



MONASH University

WHEN I THINK OF LEARNING ABOUT ASIA, ...

**STUDENTS' VIEWS OF ASIA, AND THEIR
MOTIVATIONS TOWARDS ASIA-RELATED LEARNING
IN TWO AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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Key Words

Asia literacy, studies of Asia, student voice, Othering of Asia, Q methodology, subjective task values, mixed methods.

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Abstract

Australia's national curriculum includes explicit learning of the diverse countries, cultures and peoples of Asia as a cross-curriculum priority. Despite this and previous initiatives to develop what has been called 'Asia literacy', recent evidence suggests that progress in the teaching and learning of this priority has been marginal and patchy (Halse, 2015c). Though various stakeholder views on this state of affairs have been canvassed, student voices have rarely been included in this discussion.

This study's main aim was to explore those student voices by providing a detailed and systematic account of students' ways of viewing Asia, and their motivations towards Asia-related learning. In particular, the study sought to determine the ways that students were imagining Asia, and whether the subjective values (Eccles, 2005) they held towards Asia-related learning helped explain their motivations to engage or not engage with this learning.

As a mixed method study situated within the pragmatism paradigm (Morgan, 2014), qualitative and quantitative data were analysed at the school, the year, and the (factor analysis derived) perspective level in accordance with a multi-tiered layer of embedded cases design (Yin, 2014). Participants aged 12-18 were recruited from two independent secondary schools in Melbourne, Australia; one all boys and one all girls. Data were generated in four stages via a survey ($n=200$), semi-structured focus group interviews ($n=32$), Q sort data ($n=52$), and written comments ($n=52$). Survey data were compared with data from a 2002 study to situate the overall attitudes of this 2015 cohort. Focus group discussions were coded for key statements, and these statements

were rank-ordered by students in a Q sort process that was factor analysed to identify shared viewpoints.

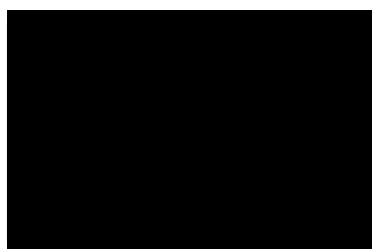
The findings suggest that although the dominant modes of viewing and Othering Asia (absence, threat and opportunity) (Pan, 2015a) are evident in students' views of Asia, there is significant diversity in the prevalence of these modes of viewing, as well as evidence of other ways of imagining both Asia, and Australia's relationship with an evolving internal and external Asia. Motivation to engage with Asia-related learning is equally diverse, with approximately half the students motivated by strong utility and attainment motivations, while the remaining half distributed across a wide range of perspectives on what engages them in Asia-related learning.

The resultant findings are relevant for informing the practices of current and future teachers, as well as teacher educators and curriculum and policy developers. The perspectives that emerged from the Q sort are useful for current teachers to consider which perspectives may be present within their classes, and how their teaching may be differentiated to target these diverse interests and motivations in order to maximise the Asia-related learning for each student. For teacher educators, these perspectives can be used to assist the preparation of pre-service teachers in a similar way. Curriculum and policy developers can also use these student perspectives to better inform the development and support of Asia-related teaching practices and resources. Such an approach will ensure progress is made towards the fundamental requirement of personalised learning and teaching that is based on each child's needs (Gonski et al., 2018).

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature:



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Date: 22nd June 2018

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List of Abbreviations

AACTF	Australia in the Asian Century Task Force
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
AEF	Asia Education Foundation
AIG	Australian Industry Group
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ANZF	Asia New Zealand Foundation
ASAA	Asia Studies Association of Australia
ASC	Asian Studies Council
AWPA	Australian Workplace and Productivity Agency
BAAL	Business Alliance for Asia Literacy
DCA	Diversity Council Australia
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIEA	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
EVT	Expectancy-value theory
HRSCEVE	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Education
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NALSAS	National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools
NALSSP	National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program
STVs	Subjective task values

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter begins with the background to this research, including the relevant background of the researcher. The aims and the research questions are then presented, followed by a discussion of the significance and scope of the study. The key terms are then defined, before concluding with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Increasing the knowledge and understanding among Australian school students of the diverse countries, cultures and peoples of Asia has been subject to periods of prioritisation and marginalisation in the education system for over forty years (AEF, 2014; Auchmuty, 1970). In a 1970 government report into Asian languages and Asian studies in Australian schools, it was noted that “there is at present an inadequate treatment of Asia, as an obligatory element, in social studies and other courses at secondary level” (Auchmuty, 1970, p. 89). Since then, and despite a general consensus among numerous state and federal governments over many years on the importance of increasing knowledge about Asia in Australia, the results of decades of initiatives and programs have not resulted in substantial policy goal achievements. There have been declines in Asian language learning and a limited diffusion of Asia-related studies in content taught in Australian schools (AEF, 2012b; Halse, 2015b; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009).

This landscape was altered most recently with the gradual implementation of Australia’s first national curriculum (the *Australian Curriculum*, or AC) in 2014 (ACARA, 2014d). Asia-related learning, or ‘Asia literacy’ as it has frequently been referred to, rose again to new levels of prominence as one of three cross-curriculum

priorities¹. Repackaged as *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia* (the Asia priority), Asia-related learning was now presented as a national priority to be embedded throughout the curriculum during the eleven years of compulsory schooling (Foundation to Year 10). Though this has symbolical significance, the various barriers that have hampered previous Asia literacy initiatives are largely remained unchanged (Halse, 2015b). According to the Asia Education Foundation (AEF), a key body that promotes Asia literacy within schools, a fundamental issue has been an insufficient focus on “driving change through building demand... among students, their parents and school leaders” (AEF, 2012b, p. 2). Building this demand, however, is problematic as not only is there a lack of detailed and systematic knowledge of current students’ attitudes towards ‘Asia’, there is no recent data available regarding students’ motivations towards learning about Asia in general. Apart from a limited attitudinal survey administered nationally to students in 2002 (Griffin, Woods, Dulhunty, & Coates, 2002), the perspectives and experiences of Australian students with respect to Asia-related learning are mostly unknown. While research linked to other curriculum areas has sought to understand students’ attitudes and motivations in order to develop more student-centred approaches to teaching, the curriculum that the Asia priority encompasses generally lacks these student voices. This study has sought to foreground aspects of this student perspective by way of exploring students’ views of Asia, and what motivates them to engage or not engage with Asia-related learning.

¹ The other two cross-curriculum priorities are *Sustainability* and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures*.

1.1.1 Researcher Background & Research Journey

As an educator with a professional and personal interest in Asia, my background has influenced the focus and design of this study. For approximately five years, I lived and worked in two Asian countries; Thailand and Japan. During those years, I also travelled frequently throughout Asia for both work and personal reasons. Though my own secondary schooling was mostly void of any learning about Asia, I majored in an Asian language during my undergraduate studies and completed a Master of Education degree specialising in Studies of Asia.

I began my secondary teaching career as a languages teacher (Japanese and Italian). That role gradually evolved into a Languages Coordinator role, and then as a Curriculum Coordinator, I was responsible for all aspects of teaching and learning in areas such as Humanities, English, and Languages. As part of my area of responsibility, I was tasked with ensuring that the school was addressing the requirements of the emerging national curriculum. With the Asia priority being included as a cross-curriculum priority, I saw considerable potential for that priority to drive the implementation of Asia-related learning across the curriculum, something that I regarded as being of significant value to all students.

During this period of teaching Asia-related content, and gradually embedding the Asia priority by way of updating the school curriculum and leading the professional development of colleagues in this area, it became evident to me that these activities were being undertaken with minimal knowledge of what our students really knew about Asia, and what their attitudes towards learning about Asia were. This was reinforced by the classroom experiences in which students demonstrated attitudes to Asia-related learning that seemed to be influenced by a great diversity of personal experiences, interests and motivations. Though there are a number of systemic issues surrounding

Asia-related teaching in schools that require system-wide responses, one area that could be addressed at a more local level was understanding the attitudes that students had towards Asia and Asia-related learning, and just as importantly, what was motivating students to engage or not engage with this learning.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS

To date, there has been limited systematic research into understanding students' views of Asia and what motivates student to engage or not engage with Asia-related learning. The aim of this study is to explore these two areas with a focus on ensuring the student voices are given as much prominence as possible during the data collection, analysis and reporting phases. The aim is not only to make these attitudes and motivations visible, but importantly, to explore factors that may be influencing these attitudes and motivations. This includes a critical examination of how 'Asia' has been constructed in the Australian discourse, and how these modes of viewing Asia may be influencing the attitudes students have towards Asia and Asia related learning. These modes of viewing Asia, discussed in depth in Chapter Three, include the Othering of Asia as absence, threat or opportunity (Pan, 2015a), Asia in the form of plurality and plural societies (Shamsul, 2006), and the 'Asia as method' discourse (K.-H. Chen, 2010).

This focus on the student experience is partly influenced by research in other educational domains that has highlighted the value of seeking student input into all stages of their learning (section 2.5). Taking a cue from these examples in other curriculum areas, research on student motivation towards Asia-related learning may also provide a way forward in efforts to understand what students think about this topic, and

how their attitudes and motivations can speak back to policy makers, curriculum developers and educators.

While there has already been some discussion of ‘what works’ in this area (AEF, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c), these approaches are generally still initiated from the educators’ perspectives, and students are usually consulted only at the end to see what their feedback is. Moreover, that feedback is predominantly still filtered through the educator’s perception of what is important and what is not. Previous research and theorisation of student voice (Chadderton, 2011; Fleming, 2015; S. Quinn & Owen, 2016; Rudduck & Fielding, 2006) has identified a range of challenges and potential issues that can arise, and these are discussed in detail in Chapter Two (section 2.5). This research has been designed with considered attention paid to these challenges, with the intention to explore and represent student voices in relation to this aspect of their schooling. The use of a novel research method (Q methodology) was an integral aspect of this student-centred approach as it provided a systematic and transparent way for the subjectivity of these participants to be accessed.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions are often generated from acknowledgements of gaps in the literature, such as the voice of individuals who have not been heard (Creswell, 2014a). The views of students, arguably the group with the most at stake in this discussion of their education, had yet to be explored. With this in mind, the following core research question was developed:

What are students’ views of Asia and what are their motivations towards Asia-related learning?

To address this question, the following two sub-questions (SQ) have guided particular aspects of the study:

SQ1: How do students view 'Asia'?

SQ2: How does motivation theory (EVT) help explain students' motivations towards engaging with Asia-related learning?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant for its theoretical and practical elements. The theoretical significance of this study is in the exploration and application of the modes of viewing and knowing Asia to the analysis of students' attitudes towards Asia and Asia-related learning. By extensively retracing the history of Australia-Asia relations, and the significant episodes in that relationship, it was possible to consider what may have been shaping students' attitudes. This was enhanced by looking beyond the Asia-Australia dynamic and exploring how 'Asia' has often been defined through a process of Othering (Pan, 2015a; Said, 1978). In addition, the discussion of more recent literature on a post-colonial 'Asia as method' discourse (K.-H. Chen, 2010) added another lens through which students' attitudes can be considered. Combining these conceptual frameworks and applying them to the analysis of students' attitudes to Asia and Asia related learning makes visible the hidden threads that link current views of Asia to previous events, discourses and societal attitudes.

At the practical level, this study helps to reduce the gap in current knowledge of students' attitudes towards Asia-related learning, and their motivations to engage or not engage with this learning. As Asia-related learning is one of only three cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian curriculum (known as *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia*), this is an area of teaching and learning that potentially affects all teachers and

students during the eleven years of compulsory schooling. Effectively engaging students in this learning is enhanced when teachers are able to draw upon research into the experiences, attitudes and motivations students may have towards this learning. The findings from this study are an initial step in building this body of research for educators to utilise.

This practical significance goes beyond the official curriculum documents and relates to the rapidly changing world that students are already entering into post-schooling. The inclusion of the Asia priority in the national curriculum was a reflection of the need to prepare students for a world in which Australia's demographics are changing, and its relationships with countries in the Asia region are continually being recalibrated (discussed in Chapters Two and Three). This was apparent in one of the goals in the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008), the most recent framework document for education in Australia. It stated that, as active and informed citizens, students "are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia" (2008, p. 9). Yet, even if that goal were to be excluded from a future version of the framework document, and the Asia priority were to be removed from the official curriculum, these internal and external transformations are highly likely to continue on regardless. As the discussions throughout Chapters Two and Three demonstrate, preparing students to be active and informed citizens in a future where 'Asia' is more visible inside and outside Australia will seemingly only gain further importance.

This study also seeks to contribute to addressing the gaps in Asia literacy-related knowledge that have been identified by a recent systematized review of research into the field (Halse & Cairns, 2018). That meta-analysis of 25 years of research pointed to

most previous studies being descriptive rather than theoretical, with an absence of multi-method research designs and minimal incorporation of theories from other areas, such as psychology. Though this current study is necessarily limited to what is feasible within the parameters of a PhD thesis, it has been designed in such a way as to build up the type of knowledge that Halse and Cairns have identified as most lacking.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are limits to the scope of this research that need to be noted. Firstly, the two schools involved in the study are not intended to represent all secondary schools in Australia. Though both schools have features in common with other schools in Australia, they also have their distinct characteristics that inevitably have an influence on the learning experiences of the students. Compared to the average numbers of students with a language background other than English across the state of Victoria (Victorian State Government, 2017), these two schools are less diverse. This would suggest that there are relatively fewer numbers of students identifying as Asian-background. Though migration to Australia from the Asian region has grown significantly in recent years discussed in section 2.3), the distribution of these migrants is not uniform, with some concentrations of specific Asian communities in parts of Melbourne and Sydney, while there are substantial areas with few Asians (Forrest, Johnston, Siciliano, Manley, & Jones, 2017). As a consequence, the locations of these two schools, in areas with relatively fewer Asian-background residents, has a dual relevance to the scope of this study.

Firstly, the attitudes and views of Asia explored in this study are predominantly from the perspectives of non-Asian background students. This must be taken into

consideration when evaluating the student perceptions of how much they feel they have learnt about Asia, both in and outside of school.

Conversely, as there are a significant number of schools that have similarly low numbers of Asian-background students ((Forrest et al., 2017), the results from this study provide some insights into how the rhetoric surrounding the Asia literacy discourse is still largely disconnected from the daily life of many Australian students. So while this study does not seek to explicitly capture the voices of a significant number of Asian-background students, it has provided some insights into the voices of those large numbers of students for whom Asia-related learning remains largely non-existent in their school and personal life.

Another factor that delimits the scope of this study is that most of the students in this study had at least half a year's experience studying an Asian language (Japanese and Chinese²). Though these two languages are among the six most widely taught in Australian schools (1st and 6th respectively), there are many schools where no Asian language is offered (Curnow, Kohler, Liddicoat, & Loechel, 2014; Kohler, Curnow, Spence-Brown, & Wardlaw, 2014; Sturak & Naughten, 2010).

The study also did not seek to investigate the specific instances of Asia-related learning within the curriculum in these two schools. There were practical and methodological reasons for this decision. Considering the range of data types that were already components in this mixed methods study, adding another potentially large data set generated from a curriculum audit would have increased the complexity of data analysis for possibly minimal additional value. From the methodological perspective, the Q approach to exploring subjectivity is based on the creation of a set of subjective

² Unless otherwise specified, Chinese (as in the language) refers to Mandarin (Putonghua) in this thesis.

statements that can be engaged with by all the potential participants in the study. If references were made in the statements to specific elements of a curriculum that only some of the participants had knowledge of, then this would potentially compromise the validity of their statement rankings.

1.6 KEY TERMS

While the final two terms listed below have relatively clear definitions, the complexities inherent in defining the first two ('Asia' and 'Asia literacy') are explored in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three.

1.6.1 Asia

The term 'Asia' eludes straightforward definitions, with at least fifty descriptions existing in the literature, all of which are open to some level of interpretation (Mackerras, 1995, p. 7). Within Australian education, although curriculum documents acknowledge diverse ways to define Asia (including in cultural, religious, historical, and linguistic terms), the following geographical definition is the only one provided in the official documentations (ACARA, 2014b):

While it includes West and Central Asia, in Australian schools, studies of Asia will pay particular attention to the sub-regions of:

- North-East Asia including China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan
- South-East Asia including Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam
- South Asia including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

In the following two chapters, I explore the origins of the concept of Asia and how geographical definitions such as the one above have some limitations in their usefulness. In addition, a key concept in this thesis is that beyond the multitude of possible definitions of Asia, it is the positioning of ‘Asia’ and the different modes of viewing Asia, especially from an Australian perspective, that need to be examined. By exploring the modes of viewing Asia within Australia, and considering these in light of those that have emerged from the student perspectives, it is then possible to question how Asia has been defined and positioned in the Australian school curriculum.

Bearing in mind this contentious nature of the term ‘Asia’, whenever it is appears in this thesis, it is used for its practicality. The reader is asked to always visualise it as being accompanied by an asterisk which footnotes an acknowledgement of its limitations.

1.6.2 Asia literacy

The term ‘Asia literacy’ combines both the complexities of the notion of ‘Asia’, along with the contentious concept of being ‘literate’ in this idea of Asia. The official national curriculum documentation describes Asia literacy as teaching and learning that provides students with a knowledge of:

Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world ... and ... the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region. (ACARA, 2014a)

In much of the literature that deals with Asia-related learning in Australian schools, the term ‘Asia literacy’ is used extensively as a conceptual shorthand for this

particular area of teaching and learning. While it is used in this thesis in a similar way, it is also a term that has been routinely reformulated and critiqued. The background to the term, its various formulations and the basis for these critiques are discussed in detail in section 2.4.1 of Chapter Two.

1.6.3 Asian Studies/Studies of Asia

These two terms appear in this study where reference is made to how learning about Asia was historically partitioned into a separate subject area in schools. Not all schools offered these subjects, and where they were offered, it was often as an elective (Dawkins, 1991; J. Quinn, 2005). The presence of this curriculum content has changed with the development of the national curriculum and the inclusion of *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia* as one the three cross-curriculum priorities. The expectation is that Asia-related learning should be present throughout learning areas in all schools. The issues that arose from the marginalisation of 'Asian studies' in the past are discussed in section 2.4.1 of Chapter Two.

1.6.4 Asia-related learning

Despite widespread usage of the term 'Asia literacy', the focus group discussions with students carried out in this study revealed that the term was either unfamiliar to students, or understood as only referring to the knowledge of Asian languages. When some of the notions that underpin the Asia literacy concept were unpacked with students in these focus groups, they would often use the phrase, 'learning about Asia' when they were referring to the broader scope that 'Asia literacy' entails. Therefore, to capture this student conceptualisation, I use the term 'Asia-related learning' in this thesis to emphasise this student perspective and to shift focus away from the problematic concept of 'Asia literacy'.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of seven chapters, two of which are analysis and discussion chapters. The chapter contents are summarised below.

Chapter One - Introduction outlines the research study by providing the background, aims and significance. The research questions that guide the study are detailed, along with definitions of key terms. An overview of each chapter's structure completes this introduction.

Chapter Two - Context and Literature presents the historical and modern context that has influenced the discourses around 'Asia' and 'Asia literacy'. As these historic and recent influences have profoundly shaped how 'Asia' and 'Asia literacy' are imagined in the Australian national discourse, exploring these influences and events provides a context for a greater depth of understanding of students' views towards 'Asia' and Asia-related learning. Importantly, the problematic nature of these concepts is presented in this context and literature chapter, and this discussion is elaborated on during the discussion of the conceptual frameworks presented in the subsequent chapter. Chapter Two also explores how student voice has become a growing area of interest within the education research context.

Chapter Three - Conceptual Frameworks has two distinct parts. It begins with a review of the literature that explores how 'Asia' has been imagined from various perspectives, including the dominant modes of viewing Asia within Australia. The analysis of students' attitudes in Chapters Five and Six is done with reference to this literature on the representations of Asia.

The second part of Chapter Three examines the relevant literature on motivation theory. Though 'motivation' is a complex construct that can be approached from

multiple perspectives, decades of research into motivation in education has produced a large body of literature and theories. For the purposes of this study, the relevant elements of this literature are briefly discussed, before presenting the specific motivational construct that is used in this study, expectancy-value theory (Eccles, 2005). This achievement motivation theory provides a systematic way to differentiate between the types of motivation that may be driving students' attitudes to Asia-related learning.

Chapter Four - Research Process details the pragmatism paradigm that guided this research, as well as an explanation of the mixed methods approach. I then explain Q methodology, the innovative and powerful research tool that was central to this study. The remainder of this chapter provides details on the participants, the data collection processes, and how the data has been analysed.

Chapter Five - Survey Results and Discussion presents the results of the survey instrument that was originally used in the 2002 national study. Though direct comparisons of results are not possible, the overall differences and similarities between the two sets of data are examined. The results from the participants in this study are also analysed in relation to the conceptual frameworks that were discussed previously; namely the modes of viewing Asia, and the motivational drivers of these views.

Chapter Six - Q Results and Discussion also draws on the conceptual frameworks to explore the results from the Q methodology factor analysis. These factors, or perspectives, are the shared viewpoints of the students. These perspectives are analysed with reference to the two conceptual frameworks from Chapter Three in order to gain insights into the different perspectives that student hold

Chapter Seven - Conclusion looks back at the rationale for this study, and how the research question has been addressed. The limitations of the study are described, and

the chapter concludes with the recommendations that the findings suggest in relation to the range of potential interested parties.

Chapter 2: Context & Literature

In this chapter, I provide the historical and modern context that has influenced the discourses around ‘Asia’ and ‘Asia literacy’. This thesis contends that the historic and recent influences discussed below have profoundly shaped how ‘Asia’ and ‘Asia literacy’ have been imagined in the Australian national discourse. The discussion of this context is accompanied by the relevant literature on the ‘Asia literacy’ concept. Exploring these influences and events, and how these have been discussed in the literature, provides the context for a greater depth of understanding of students’ views towards ‘Asia’ and Asia-related learning. This is directly linked to the main research question: *What are students’ views of Asia and what are their motivations with respect to Asia-related learning?*

The chapter begins with a summary of the key historical events that have helped shape the Australia-Asia relationship. This history also provides the foundation for the conceptual framings of ‘Asia’ that are discussed in Chapter Three. Following this, the more recent developments in the Australia-Asia relationship in areas such as politics and immigration are examined. To put these developments into the broader global context, the recent emphasis on learning about Asia in some comparative countries is also briefly discussed.

This leads on to the more recent developments in the Australian education sphere that directly affects students’ current learning. Though considerable attention has been paid to ‘Asia literacy’ over the past few decades, the student perspectives on this area of learning remain largely unknown. The discussion of this central concern and the broader discussion of student voice conclude this chapter.

