for, rather than as a form of, participation in public life. On the evidence of this document, to be a 'young citizen' from the Australian government's perspective clearly means being a docile, silent participant in literacy and numeracy activities undertaken alone or in groups of no more than three. It means focusing on a task which an adult is either actively guiding or has set up. The immediate rewards for the child are parental attention (in the case of literacy) and the cognitive stimulation that manipulating objects can bring (in the case of numeracy). Active citizenship in terms of having and using a voice, organising in groups and participating in civic society are distant prospects for children's post-school futures. The literacies necessary for these kinds of social participation are not described, depicted or represented as part of parents' or schools' responsibilities.

Shaping the class collective: schooling and citizenship

While adults may be preoccupied with children's futures as citizens, young children are participating in the communities of which they are members. They are already seeking, gaining, sometimes being excluded from and sometimes using the powers which derive from active membership of organised groups of their peers. The fact that

adults have set up the spaces in which children live, work and play does not preclude children from seeking agency in their institutional, as well as their private, lives.

Over three years, I observed eight children moving through preschool and their first two years of school, as part of a study on children's literacy development in this transitional phase (Comber & Nichols, 2003; Nichols 2004a, 2004b). I observed teachers working to shape the class, to make out of a mixed bag of individual kids an organised collective operating according to classroom routines, values and rules. Like Kamler and colleagues (1994) in an earlier study of the first month in primary school, I found Foucault's view of power (1980) useful in enabling teachers' power to be understood as productive rather than simply repressive. Applying this insight to the idea of citizenship, it is possible to suggest that in shaping the class collective, teachers create some of the conditions of citizenship and make it possible for children to experience the possibilities of active membership of an organised society in microcosm. This potential is, however, often wasted since links between literacy learning and children's social agency are often not explicitly recognised or acted on.

Young children are highly motivated to learn how power works in the class collective. One of the first lessons they learn is that there are rules of conduct in classrooms. In the early years classrooms I observed, these rules were most stressed during 'floor time', when children gathered on the mat to participate in a teacher-led activity such as a story reading. For these times, children learned the 'five Ls': lips locked, legs crossed, hands in laps and looking at the teacher. This is a very repressive list, and children typically found its strictures difficult if not impossible to follow at first. However, away from the mat what did they do but form their own collectives, make up their own rules and attempt to impose them on each other.

Here is Rose, one of the focus children, experiencing the power of the collective in her Reception (Kindergarten) class. From the note-book of colleague Barbara Comber come these notes of talk that occurred during free drawing time; Rose is seated at a table with five other girls:

- Various girls: I can follow you.
 You can follow me.
 We can follow each other.
 Then I'll have it after you.
 Hey, let's do that cool thing again.
- Rose: Can I too?
- Girl: We all are.
- Alicia to Rose: You have to copy me OK? I'm putting stars on my picture.
- Rose: Me too.

Rose writes near the top of her page.

- I like to see bu
 I lic to see bi [then she stops]
- Lucy: We don't usually write when we just draw.

The teacher had established this activity session as one where children were free to draw whatever they wished; the use of 'free' in this context signals, through its

unvoiced opposition, the ‘unfree’ nature of most school activities. The mixing of linguistic and visual texts had not been banned or even discouraged by the teacher. The girls had, however, worked to produce an institutionalised ‘unfree’ version of the activity of drawing through the injunction to ‘follow’, the use of the collective ‘we’ and the policing of the boundaries between visual and linguistic texts.

An example such as this cannot be explained in terms of an assumed opposition between a traditional back-to-basics literacy agenda and a progressive child-centred approach to literacy learning. It would also be difficult to draw any simple conclusions from this example regarding which of these two assumed conflicting approaches has most to offer in terms of developing students as active social agents, if that were seen as important. These students in effect constructed their own set of ‘basics’ or rules about literacy practice, and they did this in order to produce conditions for social participation.