Figure 2.1 depicts the relationship between the contexts and literature as they are discussed in this chapter, with the historical and modern contexts providing a background to the current educational focus on Asia literacy, and how the student perspective is positioned as a central element of this discussion.

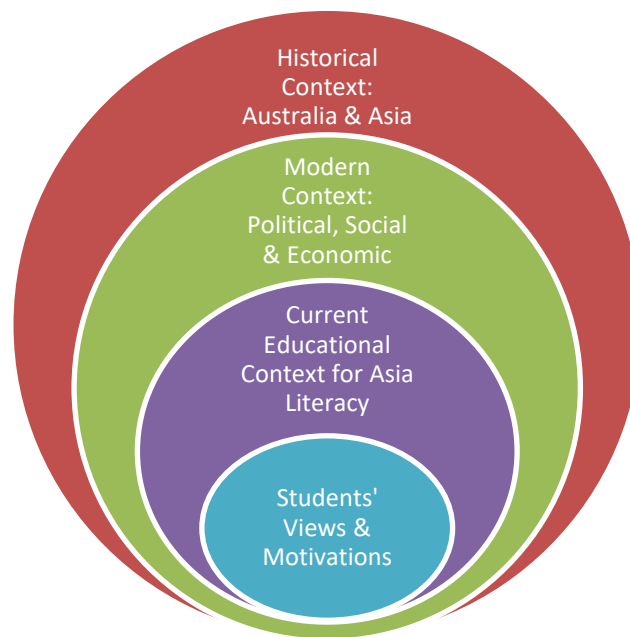


Figure 2.1. Background and foreground contexts shaping this study.

2.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The word ‘Asia’ is used extensively in this thesis, both separately and in terms such as ‘Asia literacy’, ‘Asia capabilities’, and ‘Asia-related learning’. While a definition of how the term is used would normally precede the discussion, the complexities inherent in the term ‘Asia’ render concise definitions open to criticism from multiple perspectives. The problem partly stems from the fact that it is possible to define Asia using diverse reference points, including geographical, historical, ethnographic, political, economic, cultural, linguistic, and religious.

Though geography may appear to lend a physical concreteness to a definition, critiques of these geographical definitions have highlighted their limitations. In the field

of Area Studies, where geographical metaphors constitute the basic framework for visualising the world, van Schendel (2002) has shown how the traditional areas of study are neither static nor pre-given, but rather have been socially constructed to produce “geographies of knowing but also geographies of ignorance” (van Schendel, 2002, p. 647). In the education sphere, where geography is usually tasked with setting the boundaries of what is ‘in’ and ‘out’ of Asia, there has been criticism that this is more for convenience sake and fraught with the danger of not being “helpful in Australian efforts to build good relationships with the countries in the region” (McGillivray & Smith, 1997, p. 4).

Turning to historical definitions is equally fraught as these raise questions of the worldviews of those who generated the definitions. From early Greek thought onwards, ‘Asia’ has been more of a literary and psychological construct than an actual geographical one. The ancient Greek notion of the world bisected into ‘Europe’ and ‘Asia’ (Tozer, 1971) was modified by later philosophers such as St Augustine, who carved off Africa from Europe to create a world of three imagined regions; with Asia occupying half of the world, and Europe and Africa making up the rest (Boer, 1995). These purely hypothetical boundaries and spaces became the accepted view of how the world was made, and descriptions of a mostly ‘unknown Asia’ were made by contrasting it with the ‘known Europe’; as Hippocrates did when he surmised that the two continents “in all respects differ from one another” (Hippocrates, 2007 [400 BCE], Section 12). This division of the world based on philosophical conjecture is one reason why historians such as March (1974) have argued that “the region ‘Asia’ is a relic of history, and there is no cultural or historical entity that can rationally be subsumed under this single term” (1974, p. 23). Scholars from Asian nations have also made a variety of critiques of how the notion of ‘Asia’ has been constructed as a narrowly

defined, Western concept that articulates more about the West than it does about Asian nations (discussed further in Chapter Three, sections 3.1 and 3.2).

From an Australian perspective, there have also been debates on the uses of the term ‘Asia’. In line with how the term sometimes appears between inverted commas in this thesis, some scholars have argued that this can help to problematize the concept and highlight its existence as a constructed and, particularly in the Australian political discourse, ambivalent sign of hope and fear (C. Johnson, Ahluwalia, & McCarthy, 2010). This dichotomy of hope and fear, along with other modes of ‘othering’ Asia, are explored further in section 3.2 in the following chapter.

The term ‘Asia’ has also been critiqued as perpetuating a symbolism that “reflects a racist (in part, at least) or, at best, colonial era conception of the world and its many parts” (Mackie, 1993, p. 155). Mackie suggests avoiding the word altogether and using terms such as ‘Asian countries’ and ‘Asian peoples’ in the hope that this will prompt a more accurate perception among Australians of the many differences between and within Asian countries. However, despite the benefits these more nuanced terms might afford, it is often the case that the catchall terms of ‘Asia’, and the related ‘Asian studies’, become the default. This reality was noted by one of the leading scholars in the field, Stephen FitzGerald, in one of the early reports on Asia in Australian education. Despite a preference for avoiding the terms ‘Asia’ and ‘Asian studies’, he conceded that they were used “for reasons of convenience and brevity” (S. FitzGerald, 1980, p. 12).

Bearing in mind these criticisms of the definitions of ‘Asia’, it may prove more instructive to explore what is imagined by the term ‘Asia’. This is the approach taken in this thesis, and the different modes of viewing ‘Asia’ in the Australian imagination, as discussed in the following chapter, provide the conceptual framework for examining the

attitudes expressed by students towards Asia-related learning. As those different modes of viewing Asia are strongly influenced by historical and modern events, the following sections in this chapter provide this contextual background.

2.2 AUSTRALIA AND ASIA – A COMPLEX HISTORY

The objective of improving knowledge about Asia among Australian students received its most recent boost in 2014 with the gradual implementation of the Australian Curriculum (AC) (ACARA, 2014a). As one of the three cross-curriculum priorities, this focus on Asia, known as *Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia* (the 'Asia Priority'), elevates the importance of this objective by stating that it should have a "strong, but varying presence" in the curriculum for all students from the foundation years up to senior secondary studies (ACARA, 2014a). Though this priority has usually been framed as a response to an unprecedented set of circumstances confronting Australia (Gillard, 2011), the lengthy history of relations between Australia and Asia, as discussed below, provides numerous examples of similar moments of optimism scattered amongst extended periods of anxiety (Walker & Sobocinska, 2012).

A consistent theme in Australia's relationship towards Asia is how inconsistent the positions have been prior to and since the invasion of the British to establish a penal colony in 1788. As Crotty and Roberts (2006) have catalogued, Australia's past is replete with examples of the contradictory attitudes taken towards the relationship with Asia. Furthermore, while the discussion of Australia vis-à-vis Asia is often presented as being of only recent importance, the historical facts contradict the novelty of this debate. Centuries before European voyagers travelled to Australian waters, there was a thriving trade between northern Australia and the inhabitants of Indonesia and Malaysia (Carment, 1997; P. Stephenson, 2007). This was partly a result of what has been called

an 'Asian diaspora' in parts of northern Australia (Nagata, Shnukal, & Ramsay, 2004). When Europeans began to explore the continent, there was a common belief that it was a continuation of what was viewed as Asia. For many Europeans, Australia, or 'Austral-Asia' as it was often referred to, was seen as an extension of eastern Asia (Battersby, 2004; Shepherd, 1938; Wakefield, 1829). These shifting views of what was considered within the boundaries of 'Asia' are a reflection of the arbitrary nature of these modes of viewing the world. As mentioned above, the term 'Asia' was an external, European-centric framing of the world that had little meaning within the region until incorporated from outside (March, 1974; Waddell, 1972). And while Australia may have been seen as an extension of eastern Asia prior to the establishment of the British settlement in 1788, the creation of this British outpost signified the symbolic removal of Australia from this imagined 'Asia'. As will be discussed in the next chapter, this has added to the problematic notion within Australia that it is *in* but not *of* Asia (Ang, 1999), a conflicted view that has fundamentally influenced the framing of 'Asia literacy'.

2.2.1 The beginnings of division

The first significant decision that shaped the interactions between Australia and Asia was taken by the British government on behalf of the East India Company (Shaw, 1984). To restrict the entry of potential competitors to the extremely lucrative trade that the East India Company enjoyed within Asia, the Governor of the penal colony was given clear instructions to prohibit any commercial activity with the neighbouring countries:

It is our royal intention that every sort of intercourse between the intended settlement at Botany Bay, or other place which may hereafter be established on the coast of New South Wales ... and the settlements

of our East India Company, as well as the coast of China and the islands situated in that part of the world ... should be prevented by every possible means. (Phillip, 1787, p. 10)

No suitable sailing ships were allowed to be constructed, and no third parties were permitted to transport cargo between the nascent colony and the markets in China and elsewhere. These long-lasting restrictions made it virtually impossible for the new settlers to develop any trade or cultural links with their neighbours in the region. Yet the perception of Australia as an Asian country remained, and as Shepherd writes, “until the middle of the nineteenth century Australia remained linked with Asia in the minds of people in Europe, and indeed in the minds of the Australian settlers themselves” (Shepherd, 1939, p. 4). Though it is likely that the new settlers would have always felt the strongest connection with Britain, it would be an intriguing inquiry task for students to contemplate how the Australia-Asia relationship would have evolved if the natural opportunities for trade, travel and cultural links had been permitted to develop unfettered by the hegemony of the East India Company. Though the prejudices of the time were deeply entrenched, it is feasible to consider that the greater trade and travel that could have occurred may have reduced the likelihood that Australia would have developed such a strong sense of being *in* but not *of* the region.

It was only in the mid-19th century that circumstances forced the pre-Federation, self-governing colonies to seriously consider their relationship with Asia. The event that crystallised the nascent distinction between Australia and Asia was the gold rush of the mid-1800s and the arrival of immigrants from China and other parts of Asia. Not only did this increase in the population lead to the distinction being made between the European settlers and the new arrivals, but it also resulted in a fundamental

transformation in how the two regions now viewed each other. The growing tensions on the goldfields between the European and Chinese miners was a major impetus for legislation put forward to limit the number of Chinese migrants. One of the first acts of the newly formed Australian Federal Parliament was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which formed the basis of what would become commonly referred to as the 'White Australia policy'. A collection of policies rather than just one, these were designed to exclude non-Europeans from migrating to Australia, with Asian and Pacific Island migrants the primary targets for exclusion (Carey & McLisky, 2009; Tavan, 2005). A widely read book of the time, both locally and abroad (Meaney, 1995; Roosevelt, 1894; Tregenza, 1968) was *National Life and Character: A Forecast*, by Charles Pearson (1894). The central narrative in the text was the author's prediction of the eventual dominance of China, which he characterised in racial terms as the 'lower races' eventually overtaking the 'higher' European ones (Pearson, 1894, p. 363). The term 'Yellow Peril', which has been a common refrain during periods of heightened xenophobia in Australia (Coughlan & McNamara, 1997; Meaney, 1995) can be traced back to the 1890s and was borne from the predictions set out in Pearson's book.

The emergence of the view of 'Asia as a threat' was also imbued in the phrase 'awakening East', which was used widely from the 1870s (Walker, 2012). This Eurocentric outlook framed the discourse as one in which the subjects of these countries in the 'East' were achieving a new condition of physical and mental awareness which had not previously existed. The inference was that where once there was passivity and a sense of 'lost in time', now there was a more energised and proactive 'East', which would be more aggressive in its outlook. This was occurring at a time when Australia was becoming a nation framed within the construct of a European outpost, isolated from its roots and surrounded by an Asia which was becoming ever more powerful and

resistant to being controlled (Walker, 2012). This is evident in the continuing theme in the history of Australia's foreign relations of the "geography versus history" argument (McDougall, 2009, p. xv). Due to the self-perception of being a Western country in a non-Western environment, Australia perceived its international environment as threatening, which in turn led to a strong preference to orientate towards Britain and the United States for protection (McDougall, 2009, p. 3). This 'Asia as threat' mode of viewing the region is discussed further in the following chapter as it is part of the conceptual framework through which students' views of Asia are analysed.

2.2.2 Early voices for closer ties with Asia

Yet even during this time of officially sanctioned discrimination against Asians, there were still prominent voices whose visions of Australia's potential relationships with Asia are remarkably similar to the rationales heard today for increased 'Asia literacy'. The present emphasis by Australian governments and business groups on the economic opportunities afforded by the 'Asian century' (AsiaLink, 2012; AACTF, 2012), are modern repetitions of similar proposals that emerged in the early 19th century. In the 1820s, one of the first known examples of the 'Asia as opportunity' mode of imagining Asia was evident in the predictions that the huge populations of Asia would present unheard of trading opportunities to Australian businesses. Not only would the markets of Asia be a boon for Australia, but immigration from Asia could transform the Australian wilderness into an immensely productive zone (Walker, 2012, pp. 9-10).

Alfred Deakin (later to become Australia's second Prime Minister) regarded India as an important source of knowledge from which European cultures had much to learn. He posed the question:

What can we know of Australia if we limit our inquiries within our borders, to the neglect of our relations far and near, and those Asiatic empires which lie closest to us, with whose future our own tropical lands may yet be partially identified? (Deakin, 1893, p. 151)

His vision included a hope that Australia could play the role of bringing this knowledge to the West (Walker, 2012). It is a role that a more recent Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, imagined Australia could play as the most ‘Asia-literate’ country that could “interpret Asia to the (English speaking) world” (Morris-Suzuki, 2000, pp. 19-20). While Deakin’s focus was on India, Rudd’s personal fixation was on interpreting China for the West (Pan, 2015b). Although Pearson and Deakin postulated contrasting potential futures for Australia, their outlooks highlighted the inevitable influence Asia would have on Australia’s future, and that more knowledge of this region was a growing requirement for Australians.

The economic and instrumentalist arguments for greater engagement with Asia, most prominent in the ‘Asian century’ discourse of today, were also to be heard during the late nineteenth century. At a public lecture in 1895 to an audience which included the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Manufacturers, the Royal Agricultural Society, the Melbourne Employers’ Union and the Trades Hall Council, the key message was that Australia was blessed with an advantageous geographical proximity to a world of huge trading opportunities (Walker, 2012, p. 10). In another public lecture in 1906 given by the Founding Chairman of the Stock Exchange of New South Wales, the case was made for increasing the general knowledge of Asian cultures within Australia and introducing the study of Asian languages and cultures in university courses so that young Australians might be better equipped for their future in the Asia-

pacific region (Currie-Elles, 1906). Of particular note here is that unlike the vast majority of Australia's current political and business leaders (AsiaLink, 2014; Lo Bianco, 2011), Currie-Elles was himself fluent in Chinese having lived there for many years (Walker, 2015). In letters to newspapers he strongly urged young Australians to learn not only languages such as Chinese and Japanese, but also to study the diverse cultures in the region in order to make full use of the trade, travel and cultural exchange opportunities that the region could offer (Currie-Elles, 1917). Though these rationales are over 100 years old, the current urgings put forward for engaging with Asia by governments and business leaders today closely echo the exhortations of Currie-Elles.

This historical overview of the Australia-Asia relationship has highlighted the factors that have come to influence how Asia is often positioned from an Australian perspective. The following section moves the discussion forward to the modern context and explores the continued presence of these 'Asia as threat' or 'Asia as opportunity' discourses.

2.3 MODERN CONTEXT

2.3.1 Immigration debates

Though the 'White Australia' discriminatory immigration policy was gradually dismantled during the period of 1950 to the mid-1970s, there have been regular public debates over Asian migration to Australia since then. The steady increase in migration from Asia continued such that during the 10 years from 1981 to 1991, the number of people in Australia who were born in Asia increased by 85 percent, taking the percentage of Asian born residents from 2.5 percent in 1981 to 4 percent in 1991 (S.-E. Khoo, 1993). And it was during this period that objections to migration policies, with an emphasis on the Asian migration component, came to the fore. Factors such as the

‘visibility’ of these new migrants to the ‘Western colonial eye’ and the perception that enclaves of these new migrants were being established in the cities and suburbs created moments of what Hage (2003) describes as ‘white fever’. He writes that “despite the move towards multiculturalism and the successive waves of non-White migration, ‘Asia’ still played the role of a kind of primordial threat in the White Australia psyche” (2003, p. 62).

An example of this ‘Asia as threat’ mentality was most evident in 1984 when one of Australia’s pre-eminent historians, Geoffrey Blainey, gave a public speech in which he questioned the number of migrants coming to Australia from Asia. This would, according to Blainey, have adverse consequences for the Australian population as it threaten the ‘social cohesion’ of Australia (Blainey, 1984, 1991). With the remaining vestiges of the White Australia policy only just recently abolished, this national debate received great attention within the Asia region, where the memories of the discriminatory migration policy still cast a shadow over the relationships between Australia and countries in the Asia-Pacific region (Jayasuriya, Walker, & Gothard, 2003; Lewins, 1987).

Blainey sought to portray his argument as an objective one in which he was taking a measured approach by putting forward the range of opinions on the topic. This justification, however, was questioned by his critics who pointed to Blainey’s previous writings, in which he often “used the language of invasion and warfare to describe the impact of Asian immigration” (Markus, 2001, p. 65). There were also other criticisms of the evidence Blainey relied on to substantiate his views. The public opinion polls that Blainey regularly used to support his argument that there was a lack of support for Asian immigration have been critiqued for their questionable validity (Goot, 1984).

Findings from other, more detailed attitude surveys (DIEA, 1986a; DIEA, 1986b) provided conflicting evidence that contradicted Blainey's assumptions. In terms of Asian migration and how it was accepted, these more detailed surveys showed that rather than Asian migration being a problem, there were other more influential factors that respondents tended to focus on. As Coughlan notes:

As in migrant communities from the United Kingdom, Europe, New Zealand and elsewhere, there are those who do well and those who do not. It suggests that the success or failure of migrants has less to do with their ethnicity than with their socio-economic background. (1997, p. 8)

Though empirical research such as this underscored the complexity of issues surrounding migration, this seemed to count for little to a significant proportion of the Australian population who felt that Blainey and his supporters were voicing their unacknowledged concerns. Though the historic fear of an external military threat of invasion from Asia had mostly passed, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw an increase in public angst about possible internal threats from the "Asia within Australia". This was further exemplified when the senator for the right-wing One Nation political party, Pauline Hanson, proclaimed in her 1996 maiden speech to parliament that Australia was in danger of being "swamped by Asians" (P. Hanson, 1996). Though there was widespread condemnation of these remarks (Mackie, 1997; Stratton, 1998), it was also noticeable that many of these rebuttals were based on a logic that actually reinforced this notion that the numbers of migrants from Asia needed to be watched carefully. In seeking to downplay the fear of Australia being 'swamped by Asians', it was not uncommon for politicians and others to point to the statistics and say that since only

approximately five percent of the Australian population had an Asian background, this was not consistent with ‘being swamped’. As Ang (2000, p. xiv) has subsequently argued, this fixation on percentages:

betrays a persistent underlying anxiety about Australia’s ‘Asianised’ future. Five percent may not be ‘too many’, but what about 10, 25, 50 percent? ‘Too many’ for whom? This hypothesizing over numbers is based on the tacit assumption that there is a line to be drawn somewhere, where the ‘benefits’ of having Asians around will supposedly be outweighed by the ‘disadvantages’, where the ‘danger’ of being ‘swamped by Asians’ does apparently become a reality. (Ang et al., 2000, p. xiv)

Though immigration has always remained a contentious issue within Australia, more recent surveys on attitudes to Asian migration suggest that this fear of an internal ‘Asia as threat’ may be gradually dissipating. Though the years 2015-2016 saw 31 percent of total migrants originating from Southern Asia and 17 percent from Chinese Asia (Markus, 2017), the comparison of longitudinal data from annual surveys of social cohesion do not show any heightened sense of negativity towards these arrivals (Markus, 2017, p. 56). This contextual background on migration, and the ‘Asia as threat’ mode of view that is further discussed in the next chapter, are drawn on in the analysis of student comments related to their views on Asian migration to Australia (Chapters Five and Six).

2.3.2 Shifting political perspectives

Following on from that period of immigration debates, the question of Australia’s place in the region, how it saw itself and how it was seen by others, continued to receive

national attention. The Australian Prime Minister from 1991 to 1996, Paul Keating of the centre-left party, had argued that it was misguided to view the choice as one of either an Asian nation or a European one. In refuting the idea that Australia could ever be an 'Asian nation', Keating saw the development of lasting and deep relations as contingent on Australia understanding and embracing its own unique identity, including the growing number of immigrants from the Asia region (P. Keating, 1993). In a later reflection on that period, he commented that:

Behind all these charges seemed to lie the belief that Australia faced only one simple choice: to be 'Asian' or to be 'European'. Of course, I never saw Australia in those terms. For all that we had done and created here, we could only be the nation we had become: the Australian nation. A unique group of people; a derivative of no other country. (P. Keating, 2000, p. 20)

Far more important to Keating than the labels used was the actual participation of Australia in the region. This position was echoed by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans, who highlighted the steps the nation had taken in rethinking its place in the world. Though he also acknowledged that the idea Australia could be considered an Asian nation was unlikely, he did propose the concept of Australia being part of an 'East Asian Hemisphere'. He suggested that:

Thinking of ourselves occasionally, as circumstances arise, as an East Asian Hemisphere nation, and having others in the region able to comfortably think of us in this way, can do nothing to harm, and much to advance, Australia's longer-term efforts to engage and integrate with this part of the world on which our future so much depends. It

would add value to our perception of ourselves and our role in the region, and to other's perception of us. (Evans, 1995)

Even the change in language from regarding Asia as 'the far East' to 'the near North' (Gothard, 1995, p. 1) points to an ontological shift in how Australians viewed their position as not solely from an inherited European/British perspective, but from a uniquely Australian standpoint.

In contrast to these visions of Australia's future, the subsequent Prime Minister from the centre-right party, John Howard, countered that there was no prospect of Australia being seen as an emerging Asian nation (Gorjão, 2003). Soon after taking office after victory in the 1996 election, and just a week after Hanson had given her inflammatory, anti-Asian immigration speech in the Australian Senate, Howard took the opportunity of a speech at the official banquet during his visit to Indonesia to dispel the notion that Australia could morph into a bridge between 'Asia' and the 'West'. He stated that:

We do not claim to be Asian. Like every other country in the Asia-Pacific, we bring our own distinct culture, attitudes and history to the region. I do not believe that Australia faces a choice between our history and our geography between our links with European and North American societies on the one hand and those with the nations of Asia on the other. Neither do I see it as a matter of balancing our interests in Asia against or with our interests in the rest of the world. Neither do I see Australia as a bridge between Asia and the West as is sometimes suggested. Rather I believe that our geography and history are elements in an integrated relationship with our region and the wider

world. Our links with Asia add something to our links with the rest of the world, and vice versa. For example, our close association and alliance relationship with the United States contribute to the prosperity and stability of the region. (Howard, 1996)

The sense that Australia was once again withdrawing from engagement with Asia became more apparent following budget allocation changes made by the Howard government. The previous centre-left governments had placed an emphasis on greater engagement with Asia, and had sought to build capacity for this with long-term funding to support more widespread and sustained study of Asian languages in schools (Rudd, 1994). However, despite evidence of some progress being made in increasing the study of Asian languages, in 2002 the Howard government terminated commonwealth support for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) program before its original expiry date of 2006 (Henderson, 2008). The impact of this withdrawal of commonwealth funds was quickly felt, with key initiatives such as the Access Asia program for schools losing 80 percent of its funding, and professional development programs for teachers decreasing by 75 percent (Kirby, 2004).