This kind of activity on the part of children often draws negative or ambivalent attitudes from teachers and parents. What adults might term ‘team building’, when performed by groups of their peers, is more likely to be called ‘peer group pressure’ when performed by groups of children. Rose’s mother was dismayed to see her daughter bringing home stereotypical images of girls in triangle-shaped dresses next to houses with smoking chimneys rather than the vivid disorganised art which she produced at home. Child-centred discourses position adults as responsive to individual children’s unique characters (Chung & Walsh, 2000). However, children’s developing social awareness involves taking up positions in relation to the collectives to which they belong. Individualistic approaches may prevent teachers from using children’s interest in, and understanding of, the politics of the social world as resources for learning. And this, in turn, might hold off the moment at which children can be treated as full citizens of their presents rather than as citizens of a distant future.

However, this is not always the case. Some teachers of young children use literacy intentionally to develop and build on children’s social awareness in ways that recognise their rights as citizens of their classroom collectives (e.g., Vasquez, 2001). A particularly striking example of this is described by Kliewer and colleagues (2004) in a paper on literacy teaching in inclusive preschools. In ‘Corner Nook’ preschool, the teacher worked with ideas of democracy, debate and collective policy-making to involve all children as citizens in the preschool community. Literacy was integral to enabling participation, and also an outcome of children’s involvement. A key practice was rule-making:

Certain rules changed on an almost weekly basis, as children and adults gathered to discuss emerging issues and concerns. Implicit in these interactions were both the power and dynamic nature of the written word. Rules were not static but evolving, and authority could be captured and conveyed through graphic (i.e., recorded and observable) symbols. (p. 375)

The test of a civic society is whether all its citizens are able to act on their rights and participate in the activities through which that society regulates itself. It is true that in societies that call themselves ‘advanced’, an inability to decode and compose written language texts effectively is a severe impediment to the performance of

citizenship. Members of the Corner Nook community, however, were young children with pre- or emergent knowledge of print literacy. An even greater test of the teacher's ability to build active citizenship was the presence of several children with severe and multiple disabilities including communication disorders. Children with disabilities can realistically look forward to a form of partial or compromised citizenship in their adult futures. The challenge of working with such children brings starkly home the point that educators cannot afford to wait for the future to deliver full citizenship.

In one instance, the teacher Shayne succeeded in enlisting Steven, a child with autism, into participating in organised social action through the use of a heightened dramatisation of debate. Playfully provoking children by proposing a 'no fun in school' rule, Shayne encouraged Steven to connect with the majority opposition lobby which immediately formed. The room's school assistant showed children how to make 'protest' signs and Steven spontaneously added his mark to the placard of his most trusted peer companion. This example shows that it is possible to work with, and develop, children's understanding of literacy as a form of social action at the same time as teaching even the most basic foundational skills.

Children's citizenship beyond the school

It is one thing to suggest that children be treated as full citizens within the micro-social spaces of their preschool and school sites. It is a considerable jump to suggest that young children be treated seriously as social citizens in the world outside these spaces.

International children's advocacy and service organisations have been at the forefront of supporting children's meaningful participation in decision-making, and thus their active citizenship. In the majority world, young children have often been the focus of these initiatives, particularly when their responsibilities include the kinds of self-support (such as earning a living) which are considered the province of adults in the West. In 'developed' countries, older children and young adults have generally been the focus of social participation programs (e.g., the Citizenship in Practice program reported by Tisdall & Davis, 2004). Fewer initiatives in these contexts have taken seriously the participation of young children.

In Australia, the Commission for Children and Young People, a department of the state government of New South Wales, has produced a framework intended to promote a holistic, cross-agency approach to improving children's well-being. The document *A Head Start for Australia: An Early Years Framework* describes nine outcome areas, one of which is entitled 'Increasing Children's Participation: Policy Action, Awareness Raising and Advocacy'. The introduction to the section of the document about this outcome states:

Children have valuable knowledge to contribute to developing and evaluating the policies and services that affect them and consideration needs to be given to how children can be involved in making decisions about issues that affect them. (p. 13)

The document lists a number of suggested actions which might help to achieve this outcome, including 'forums where children and the carers of very young children

can raise and debate issues of concern' (p. 13). Recognising that social participation of this kind represents a challenge for children, the report's authors also recommend making support available so that children are able to 'prepare for consultations' (p. 13).