However, just as the broader Australian attitudes to Asia have tended to waver between imaginations of Asia as ‘threat’ or ‘opportunity’, the political class has demonstrated the same vacillation and lack of bipartisan commitment to what many see as a broader national priority that transcends political differences (Menadue, 2012; Walker, 2015; Wesley, 2016). After the centre-right party was ousted in 2007 with a landslide victory to the centre-left Labor party (Koutsoukis, 2007), the pendulum swung back to placing greater emphasis on learning about Asia and Asian languages in schools. With Kevin Rudd, the author of the 1994 report into Asian languages and

Australia's economic future (Rudd, 1994) as Prime Minister, concrete steps were taken to make learning about Asia an integral and visible part of the school experience for all students (MCEETYA, 2008). Since then, and undoubtedly influenced by the growing dependence of the Australian economy on the rapid growth in the Asia region, both major political parties have adopted similar policy positions by latching onto the perceived utilitarian benefits of improving knowledge of Asian languages and cultures among the Australian population (Abbott, 2014; Gillard, 2011; Turnbull, 2015, 2017).

2.3.3 Asia-related learning beyond Australia

Although the hype surrounding the 'Asian century' has been criticised for getting ahead of the geopolitical realities (Asia Century Symposium, 2013), there is little doubt that its global significance is real, and Australia is not the only country that has tasked the education system to prepare future generations for this expected realignment of economic, cultural and geopolitical centres of power. Other countries that have characteristics in common with Australia (geographically and/or demographically) have also placed an importance on increasing knowledge of Asia as an educational objective. Though Australia appears to have led this reorientation, the experiences in New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America (USA) are of comparative interest. Before examining in detail the emergence and status of 'Asia literacy' in Australia, the developments in these countries are briefly discussed.

2.3.3.1 New Zealand

As it shares many geographical, demographic and economic characteristics in common with Australia, it is not surprising that New Zealand has also focused on increasing levels of 'Asia-readiness' at the school and tertiary level (Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand, 2004; P. B. Keating & Keen, 2004). Successive New Zealand governments have proposed initiatives that have been based on economic

imperatives, many of which have also been critiqued for a lack of epistemological and pedagogical clarity (Pang, 2004). As with the situation in Australia, Pang argues that the role of the teacher in these initiatives has not been sufficiently envisioned or supported, and this has led to poor outcomes (Pang, 2004, 2005). Surveys of teachers and teacher educators revealed that “among academic staff of New Zealand’s colleges and schools of education, there are practically no Asia specialists” (P. B. Keating & Keen, 2004, p. 57).

The Asia New Zealand Foundation (ANZF), a comparable body to the Asia Education Foundation in Australia, has released a number of reports and surveys into Asia-related learning in New Zealand schools (Colmar Brunton, 2013, 2017; E. Ho, Cheung, & Didham, 2017). Of particular relevance to the aims of this current study into Australian students’ attitudes to Asia-related learning, the ANZF carried out two surveys (in 2012 and 2017) of students’ ‘Asia readiness’ from the perspective of the students. Noting that the 2017 results were worse than those of 2012, the report notes that the “survey results suggest we are educating a generation of New Zealanders who will not be able to fully prosper in a world increasingly focussed on Asia... we are not getting any better at this” (Colmar Brunton, 2017, p. 2). Though the AEF in Australia have not conducted similar surveys, the other related survey data and reports discussed in this thesis suggest that the Australian experience has not been markedly different.

2.3.3.2 *Canada*

The economic rationale for building Asia literacy that is so prominent in Australia has also gained some traction in Canada, with an Asia Competence Task Force created in 2013 as a response to the concern that Canadians may not “have the skills, knowledge and experience to successfully pursue business opportunities and build lasting relationships with Asian partners” (Mulroney & De Silva, 2014, p. 4). In a similar

fashion to the Asia capabilities focus in Australia being driven by economic imperatives, in Canada the language is the development of ‘Asia competent’ young Canadians as part of a competitive environment between Canada and countries such as Australia and the United States (Kwan, 2017). Among the variety of issues the Task Force reported on, there was also the identification of a lack of sufficient preparation and support for teachers to include an Asia focus in their teaching. A suggested solution to this problem was to look to the cross-curriculum Asia priority in the Australian curriculum as a good model to follow (Williams, 2016). The approach taken in Australia is cited as being the most comprehensive, with the report authors stating that “it would be fair to say that Australia has been experimenting with building Asia competence longer than any other comparable country, and that it has developed the most comprehensive program for addressing the challenges of doing so” (Mulroney & De Silva, 2014, p. 25). However, without a national curriculum, any efforts to incorporate similar cross-curriculum priorities in Canada is dependent on the decisions made by the provincial authorities who have control over their respective curricula.

2.3.3.3 *The USA*

In 2001, the non-governmental educational organisation, the Asia Society (USA) released an in-depth report on Asia in U.S. schools. They reported that the vast majority of students learnt very little about Asia during their schooling, and the majority of teachers are insufficiently prepared to teach about Asia. As with similar reports produced in Australia, the economic rationale was prominent throughout the document, though the strategic, geopolitical imperative was also stressed. The legacy of an ‘Area studies’ mindset (Mielke & Hornidge, 2017; Morris-Suzuki, 2000) is evident in a table presented at the beginning of the document, with each Asian country listed with the political, military, economic and social issues these countries were seen to present from

the U.S. perspective. The report states, “Asia is ripe with opportunities. At the same time, ignorance of Asia puts Americans at risk on many fronts” (Asia Society, 2001, p. 12). The binary of ‘us’ and ‘them’ pervades the report, with the focus on gaining knowledge of an external ‘Asia’ that is imagined as a fixed entity, with minimal emphasis on a critical, self-reflective approach. The authors state that the primary goal is for “young Americans to learn what they need to know about Asia and its impact on the United States (2001, p. 7). There is a parallel with similar reports that have been carried out in Australia in that the authors recommend that “studies of Asia must be *integrated* into *extant* teaching and learning structures across the spectrum of disciplines and at various levels” [emphasis in original] (2001, p. 7).

It is worth noting that the economic and utilitarian rationale for education about Asia appears to have been less dominant in a 1972 example of a U.S. curriculum document on Asia-related teaching. With the aim of foregrounding empathy as an important goal of learning, this guide for primary school teachers on Asian studies presented units of work that prioritised both the cognitive and empathic domains of learning about Asia (Hantula, 1972). Interestingly, these units on China and India included features that are considered important to the development of Asia literacy today. For the unit on China, along with studies of communities in mainland China and Taiwan, students also studied Chinese communities in other parts of Asia and in the United States. This mirrors elements of the current Asia literacy rationale, which calls for Australians to be more aware of the presence of Asia within Australia and not just as something ‘out there’. In the unit on India, a strong self-reflective element is built into the learning with a focus on culture, and how each student’s own culture has an influence on their learning of other cultures. The main activity in this unit was a

vicarious trip to India, in which the students brought a suitcase that served not only to transport personal items, but also as a:

container of cultural baggage which is carried by everyone wherever they go; it contains the words, family relations, songs and beliefs of the carrier. Further, styles and forms of a suitcase change; similarly, the styles and forms of a culture also change. Thus, the student learns inductively that culture is an idea and a thing which changes.

(Hantula, 1972, p. 14)

Though this document was produced 45 years ago, that quote would not look out of place within the definition of the intercultural understanding capability of the current Australian curriculum. This capability, discussed further in section 2.4.1 below, is explicitly linked to the Asia priority and states that students “come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture” (ACARA, 2014c, p. 1) As a sign of apparent regression rather than progression in this area of learning in some U.S. schools, a 2009 study into the teaching of Asia in U.S. secondary school classrooms found that the curriculum about Asia tended to reproduce students’ fixed notions of Asia rather than critically examine and deconstruct them as the teachers had intended (Hong & Halvorsen, 2010).

2.3.3.4 *Asian views of Asia*

Though beyond the scope of this thesis, it may become more relevant in the near future to examine how countries within the Asia region approach learning about each other, especially if the historic East-West dichotomy gradually loses its relevance in a world of increasingly hybrid identities (Iyall Smith & Leavy, 2008) and transnational flows (Darling-Wolf, 2015). Recent public opinion polling suggests that despite

historical frictions and territorial disputes, Asia-Pacific publics tend to hold mostly positive attitudes towards their regional neighbours (PRC, 2015). However, digging deeper into the data shows that long-standing animosities still resonate. Only 12 percent of Chinese and 25 percent of South Korean respondents viewed Japan favourably. This is well below the 70 percent of respondents as a median across all 10 countries surveyed who hold favourable views of Japan. Only 9 percent of Japanese and 19 percent of Vietnamese respondents expressed favourable views of China, and only 21 percent of Japanese viewed South Korea favourably. By contrast, Australians expressed favourable views of Japan (80 percent), China (57 percent), India (58 percent), and South Korea (61 percent). Although there are multiple critiques of how Asia is imagined in the Australian consciousness (as this chapter and the next demonstrate), there appears to be at least some goodwill to leverage in future discussions of how Asia-related learning in Australian schools can be conceptualised.

2.4 ASIA AND ASIA LITERACY IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION

2.4.1 What is Asia literacy?

Asia literacy is a term that, although often contested, reformulated and problematic to define, has been increasingly referred to over the past three decades in political, educational, economic and cultural discussions of the Australia-Asia relationship (S. FitzGerald, Boomer, Lo Bianco, & McKay, 1988; Halse, 2015c; Henderson, 2003).

Within the highly contested space of school curriculums (Yates, Collins, & O'Connor, 2011), the originators of the Asia literacy concept knew that compelling reasons had to be put forward if Asia-related teaching was going to overturn the decades of neglect. This calculation was apparent in the very first formulations of what

would later come to be called ‘Asia literacy’. Writing in a 1980 report into Asia in Australian education, the proponents of Asia literacy (which was to emerge out of what was then called ‘Asian studies’) recognised that it would only garner wide public support if an obvious benefit could be identified. The report authors wrote:

Within the Australian community, therefore, in government and in education circles, amongst academics, in business and in the media, the basic arguments we must put for the study of Asian societies are both utilitarian and educational.... The future of Asian studies in this country will largely depend on how successful we can be in establishing the view that it is of utilitarian as well as intellectual value. (S. FitzGerald, 1980, p. 5)

To a nation in which the discriminatory ‘White Australia’ immigration policy had only recently been abolished (Meaney, 1995), building a case for the utilitarian argument by appealing to self-interest always seemed more likely to resonate over the less tangible, intellectual value of learning about the histories, cultures and peoples in the region.

Following on from this, the Asian Studies Council issued a publication in 1988 entitled, *Towards an Asia-literate Society*, in which they defined an Asia-literate population as “a populace in which the knowledge of an Asian language is commonplace and knowledge about Asian customs, economies and societies very widespread” (S. FitzGerald et al., 1988, p. 5).

In the 2008 overarching policy statement for schooling in Australia, known as the Melbourne Declaration, the term was defined as the capacity “to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia”

(MCEETYA, 2008, p. 9), a definition which appears again in the government White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century; though with a shift to focussing on ‘capabilities’ rather than literacy (AACTF, 2012). Prior to and following on from this declaration, efforts to work towards this goal have been manifest in numerous language policies and targeted programs (AEF, 2012a; Lo Bianco, 1996, 2013; J. Quinn, 2005; Salter, 2013b). In Australia’s first national curriculum, known as the Australian Curriculum (AC), Asia literacy is described as teaching and learning that provides students with a knowledge of “Asian societies, cultures, beliefs and environments, and the connections between the peoples of Asia, Australia, and the rest of the world”, and “the skills to communicate and engage with the peoples of Asia so they can effectively live, work and learn in the region” (ACARA, 2014a). Intercultural Understanding, one of the six General Capabilities in the AC, echoes the principles of Asia literacy as it “promotes recognition, communication and engagement with the different countries and cultures within Asia” (ACARA, 2014c, p. 3). While the current global focus on the ‘Asian century’ (Kohli, Sharma, & Sood, 2011) drives much of this discussion, the recognition of this issue in Australia stretches back to at least 1970, when one of the first government reports into Asian languages and Asian studies in Australia noted that “there is at present an inadequate treatment of Asia, as an obligatory element, in social studies and other courses at secondary level”, and that “more than half of the population can go through secondary school without any systematic study of Asian affairs” (Auchmuty, 1970, p. 89).

This situation was partly a result of how learning about Asia was situated within the curriculum. The traditional space in school curriculums for any learning about Asia was partitioned into what were commonly called ‘Asian studies’ subjects; subjects that were not universally offered at all schools and were often options outside the core

curriculum (Curtis, 2010; Morris, 2000; Williamson-Fien, 2000). This marginalisation of the subject was regarded by some as sending a signal to students and parents that learning about Asia was not considered part of the core, employment orientated subjects and that “the Asian societies themselves must in logic be outside the mainstream of human history and society” (S. FitzGerald, 1980, p. 13). It also served to relegate the learning of Asia to ‘Asianists’; “the few marginal people Australia can afford to have, and should have, to improve Australia’s image in Asia and tell Australians a little about Asia” (G. Wang, 1972, p. 52). For these reasons, the series of reports into the state of Asian studies and Asian languages studies, beginning with the ‘Auchmuty report’ in 1970 (Auchmuty, 1970, pp. 99-101), have consistently advocated for studies of Asia to be infused throughout the mainstream curriculum. The presence of the cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia as one of the three cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014a) can be seen as a culmination of this agenda.

This emphasis on increasing levels of ‘Asia literacy’ has commonly been premised on the growing economic and cultural importance of countries in the Asia region, and the parallel growth of the population with an Asian background. This change in the demographics of the Australian population, both permanent and transient, is evident in an increasing number of people originating from Asian countries (ABS, 2012; ABS, 2013). Proponents of Asia literacy argue that if these trends continue, then current and future Australian students are more likely to have opportunities and face challenges that will require the knowledge and skills that are at the core of the concept of Asia literacy. A recent report (Freeman & Rizvi, 2014) into Australians living in Asia found that the overwhelming majority of those surveyed saw a need for higher levels of understanding of the dynamic nature of Asia among Australians. The report authors

emphasised “the importance of Australia’s education system through Asian literacy programs, Asian language training and intercultural development in positioning young Australians to maximise their opportunities for global mobility, and educate young Australians to live and work in Asia’s thriving region” (2014, p. 4). These rationales have been supported by successive governments on both political sides, and business and industry groups have been unified in their promotion of the need for Asia literacy in largely reductionist, economic terms where the primary objective is to secure Australia’s future trade and industry prosperity (Abbott, 2014; AsiaLink & Australian Industry Group, 2011; AACTF, 2012; BAAL, 2009; DFAT, 2013; Love, Kamener, von Oertzen, & Minifie, 2012; Rudd, 1994; Turnbull, 2015).

2.4.2 Criticisms of Asia literacy

If becoming ‘Asia literate’ is an actual possibility (it has been noted that achieving ‘semi-literacy’ might be a more realistic goal (Williamson-Fien, 1994)), then this implies that there is a body of knowledge about which one is literate in. At one level, it is possible to critique this concept of Asia literacy by focusing on the possible meanings of ‘literacy’ and how the word suggests that a person can be considered ‘Asia literate’ once a certain level of knowledge of Asian cultures, histories, geography, societies and even languages have been ‘mastered’. This approach has been taken by Heryanto when he labels Asia literacy as a dangerous metaphor that harks back to “Euro-American centricism”, and “unequivocally articulates the notation of Asia as a fixed text for reading” (2015, pp. 171-172). Lo Bianco makes a similar critique when he writes that the notion of ‘Asia’ has been presented in curricula as merely a “text to be read or a task to be undertaken” (2014, p. 64). While these critiques are valid, they do raise the practical question of how the complexities that the term ‘Asia literacy’ seeks to convey can be encapsulated in a phrase that minimises the problematic connotations and

implications. As Halse points out, despite its deficiencies, “the term ‘Asia literacy’ has survived the decades, because it offers a convenient shorthand for the complex amalgam of knowledges, skills and intercultural capacities involved in knowing, understanding and interacting with the societies, cultures and peoples in/from/with Asia” (2015a, p. 3).

2.4.3 Asia literacy and systemic attitudes to Asia

Another aspect of Asia literacy that has been discussed is whether the framing and perceptions of Asia in the general Australian discourse have led to a narrow, one-dimensional view of what Asia literacy encompasses. The importance of examining the sources and influences of these perceptions was recognised in an early review of Australian studies at the tertiary level (Committee to Review Australian Studies in Tertiary Education, 1987). The report included a reflection on the levels of international awareness among Australian students, and in commenting on the necessity for the teaching of Asian studies, the report authors argued that:

If Asia is presented as unconnected to Australia, Australian students will have their remoteness intensified. If one objective in teaching Australian students about Asia is to reduce misunderstandings of Asia, then *the sources of Australia’s attitudes* [emphasis added] deserve to be a continuing part of the syllabus. Thus, Australia’s history becomes an active part of the successful teaching of Asian studies. (1987, p. 21)

These sources of Australian attitudes towards Asia have been fundamental in the shaping of these attitudes, yet at the same time appear so deeply ingrained that they have been normalised as part of the collective national imagination of ‘Asia’. According to some of the critiques of the Asia literacy project (Salter, 2013a; Takayama, 2016), it is this lack of a truly reflective engagement with these sources of influence that has

hindered much of the potentially beneficial outcomes that could be achieved by making Asia-related learning a priority in schools. Even as Australia has become increasingly more integrated with Asia in recent years, this engagement is arguably still premised on an entrenched self-image of Australia as fundamentally separate from other countries in the region. As Pan observes, “Australia’s excitement about the Asian opportunity and its craze for Asia literacy belie its halting self-imagination of being part of the region geographically and economically, but not culturally and politically” (2013, p. 77).

How this historical consciousness impacts on Asia literacy in the curriculum, which is relevant to understanding the formation of students’ attitudes to Asia and Asia-related learning, has also been explored by scholars. Williamson-Fien (1994) has pointed to the dominance of western frameworks of knowledge that have been codified and normalised in curriculum documents and textbooks. Though she contends that western frameworks can be challenged by constructing new knowledge and ways of knowing, she regards Australia’s cultural conditioning as a barrier to becoming aware of “the extent to which our insights are imbricated in western codes” (Williamson-Fien, 1994, p. 16). Singh appears less optimistic that there is either space or willingness for these western frameworks to be challenged, as he sees the ‘Asia’ that has been defined in the concept of Asia literacy as indelibly linked to deeply ingrained prejudices that were foregrounded in works such as Said’s *Orientalism* (1978). Singh argues that “the capacity of ‘Asia-literacy’ to incorporate alternative voices is limited to the extent that it is already framed by the pre-existing prejudices of the Orientalist project” (Singh, 1995, p. 617).

In Chapter Three, I expand on some of these criticisms of Asia literacy and explore conceptual frameworks that can be used to examine how the construction and

Othering of Asia has influenced the modes of viewing Asia. These concepts are then drawn upon in the analysis and discussion chapters to explore the influences on students' views of Asia.

2.4.4 A new Asia literacy narrative?

In light of the many criticisms of how 'Asia literacy' has been framed, there have been calls for a new Asia literacy narrative that is more reflective of fundamental changes that have taken place in the nature and scope of Asia-Australia relations (Rizvi, 2015, 2017). Rizvi cites four major factors that necessitate a critical evaluation of the current 'Asia literacy' narrative. The first of these, as noted above in section 2.3.1, is the significant demographic change taking place within Australia, as the total number of migrants from parts of Asia, and China in particular, has been growing steadily. Since 1947, when 0.3 percent of the Australian population were born in Asia, the number has roughly doubled every decade to reached 10.3 percent in 2016 (ABS, 2012; ABS, 2017). This increase in Australians with an Asian background looks set to continue with the proportion of migrants from Asia increasing from 24 percent of the overseas born population in 2001 to 40 percent in 2016 (ABS, 2017). This growing 'Asia within' also raise questions of how the binaries and boundaries that have narrowly defined the imagined 'Asia community' in Australia can be re-theorised "as hybrid geographical, social and cultural space" (Weinmann, 2015, p. 184). To achieve this at the level of the enacted school curriculum, Weinmann argues for a move away from the content and knowledge focus that currently dominates the framing of Asia literacy. This could take place in the form of community engagement that opens up opportunities for "the dynamic capability of teachers and students to position themselves relationally within a hybrid 'Asiascape'" (Weinmann, 2015, p. 184). In discussing these possibilities, Weinmann draws on the perspectives of school principals and teachers in relation to

how they conceptualise the notion of Asia engagement. Though this current study has different aims from those of Weinmann, the perspectives of students that studies such as this current one uncover can also be given space in these discussions of re-theorising the imagined 'Asia community' within Australia.

Two of the four transformations that Rizvi cites, namely increased connectivity and mobility between Australia and Asia, are of particular relevance to a younger generation that are growing up in increasingly interconnected (Bennett & Corrin, 2017) and transnational spaces (Gargano, 2009). The interconnected world that Appadurai described in his seminal text (Appadurai, 1996) has become a hyperconnected world today (Kontopodis, Varvantakis, & Wulf, 2017). The Asia that was perceived to be 'out there' when Asia literacy was first formulated is now instantly accessible via a range of sources such as new media, social media and peer to peer networks (Kontopodis et al., 2017). This builds on what was already an incremental but growing presence of Asian popular culture in Australia and an Asian presence in mainstream Australian media (Jetrnikoff & Henderson, 2013; T. Khoo, 2008; M. Thomas, 2000), along with greater use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in Australian schools to build student to student networks with schools in Asia (AEF, 2013c).

This virtual connectedness is expanding in tandem with a greater mobility that sees more and more Australians living and working in the Asia region for extended periods of time. While precise numbers are difficult to ascertain due to variances in methodologies, a 2003 report found that the number of Australians relocating to Asia had increased by 50 percent in the preceding few years (Hugo, Rudd, & Harris, 2003). A 2014 report put the number at over 150,000 and rising (Freeman & Rizvi, 2014). This growing mobility within the region is also visible in the increase in numbers of

Australians choosing an Asian country as a travel destination (ABS, 2016). These career and leisure trends combine elements of both instrumental and intrinsic motivation. The motivational framework used in this study (discussed below in section 3.3) allows for a detailed exploration of the significance of these motivations for students.

The final, and possibly most important transformational element that Rizvi identifies as having a fundamental influence on the nature and scope of Asia-Australian relations is the disruptions brought about by the strong economic growth taking place throughout most of the region. The data on this transformation is well documented (Kohli et al., 2011; Mahbubani, 2008), and the constant reference to it in Australian government rhetoric indicates that the political and business worlds fully expect the rise and influence of Asian countries, especially China and India, to continue (Turnbull, 2015, 2017). However, in the enthusiasm to emphasise the growing markets for Australian goods and services, what is not often acknowledged is how the emergence of Asia as a centre of power (geopolitical, economic, military and cultural) can change the dynamics of the relationships Australia wishes to develop in the region. Rizvi refers to this as “a new sense of postcolonial confidence in many Asian countries that has redefined the ways in which many Asians view Australia and its attempts to develop closer relations with them” (Rizvi, 2017, p. 82). This argument is explored in more detail in the following chapter with reference to the Western conceptualisation of Asia and the emergence of an ‘Asia as method’ approach that questions the dominance of Western knowledge.

2.4.5 Students and Asia literacy

Currently there is very little known about what Australian students think or understand about Asia or their motivation to engage in Asia-related learning. There are

no comparable large-scale, longitudinal surveys similar to the ones that have been carried out in New Zealand by the Asia New Zealand Foundation (Colmar Brunton, 2013, 2017). Most of the existing data we have on what Australian students know and think about Asia and studies of Asia is inferred from the uptake of Asian languages and the presence of Asia-related content in other subjects (Sturak & Naughten, 2010; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009). An increase or decrease in these numbers is then seen as an indicator of actual student knowledge of, and attitude to, learning about the region. While there is some limited data available on students' attitudes to Asia-related learning (discussed below in this section), the lack of more detailed information has been cited as hindering efforts to improve learning outcomes. As Scarino argues, "we also need evidence from students and their actual experiences of learning... the[ir] experiences are the voice that speak the need for change and create a deeper understanding of the need for change" (Scarino, 2014b, p. 303). Lo Bianco and Aliani also found in their study on secondary student perspectives on language study that, when consulted, "students are active in forming opinion and in speaking back to the part of the policy implementation they encounter" (Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2013, p. 121).

An early study into students' knowledge of Asia and their levels of intercultural understanding was carried out in 1994 as part of a larger assessment of AEF programs in schools (Baumgart & Elliott, 1994). The researchers surveyed 639 senior primary (average age of 10) and junior secondary students (average age of 14) from 16 schools from the group of 80 'Magnet' schools that had implemented a range of cross-curricula programs focussing on awareness and understanding of Asia and Asian communities. The authors reported that students were:

Developing a sound knowledge of basic Asian economic and trade issues. This knowledge seems to reflect recent and concerted government and media emphases on economic restructuring and more global, particularly Asian, economic, trade and manufacturing initiatives, rather than Asia specific curricula in schools. (Baumgart & Elliott, 1994, p. 21)

Though the reported data did not elaborate on this finding, in itself it is interesting considering the young age of the students. It suggests that media (and social media today) can be a power tool for informing, and misinforming students about Asia.

In a 2000 study, Morris undertook a case study of Asian Studies in a regional school in Victoria (Morris, 2000). He collected qualitative and quantitative survey data from 74 Year 10 students and analysed the responses in relation to the education goals put forth by the AEF in the 1995 Studies of Asia statement (AEF, 1995). Though that approach provided some insights into the students' generally positive attitudes to Asia-related learning, there was no underlying conceptual framework of motivation used to categorise the responses.

A small-scale study of 26 Year 5 students in a Melbourne school explored students' struggles with discourses of ethnicity within the context of a ten-week Studies of Asia curriculum project (Hamston, 2003, 2006). This study demonstrated the potential power that a dialogic approach (Bakhtin, 1981) has to offer students as they reposition and revisit challenging issues and make sense of them in an ongoing conversation. Though that study's theoretical approach is not related to this current study, the results highlight the powerful role a suitably skilled and informed teacher can

play in encouraging students to question assumptions and reflect on how language about Australia and Asia has been socially and historically shaped.

The largest study carried out into students' attitudes to studies of Asia was a 2002 national study which looked at the knowledge and understandings of Asia among approximately 7000 primary and secondary students (Griffin et al., 2002). The researchers generated a 60-item multiple-choice test for knowledge of Asia, and a 30-item attitudinal survey. The overall results from the responses of the Year 5 and Year 8 students revealed that while the growth and development of knowledge of Asia was considered to be generally good, there was not a similar growth and development in attitudes towards studying about Asia. In fact, negative attitudes towards Asia increased, especially among boys. While the instruments developed in that study to assess students' attitudes were seen as valid in construct, there was no scope to uncover motivators for attitudes, or incorporate some of the problematisation of the Asia literacy construct in the survey statements. There was also no consideration given to include student input into the construction of the survey instrument. Nevertheless, as this is the most significant data on students' attitudes to studies of Asia, and the only existing example of an attitudinal survey of this type, it was replicated for use in this current study as a preliminary data collection step to evaluate the responses of this 2015 cohort in relation to the 2002 data. The format and content of the survey is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

2.4.6 Community attitudes to Asia literacy

As the influence of parents and guardians on students' attitudes towards Asia-related learning is an element of this study, the limited information available on this topic merits attention. Earlier research in the United States suggests that parental

attitudes to Asian language learning and levels of involvement can be influential (Sung & Padilla, 1998) and the limited data available in Australia on both Asian language learning and Asia-related studies broadly supports this. In Slaughter's research on the study of Asian languages in two Australian states, the positive and negative attitudes that parents had regarding language study and language programs in schools were seen as potentially important factors in the support (or lack of) for the child's language learning and academic outcomes (Slaughter, 2007b). A more recent, though smaller, non-representative report into parent attitudes towards Asian language learning in schools echoed similar findings, with strong correlations between the positive or negative attitudes the parent(s) expressed towards learning an Asian language and the encouragement and support given to the child to continue learning the language (AEF, 2015). A 2012 study into Chinese language programs in Victorian schools also indicated a range of parental attitudes towards learning an Asian language and learning about Asian cultures in general, with some expressing the negative view that it was taking away essential time for literacy and numeracy study, while others were "increasingly alert to the practical realities of the developing economic and other relationships between Australia and China" (Orton et al., 2012, p. 11).

On the broader topic of parent attitudes to Asia-related learning, apart from a scoping study (N=137) carried out in 2006 (AEF, 2006), there is minimal data available. The 2006 study was commissioned by the AEF to canvas the views of members of the executives of the Australian Parents Council (the peak body parent organisation for non-government schools) and Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO – peak parent body for government schools). Overall, the respondents were supportive of engagement with Asia and that it should be seen as a national priority. However, doubts were raised by some parents, including questions of what exactly is 'studies of Asia',

how it fits into the current curriculum, its academic rigour, and if it would create an imbalance with studies of other world regions being reduced. This concern also appears in some of the student comments gathered in this study, and can be seen as the expression of a traditional, hierarchical view of areas of knowledge (Bleazby, 2015). As will be discussed in the following chapter, this view of Asia-related learning as peripheral learning in Australia can be linked to the ‘absence of Asia’ mode of viewing that has been prevalent in the Australian consciousness (Pan, 2015a).

2.4.7 Asia literacy and teacher education

Meta-analyses on such as those done by Hattie into the important factors in student learning (Hattie, 2003, 2012) suggest that outside of the individual student’s abilities and the home influence, the quality of teaching can have the greatest impact on student outcomes. The quality of language teaching has also been cited as a major factor in student outcomes, as noted in the series of language reports cited below (section 2.4.9). It follows then, that the degree to which students become ‘Asia literate’ will also depend heavily on how well their teachers are prepared to help them achieve this curriculum objective. There have been a growing number of studies into this question, and the results strongly indicate that there is significant work to be done in initial teacher education and in professional development for current teachers to suitably prepare teachers to incorporate the cross-curriculum Asia priority. It is apparent that this situation is partly a result of a negative cycle in which many Australian students experience minimal learning about Asia through their schooling, and when the cohort of those students who go on to choose a career as teachers are in the classroom, they too often lack the basic knowledge to teach about Asia in their classes.

None of these issues with teacher education about Asia is necessarily new. Over 45 years ago, a 1973 report identified the lack of suitably qualified teachers as the main issue influencing efforts to increase the teaching of Asian languages and cultures in school (Webb, 1973, pp. 7-8). The 1988 Asian Studies Council report contained recommendations on the matter (Asian Studies Council, 1988), and a Minority Report submitted by one of the Steering Committee members contained extensive recommendations on ways to improve the preparation of language teachers and generalist teachers' knowledge of Asia (Neustupny, 1989). Early research on teacher attitudes to teaching about Asia found that many teachers held traditional views of Asian societies that perpetuated the binary of 'us' and 'them' (Halse & Baumgart, 1995). The researchers concluded that these "teachers' perspectives are a constraint in the development of students' intercultural understanding" (Halse & Baumgart, 1995, p. 1). Another matter to consider is the lack of diversity within the current Australian teaching workforce, particularly when compared with the diversity of the general population. The changing demographics in the general population are not yet being reflected in a teaching workforce, which is still predominantly middle class and Anglo-Australian (HRSCEVE, Allard & Santoro, 2006; Cruickshank, 2004; 2007; Mills, 2013).

Not only are fixed views of Asia as an external and distant construct common among teachers, this also appears to provide a ready justification for not engaging with the topic. A 2002 review of Studies of Asia in schools found that:

The greatest barrier to further implementation is teacher knowledge; not only about Asia itself, but also about the existence of resource material, and about how they can "fit in" another area in what they see

as an already crowded curriculum. These teachers see no compelling reason why studies of Asia should be given priority, and many see it as not being of relevance to them. (Wyatt, Manefield, Carbines, & Robb, 2002)

A 2013 large scale national survey of Asia literacy in the Australia teaching workforce (1319 teachers and 432 principals) found that 60 percent of teachers completed their initial teacher education without addressing teaching and learning about Asia (Halse et al., 2013, p. 118). Similar results have been found in other, smaller scale studies (AEF, 2001; Gauci & Curwood, 2017; Grainger & Christie, 2016; Salter, 2014). A survey of 235 teachers in independent schools across Australia found that “over 70 percent rated their pre-service teacher education in Asian Studies as poor with less than one percent saying it was extremely well done” (Rose, 2016, p. 200). The situation for teachers’ professional development was marginally better with 57 percent rating it very poor, 25 percent as moderate, 14 percent as satisfactory, and 4 percent as very good. Though the presence of the Asia priority has the potential to compel teacher education courses to address this absence, there are the additional complexities of implementing cross-curriculum approaches. The analysis of case studies of Asia literate teachers carried out in the 2013 national study found that “even highly experienced teachers with specialist knowledge in Asia struggle to articulate and create integrated cross-curricular teaching examples” (Cloonan, 2015, p. 133).

2.4.8 Challenges in teaching Asia literacy

In addition to these initial teacher education challenges, there have been other concerns raised on the structural, pedagogical and resource challenges that impact on attempts to increase Asia literacy. The recent Australian Curriculum review described

the curriculum as “overcrowded” (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014, p. 3) and although the reviewers acknowledged the strong support for the three cross-curriculum priorities, they argued for a “complete reconceptualisation of the teaching of the cross-curriculum priorities” (2014, p. 4). The authors recommended that this Asia priority (and the other two priorities) should be “anchored” back into “the content of learning areas and subjects” (2014, p. 4). While the points raised in this report are important ones and require due consideration, the objectivity of these recommendations is questionable considering previous critiques of the curriculum made by one of the reviewers. In a 2011 general critique of the Australian curriculum, Donnelly wrote that:

Instead of respecting and acknowledging this liberal view of education, the national curriculum gives primacy to three politically correct “Cross-curriculum priorities” (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures, Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia, and sustainability) and seven “General capabilities” (including intercultural understanding, competence in information and communication technology, and critical and creative thinking). Every subject in the national curriculum must incorporate the aforementioned perspectives and capabilities. As a result, the disciplines of knowledge are undervalued and distorted to make them conform to the ALP’s [Australian Labor Party] and the Left-intelligentsia’s preoccupation with Asia, Indigenous Australians, and teaching so-called work-related generic skills. (Donnelly, 2011)

Attacking a version of the curriculum for its perceived political bias, while simultaneously promoting a traditional curriculum that has its own political bias may be

sufficient justification for ignoring this particular critique of the Asia priority. However, political biases aside, the reviewers' points are supported in part by other literature into the implementation of the cross-curriculum priorities. As Salter and Maxwell note, the cross-curriculum priorities are both rhetorically prioritised but effectively marginalised within the curriculum (Salter & Maxwell, 2016). When this lack of clarity of the status of the three priorities was questioned, the then Chair of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) seems to have tried to appease both supporters and detractors of the cross-curriculum priorities (CCPs) by affirming that "we believe they [CCPs] are important" but also saying that there "is no requirement that subjects be taught through the three cross-curriculum priorities" (McGaw, 2014). No doubt, the fact that a federal level organisation (ACARA) has to navigate a workable pathway through the complexities of state-controlled education can be seen as a reason for this attempt to leave the curriculum enactment somewhat vague. McGaw as much as admits this by saying, "the Australian curriculum does not prescribe how content should be taught. That is a matter for schools and their jurisdictions" (McGaw, 2014). The end result though, as the reviewers and others have noted, is confusion among educators of what exactly needs to be done, how it should be done, and by whom (Cloonan, 2015; Gauci & Curwood, 2017).

Notwithstanding the challenges and complexities of teaching about Asia as a cross-curriculum priority, recent data suggests that the attitudes of current and pre-service teachers are changing and there is a greater awareness of the need to increase their knowledge and preparedness to teach about Asia. A 2016 survey of 54 final-year Bachelor of Education students at a regional university found that although 80 percent did not believe they were prepared to teach about Asia upon graduation, 80 percent said they wanted to learn more about Asia prior to graduating (Grainger & Christie, 2016).

In a similar vein, a 2017 study into the attitudes of 82 secondary English teachers in New South Wales to addressing the Asia priority found that although many felt “ill-equipped or under-resourced to address it in a way that promotes deep learning and understanding for students”, 76 percent of them indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the implementation of this CCP (Gauci & Curwood, 2017, p. 163).

There are examples in current teacher education courses where related curriculum such as the civics and citizenship can be combined with experiential teaching and learning to explore the Asia priority. Using the critical citizenship approach and ensuring the student voice is an authentic driver in the project, Tudball and Henderson document examples of the power this approach can have (Tudball, 2017; Tudball & Henderson, 2013). In the Canadian context, Cui (2010) has shown how a critical discourse approach that challenges the Othering of Chinese migrants in Canada can be utilised within global citizenship education. Two other examples of highly effective ways to develop Asia literacy are short term study tours as professional development for practicing teachers (Halse, 1999; Trevaskis, 2013) and in-country teaching practicums for pre-service teachers (B. Hill & Thomas, 1998, 2002; Tudball, 2005). Though there are limits on the number of participants who can take up these types of in-country experiences, the ripple effect that these teachers can have in their schools as ‘champions’ of Asia literacy can be long lasting (Trevaskis, 2013).

2.4.9 Asia literacy and language learning

Though the original definition of Asia literacy referred to “a populace in which the knowledge of an Asian language is commonplace (S. FitzGerald et al., 1988, p. 5), the various iterations of Asia literacy definitions that have been used since then tend to reduce the importance of language learning. This is evident in other expressions such as

‘Asia capabilities’ or ‘Asia-relevant capabilities’ (AEF, 2013a; AEF, 2013c; AsiaLink, 2012; Bice & Merriam, 2016; DCA, 2015). Given the historic and current low levels of Asian language study in Australian schools (discussed below in section 2.4.10), and the semantic link that literacy suggests with language proficiency, the concept of ‘capability’ seems to have been adopted to sidestep this perceived obstacle. The AEF have sought to express this revised approach with the following definition:

Asia capability means that every student will exit schooling in Australia with knowledge and understanding of the histories, geographies, arts and literature of the diverse countries of Asia. Asia capability is strengthened in students who also learn an Asian language. (AEF, 2017)

There has also been an argument that while knowing an Asian language is desirable, it is not sufficient without suitable cultural understanding. Submissions from Australian businesses to a government discussion paper on the needs of the future Australian workforce noted that:

While strong support was expressed for the need for Australians to be more proficient in Asian languages as a means of enhancing effective engagement, overwhelmingly it was noted that being ‘Asia literate’ or ‘Asia capable’ required broader skills than language fluency, including the need for cultural understanding. (AWPA, 2012, p. 27)

In schools that offer an Asian language, there is often an expectation that the students will also be learning more about that country and other parts of Asia while also learning the language. Also for students, when the question of their attitude to Asia-

related learning is asked, there is often an assumption that this is centred on their attitudes to learning an Asian language. As the investigation of students' attitudes to Asia-related learning undertaken in this study also touched on attitudes to learning Asian languages, this next section examines the literature on the learning of Asian languages in Australian schools.

2.4.10 Asian language learning

As Asian language learning is not the focus of this current study, the reports and related literature on language learning are not exhaustively discussed here, though the aspects that touch on students' attitudes to learning an Asian language are examined. There is a long list of reports into languages education in Australian schools, with numerous smaller scale ones that can be added to the following cited major ones (Auchmuty, 1970; Commonwealth Department of Education, 1986; Curnow et al., 2014; Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2013; K. Hill, Iwashita, McNamara, Scarino, & Scrimgeour, 2004; Kohler et al., 2014; Lo Bianco, 1987; Rudd, 1994; Solved at McConchie, 2007; Webb, 1973). Each of these reports paints a similar story; a few periods and examples of positive growth and interest, set within a broader gradual decline in language learning in Australian schools.

It is not surprising, therefore, that within the broader context of the struggles of language education in schools, the knowledge of an Asian language among non-Asian background students is uncommon. One of the early official recognitions of these low levels of Asian language capability was during a 1963 symposium on the topic of 'Problems of Research where Overseas Contacts are Necessary', in which "the lack of linguistic equipment of honours and post-graduate students was deplored by the heads of many humanities departments" (Wykes, 1966, p. 2). Fifteen years on from that, this

situation had only minimally improved according to another report which stated that “it is still likely that large numbers of students pass through both primary and secondary school with only minimal exposure to any systematic study of Asian countries” (S. FitzGerald, 1980, p. 49). When the first national policy on languages was released in 1987, the importance of addressing this situation was highlighted:

The widespread teaching of the languages of the Asian Pacific region – the world’s most populous region and an overwhelmingly non-English speaking area of the world – can contribute to the broad policy objectives of promoting the fullest participation of Australia in the region’s affairs. In addition, the spread of knowledge and appreciation of the cultures of the region would enrich Australian life and promote a fuller integration of the lives of individual Australians with their peers in the professional activities and cultures of the countries of our region. (Lo Bianco, 1987, p. 60)

This national policy received widespread political support and led to several initiatives and funding allocations designed to boost the study of languages in general, with an emphasis on Asian languages due to their perceived economic importance (Lo Bianco, 1988). Since then, there have been further government programs and resources targeted at increasing the number of students who learn an Asian language at school, including the large scale *National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools* (NALSAS) from 1994-2002 and the smaller follow-up program called the *National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program* (NALSSP) from 2008-2012 (NALSAS Secretariat, 1999). Initiatives such as these have helped see Australia rank fourth globally for number of learners of Japanese, with a 9.8 percent proportion

compared to China at 26.1 percent, Indonesia at 20.4 percent and South Korea at 15.2 percent (The Japan Foundation, 2017). This relative strength of Japanese has also come about due to significant financial support from the Japanese government through organisations such as the Japan Foundation, which promotes Japanese language and culture throughout the world. A similar ‘soft power’ approach has been taken more recently by the Chinese government, with the establishment of Confucius Institutes in Australia and other countries along with a growing number of Chinese teaching resources being made available (Hartig, 2012; Orton, 2016b).

Yet, despite many positive beginnings, innovations and moderate successes, the current overall state of Asian language learning appears to be worsening. A 2012 government White Paper stated:

The share of Australian students studying languages, including many Asian languages, is small and has fallen in recent times. Between 2000 and 2008, the share of Australian students learning a tertiary accredited language other than English in Year 12 dropped in a time where overall student numbers increased by almost 9 percent. (AACTF, 2012, p. 168)

For Asian languages, the numbers are stark; less than 6 percent of Year 12 students are enrolled in Indonesian, Japanese, Korean or Chinese (Sturak & Naughten, 2010). There were more students studying Indonesian in 1972 than there were in 2016 (D. Hill, 2016), a dramatic fall that has been partly attributed to negative cultural perceptions of Indonesia following the terrorists attacks that occurred in Bali and Jakarta in 2002 and 2003 respectively (Slaughter, 2007a). Even in the case of Japanese, which is still one of the most widely taught languages in Australian schools, the total

numbers fell by 16 percent from 2000 to 2008 (De Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). In a clear indication of the important role funding plays in boosting and maintaining numbers, the most dramatic drop in the number of students studying Japanese occurred in the two years following the sudden withdrawal of the NALSAS funding in 2002 (De Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010, p. 22). Though the current emphasis on Chinese as a priority language, or “Chinese fever” as it has been dubbed (Scrimgeour, 2014, p. 151), appears to show healthy signs of growth, this masks the complexity of large numbers of background speakers in classes and declining numbers of non-background speakers continuing on into the senior years (Orton, 2016a; Singh & Nguyễn, 2018; G. Q. Zhang & Gong, 2014).

Looking beyond the two major languages of Japanese and Chinese, there are very few positive indicators to be found when examining the state of other Asian languages. Though Korean was one of the four original target languages in the NALSAS and NALSSP programs, it was always under-represented compared to Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian, with only a little more than 4000 students (or 0.1 percent of total K-12 students) studying Korean in Australian schools in 2009 (Shin, 2010). This precarious situation was further accentuated when Korean was replaced by Hindi as one of the four languages the Australian government prioritised in its 2012 White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century (AACTF, 2012). The economic argument for this was made clear in the White Paper with the following justification: “the selection of priority languages reflects those nations where the majority of opportunities will be for Australians in the Asian century” (AACTF, 2012, p. 171).