Another outcome area, entitled 'Enriching, Safe and Supportive Environments for Children', is also connected to children's active social participation. It is suggested that for children to develop a 'sense of inclusion in their community' their rights to express their views on community issues (such as urban design) should be recognised and strengthened 'in legislation, policies and practices' (p. 7). Children are here represented as stakeholders whose views should be sought at the point of policy and service development rather than solely as the object of such development. From this perspective, children are citizens, not just of the future, but of the present.

The implications of this view for early childhood education are considerable. A curriculum which develops the knowledge and skills for social participation of this kind could not be based on a linear hierarchical model with a progression from basic to advanced competencies. Literacy learning, in a hierarchical model, progresses from the basic skills of decoding through exposure to increasingly complex texts and eventually (if one gets that far) to a critical awareness. Freebody (2004), acknowledging that reading and writing are 'powerful emergent capabilities for individuals and communities' warns that 'the ways in which young people and novice readers ... are acculturated into literate society can, with equal power and consequence, deny or trivialise these capabilities' (p. 12). It follows that if children are considered to have the capability to understand their social worlds and participate as actors in them, the manner in which they are brought into literacy should not 'deny or trivialise' these capabilities. Given the complexities of children's social worlds, and the kinds of thinking and expression demanded by meaningful social participation, a complex and diverse set of literacy competencies needs to be made available.

Children mapping their worlds

Understanding one's place in the world is both a condition for, and an outcome of, citizenship. Yet children's knowledge of their worlds and their places in these worlds has not received a great deal of attention in educational research and theory until recently. The research tradition in child study has centred either on observation in 'natural' settings, generally home environments, or on experimental studies in which infants and young children are given tests in object manipulation, reasoning and so on (Rose, 1990; Tyler, 1993; Burman, 1994). Neither approach is well suited to investigating children's understandings of society and place beyond their immediate contexts. Neither is designed to take into account young children's exposure to ideas about society, place and identity encountered through popular culture (Sefton-Green, 2002; Holloway & Valentine, 2003). Neither is based on a view of child as citizen, either in the present or the distant future; the horizon is limited to the next stage of a developmental progression.

Kwan and Anderson (2001) have looked to the field of cartography for a different perspective on children's knowledge. The International Cartographic Association promotes appreciation of the diverse practices involved in recording and representing knowledge of environments in multiple dimensions: spatial, social, economic, biological, geological and cultural. This association runs an annual competition which invites children to produce maps with a different theme each year. Kwan and Anderson state that children's map-making gives us access to their constructs relating to culture, peace and conflict, and the environment.

A visitor to the website of the ICA (<http://www.icaci.org/>) will notice that in 2003 children as young as four, in locations from Slovakia to Brazil, submitted maps which addressed the theme 'Making a Better World for Children'. This theme invites children to consider themselves as citizens of a global community with a commitment to the well-being of other members of this community. To enter, children were required to produce representations of actual (rather than fantasy) spaces, use recognised map-making conventions and give their maps titles. For the purpose of this paper, I focus on maps produced by children in the youngest age range, unlike Kwan and Anderson who refer to a broader range of children. Like all texts, these maps are open to interpretation and my readings do not claim to state the 'truth' of what a particular child intended. Also, the role of helping adults in co-producing these texts is not known. However, these examples do suggest that young children are capable of forming, and representing, understandings of the worlds beyond their immediate contexts. This understanding is arguably one of the conditions of full citizenship in a society both local and global.

Carlo Valdez Juarez, six, of Argentina, has used the traditional circle form to symbolise the entire world. This circle is filled in with water colour blocks in somber shades of grey, green and blue. On top of this world stands a smiling figure with long hair and arms outstretched next to a smaller house and an even smaller tree. The wording of the caption pulls one up short; it states, 'The world is in a bad situation.' If the smiling figure represents what is closest to Carlo, the dark hues of the globe and the sobering text suggest that he has a sense of a different state of affairs outside his own context.