This economic rationale also helps explain why, despite the existence of large numbers of migrants from other Asian countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka,

and to a lesser extent the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand, the languages of these countries are generally only offered in after-hours community school programs, and studied by the children of migrants. The relevance of this to the exploration of students' views of Asia and motivations towards Asia-related learning is that this tends to further reinforce the 'absence of Asia' mindset that has been evident in Australians' modes of viewing Asia (Pan, 2015a). Though Australian students may have many opportunities to interact with other students of Vietnamese background for example, there is almost no opportunity to learn some of the language or culture of Vietnam. This is also of concern in light of how addressing the Asia priority in schools is often considered the responsibility of Asian language teachers (if an Asian language is offered). The tendency is for students to have their learning about Asia narrowly framed through the culture of the language they are studying. While this is not a criticism of the language teachers, it does suggest that despite the broad aims of the Asia priority, in practice it is often limited to some exposure to the cultures of the countries with the most widely taught Asian language; Japanese and Chinese. As will be discussed in the following chapter and subsequent results chapters, this may further accentuate in the Australian consciousness the sense that Asia only really exists outside of Australian borders, and it is important solely for the economic benefit it offers to Australians.

2.4.11 Student-centred language learning

Amongst this range of challenges that stymie efforts to increase the study of Asian languages, there are some examples of successes being achieved through of a realignment of language education to a more student-centred pedagogy. As a core rationale for this current study is that a more student-centred approach to Asia-related teaching may lead to improved learning outcomes, it may be informative to consider previous work in this area.

An early example of the benefits of giving students more control over their language learning was demonstrated by Kinoshita-Thomson (1995). By encouraging a self-directed learning approach and creating opportunities for syllabus choice among learners of Japanese, she was able to effectively differentiate the teaching to suit learners from diverse backgrounds. The value of using feedback from students to inform Chinese language teaching pedagogy was explored by Scrimgeour (2009). His study was premised on the perception that the generic second language teaching methodologies commonly used by teachers were overlooking the particular challenges in learning Chinese for non-background students. Based on the results of his study, he has recommended changing the pedagogical approach used for teaching Chinese to young learners.

Kohler (2009) has also provided examples of a more student-centred approach for teaching Indonesian that not only engages students, but also encourages their long-term language learning. When Zhang and Gong investigated ways to improve retention rates of Australian senior students studying Chinese, they discovered that students “take a relevance-driven and effect/cost-guided approach to language learning” (G. Q. Zhang & Gong, 2014, p. 119). This emphasis on seeking maximum benefits with minimum costs is related to the cost value in the subjective task values model (Eccles, 2005) that is used in this study to explore student motivation towards Asia-related learning. One issue with Zhang and Gong’s study though, is that they relied on teacher reported data instead of consulting directly with students. There are potential validity issues with this reliance on second-hand information, as an earlier study (Curnow & Kohler, 2007) on students’ attitudes to language learning demonstrated. The researchers in that 2007 study asked students about their decisions to either continue or drop language study while at school. Even though the students were aware of the importance of language study, including

echoing the rationales provided by teachers and others, the actual reasons that they gave did not include these factors. Rather, they privileged factors such as academic achievement, personal interest, relationships, career possibilities, and lived experiences. This is an important indication of how student voices should be accessed as directly as possible in any research that seeks to report on it.

Another example of reconsidering the individuality of the student is when learner diversity is acknowledged, not only when teaching languages, but also in assessment. As there is a common perception that languages are too difficult, students often do not feel they are progressing in their language studies (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2010; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009). This has been investigated using empirical research done via the *Student Achievement in Asian Languages Education* (SAALE) national project, which aims to understand the impact that time allocated to language learning and the learner's background have on language learning. This research also provides baseline descriptions of learner achievements in four Asian languages (Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean). As the project leaders point out, this type of data can help to:

move beyond hypothesised generalisations about learner achievements towards some realistic sense of diverse learner achievements for diverse language learners. In this way, they provide a more nuanced and realistic orientation towards the learning of Asian languages in Australia, creating the potential for all learners of these languages to make progress and gain satisfaction from doing so. (Scarino, 2014a, p. 147)

These examples of a more student-centred pedagogy are made possible when student voice is valued within education discourse. In this thesis, priority was placed on

letting student voices be articulated with minimal interference or pre-conceived theorisation by the researcher. The process taken to work towards this goal is given in Chapter Four. The remainder of this chapter provides some background to the development and current state of student voice research.

2.5 STUDENT VOICE

Student voice, student empowerment and learner ownership are related concepts that have a shared goal of increasing the involvement of students in all aspects of their own learning (Czerniawski & Kidd, 2011; Robinson & Taylor, 2013). In 1991, influential educator Michael Fullan argued that “unless they [students] have some meaningful (to them) role in the enterprise, most educational change, indeed most education, will fail” (Fullan, p. 170). A large number of more recent studies in a range of education fields have added to the evidence base acknowledging the value that can be gained by seeking and engaging the voice of students. This wide array of student voice related studies includes research into how student voice can improve insights and understandings in research methodologies (Atweh, Bland, Smith, & Woodward, 2012; Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005); literature that compares student voice research internationally (Hopfenbeck, 2013; Leitch, 2012); research that examines student voice in relation to schooling experiences and education policy reform (Carline, 2008; Cullingford, 2006, 2010; Elwood, 2013); the possibilities of improving teacher education through student voice (Flutter, 2007); research into the relationship between student voice and student leadership within educational institutions (Lanskey & Rudduck, 2010; Serriere & Mitra, 2012); discussions on the power dynamics and theoretical underpinnings of student voice (Fielding, 2004; Wyn, 2011); and, closer to the geographical location of this current study, government education reports into the

historical and future perspectives of student voice (Manefield, Collins, Moore, Mahar, & Warne, 2007).

Accessing and empowering student voice is seen as one potential way to tackle the common challenges of passivity, disengagement and minimal responsibility that the cited studies have chronicled. A 2007 Victorian Education Department report on student voice found that student outcomes do improve when students have a genuine say and are actively participating in changes that affect them (Manefield et al., 2007). In developing the *Student Voice* portal, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) promotes the need to “develop learner agency by empowering students to manage their own learning” and for students to reflect “on what engages them in learning and why” (AITSL, 2014).

Along with exploring its potential, the literature on student voice also indicates the complexities of the concept and the significant differences in how it is understood. Leitch argues that student voice is “currently under-theorized, particularly in relation to how power shapes our understanding of what is possible in student voice practices in schools” (2012, p. 215). Examples of education systems which have created space for student voice have also seen instances of “manipulative incorporation” which has led to a “betrayal of hope” and an “increasingly powerful status quo” (Fielding, 2004, p. 296). In her analysis of student voice in educational research, Cook-Sather (2006) also outlines concerns that an oversimplification of complex change processes can lead to tokenism and manipulation. She also highlights how the term ‘student voice’ can have negative aspects in that it implies a single, monolithic voice that denies space for essential differences among students. What Cook-Sather and others (Atweh et al., 2012; Mitra, 2007; Smyth, 2007; Zyngier, 2005, 2008) consistently report, however, is that a

crucial step in any research involving student voice is to create a listening culture in which listening is a multi-faceted activity that requires a critical awareness of roles and purposes. Such an approach has strong links to the concept of empowerment (Shute & Slee, 2015), a concept that moves away from the deficit model where students are as seen as part of a problem that needs to be fixed, towards a positive approach that puts students' strengths as the starting point.

This attention towards how student voice and student participation can be used to improve teaching and learning outcomes has gained prominence in other subject areas. Jansen et al (Jansen, Herbel-Eisenmann, & Smith, 2012) sought to examine student experiences of mathematics programs as they transitioned from U.S. middle schools to high schools. As they wrote, “the value of listening to students’ voices lies not only in capturing which differences matter to students, but their voices provide a window into the sort of learning that students can experience as they make sense of these differences when they move from one setting to another” (Jansen et al., 2012, pp. 285-286). In the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) there has been an increased awareness that the challenges of improving student engagement, learning and ongoing commitment can be assisted through thoughtful and thorough exploration of student voice and student attitude (Betzner & Marek, 2014; Jones, Howe, & Rua, 2000; Potvin & Hasni, 2014; Tytler, 2007). Potvin and Hasni’s systematic review of 228 studies spanning twelve years of research into student interest, motivation and attitude in science and technology highlighted a major limitation of this body of research that this current study has sought to avoid. In noting the almost universal use of questionnaires to gauge attitude and interest, they note that this research tool is “obviously limited to perceptions”, and “it is not impossible that researchers have somehow lost sight of its limitations” (Potvin & Hasni, 2014, p. 111). Though this

current study has used an existing survey instrument for the first stage of data collection, the subsequent stages have gathered a variety of qualitative and quantitative data that provide scope for a more holistic understanding of student voice.

2.6 SUMMARY

The chapter has provided the relevant contextual background that has influenced the discourse around ‘Asia; and ‘Asia literacy’ in Australia. This discussion has also demonstrated the complex and often contentious relationships that have been a characteristic of the interactions between Australia and ‘Asia’. In relation to the central aim of this thesis, this background information and the relevant literature helps to identify and theorise the recurring themes in current students’ views towards Asia and Asia-related learning. This chapter also provided a history of the emergence of Asia literacy as a curriculum priority, along with the various challenges that hinder progress towards this priority. Though there has been rhetorical support for this priority from governments, business groups, educators and the general community, the enactment of this priority into the curriculum has encountered numerous hurdles. Of these, current and future teacher preparedness to effectively incorporate the Asia priority into relevant teaching is evidently a major concern.

Though the aims of Asia literacy are broader than learning an Asian language, in schools that offer an Asian language, this is often the default location for Asia-related content. Not only does this potentially limit this Asia-related teaching to being framed predominantly through the lens of that Asian language, it is also a precarious reliance on dwindling participation in ongoing language learning. However, as the discussion of student-centred language learning and student voice demonstrated, there are existing examples of how a more student-centred educational focus can lead to better learning

outcomes. These examples lend support to the other aim of this study; namely to gain greater understanding of what motivates students to engage (or not engage) with Asia-related learning.

In the following chapter, I build on the context and literature presented in this chapter by critically examining the construction and positioning of the notion of ‘Asia’ in order to clarify the conceptual framework used to explore students’ views of Asia. I also explore the theoretical conceptualisation of student motivation in order to provide a conceptual framework suitable for analysing what motivates students to engage with Asia-related learning.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Frameworks

As this thesis explores students' views of Asia and their motivations towards Asia-related learning, conceptual frameworks relevant to these two areas are explored in this chapter. The chapter has been divided into two distinct parts to reflect these two separate bodies of research.

The first part tackles the fundamental question posed by the concept of 'Asia literacy'; namely, what exactly is this 'Asia' that students are supposed to become literate about? This question will be explored here by first examining how 'Asia' has been imagined and positioned from various perspectives, including the dominant modes of viewing and *Othering* of Asia within Australia. Though these modes of viewing and Othering of Asia provide the main tool for analysis of students' views of Asia, the additional discourses of plurality/plural societies and 'Asia as method' are also explored, as these provide additional analytical lens for examining students' views of Asia. This provides the necessary framework to respond to Research Sub-Question 1; *How do students view Asia?*

The second part of the chapter examines the relevant literature on motivation theory. Though the concept of 'motivation' is complex and can be approached from multiple perspectives, decades of research into motivation has produced a large body of literature and theories. For the purposes of this study, the relevant elements of this literature are briefly discussed, before analysing the specific motivational construct that is used in this study; expectancy-value theory (EVT) (Eccles, 2005). This motivation theory provides a systematic way to differentiate between the types of motivation that influence students' attitudes to Asia-related learning. This directly addresses Research

Sub-Question 2; *How does motivational theory help explain students' attitudes to Asia-related learning?*

As an exploratory study into an under-researched field, this systematic approach also has potential to serve as a framework for future research in this area.

3.1 PART ONE – CONSTRUCTING AND VIEWING ‘ASIA’

As was shown in Chapters One and Two, the term ‘Asia’ has been critiqued from a wide number of perspectives. Yet, despite its deficiencies, it continues to be used as a convenient shorthand in any geographical, political, economic or cultural discourse that makes reference to a fluidly defined region that is located somewhere between the Pacific and Indian oceans. The extent to which the southern, western and northern boundaries are defined tends to vary depending on the motivations of the metaphorical cartographer rather than standardised parameters. The multiple definitions of ‘Asia’ that are in use today, be they geographical or conceptual, highlight the subjective nature of the concept. In the previous context chapter, I presented some of the historical and geographical complexities that have influenced how ‘Asia’ has been defined. In this chapter, I discuss some of the conceptual approaches to the positioning of Asia. All of these possible constructions of ‘Asia’ shape what it means to ‘know Asia’, since how Asia is constructed necessarily dictates what one needs to ‘know’ (i.e. be *literate* in) of that representation of ‘Asia’. This is a fundamental question when it comes to examining students’ motivations towards learning about Asia, as it provides a context through which the imagined ‘Asia’ that students express attitudes towards can be understood.

3.1.1 Plurality and plural societies

One way in which the type of knowledge about Asia has been codified is with reference to a social-scientific knowledge baseline (Shamsul, 2006). This baseline is a continuous and inter-related conceptual/intellectual reference which has led to “the construction, organisation and consumption process of this knowledge” (Shamsul, 2006, p. 45). Within the field of Asian studies, the foundation for constructing this knowledge is based on characterising Asia according to the two theories of ‘plurality’ and ‘plural society’ (Hefner, 2001). Plurality, most often used with reference to the Southeast Asian region, characterises Asia “before Europeans came and subsequently divided the region into a community of ‘plural societies’” (Shamsul, 2006, p. 45). This notion of plurality refers to a free-flowing, natural process which is visible not only in the flows of people via migration, but also evidenced in cultural borrowings and adaptations. By contrast, “plural society signifies both ‘coercion’ and ‘difference’. It also signifies the introduction of knowledge, social constructs, vocabulary, idioms and institutions hitherto unknown to the indigenous population” (Shamsul, 2006, p. 45). Concepts such as nation-states and governments were predominantly European constructs (i.e. colonial forms of knowledge) that replaced the traditional polities of Asia (Ooi & Hoàng, 2016; Tarling, 1998).

While modern Asian nation states are a product of this plural society, the relevance of this characterisation of Asia to the question of how knowledge of Asia is constructed and how views of Asia are formed is that the plural society framework is also the dominant way in which much knowledge of Asia in the West has been produced. As Shamsul points out, “the number of studies produced on Asia in the plural society context [supersede] many times those produced on Asia in the plurality context” (Shamsul, 2006, p. 46). While the dominance of the nation state paradigm means that

there is an element of inevitability in this bias, it is important to contextualise the vast body of knowledge of Asia as one which has been generated through the framework of the plural society construct.

The relevance of this to the positioning of Asia (and therefore, the inherent meaning of being ‘Asia literate’) is the importance of recognising the existence of other worldviews for understanding the complexity of Asia that can be accessed through the lens of plurality. Among the multiple data analysis approaches used in this study, the qualitative data is examined for indications of both the tendency to view Asia as a generic construct, and if students show awareness of other ways to conceptualise Asian societies beyond the nation state paradigm.

3.1.2 ‘Asia’ - from Western to Asian Constructs

This critique of plural society dominant knowledge of/about Asia is also evident in how other scholars in Asia have critiqued the characterisation of societies in Asia that have been derived through the application of Western discourse frameworks. In Wang’s essays on the politics of imagining Asia (and China in particular), he bases much of his critique on the dominant theme of a “profound dissatisfaction with the imported Western discourse that have been used to characterise and analyse China for most of the century” (H. Wang, 2011, p. 2). Like Shamsul, Wang argues that the histories of Asia, (and with relevance to this study, the knowledge of Asia codified for learning in schools) are not adequately represented by using solely Western conceptual frameworks. Wang writes that “the issue of Asia is not simply an Asian issue, but rather a matter of ‘world history’. Reconsidering ‘Asian history’ at once represents an effort to rethink nineteenth-century European ‘world history’” (H. Wang, 2011, p. 62). To address this misrepresentation, Wang argues for a new method of analysis that is neither

exclusively Western nor Chinese in origin. As with Shamsul's criticism that any attempts to 'know Asia' based solely on a plural society framework can only ever be partial understandings, Wang's rejection of the previous total reliance on Western analytical standards for understanding China also raises questions about the knowledge of Asia that is codified into the school curriculum.

One way this new method is emerging is in what has been called an 'Asia as method' approach (K.-H. Chen, 2010). Though the work of Edward Said (1978) is viewed as a watershed moment in post-colonial thinking, within Asian countries these types of critiques and interrogations of the concept of 'Asia' and the 'Orient' from a Western perspective had an earlier history (Takeuchi & Calichman, 2005; H. Wang, 2011). Thirty years prior to Said's critique of Orientalism, the Japanese scholar Takeuchi commented that "for East Asia to be East Asia requires reliance upon a European discursive context" (cited in H. Wang, 2011, pp. 12-13). The discursive context Takeuchi is referring to is the historical creation of 'Asia' as a European idea that did not exist as such without being defined in contrast with Europe. Though Takeuchi's visions of a self-referential Asia were largely forgotten in the tumultuous events of World War Two, his ideas have been revisited more recently by other Asian scholars who have advocated for a continuation of the de-imperialisation process (Ching, 2010; Lin, 2012; H. Zhang, Chan, & Kenway, 2015). The self-reflective concept of 'Asia as method' has been further theorised by Taiwanese scholar Chen Kuan-Hsing (2010). He argues that with "the idea of Asia as an imaginary anchoring point, societies in Asia can become each other's points of reference, so that understanding of the self may be transformed, and subjectivity rebuilt" (K.-H. Chen, 2010, p. 212). The concept of subjectivity is key to Chen's concept of 'Asia as method'. By this, he is referring a self-analysis of the imaginary Asia that was a product of

colonialism and imperialisation. The goal of rebuilding this subjectivity would be to advance the historical experiences and practices in Asia as alternative perspectives for understanding world history.

Linking this back to how Australian students can ‘know ‘Asia’, the following comment from Ching is pertinent. He argues that the agenda for this inter-referencing of knowledge producers within Asia is to shift “away from a Euro-American-centric knowledge production – the West produces ‘theory’ whereas the non-West provides ‘data’ – to that of an Asia-emphasised concern” (Ching, 2010, p. 184). Ching’s point is that where the Euro-American centric knowledge was previously projected as universal without location or history (Mignolo, 2000), this is challenged by a recognition of local histories and subaltern knowledge that are not trapped within a colonial epistemology. For an Australian society that is becoming more and more integrated with the region on multiple levels, it would appear inevitable that the theories and forms of knowledge that have been relied on to inform our understanding of the region (‘the Euro-American-centric knowledge base’) will need to be subjected to critical reflection. This can be seen as one facet of the broader disruption in static notions of identity that is taking place in a world of increasingly hybrid identities (Iyall Smith & Leavy, 2008; Rizvi, 2005) and transnational flows (Darling-Wolf, 2015; Soysal, 2015).

The extent to which students’ views of Asia indicate evidence of this critical self-reflection is also one way the data in this study has been analysed.

3.2 OTHERING ASIA

When contemplating what the term ‘Asia’ connotes in Australian discourse, the long and complex history of Australia-Asia interactions (see Chapter Two) has had a profound influence. The impact is on not only how Australians view Asia, but also how

Australians often define themselves in contrast to Asia. As Pan (2015a) writes, “our [Australia’s] understanding of Asia, though no doubt affected by what is ‘out there’ in Asia, is ultimately conducted in Australia’s language, discourse and identity context” (Pan, 2015a, p. 200). Walker captures this complex relationship by noting that “what was meant by ‘Australia’ and what was meant by ‘Asia’ were not unrelated questions” (Walker, 1997, p. 141). The dynamics of this framing of Asia (and therefore the concept of ‘Asia literacy’) can be viewed as a process of *Othering*.

As a noun, the term *other* signifies that which is outside of oneself. By placing oneself at the centre, all which is outside, i.e. the ‘other’, is positioned as different from oneself (Mountz, 2009). *Othering* is the process of creating the ‘other’; of positioning oneself as the norm against which persons or groups can be judged as outside of the norm. This characterisation of the Other also serves as an obverse way in which to talk about the Self, for the visual or linguistic representation of the Other is also part of how one’s own identity is constructed in opposition to this (Coward & Ellis, 1977).

According to Yew, the process of Othering can be seen in the knowledge-power paradigm that prevailed from the beginning of European invasions of Asia, a process that “politically subjugated and culturally obfuscated the Asian Other” (Yew, 2010, p. 20). This process of Othering was a central theme of Edward Said’s critique of how representations of the ‘Orient’ were normalised by western powers, philosophers, scholars, and artists (Said, 1978). This process of Othering, which in Said’s area of focus was manifested as Orientalism, served to create a binary between East and West, in which the East was invariably cast as either without distinction (homogenised), reductively stereotyped (essentialised), or regarded as the lesser of the two (feminised) (Mountz, 2009, p. 329).

Within the discourse of Australian representations of Asia, Rizvi (1997, p. 25) has drawn the link to how studies of Asian cultures in Australian education institutions have often been limited to essentialist representations of cultures in which the Asian ‘other’ is constructed in a binary Self-Other relationship. As a first step in redressing this problematic Othering, he recommends a shift to a self-reflective, relational approach that “examines the ways our knowledge of different cultures has been historically organised in terms of particular formations of power relations” (Rizvi, 1997, p. 25). The cultural obfuscation that Yew has identified can also be witnessed in the homogeneous and generic view of Asia that is still partly evident in modern Australian imaginations of Asia (Walker & Sobocinska, 2012). The origins of the three modes of viewing Asia (absence, threat and opportunity) that dominate Australian ways of viewing Asia (Pan, 2015a) can also be considered a product of this process of Othering. Before examining these three modes in detail, it is important to clarify how the Othering of Asia can impact on students’ views of Asia.

The relevance of this Othering of Asia to the exploration of Australian students’ views of Asia is twofold. Firstly, without a critical approach to deconstructing these modes of viewing, efforts to develop Asia literacy are susceptible to perpetuating the hegemony that has created this Othering of Asia. As Nozoki (2007, 2009) has proposed in relation to Asia-related teaching to students in U.S. schools, the everyday cultural practices of representation in which students are immersed, can lead to students bringing to the classroom the knowledge(s), perspectives and identities that are embedded within an existing Western-centred hegemony. To counter this, she argues that “Asia literacy curriculum and pedagogy thus requires a critical and cautious deliberation on the part of schools and teachers” (Nozaki, 2007, p. 157). Such an approach can be productive:

since hegemonic achievement is not stable, but, rather, the result of constant struggles, it is always possible to teach about Asia in ways that can form a counterhegemony, one that embraces equality and freedom rather than dominance in social and structural relations between and among different peoples and groups within/out the nation. (Nozaki, 2007, p. 157)

Secondly, not only does the unquestioning perpetuation of this Othering reinforce the dichotomy between Australia and Asia, it also denies students the opportunity to critically reflect on pre-conceived views, and therefore begin to see beyond the monolithic national identities that conceal the great diversity within and between peoples. This continual Othering of Asia leads to a focus predominantly on the differences *between* Australia and Asian countries, and tends to limit space for critical reflection on the differences *within* both Australia and *within* Asian countries.

An example of the potential such a critical approach offers is provided by a recent study with a cohort of 47 Year 11 and 12 students from three Victorian (Australia) secondary schools (Schorch, Walton, Priest, & Paradies, 2015). The students were from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and the researchers were interested in how young people with culturally diverse backgrounds experience and think about racism and cultural diversity from their own perspectives in relation to their everyday lives. As part of their schooling, these students were able to experience a multi-sensory Immigration Museum installation which was designed to stimulate student reflection on identity, belonging and racism. The findings from that multi-method study suggested that the experience enabled students to move “beyond an abstract tolerance of cultural

diversity by unsettling the self and destabilising stereotyped and prejudiced interpretations of the ‘other’” (2015, p. 222).

Though the role of the teacher in unpacking these normalised modes of viewing the Other is critical, it is also important not to underestimate the influence that deeply entrenched modes of viewing the world can have on how teachers enact the curriculum. This was highlighted in a study by Schmidt (2010) into the efforts of four prospective teachers who sought to disrupt the colonial ideology that had framed the teaching of geography in U.S. schools. Though these pre-service teachers were both conscious and critical of the Self/Other division that privileged a U.S.-centred way of understanding the world, their subsequent efforts to disrupt this Othering in their teaching were generally unsuccessful. In analysing the teachers’ lessons, Schmidt commented that:

At the conscious level, these teachers are resisters who want to challenge the imperial systems they feel structure the world. But their actions show that their subconscious delineation of the world has not disappeared. This is not surprising, as they were educated in a system they described as preparing them to believe the U.S. has a superior position. (Schmidt, 2010, p. 43)

Both Nozoki and Schmidt writes from the position of educators in the United States, the remaining superpower which has unequalled hegemony in the world today. Australia’s position in the world and its relationship with Asia is quite different. As Ang and Stratton have suggested, due to a shared experience of being subject to European colonisation, Asia and Australia “no longer appear as absolute binary opposites” (1996, p. 16). Though exploring this aspect of the Australia-Asia relationship was not an explicit objective in this study, the extent to which the blurring of this ‘East/West’,

‘us’/‘them’ dichotomy is apparent in the views of students is one element of the data analysis.

3.2.1 Three dominant modes of viewing Asia

In a recent edited publication on Asia literacy education in Australian schools (Halse, 2015c), a theoretical construct that explores the dominant modes of viewing Asia has been put forward by Chengxin Pan (Pan, 2015a). According to Pan, the three modes of viewing Asia; namely, ‘absence of Asia’, ‘Asia as threat’, and ‘Asia as opportunity’ have conditioned not only how ‘Asia’ is imagined within the Australian national consciousness, but by implication, how Australians then construct what it means to be literate about the imagined ‘Asia’. The contention is that although there are significant structural, material and financial issues that have hampered previous efforts to raise levels of knowledge of Asia at the educational level, attempts to address these problems will always struggle to succeed unless the underlying fundamental assumptions are brought to the fore. For Pan, the priority should be to first critically examine the existing “prior knowledge about Asia and how such knowledge or preunderstanding has come about” (Pan, 2015a, p. 198).

References to the three dominant modes of viewing Asia that Pan identifies can be seen in other writings on how Asia is often imagined from an Australian perspective. Many of the earlier and contemporary works have pointed to the oscillations between the ‘Asia as challenge/threat’ and ‘Asia as opportunity/hope’, constructs that have characterised the national attitude towards Asia since the 19th century (A. Burke, 2008; Patience, 2018; Walker & Sobocinska, 2012). In addition to these two recurring motifs, Asia is also marked by its internal and external absence from the views Australian have of their world. This was most recently borne out in research into Australian perceptions

of Asia (Fozdar, 2016), in which the findings suggested that the binaries of Asia as either invisible or as a threat were the dominant themes. The following section examines these three modes of viewing Asia, and whether there are additional factors that need to be considered when using this construct to analyse students' views of Asia.

3.2.1.1 Absence of Asia

As previously discussed in section 2.2 of Chapter Two, the absence of Asia in the Australian consciousness can be traced back to the British invasion of Australia in the 18th century. This legacy of self-identifying as an outpost of British colonialism for over a century (Dutton, 2001), compounded with the deference shown to European and North American cultures as primary points of reference, may partly explain why in 1992, approximately 70 percent of respondents in a public opinion poll thought of Australia as “basically separate from Asia” (Muller, 1992).

Pan's ‘absence of Asia’ construct posits that this sense of external separation from Asia is also transferred psychologically to the way that ‘Asia’ remains largely unseen within Australia. Even as the proportion of migrants from Asia to Australia has trended upwards in recent decades (ABS, 2017) the absence of the ‘Asia within’ that is evident today has similarities with the historical absence of Asia in the Australian psyche. As Fitzgerald (2007) notes in his historical account of the experiences of the Chinese in Australia, “Chinese voices are barely audible among all the comments about people of Chinese descent that resonate through Australian art and letters of the late 19th century and early 20th century” (J. Fitzgerald, 2007, p. vii).

This applies also to the little-known stories of the long period of interactions between Indigenous and Southeast Asian peoples, stories that are also only recently being made more widely known (Nagata et al., 2004; P. Stephenson, 2007). Though

Walker and Sobocinska's recent edited volume titled *Australia's Asia* is replete with examples of an important Asian presence in Australia, they acknowledge that "these Asian dimensions of the Australian past are frequently poorly recorded or difficult to decipher" (Walker & Sobocinska, 2012, p. 13). With the growing numbers of the Australian population having an Asian background, some see that while there is no longer an absence of Asia, there is a perception that 'Asian' communities are 'in' but not 'of' Australia (Ang et al., 2000; Iwabuchi, 2015). This psychological separation of the 'Asia within' is also reflected in the tendency to regard all of 'Asia' as a homogenous entity. Such a view, it has been argued, is a "process of racial/cultural othering that still continues to be reproduced, for example, in media representations of 'Asia' or even in some well-intentioned efforts to bring 'Asian' art to the Australian public" (Ang et al., 2000, p. xviii).

Despite the pervasiveness of this 'absence of Asia' view, there are signs that its prevalence may be gradually in decline. One indication of this is the emergence of a specialised field of contemporary Asian Australian studies. Though not as well established as similar studies in the United States or Canada, the writings of Lo (2006) and compilations such as those by Khoo (2003, 2008) demonstrate not only the complexity, but also the breadth and depth of this field of academic studies. In the realm of literature (Hamston, 2012; Lokugé & Wilson, 2018; Ommundsen, 2011, 2012; Ramlan, 2016) and film (Jetnikoff & Henderson, 2013) there are a growing number of examples of how books and films about Asians in Australia can be used in the curriculum to not only spur inquiry into stereotypes and assumptions about the Asian 'Other', but to also normalise these types of multimodal texts within the standard curriculum. These developments may be challenging the preunderstandings that Pan argues have limited how much Australia can know about Asia. The analysis of student

attitudinal data in subsequent chapters includes a focus on this ‘absence of Asia’ in the student perspectives.

3.2.1.2 *Asia as Threat*

The episodes in which Asia has lost its ‘absence’ and been rendered ‘visible’ in the mainstream discourse in Australia are typically when it has been regarded as either a looming threat or as a golden opportunity. These views of Asia, often contradictory reactions to the same phenomena, have regularly been cultivated by those who have sought to provoke a range of responses from the Australian public. As was outlined in the context and literature chapter (section 2.2), the creation of the ‘awakening East’ narrative in the late 19th century (Walker, 1997) was regarded by some as a way to accelerate efforts for Australia to “wake up to the responsibilities of nation building” (Walker, 1997, p. 132) or face the prospect of invasion from the north (i.e. Asia).

Evidence of the ubiquity of this ‘Asia as threat’ trope as can be found in the formulaic subgenre of “novels of Asian invasion” that emerged in pre-Federation days (Ross, 2008, p. 11). In her analysis of over 30 invasion-narratives novels, Ross notes that “Asia-invasion novels are a specific kind of Australian fiction with their own narrative formula, recurring discursive tropes, and rhetorical strategies” (Ross, 2009, p. 12). In a settler nation that was itself a product of invasion, these alarmist and didactic texts tapped into the insecurities of the white population. Ross writes that:

the reality of the colonial invasion of Australia then lies concealed beneath repetitious reams of writing detailing the danger posed to the white race, and discourses of white victimhood and white suffering at the hands of possible Asian invaders. (Ross, 2009, p. 13)

According to Pan (2015a), this historic fear of an Asian invasion has been redirected to the more recent phenomena of terrorists, ‘boat people’, drug traffickers, rogue states and failing regimes, all of which contribute to a re-imaging of the Asia region as the ‘arc of instability’ in the Australia psyche (Dobell, 2006).

The enduring appeal this narrative has had within the broad Australian public is evident in the hugely successful series of novels by author John Marsden. The first novel in the series, *Tomorrow, When the War Began*, revolves around the invasion of Australia by an unnamed pacific-Asian country. Though Marsden purposively avoided identifying the origins of the invaders, the screen adaption of the novel (Marsden, Hurd-Wood, Stasey, & Akdeniz, 2010) casts Asian actors in the roles of the invaders, and this has been criticised for exploiting the deeply held ‘Asia as threat’ discourse. As one critic commented, “what makes the audience believe in this narrative is that they have heard it time and time again, it’s part of our political DNA, part of our deep sense of anxiety about being a white settler state in South Asia” (Barber, 2010).

However, just as the ‘absence of Asia’ view may be undergoing disruption, there are indications of a decrease in the ‘Asia as threat’ mode of viewing. As evidence to support the modern prevalence of this mode of view, Pan (2015a) pointed to a 2011 opinion poll which suggested that approximately two-thirds of Australians feared that China’s rise could pose a threat to Australia (F. Hanson, 2012). However, data from more recent publications of that annual survey suggested a more positive outlook towards China. Results from the 2017 poll showed that Australians ranked the Australia-China relationship as equally important as the one with the United States, and 79 percent consider China as more of an economic partner compared to 13 percent who see China as more of a military threat (The Lowy Institute, 2017). Though this is only

one small aspect of the larger ‘Asia as threat’ discourse, the trend evident in that longitudinal survey data may be indicative of a broader shift in this mode of viewing Asia. Linking this back to the exploration of students’ attitudes to Asia-related learning undertaken in this study, though there was not an explicit focus on themes of ‘Asia as threat’, the topic was raised in direct and inferred ways by students, and these attitudes will be discussed with reference to this mode of viewing Asia

3.2.1.3 *Asia as Opportunity*

Pan’s third mode of viewing Asia, namely, ‘Asia as opportunity’, tends to function as the binary of the ‘Asia as threat’ narrative mode. Just as ‘Asian invasion’ novelists and opportunistic politicians harnessed latent fears of Asia to increase sales or achieve political objectives, there has been an analogous public discussion by those who have viewed Asia as an untapped and unlimited source of economic prosperity from which Australia can benefit. Though the recent references to the ‘Asian century’ have exponentially increased this mode of viewing Asia, the history of this narrative, as shown in section 2.2. of Chapter Two, demonstrates the emergence of this view in the early days of post-invasion settlement.

Though Pan sees this ‘Asia as opportunity’ mode of viewing as the most positive of the three due to its apparently outward focus, he still regards it as fundamentally flawed by the fact that it is “essentially about the Australian self” (Pan, 2015a, p. 203). It is also the mode of viewing Asia that seems to have received the most criticism from academics from a variety of disciplines. Though this may be due to the widespread reliance by governments on this mode of framing a rationale for Asia literacy, it also seems to be a reaction against the instrumentalist mindset that underpins this view of Asia.

A reading of the multitude of government, business and special interest group publications on the rationales for Asia literacy suggests that the utilitarian value of learning about Asia has been so successfully established that the intellectual value is barely mentioned. As Salter has commented, the intrinsic value of learning about Asia has been mostly overlooked in the face of the “dominance of an economic rationale that is seemingly impossible to resist” (Salter, 2013b, p. 3).

Despite these critiques, the calculation of what is in the national interest is usually codified in government policies and documents, and these are often seen as the source of this instrumentalist bias. The most significant government document to date, the White Paper on *Australia in the Asian Century* (AACTF, 2012) continued this discourse with an unquestioning assumption that adherence to an economic rationalist agenda will create a relationship between Australia and Asia that provides economic opportunities for all. This fixation on self-interests echoes Pan’s critique. It not only reinforces the simplification of interactions between Australian and Asia to a solely transactional relationship, it also appears to send a signal to Asian countries that an economic gain is the primary motive for Australia’s engagement in the region (Broinowski, 2003, 2004; Wesley, 2011). As Morris-Suzuki notes, this is a one-dimensional portrayal of Asia as a region of burgeoning middle classes who are prime for contributing directly or indirectly to the economic prosperity of Australia (Morris-Suzuki, 2015).

Education policy and curriculum documents are also critiqued for being positioned within this ‘Asia as opportunity’ discourse. With reference to Gramsci’s notion of cultural hegemony, in which a dominant worldview is internalised to the point of seemingly being the “natural order of things” (Boggs, 1976, p. 39), Ditchburn critiques the perceived neo-liberal hegemony underpinning the national Australian

curriculum as it places an emphasis on increasing Asia literacy to meet the perceived needs of a global market (Ditchburn, 2012, p. 264). Employing a form of critical discourse theory, another critique of the national curriculum maintained that the curriculum is designed to “steer student knowledge of ‘Asia’ towards the acquisition of a set of skills to exploit future economic activity” (Peacock, Lingard, & Sellar, 2015, p. 367). And even if there are elements of the curriculum such as the general capability of Intercultural Understanding that appear to encourage a more critical, self-reflective approach to learning about Asia (ACARA, 2014c), there is an argument that it is compromised by the problematic constructs of ‘us’ and ‘them’, and the perpetuation of the “dualism between Australians and their Asian others” (Rizvi, 2012, p. 74).

In terms of how this ‘Asia as opportunity’ discourse is prevalent in the attitudes expressed by students in this study, the multifaceted nature of this view of Asia adds complexity to this analysis. Of the three modes of viewing Asia, this one appears to be the most influential. This presents the challenge of how to go beyond the broad categorisation of ‘opportunity’ as a motivator for student engagement in Asia-related learning, and explore the more complex factors that may be influencing this ‘Asia as opportunity’ view. Taking the students’ perspective, the question then becomes ‘what is Asia an opportunity for?’ Though the economic rationale is clearly the dominant objective for government and business, students may have more diverse reasons for seeking to take this ‘opportunity’. To explore the possible differences within these reasons, this study utilised an established conceptual framework of motivation. The more precise subjective task values that are part this motivation theory (discussed below in section 3.3.4) enable a greater degree of clarity and contextualisation of student motivation for engaging in Asia-related learning.

3.3 PART TWO – CONCEPTUALISING STUDENT MOTIVATION

In this second part of this chapter, the focus moves away from the conceptualisation of ‘Asia’ towards the conceptualisation of motivation. The rationale for this is that while surveying the literature on how ‘Asia’ has been constructed is necessary to contextualise the ways that students have imagined ‘Asia’, this body of literature alone is insufficient for the purposes of understanding the underlying motivations students have with respect to Asia-related learning in schools. To fully respond to the main research question of; *What are students’ views of Asia and what are their motivations with respect to Asia-related learning?*, the relevant literature on motivation must be explored. This will also ensure that the research design is based on a sound theoretical model of motivation. Though the specific content area (Asia-related learning) has not been explored previously using such constructs, there is a large body of relevant educational research into motivation that can be drawn upon. This includes the established literature on motivation in second language acquisition (Gardner, 1988). Although this study’s focus is broader than students’ attitudes to learning an Asian language, the use of motivational constructs in language research has proven to be a useful way to understand what motivates students to engage (or not engage) in this learning.

This section begins with a discussion of the literature on theories of motivation, and then the focus narrows to assessing the suitability of the established theoretical framework of expectancy-value theory (EVT) (Eccles, 2005) to systematically understand student motivation to engage in Asia-related learning. As this appears to be the first time student motivation towards Asia-related learning has been investigated within such an established motivational construct, adopting this systematic approach in

this exploratory study can provide a foundation for further studies of student motivation towards this learning.

3.3.1 What is motivation?

While the term motivation is used extensively in the fields of education and research, recent overviews of motivational research (Hulleman, Barron, Kosovich, & Lazowski, 2016; McInerney, Walker, & Liem, 2011; Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2014) have shown that there are numerous definitions and constructs given to the term, with little agreement on some form of consensus definition. Despite this complexity, a common principle found in motivational research is a focus on understanding the ‘whys’ of human behaviour and what moves people to act (Weiner, 1992).

Atkinson’s (1964) seminal work on motivation accentuated the importance of understanding cognition and beliefs as opposed to the then dominant, purely behaviourist theories of behaviours, drives, needs and habits. Drawing together the concurring elements of previous theories of motivation, Atkinson’s definition of motivation proposed that “the strength of tendency to act in a certain way depends upon the strength of expectancy that the act will be followed by a given consequence (or goal) and the value of that consequence (or goal) to the individual” (Atkinson, 1964, p. 274). A duration element has been added to this in a more recent definition of motivation as “the process whereby goal directed activities are instigated and sustained” (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 5). Defining motivation as a process, as opposed to a product, implies that the presence of motivation is inferred from specific actions and behaviours which are goal-orientated.

3.3.2 Motivational theories

Since that early work by Atkinson on expectancy and value constructs, motivational research has focussed on cognition and beliefs, and this has now become the dominant paradigm in the field today (Schunk et al., 2014). In contemporary research on motivation in education, two dominant theories are achievement goal theory (AGT) (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Maehr & Midgley, 1991; Nicholls, 1984) and expectancy-value theory (EVT) (Eccles, 2005; Eccles et al., 1983). Examining motivation from a socio-cognitive lens, both of these theories seek to explain how students give meaning to their experiences within achievement contexts (Schunk et al., 2014). Within AGT, the three types of achievement goals commonly studied are mastery, performance approach and performance avoidance. In this current study, where the area of interest is Asia-related learning, the broadness of the topic does not readily lend itself to a clear concept of mastery or performance. Unlike distinct subjects such as mathematics, English and languages, Asia-related learning has a patchwork presence across the curriculum without clearly defined measures (e.g. tests and exams) to assess student performance. Achievement goal theory, therefore, does not suit the objectives of this study. Expectancy value theory, however, does offer additional systematic ways to investigate motivation (Wentzel & Brophy, 2014). The EVT concept and its applicability to this study are discussed next.

3.3.3 Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT)

EVT is a multidimensional approach to understanding student motivation grounded in a social cognitive perspective (Pintrich, 2003), with a focus on an individual's beliefs, values and goals as primary drivers (Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2007). As the name of the theory suggests, it predicts that student motivation and achievement is directly influenced by students' *expectancies for*

success and their *values*. In its expanded form, the values component is referred to as *subjective task values* (STVs). EVT was first developed to systematically study gender differences in mathematics engagement and achievement in children (Eccles et al., 1983). Since then, this model has been applied more broadly in academic and non-academic settings to understand the indirect and direct ways in which expectancies and values influence achievement choices, effort, persistence and performance. In recent education research on motivation, *expectation of success* and *subjective task values* are seen as the two most important predictors of achievement behaviour (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 51). Examples of these studies that are of relevance to this current study are discussed below in section 3.3.5.

In the EVT model, the terms expectancy and value have clear definitions. Expectancies are an “individuals’ beliefs and judgements about their capabilities to perform tasks successfully” (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 47). This concept of expectation is linked to the question; ‘*Can I do this task?*’ An expectation of failure is seen as deterring an individual from engaging or continuing to engage in a task. Even though they might value or be interested in the task, if they expect to fail or experience failure after attempting the task, then this leads to non-engagement. As noted above (section 3.3.2) the broadness of Asia-related learning in the curriculum works against efforts to explore students’ beliefs about success or failure with this learning. This means that the *expectancies for success* component of the model cannot be utilised in this current research. However, as the components are not interdependent, this does not impede the use of the subjective task values (STVs) component.

In STVs, the term ‘values’ refer to the students’ beliefs about why they might engage in a task (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 47). This answers the question; ‘*Do I want to*

do this task and why?’ These values are regarded as subjective, since each individual may assign different values to the same tasks. Empirical research has shown that “students’ subjective task values predict both intentions and actual decisions to persist at different activities” (Wigfield, Tonks, & Klauda, 2016, p. 59). Therefore, these values are considered one of the most important predictors of achievement behaviour (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 51). The term ‘task’ has a broad meaning and can refer to any short or long term activity (Eccles, 2009; Schunk et al., 2014). In the case of Asia-related learning, a task could refer to a wide range of short or long term learning. Some of the statements used for the Q sort made reference to these types of tasks. Examples of these and other possible tasks are:

- choosing to study an Asian language if a school offers more than one language
- continuing with Asian language study past the compulsory years
- choosing an Asian country as a focus for an inquiry unit of work
- choosing to learn a traditional Asian sport/martial art in Physical Education classes
- choosing to read novels that have some Asia-related themes or characters with an Asian background
- choosing traditional art techniques from Asian countries for use during Art classes
- engaging and collaborating with Asia-related organisations in the local community as part of school-community networks
- using Asian media/social media as sources of information for school related work
- sharing their own experiences of Asia-related learning in peer teaching opportunities.

These are only some many examples of short and long term Asia-related learning activities that could be categorised as tasks. So while the concept of performance is not

easily defined in this study, the values that student hold can provide a way to evaluate how these task-values interact to influence motivation towards Asia-related learning.

3.3.4 Dimensions of Subjective Task Values (STVs)

As a multidimensional construct, the subjective task values component of expectancy-value theory consists of the following four subcomponents.

3.3.4.1 *Attainment value*

This is the personal importance of doing well on a task. If the task fulfils a need or is important to the student, then the attainment value is elevated. Recently theorisation of this value has incorporated identity constructs, including those from self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2009). Engaging in an activity is seen as a demonstration of its importance to the individual in order to attain their goals and affirm their identities (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010).

3.3.4.2 *Utility value*

This is the usefulness of a task in helping achieve short-term or long-term goals. Examples are engagement in academic studies to achieve future career goals, or participation in physical activity for health benefits. Of importance here is that utility value can exist even when there may be minimal or even no actual interest in the task for its own sake. Extrinsic motivational factors such as working towards career goals, pleasing parents, and maintaining peer relationships may lead students to undertake studies that are not particularly enjoyable. Utility value can be “determined by how well a task relates to current and future goals, such as career goals” (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 120). As utility value can also be connected to personal goals or a sense of self, it can interact with attainment value.

3.3.4.3 *Intrinsic value*

This is the enjoyment one receives from performing an activity. It conveys similarities with intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), as both concepts define this form of motivation as coming from the pleasure or satisfaction one gets from the task itself, rather than external rewards.