Arpad Barsony of Hungary, also six years old, submitted a map depicting a country whose physical shape and dimensions are taught to every school child in ... Australia. It is surrounded by a blue sea and fringed all round with the white froth of waves. Superimposed on the land are three figures each displaying tanned limbs; one holds a boomerang (iconic indigenous throwing tool), another rides a surfboard and a third seems to be on a smaller 'boogy' board. The caption reads, 'I wish I could play the games of children on the other side of the world.' What might this tell us about Arpad's understanding of his place in the world?

In relation to the theme of making a better world for children, this text speaks to the centrality of recreational opportunities and a healthy clean environment in this child's understanding of conditions of well-being. Another reading is that a child's local context is no longer necessarily the limit of his or her understanding of place and society (Holloway & Valentine, 2003). Television documentaries and soap

operas bring images of Australia and other countries into houses all over the world. An Australian child viewing this text could be afforded the novel and somewhat enlightening experience of being positioned as exotic and primitive in ways that Australians have tended to position people of other countries.

These maps can be seen as instances of children participating in a socially recognised text production activity (map-making), using visual and linguistic resources to communicate their understandings of a world in which they can claim to be global citizens. Their publication on the website of an international organisation shows the map-makers that others see them as fully entitled to participate in dialogue about the state of the world.

Literacies for citizenship

A back-to-basics agenda may help to ensure that children achieve foundational decoding skills in their first few years of formal education. Conservative and populist campaigns to increase story-book reading promise children the pleasures of family warmth and cognitive stimulation. No-one would wish to deny children these pleasures or to refute research evidence that indicates resultant gains in children's reading performance. Missing from these prescriptions, however, are opportunities for children to learn the knowledge and skills of social participation such as forming and voicing an opinion, understanding the ways in which texts record collective decisions and developing a repertoire of ways in which to represent knowledge of place, society and identity.

Taking children's citizenship seriously means providing educational environments in which educators: model, explicitly teach and provide opportunities for the expression of views; actively listen and respond to children's viewpoints and encourage children to listen and respond to each other; hold up for question adults' views about children; explain that adults sometimes write these views down and that these texts impact on children's lives; and translate adults' texts for children so that children can actively engage with these texts. This orientation to curriculum appears in a range of guises: place-based learning, critical thinking, democratic education, students-as-researchers and critical literacy are some compatible approaches and it is not the intention of this author to propose a single model. All of these approaches recognise children as social agents in and beyond the classroom. All are compatible with the explicit teaching of foundational skills (such as the decoding of print text) while at the same time bringing in a broader range of strategies for learning, recording, representing, articulating, debating and sharing knowledge.

Children's own keen interest in the workings of the social worlds they encounter in their families, in their peer groups, in institutional settings and in popular culture is the most valuable resource for educators. Adults' low expectations of young children's capacities for social agency have been described as 'the foremost barrier' to children's participation in decision-making (Hill *et al.*, 2004). However, this barrier may be overcome when genuine opportunities are made available for children to demonstrate their interest and competence. A greater obstacle is the hierarchical

model of literacy development, in which the literacies of social participation, such as the skills of debate, are seen as higher rungs on the ladder to be reached only after the foundational steps have been successfully scaled. Right at the top is full active citizenship – from which all those who remain on the lower rungs (including, still, the poor and those with disabilities) can expect to be excluded. To prevent this outcome, children's rights to literacy have to be understood as including, but extending beyond, the basics. Children should be accorded the right to participate as citizens, and to this end should be supported in acquiring the literacies of social participation.