3.3.4.4 *Cost*

This is the time, attention, effort, and monetary inputs students need to devote to achieving their goal. Cost is concerned with the perceived negative aspects of engaging in a task (Eccles et al., 2005). Examples include the fear of failure in a task, the effort required to succeed, and the loss of time, opportunities or energy for other activities. Cost is especially important to choice, as all choices are assumed to have costs associated with them.

Though the research into what influences the development of these values is not as developed, the literature does suggest that a mix of psychological and experiential factors play a role in the development of these subjective task values. Some of these factors include, the student's own experiences with the activity, feedback from parents and teachers on the importance and usefulness of the task, and the cultural norms and expectations that surround the student (Wigfield et al., 2016). These are relevant to the investigation of students' attitudes in this study since, some of the factors that have been previously identified as of importance for engagement with Asia-related learning are situated at the levels of personal, family/peer, and community (AEF, 2012b).

These four task values will be used in the analysis of the attitudes expressed by the participants to assess whether this systematic way to answer the question; '*Do I want to do this task?*', can be applied in a meaningful way to the students' attitudes and motivation for engaging or not in Asia-related learning. The value that a student places

on engaging in these studies is considered a function of how important it is to the student to do well in Asia-related learning (attainment value), how much enjoyment or pleasure he or she receives from engaging in the activity (intrinsic value), the extent to which the learning the student acquires from Asia-related learning is instrumental to reaching a variety of short or long term goals (utility value), and the cost of engaging in the activity in relation to what is forgone, expended, or suffered (cost).

3.3.5 EVT in related research

As this is an exploratory study into a relatively new area of research, the decision to use EVT in this study was informed by its suitability and effectiveness in areas of research that had some points in common with this current study. One of these considerations was how a concept that has been used extensively in quantitative-type research could be used in a mixed-methods study. Though the motivational components in EVT have commonly been assessed using validated scales, a database search of published EVT based research indicated that there has been a growing interest in applying this model to qualitative data analysis. The following are a few examples of studies that have informed the design and process used in this current study.

A 2005 Canadian study used EVT to explore and code interview data from primary school students on their attitudes to recess-time activities (Watkinson, Dwyer, & Nielsen, 2005). Another study with primary school students employed a mixed methods design in which EVT was used to analyse interview data to explore student motivation to participate in physical exercise (Xiang, McBride, & Bruene, 2006). Chen and Liu also used EVT in analysing interview and written responses from university students about their motivation towards physical education activities (A. Chen & Liu, 2009). And more recently in an exploratory study similar to this current one, Cooper et

al analysed data from semi-structured interviews to examine student perceptions of active learning experiences (Cooper, Ashley, & Brownell, 2017). The authors noted that while there had been considerable discussion of student resistance to active learning, there had been few studies into the topic and even fewer that have applied a conceptual framework for systematically investigating this issue. There are parallels with this current study, as while ‘Asia literacy’ has been a topic of debate for a considerable time, studies into student perceptions are scarce, and even more so those which employ a systematic, conceptual framework of motivation.

Considering the cohort involved in this study, and the factors that may influence their attitudes to current and future Asia-related learning, there have been examples of other research which were considered informative to the application of EVT in this current study. For example, a longitudinal study of Australian, Canadian and U.S. junior high school students found that students’ perceptions of the importance of mathematics predicted their future course enrolment intentions (Watt et al., 2012). Other studies have also found predictive elements in EVT in terms of course continuation decisions (Harackiewicz, Durik, Barron, Linnenbrink-Garcia, & Tauer, 2008; Meece, Wigfield, & Eccles, 1990). EVT has also been used for studies into classroom interest (Durik, 2003) and time dedicated to sports (Eccles & Harold, 1991). The areas of focus of these studies (course enrolment and continuation, classroom interest, time dedicated to study) are also areas of interest when exploring students’ attitudes to Asia-related learning.

In research areas closer to this current study, EVT has either influenced, or been used directly in a variety of ways to understand motivation in language learning. In a longitudinal study of Japanese tertiary students’ interest in English language study, Fryer and Ainley (2017) suggested that developing and supporting utility value is an

important pathway towards enhancing student interest in language study. In a qualitative multiple case study of Chinese tertiary students' attitudes towards foreign language learning, Bo et al (2016) used EVT for theme analysis of interview data identifying utility value as a consistent marker in motivation. And in a number of studies on Japanese learners of English, Mori has drawn on the subject task values to investigate motivation to read in a foreign language (Mori, 2002, 2004; Mori & Gobel, 2006). In the United Kingdom, Graham et al used EVT as a lens in a longitudinal study of English primary students' motivation to learn French (2016). They found that the utility value (for travel purposes) of learning the language was strong when students were in Year 6, though this waned as the students transitioned into secondary school.

These studies, and the ones cited previously, provide strong support for the applicability and value of using the systematic approach inherent in EVT to studying student motivation.

3.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has laid out the two fields of literature that provide conceptual frameworks for this study. The ontological and epistemological complexities that the term 'Asia' presents have been explored by examining some of the varying ways 'Asia' has been constructed. This discussion has extended to how Asia has been viewed as a highly situated, Australian construct with past discourses lingering on as influences on current views. These constructions of Asia (plurality/plural society, 'Asia as method', and Othering as absence, threat and opportunity) are utilised during the analysis of students' views of Asia presented in Chapters Five and Six.

The second part of the chapter explored the relevant socio-cognitive theories of motivation. Given the lack of relevant previous studies to draw on, the use of an

established and empirically tested theory of motivation, namely expectancy-value theory, was shown to be suited to the objectives of this study. The subjective task values of attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value and cost will help in the systematic exploration of students' motivations towards Asia-related learning.

Before exploring the views and motivations of student, the following chapter sets out the design of the research and provides information on the participants.

Chapter 4: Research Process

This chapter has two main parts. It begins with a discussion of pragmatism as the underlying framework that informs the mixed methods design of this research. I conclude this first part with an explanation of Q methodology and why it is particularly suited to the objectives of this study. In part two, I elaborate on the design and process of data collection, including details of participants and procedures. A detailed explanation of the steps taken during the qualitative and quantitative analyses is also provided.

4.1 PRAGMATISM

This research has been formulated and carried out within the paradigm of pragmatism as the theoretical framework. Though the roots of pragmatism can be traced to the first half of the nineteenth century (Ayer, 1968), it was more fully articulated by philosophers James Dewey and William James in the early decades of the twentieth century (Cherryholmes, 1999). Despite James and Dewey's extensive writings on the theoretical and practical aspects of pragmatism, the ensuing seven decades saw logical positivism and empiricism as the dominant research paradigms, with pragmatist approaches the rare exception (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). With the gradual waning of the "paradigm wars" (Bryman, 2008, p. 13), pragmatism now has an ever growing presence in research, particularly in education research (Badley, 2003; Biesta, 2010b; Bryman, 2006; Maxcy, 2003; Morgan, 2013; Rocco et al., 2003; Sammons, 2010).

Though the etymological link with the word pragmatic often leads to pragmatism being regarded as just doing "what works" (Denzin, 2010, p. 422), there are deeper philosophical underpinnings of pragmatism that distinguish it from other commonly

used paradigms in the fields of social science research. Kuhn's concept of paradigm (Kuhn, 1970) is often linked to a philosophy of knowledge approach, which emphasises questions on the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), and how knowledge is produced (methodology) (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Though this is not the version of paradigm that Kuhn regarded as of the greatest importance (as discussed in the 2nd edition postscript of his seminal text), it is most often associated with the contrasting paradigms of positivism/post-positivism and constructivism (Morgan, 2013). Due to the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions inherent in these paradigms, they generally favour research based on quantitative or qualitative data respectively (Lincoln et al., 2011). These two paradigms are sometimes regarded as incompatible due to their fundamentally different positions regarding the concept of truth (Greene & Caracelli, 2003). This incompatibility, however, is rejected in pragmatism as it theorises that reality is neither completely objective as per positivist/post-positivist thinking, nor entirely subjective as posited in the constructivist approach. As Morgan notes, a pragmatist would argue that "even though there is a reality that exists apart from human experience, it can only be encountered through human experience. In other words, all knowledge of the world is socially constructed, but some versions of that construction are more likely to match individual's experiences" (Morgan, 2013, p. 39). In addition to accepting the nature of the world as both real and socially constructed, pragmatists view all knowledge as social knowledge. Morgan summarises this position as:

Every individual is born into a world that has already been experienced and interpreted by previous generations. This means that all of your perceptions of that world are the product of your social experiences since infancy, so any knowledge is inescapable social

knowledge. Pragmatists thus acknowledge that each individual's knowledge is unique because it is based on individual experience, while also asserting that much of this knowledge is socially shared because it comes from socially shared experiences. (Morgan, 2013, p. 39)

These ontological and epistemological positions are fundamental to the questions of how research can be done and what forms of knowledge can be produced. In the case of this study, the characteristics of the main research methodology (Q methodology discussed in detail in section 4.3 of Chapter Four) are consistent with this pragmatic position on the nature of knowledge. In brief, the characteristics of Q methodology allow for both the individual's knowledge (derived partly from personal experience) to be expressed via the Q sort, and then the socially shared views can be explored through the by-person factor analysis. The results are then a combination of data that can be analysed at the individual level with the lens on that unique lived experience, but also at the shared viewpoint level with the lens on the social aspect of knowledge and attitudes.

Another feature of pragmatism that informs the research approach in this study is the reasoning process of abduction. While qualitative and quantitative approaches to research are usually aligned with inductive and deductive processes respectively, pragmatism is distinct for an explicit, abductive approach to connecting theory and data (Plowright, 2016; Shank, 1998). Deductive reasoning, a top-down logic, generally commences with a formal theory and hypothesis, which are then tested by observing data. In contrast, inductive reason starts at the bottom by collecting the data and analysing it for probable generalisations and descriptions. Abduction, on the other hand, studies the data not only to describe them, but to also pursue explanations and new

insights. This use of abductive reasoning is inherent in Q methodology, where the researcher uses abduction to guide the analysis during the factor rotation and factor interpretation stages (Watts & Stenner, 2012). It could also be argued that abduction is often at play when researchers are connecting theory and data in all forms of inquiry. Though research method textbooks often use induction and deduction as a way to distinguish research approaches, Morgan points out that while this textbook definition may have its uses for introductory research courses, “the only time we pretend that research can be either purely inductive or deductive is when we write up our work for publication” (Morgan, 2007, p. 70).

Pragmatism also has the important characteristic of being an “explicitly value orientated approach to research” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 74) that does not seek to deny that “human beings can never be completely value-free, and that values affect what we choose to investigate, what we see, and how we interpret what we see” (R. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 16). Reflecting on this study and the research background discussed in Chapter One (section 1.1), the focus of this inquiry was guided by two core beliefs; firstly, that Asia-related learning is an area of learning that has multiple qualities of present and future value for students. And secondly, that student voice should be meaningfully sought out and listened to in any discussions about schooling. Dewey envisioned pragmatism as an inquiry approach ideal for problematic situations that require attention and action (Morgan, 2013). In the previous context and literature review chapters, I discussed the complexity of Asia-related learning in schools and the issues that hinder meaningful student outcomes in this area. A goal of this study is to explore new understandings of students’ attitudes to Asia-related learning in order to consider future action.

4.2 MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Within the growing field of mixed methods research (MMR) (Biddle & Schafft, 2015; Cameron, 2015; Creswell, 2014b; R. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Maxwell, 2016; Mertens, 2015), pragmatism has become the mostly widely used paradigm (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This is partly attributed to the convergence of an outcome-orientated focus that is characteristic of both pragmatism and much MMR (Biesta, 2010a). This is evident in the description of mixed methodologists as researchers who “present an alternative to QUAN and QUAL traditions by advocating the use of whatever methodological tools are required to answer the research questions under study” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 7). This feature of MMR was the basis for the diverse data types and collection methods used in this study. The choice of a mixed methods approach was also prompted by the research question, as it indicated a need for both qualitative and quantitative data to enable a better understanding of the issue (Plano Clark & Badiee, 2010). The methods chosen include a survey instrument from a 2002 study (quantitative data), factor analysis (quantitative data), as well as focus group and written reflections (qualitative data). This data mix is characteristic of an exploratory study adopting a methodological pragmatist approach to address the research question (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003).

An important practical consideration for MMR is the typology employed for data collection and analysis. Though there are valid criticisms of typologies for MMR (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2009), typologies can provide the novice researcher with clear guidelines that not only enable differentiation of mixed methods from other paradigms, but also an organisational blueprint for the design and implementation of the study (Collins & O'Cathain, 2009). A common typology of mixed methods design is based on the three dimensions of: (a) level of mixing, that is, partially or fully mixed; (b) time

orientation of the qualitative and quantitative components (concurrent versus sequential); and (c) the emphasis of approaches in terms of addressing the research questions (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In this study, the quantitative and qualitative aspects are mixed across the stages of the research and the phases occur sequentially, therefore it is most closely aligned with a fully mixed, sequential, equal status design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p. 271). As Bazeley points out, the data elements should be “combined throughout in such a way as to become interdependent in reaching a common theoretical or research goal” (Bazeley, 2010, p. 432). This iterative and interactive process, where the analysis results from one component inform and extend the analysis of another component, creates the potential to produce “findings that are greater than the sum of their parts” (Bazeley, 2010, p. 432).

4.2.1 MMR criticisms and responses

As pragmatism is the most common approach in MMR, criticism of MMR is most often centred on the pragmatist’s approach of employing whatever research methods appear most suitable for the task. Much of this criticism can be summed up in what is known as the “incompatibility thesis” (R. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14). This incompatibility is said to arise due to the different philosophical perspectives embedded in quantitative and qualitative inquiry. Hathcoat and Meixner (2017) warn that unless the researcher addresses this perceived incompatibility, MMR guided by the pragmatic maxim is questionable. This incompatibility could occur when a researcher uses an interventionist component of a study to manipulate variables, which by definition suggests a causal relationship between the two and therefore a deterministic and positivist/post-positivist stance. If the qualitative element of the same study were based on a contradictory ontological foundation, then this could be considered inherently

incompatible. This current study avoids such incompatibility by employing exploratory, non-deterministic methods for both the quantitative and qualitative components.

4.3 Q METHODOLOGY

A distinctive feature of this current research is the use of a novel methodology that leverages the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data to explore attitudes in a participant-centred way. Q methodology can best be described as a research method that:

combines several qualitative elements, such as interviews and document analysis, with the quantitative element of factor analysis. Its strength is that it enables the researcher to investigate subjective notions, such as perceptions, viewpoints and beliefs, in a much more systematic way than is possible using ‘typical’ qualitative research methods. (Pemberton & Cooker, 2012, p. 210)

Q methodology (henceforth referred to simply as Q) was first developed by the psychologist and physicist William Stephenson in 1935 (Burt & Stephenson, 1939; W. Stephenson, 1935b, 1953). Stephenson sought to develop a technique that would utilise the statistical tools of factor analysis, but still be suitable for studies that could involve fewer participants than was the standard procedure for experiments up to that point (W. Stephenson, 1935a, 1953). In Q, the researcher’s emphasis is on “discovery and upon the use of laws, theory and instrumentation to reach *understandings*, not facts, by proceeding from concrete situations to interpretations and explanations which are subjective to the proponent of knowledge” (W. Stephenson, 1986, p. 38 [emphasis in original]). In other words, Q aims to explore an individual’s communication of his or her viewpoint (Brown, 1972; McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The fundamental tenets of Q

methodology are that subjective points of view are communicable and that these views are always anchored in self-reference and based on each individual's past and present experiences. A strength of Q is the method's discovery potential (Shemmings, 2006; Watts & Stenner, 2012). When investigating underdeveloped research areas where the objective is to understand what views people hold, Q assists researchers to discover the extent to which these views might be shared³ by others (Watts & Stenner, 2012). As this current study is focused on exploring the often-overlooked student voice, Q methodology is a powerful tool as it "permits us to hear those muted voices as well as the dominant ones" (Stainton Rogers, 1995a).

While Q has characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative research, there are significant differences. It is not designed to test causal relationships from suggested hypotheses as quantitative research often does. This moves it along the continuum towards qualitative research. Yet it leverages the power of statistical correlations to suggest associations between ideas that are embodied in the statements. This adds another level of triangulation to the common reliance on researcher interpretations in much qualitative research. Q methodology has been used in education settings to gain insights into a diverse range of topics, including; developing dyslexia support systems (Deignan, 2012), inclusion of Muslim girls in United Kingdom schools (Frearson, 2013), improving student learning in the Communication classroom (Hall, McLean, & Jensen, 2012), students' attitudes to learning a language (Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2013), student perspectives on improving computer courses (Sampaio & Sampaio, 2012), children's experiences of divorce (Størksen, Thorsen, Øverland, & Brown, 2011), social

³ In Q methodology research, the word 'shared' is generally used to indicate similarities in the overall arrangement of the statements between individuals (Watts & Stenner, 2005). It does not imply (nor does it exclude) the possibility that these participants may hold these views as a result of co-constructed knowledge processes.

constructions of popularity among Chinese and Australian teenage girls (Owens, Feng, & Xi, 2014; Xi, Owens, & Feng, 2016), students' attitudes to global citizenship (Sklarwitz, 2017), Japanese students' study abroad experiences and learner motivation (Irie & Ryan, 2014), student perception of learning and assessment in science and mathematics (N. Burke, Dempsey, & O'Shea, 2015), emotion regulation among school-age children (Shields & Cicchetti, 1997), student approaches to studying (Godor, 2016), and the education needs of English language learners in Australian primary schools (Ives, 2014). With the increased use of mixed methods in research, this inherent mixture of quantitative and qualitative features has raised the profile of Q methodology to now being included in modern mixed methods handbooks (Newman & Ramlo, 2010).

Though this current study used a previously developed survey as one data collection tool, the predetermined nature of the survey instrument did not allow for the inclusion of student-generated input into the data collection process. One of the objectives for using Q methodology was to investigate student subjectivity regarding Asia-related learning in an inclusive and systematic way. Inclusivity is framed from the epistemological position that, as the “makers of meaning” (Fielding, 2004, p. 307), the students' attitudes and beliefs about Asia-related learning are the knowledge perspectives of most significance in this study. By using the predominantly unaltered student comments from the six focus group transcripts to create the statements for the Q sort, the primacy of student voice is maintained. The factor analysis component of Q methodology provides a systematic procedure that supports a transparent and reproducible process of analysis.

The following is a summary of the procedures of Q methodology in relation to the current study. For more detail on the theory underpinning Q, the texts by Stephenson

(W. Stephenson, 1953) and Brown (Brown, 1980) are comprehensive, and can be supplemented with two texts that provide procedural guidance to the novice Q researcher (McKeown & Thomas, 2013; Watts & Stenner, 2012).

4.3.1 Q methodology process and terminology

The five stages of a typical workflow for a Q study are shown in Figure 4.1. Each of these stages is discussed below.

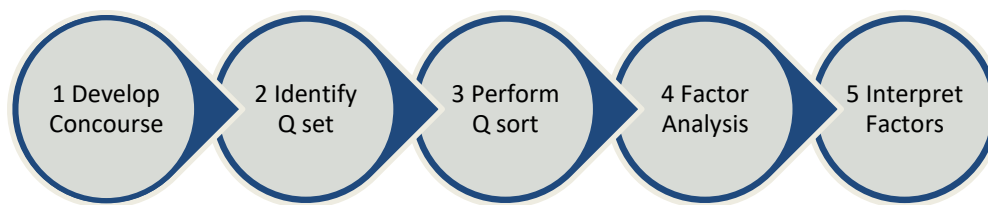


Figure 4.1. Process for conducting a Q study

4.3.1.1 Develop concourse

Central to Q methodology is the concept of concourse. It equates to the broad range of thoughts, opinions and perceptions that are expressed about a particular topic. As Stephenson noted, “there is a concourse for every concept, every declarative statement, every wish, every object in nature when viewed subjectively, in physics, philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, law, art” (W. Stephenson, 1986, p. 44). Though most Q studies focus on the textual format of concourse statements (academic literature, media, focus groups, interviews and informal discussions), there is also scope to use other media within Q sorts. Some studies have combined a variety of multimedia, including text, images, and video and audio recordings into one Q sort (Grosswiler, 1997; Hogan, 2008). Images can also be in the format of cartoons (Kinsey, 1991).

Researchers studying five-year children's experiences of divorce in Norway had the statements converted to visual images for the children to sort (Størksen et al., 2011).

4.3.1.2 Identify *Q* set

The *Q* set (also known as the *Q* sample) are the statements extracted from the discourse by the researcher. These are the representative sample of items that surround the research topic. The number of statements will vary, but should encompass all views within a spectrum. These can be arranged on physical cards or entered into a computer program for online sorting. The *Q* set should ideally be “composed of statements that are ‘natural’ in the language of the parties to the discourse and ‘comprehensive’ in their representation of the subjective phenomena and viewpoints possibly implicated” (McKeown & Thomas, 2013, p. 18). For the participant to express their evaluation of the statement, they must be subjective in nature and not factual.

4.3.1.3 Perform *Q* sort

Participants create a model of their viewpoint by positioning the statements. This usually involves a ranking of the statements according to ‘most like my point of view’ to ‘most unlike my point of view’, often in a quasi-normal distribution similar to a bell curve. Participants evaluate each statement in relation to every other statement and this reflects the person's worldview of the topic. Figure 4.2 depicts a typical *Q* sort in action.



Figure 4.2. An illustration of a typical Q sort process using a forced distribution grid.
(Reprinted with permission from Stainton Rogers, 1995b, p. 249)

4.3.1.4 Factor analysis

Factor analysis, a data reduction method, is used to identify the existing patterns of thought with a selected group of individuals. A strength of Q methodology is that the patterns of thought that emerge from the statistical analysis (the factors) are the direct result of the sorting activity of the participants. The holistic view of the participant is captured in the sort, and this can be compared to other sorts to identify shared viewpoints. While Q does use factor analysis as a data reduction tool, the goal is not to allocate people to categories. Data reduction allows the researcher to explore the discourse in a systematic way to ascertain how the different viewpoints are constructed.

4.3.1.5 Interpret factors

Once each sort is complete, it represents a distinct understanding of the issue. In addition to finding patterns across individuals, Q draws on its ipsative process of comparison between items to enable people to express relatedness explicitly and intentionally (Stainton Rogers, 1995a). The nature of this ipsative process means that the participant, as opposed to an external normative measure, provides a frame of reference to make judgements and comparisons (Reber, Allen, & Reber, 2009).

With reference to the literature surrounding the topic, and the researcher's own knowledge and insights, the significant factors that emerge are analysed and explored. Where there are qualitative post-sort explanations (verbal or written) by the participants, these can be utilised to provide a deeper analysis. A complex and multifaceted viewpoint that is commonly shared by a group of individuals can therefore be represented holistically.