References

- Brennan, M. (1996) Sustaining new forms of school life? A response to Stuart Macintyre's 'Diversity, citizenship and the curriculum', in: K. Kennedy (Ed.) *New challenges in civics and citizenship education* (Canberra, Australian Curriculum Studies Association), 29–32.
- Burman, E. (1994) *Deconstructing developmental psychology* (London, Routledge).
- Chung, S. & Walsh, D. (2000) Unpacking child-centredness: a history of meanings, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 32(2), 215–234.
- Comber, B. & Nichols, S. (2004) Getting the big picture: regulating knowledge in the early childhood classroom, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 4(1), 43–63.
- Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (year) *Your child's future: literacy and numeracy in Australian schools* (Canberra, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs) Available online at: www.detya.gov.au/schools/publicat.htm.
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writing*, C. Gordon (Ed.), (Brighton, Harvester Press).
- Freebody, P. (2004) Foreword, in: A. Healey & E. Honan (Eds) *Text next: new resources for literacy learning* (Newtown, Primary English Teachers Association), 3–18.
- Gee, J. (2002) A sociocultural perspective on early literacy development, in: S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds) *Handbook of literacy research* (New York, Guilford Press), 40–42.
- Hill, M., Davis, J., Prout, A. & Tisdall, K. (2004) Moving the participation agenda forward, *Children and Society*, 18(2), 77–96.
- Holloway, S. & Valentine, G. (2003) *Cyberkids: children in the information age* (London, Routledge).
- Kamler, B., Maclean, R., Reid, J. & Simpson, A. (1994) *Shaping up nicely: a report to the Gender Equity and Curriculum Reform Project* (Canberra, Department of Education, Employment and Training).
- Kenner, C. & Kress, G. (2003) The multisemiotic resources of biliterate children, *Journal of Early Childhood*, 3(2), 179–202.
- Kliwer, C., Fitzgerald, L., Meyer-Mork, J., Hartman, P., English-Sand, P. & Raschke, D. (2004) Citizenship for all in the literate community: an ethnography of young children with significant disabilities in inclusive early childhood settings, *Harvard Educational Review*, 74(4), 373–403.
- Kwan, T. & Anderson, J. (2001) Children's knowing through map constructs of 'their' world, in: M. Robertson & R. Gerber (Eds) *Children's ways of knowing: learning from experience* (Camberwell, ACER Press), 194–212.
- Labbo, L. (1996) A semiotic analysis of young children's symbol making in a classroom computer center, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(4), 356–385.
- Lankshear, C. (1997) *Changing literacies* (London, Open University Press).
- Moss, P. (2002) From children's services to children's spaces, paper presented at *ESCR seminar Challenging Social Inclusion: Perspectives for and from children and young people*, University of

- Stirling. Cited in Hill, M., Davis, J., Prout, A. & Tisdall, K. (2004) Moving the participation agenda forward. *Children and Society*, 18, 77096.
- New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People (2004) *A head start for Australia: an early years framework*. Available online at: www.kids.nsw.gov.au (accessed 10 June 2005).
- Nichols, S. (2004a) Literacy learning and children's social agendas in the school entry classroom, *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 27(2), 101–113.
- Nichols, S. (2004b) Reading the social world: the case of Prudence, in: B. Comber & J. Barnett (Eds) *Look again: longitudinal studies of children's literacy learning* (Marrickville, Primary English Teachers Association).
- Prout, A. (2001) Representing children: reflections on the Children 5–16 Programme, *Children and Society*, 15, 193–201.
- Prout, A. (2002) Researching children as social actors: an introduction to the Children 5–16 Programme, *Children and Society*, 16, 67–76.
- Rose, N. (1990) *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self* (New York, Routledge).
- Sefton-Green, J. (2002) Cementing the virtual relationship: children's TV goes online, in: D. Buckingham (Ed.) *Small screens: television for children* (London & New York, Leicester University Press), 185–207.
- Tisdall, E. & Davis, J. (2004) Making a difference? Bringing children's and young people's views into policy-making, *Children and Society*, 18(2), 131–142.
- Tyler, D. (1993) Making better children, in: D. Meredyth & D. Tyler (Eds) *Child and citizen: genealogies of schooling and subjectivity* (Nathan, Griffith University Press), 35–60.
- Vasquez, V. (2001) Classroom inquiry into the incidental unfolding of social justice issues: seeking out possibilities in the lives of learners, in: S. Boran & B. Comber (Eds) *Critiquing whole language and classroom inquiry* (Urbana IL, National Council of Teachers of English), 200–215.