4.3.2 Using Q to explore student voice

Research on students' attitudes often proceeds with the researcher conceptualising the domain with preconceived ideas and definitions of what is important and what different concepts might mean. This has the potential to cause issues if it reduces the opportunity to understand the topic from the students' perspective. An example of this can be seen in some of the research on bullying. As Guerin and Hennessy (2002) have shown, some studies that have used definitions of bullying and victimisation that have been derived from the researchers' perceptions of the issue did not fully capture the student understanding of bullying. Using the participant centred nature of Q methodology, Wester and Trepal (2004) conducted a study with 5th to 8th graders in the United States on students' perceptions of bullying. The results revealed a greater degree of nuance and complexity in the students' perceptions of bullying than previously thought. This has important implications for any subsequent anti-bullying initiatives based on research. If the initiatives are not designed to target the bullying as students see and experience it, then the effectiveness will be compromised. This same rationale can be applied in this study. Students' understandings and attitudes towards Asia-related learning need to be explored in an unmitigated way, free as much as possible from researcher mediation. As Brown notes, "one of the advantages of Q methodology is that it has built in features that, while not providing guarantees, certainly load the dice in

favour of seeing things from the native's or any other point of view, marginalised or otherwise" (Brown, 2006, p. 365).

4.3.3 Comparing Q sorting and Likert-type scales

Likert-type scales are one of the most common tools used for research into attitudes (G. Ho, 2017). There are, however, a number of drawbacks to Likert-type scales that Q methodology can overcome. There are well-known biases that can occur in Likert-type rating, including acquiescence, extremes responding, and mid-point responding (De Vaus, 2014; Shulruf, Hattie, & Dixon, 2008). The forced distribution of the Q sort ensures that participants are not able to indiscriminately agree with every item (acquiescence bias), nor can they choose a mid-point response for each item (mid-point responding) (Serfass & Sherman, 2013). The forced distribution requires them to make choices about which items they agree or disagree with more than others. The participant evaluates each statement in relation to every other statement and this reflects that person's worldview of the topic. This allows Q to access an individual's comprehensive attitude, whereas surveys usually only produce discrete pieces of information that may contribute to a person's attitude (Brewer, Selden, & Facer, 2000). If survey data were exclusively used in this study, it may be possible to gauge what the students think about Asia-related learning, but much less likely to find out *why* they think like this (G. Ho, 2017; ten Klooster, Visser, & de Jong, 2008).

Another limitation of standard survey tools is that the wording of the items is provided by the researcher and may not be interpreted in that intended way by the respondent (Urdan & Mestas, 2006). Harré sums up this limitation in the following way:

The use of questionnaires with limited range questions ... which effectively preclude elaborations and reinterpretations ... means that

the concepts deployed ... are predetermined. The effect of this is to produce not a representation of the social world being studied, but the representation of the shadow cast upon the social world by the prior conceptual apparatus deployed by the person who constructed the questionnaire. (Harré, 1979, p. 115)

To relate this comment to the current study, the survey instrument that was developed for the 2002 national study into students' attitudes to studies of Asia (discussed below in section 4.6.1) contains statements that are necessarily a product of the researchers' conceptualisation of what is important or relevant to learning about Asia. There was no scope for elaborations, reinterpretations or original contributions from the student perspective.

Survey instruments do, however, have an important advantage over Q methodology in terms of their scalability. Q is a comparatively labour intensive method that is best done in a face-to-face setting with the participants. Though a Q study does not need large numbers of participants, there are limitations in terms of generalisability. With this in mind, one future direction of this research may be to use the factors that emerge from the Q sort to construct a Likert-type attitude scale for a larger study. There are examples of exactly this type of approach in other fields (Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith, & Sullivan, 1997; Baker, Van Exel, Mason, & Stricklin, 2010; Danielson, 2009). This would also allow for various demographic characteristics to be explored in relation to the factors.

4.3.4 Validity

The Q sorting process is wholly subjective in the sense that it represents the participant's point of view. There is no external criterion by which to appraise an

individual's perspective and each individual's rank-ordered set of statements is considered a valid expression of their opinion (Brown, 1980). The content validity of the Q sort statements is dealt with by theme coding of interview transcripts to saturation (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and conducting a thorough literature review. The face validity of the text and statement wording is addressed by constricting the editing of statements to minor grammar and readability alterations. The statements of opinion used in the sort should maintain the fidelity of the participants' words and expressions. The item-validity test used in survey research does not apply to the study of subjectivity. In Q methodology, it is expected that the meaning of an item will be interpreted individually.

4.3.5 Reliability

The reliability of Q methodology has been demonstrated in test-retest studies and valuation of reliable schematics. For test-retest reliability, studies that have conducted the same Q sort with the same individuals at two points in time have typically resulted in correlation coefficients of 0.80 or higher (Brown, 1980; Dennis, 1988; Peritore, 1990). Q methodology has also produced consistent findings when administering the same set of statements to different participants and when exploring the same research topic but using different sets of statements and different participants (Dan Thomas & Baas, 1992; York & John, 1992). For reliability and stability of identified opinion clusters (schematics), findings were consistent when the Q sort was performed by different participants (Dan Thomas & Baas, 1992; Dominic Thomas & Watson, 2002).

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN, PROCESS AND ANALYSES

4.4.1 Case study

The rationales for conducting case study research, as proposed by Yin (2009) and Flyvbjerg (2011), align with the characteristics of this study. Yin states that case studies

“are the preferred method when (a) ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 2). These are all features of this current study. Yin also notes that the unit of analysis in some case studies is less easily defined, particularly when the study includes multiple and complex entities such as organisations, programs, classrooms or events. Designs can be either single case studies or multiple cases, also known as embedded designs. This current research has a multi-tiered layer of embedded cases beginning with the two schools involved. Within and across these two groups are the different year levels of students. The final level is the set of factors (perspectives) that emerge from the factor analysis and indicate shared viewpoints. The viewpoints and the students who hold them are also discussed as a unit of analysis. In keeping with the mixed methods design, Flyvbjerg supports this combination by arguing that “case studies and statistical methods are not conflicting but complementary” (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 313).

4.4.2 Ethics approval

Ethics approval was obtained from Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) on March 2015 (CF15/806 - 2015000364) before this research commenced (Appendix A). Permission was also obtained from both schools prior to contacting participants. The age range of between 12 – 19 years requires careful attention to any ethical issues resulting from conducting interviews with children (Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010). During all stages of the research the participants were informed that involvement was voluntary and there were no implications or connections to their academic grades or any other school assessment. They were assured of the anonymity of their involvement and that the purpose of the

research is completely non-judgemental. The explanatory statements and consent forms are listed in Appendix B.

4.4.3 Data collection overview

Data collection was carried out in three distinct phases. The sequence and type of data collection is shown in Figure 4.3. Each of these stages is discussed in detail in section 4.6. The number of participants for each step is listed in Table 4.2. Data was collected from the two schools in three stages. In stage 1, students were invited to participate in an online survey that replicated the survey tool used in the 2002 study (Griffin et al., 2002). To generate the statements for the Q sort, students were invited to participate in a series of semi-structured focus groups (stage 2). Conversations were recorded, transcribed and then coded to extract key statements on six main themes. In this process, the verbatim comments of the students were retained as much as possible in order to maintain the original voice and phrasing of the students. At times, two or more statements on a similar theme were blended together to produce a statement that captures the opinion expressed in the focus group discussions. The final two stages (3a and 3b) were completed in one sitting with students doing the Q sort and then writing a reflection on some of the choices they had made in the Q sort.

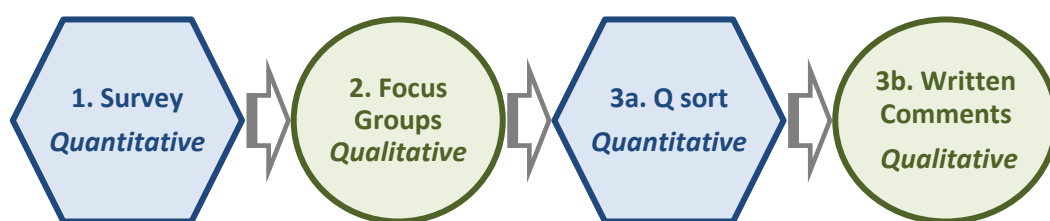


Figure 4.3. Data collection sequence, method and type

4.5 THE SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS

Both schools were single-sex, non-government secondary schools (years 7-12) in the east-southeast of Melbourne, Victoria. Wattle College is an all-boys schools while

Banksia College is all-girls. The schools are about 10 kilometres apart and have a formal sister-school relationship with students in the same year levels participating in shared activities once or twice a year. A considerable number of students have a brother or sister attending the other school. In the year of data collection (2015), both schools had approximately 1000 students enrolled. Table 4.1 provides some more details on each school. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a scale developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) based on four criteria: geographical location, parents' occupation, parents' education and proportion of indigenous students. The scale is used to compare similar schools based on the level of educational advantage or disadvantage that students bring to their academic studies (ACARA, 2013). The median score for ICSEA is 1000. Both of these two schools have an ICSEA score very close to this benchmark, indicating cohorts with 'average' levels of socio-economic advantage. The schools both offer an Asian language, but limited Asia-related learning across the curriculum. This is a characteristic common in many other Australian secondary schools (AEF, 2012a; AEF, 2014; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009).

Table 4-1

Profiles of schools in current study

Name	Wattle College	Banksia College
Location	Metropolitan - East/South east of Melbourne, VIC	Metropolitan - East/South east of Melbourne, VIC
Sector	Non-government	Non-government
Year levels & type	7-12 - single-sex male	7-12 - single-sex female
Enrolments (2014)	1046	956
ICSEA* Value (avg. 1000)	999	1072
LBOTE [#]	3%	15%
Attendance rate	94%	91%
Languages offered	Japanese & Italian	Chinese & French
Indigenous	1%	0%
*Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage		source: www.myschool.com.au
#Language Background Other Than English		(2014)

4.5.1 Wattle College

Wattle College, an all-boys school, has a very low percentage (3 percent) of students who identify as having a language background other than English (LBOTE). This is significantly lower than the 27.71 percent of LBOTE students in Victorian government schools (Victorian State Government, 2017) and 19.1 percent of all Australian students (Australian Government, 2013).

The school has a modest international student program with a small number of students from the Asia region (mostly China and Vietnam) enrolled each year. Up until 2011, the school offered only Italian, though it did have a sister-school relationship with a Japanese high school. Japanese was first offered at Year 7 in 2011, and each year since it has been added to the following year's curriculum. Students study a semester of each language in Year 7 and then choose one language to continue studying for the entire Year 8. Language study is no longer compulsory in Year 9. To encourage the students to continue with their language study, the Year 9 language curriculum is based

on the nationally accredited Certificate II in Applied Languages (VCAA, 2017). In addition to developing basic oral and written communication skills, this Applied Languages curriculum puts a strong emphasis on practical application of the language in a variety of scenarios. This is seen as a way to provide alternative language study pathways to students who lose interest in language study and discontinue in Year 9.

A two-week study tour to Japan with a short stay at the sister-school was initiated in 2013 and this takes place every two years. Preference is given to students who are studying the language, but it is also open to all students to apply if there are places available. Wattle College students also get an opportunity to interact with their Japanese sister-school peers for one day when that school visits Australia for a week each year. These one-day visits were taking place before Japanese language was offered in the curriculum. Since then, many students make use of this day to practice their conversational Japanese and to use the language in a meaningful way.

Apart from what students learn about Japan during their language classes, the curriculum from Years 7-12 has only a few examples of Asia-related learning. Year 7 students study a unit on ancient China and Year 8 students learn some of the human and physical geography of the Asia region in a unit on natural disasters. The curriculum for Years 9 to 12 has minimal Asia-related learning content, something which is still the case for many secondary schools in Australia (AEF, 2014; Owen, Ling, Andrew, & Ling, 2006; Wilkinson & Milgate, 2009).

4.5.2 Banksia College

There are a higher percentage of LBOTE students at Banksia College (15 percent), though this is almost less than half the percentage of government schools. The school utilises the Middle Years Program of the International Baccalaureate as a

framework for its Year 7 to 10 curriculum, and this requires compulsory language study up to Year 10. Students do both Chinese (Mandarin) and French in Year 7 and then can choose either one to continue to Year 10. Language study in Years 11 and 12 is optional. Though Chinese has been part of the school curriculum for a considerable time, the percentage of students who continue the language study up to the senior years is very low. In 2015 there were no non-background Chinese speaking students enrolled in Year 12. Similar to Wattle College, Banksia has started to offer the Certificate II in Applied Languages in order to encourage greater uptake of the language. In 2010 the school established a sister-school relationship with a junior secondary school in China. In addition to reciprocal school visits, the schools have experimented with ICT technologies such as Skype to allow the students real time opportunities to use Chinese and English.

4.5.3 Participants

The number of participants varied at each stage of the data collection (Table 4.2). For the survey, a total of 200 students from Year levels 7, 8, 9 and 12 took part. The focus groups were with 4-6 students per group and done by Year level. The final phase was the Q sort, in which 60 students took part. When the Q sorts were conducted at the school, some classes were composite classes consisting of more than one Year level, which explains why there were Year 10 and 11 students included in the Q sort. Each of these students also wrote a post-sort reflection on their thoughts while ranking the statements in the Q sort and the reasons why they placed statements at the extremities of the grid.

Table 4-2

Number of participants for each data collection stage.

	Wattle College	Banksia College	TOTAL
Survey Years 7, 8, 9, 12	104	96	200
Focus Groups Years 7, 9, 12	18	14	32
Q sort Years 7, 9, 10, 11, 12	33 (29)*	27 (23)	60 (52)
<i>*Numbers in brackets indicate actual Q sorts included in analysis after non-significant and confounding sorts were eliminated. Details below in section 4.6.5</i>			

4.6 DATA COLLECTION PHASES AND ANALYSES

The first data collection stage was a survey that had originally been developed for a 2002 national study on Australian primary (Year 5) and secondary (Year 8) students' knowledge and attitudes to studies of Asia (Griffin et al., 2002) (Appendix C). The main component of this 2002 study was a multiple-choice knowledge quiz of 60 questions. As gauging student knowledge levels was not an objective in this current study, this quiz was not replicated. The other part of the 2002 study was a 30-item attitude survey with some basic demographic questions. Of these 30 items, 23 were used by the researchers in 2002 for the interpretation of the attitude clusters. In the conceptualisation stages of this thesis, a typical attitude-type survey was not considered the most suitable tool in this exploratory study of students' attitudes. However, as this 2002 study is the only detailed research into Australian students' attitudes to Asia-related learning, it was seen as a useful tool to use in order to consider the responses of the 2015 students in light of the 2002 data. If the results proved to be significantly different, then that may have suggested additional research areas to focus on in the subsequent data collection stages. Therefore, to enable this direct comparison of responses, the survey questions and format were replicated without alteration (Appendix

C). The only change was to use an online survey tool (Qualtrics) rather than the paper one used in 2002.

For the survey completion, the researcher visited both schools and explained the research to students in the classes that were accessible at the time. Students were given a copy of the explanatory statement and consent form (Appendix B) and were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the research. As there were three data collection stages (survey, focus group and Q sort), interested students could volunteer for any or all of these stages.

Students who volunteered to be part of the study took copies of the explanatory statement and consent form home to be signed by a parent or guardian. These forms were collected by the researcher on the next visit and the students were given the link to complete the online survey. Table 4.2 shows the aggregate numbers for the survey. Participants by Year level are given in the survey analysis in section 4.6.1 below.

4.6.1 Survey analysis

The survey had three sections (Appendix C). It began with eight demographic questions and then 30 questions asking the student about the context of where and how they learn about Asia. Though the original survey had four response options (*lots, some things, not very much* and *nothing*), these were collapsed into two responses ('learn' and 'not learn') for calibration purposes when the researchers analysed and reported the results (Griffin et al., 2002, p. 76). The current survey has maintained the four responses during the analysis and reporting, though these are collapsed to two when considering the 2002 data. The final part of the survey has the attitudinal component with 30 statements to which students were asked; '*Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*' The two response options were '*agree*' or '*disagree*'.

As mentioned above, this survey is seen as potentially useful mainly to give some approximation of the responses of this 2015 cohort with respect to the responses from the 2002 study. This is not intended to be a direct comparison, as the 2002 study was a national survey that sought to be a representative study. This current 2015 data set is from two schools and the students were not selected as representative of all Australian students. In the 2002 study of primary and secondary students, approximately 3700 were Year 8 students (Griffin et al., 2002). Of the 200 responses in the current survey, 70 were from students in Year 7 and 20 from students in Year 8. These responses have been combined to make a total of 90 responses that can be considered in light of the responses of the Year 8 students in 2002. The remaining 110 responses in the current study (58 in Year 9 and 52 in Year 12) are presented, but not used in the comparison analysis due to the increasing difference in ages.

Table 4-3

Survey responses by year level and school

	Wattle College	Banksia College	TOTAL
Year 7	48	22	70
Year 8	0	20	20
Year 9	28	30	58
Year 12	28	24	52
Total	104	96	200

To provide a theoretical framework for analysis of students' attitudes, the 2002 study created a scale based on the affective domain in the taxonomy of educational objectives developed by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964). The top level in the taxonomy of *Characterisation*, which involves a thorough change of behaviour and a

tendency to steer the behaviour of others was not addressed in the attitude survey and excluded by the researchers. The affective domain encompasses “objectives which emphasise a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection. Affective objectives vary from simple attention to selected phenomena to complex but internally consistent qualities of character and conscience. We found a large number of such objectives in the literature expressed as interest, attitudes, appreciations, values and emotional sets or biases” (Krathwohl et al., 1964, p. 7). Though this current study does not follow the structuralist foundations of the taxonomy of educational objectives, the five levels in the affective domain are presented to help give context to the comparisons. As per the 2002 study, the responses have been presented as percentages and described in profiles according to the affective level. This data and the discussion is presented in Chapter Five.

4.6.2 Focus group process

During the next visit to the schools, the researcher met with consenting students to conduct the focus groups. Six focus groups comprising 4-6 students per group ($n=32$) were conducted with students from Year levels 7, 9 and 12. Each of these was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Focus groups, rather than individual interviews were utilised as there is substantial evidence in the literature that focus groups can offer particular advantages over one-on-one interviews where participants are children or adolescents. Eder and Fingerson (2003) argue that the power of the interviewer can be reduced in a focus group setting and this helps reduce the influence of the researcher. Another benefit of the focus group is that it more closely mimics the natural setting of how adolescents “acquire social knowledge through interaction with others as they construct meanings through a shared

process (Eder & Fingerson, 2003, p. 35). While it is not possible to totally remove the barriers that may exist in the participant's mind about the intentions of the researcher, one approach that is recommended is to focus on the quality of the research encounter. The researcher's aim should be to approach the interview with a manifestly clear purpose of being genuinely interested in the points of view of the participants (Heath, Brooks, Cleaver, & Ireland, 2009) and that 'young people will respond well to older researchers if they perceive their desire to listen as genuine (Heath et al., 2009, p. 48).

Data from the focus groups serve the dual purposes of providing the statements to be used in the Q card sorting phase of the research, as well a set of qualitative data to reference and utilise in the analysis and discussion sections of the analysis results.

4.6.3 Focus group analysis

The semi-structured focus groups lasted approximately 35-45 minutes and were recorded and transcribed to code for prominent and relevant statements that expanded on the following six themes:

- I. Asia-related learning in school and school subjects
- II. Asia and my future
- III. Parents and Asia-related learning
- IV. Asia in general life
- V. Intercultural understanding
- VI. Asia and Australia

These broad themes were identified in the literature review as themes that had received attention in previous relevant studies. In particular, the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) has been involved in a number of studies and projects to explore these themes using various research tools such as surveys, interviews, policy reviews and action research (AEF, 2008, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c; Walton et al., 2012; Walton, Priest, & Paradies, 2013). These six themes were used as discussion prompts,

with the students invited to respond, question, and generally discuss the topic with minimal guidance from the researcher. The list of possible prompts used in each focus group are shown in Appendix E. Though these prompts served as guiding conversation starters, there was opportunity for the discussion to go outside of these topics and include other points that students wished to raise.

From these focus group discussions, the statements used in the Q sort were extracted from the focus group transcripts after a process of coding until no new information pertinent to the themes or other topics was being generated (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, pp. 92-93; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Each theme was represented by a varying number of statements expressed by the students during the interviews, with 36 statements in total (Appendix F).

4.6.4 Q sort process

The final data collection stage was the Q sort. Sixty students had volunteered for this stage of the study; 33 boys, 27 girls. After factor analysis, eight Q sorts were excluded as they were either confounding or non-significant. A confounding sort is one which aligns generally to two distinct viewpoints simultaneously. These are typically not included in the construction of factor estimates (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 129). A non-significant sort does not clearly align with any of the identified factors (viewpoints). In Q studies, it is generally expected that there will be some confounded and non-significant sorts. The breakdown of the retained Q sorts by Year level is shown in Table 4.4. When the Q sorts were conducted at the school, some classes were composite classes consisting of more than one year level, which explains why there were Year 10 and 11 students included in the Q sort.

To maintain the fidelity of student voice, the verbatim statements from the focus group transcripts were used as much as possible. Some statements were slightly reworded either to amalgamate related statements or to synthesise a common viewpoint. To check the readability and intelligibility of the statements, two pilot Q sorts were conducted with a Year 7 male student and a Year 9 female student who were not part of the research participants. Based on their feedback, minor lexical changes were made to two statements. Statement 26 was changed from *Learning about the **customs** of Asian people is more important than learning the languages* was changed to *Learning about the **way of life** of Asian people is more important than learning the languages*, as the word *customs* was understood by the Year 9 girl in the sense of the customs officials at airports. For the same reason, the word *customs* was changed in statement 25 to become *Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life*.

At the schools, each student was given a sorting grid with the sorting instruction of, ‘When I think of learning about Asia, I think...’. The purpose of the sorting instruction is to give the participant a context in which to consider the statement. This sorting statement was worded in this way to stimulate the students to reflect on their past, present and possible future Asia-related learning, and use these experiences as reference points while considering each statement. The structure of the grid can be determined by the researcher. The steep, forced-distribution layout used in this research is based on recommendations in Watts and Stenner (2012, pp. 77-81).

Table 4-4

Year level and gender of participants (excluding confounding sorts n=6, and non-significant sorts n=2)

	Male	Female	Total	% of Total
Year 7	7	7	14	27%
Year 9	7	14	21	40%
Year 10	6		6	12%
Year 11	4		4	8%
Year 12	5	2	7	13%
Total	29	23	52	
%	56%	44%		

Each statement was printed on cards and the students first read each card and decided if they agreed with, disagreed with, or were unsure of the statement on the card. This process created three piles as shown in Figure 4.4.

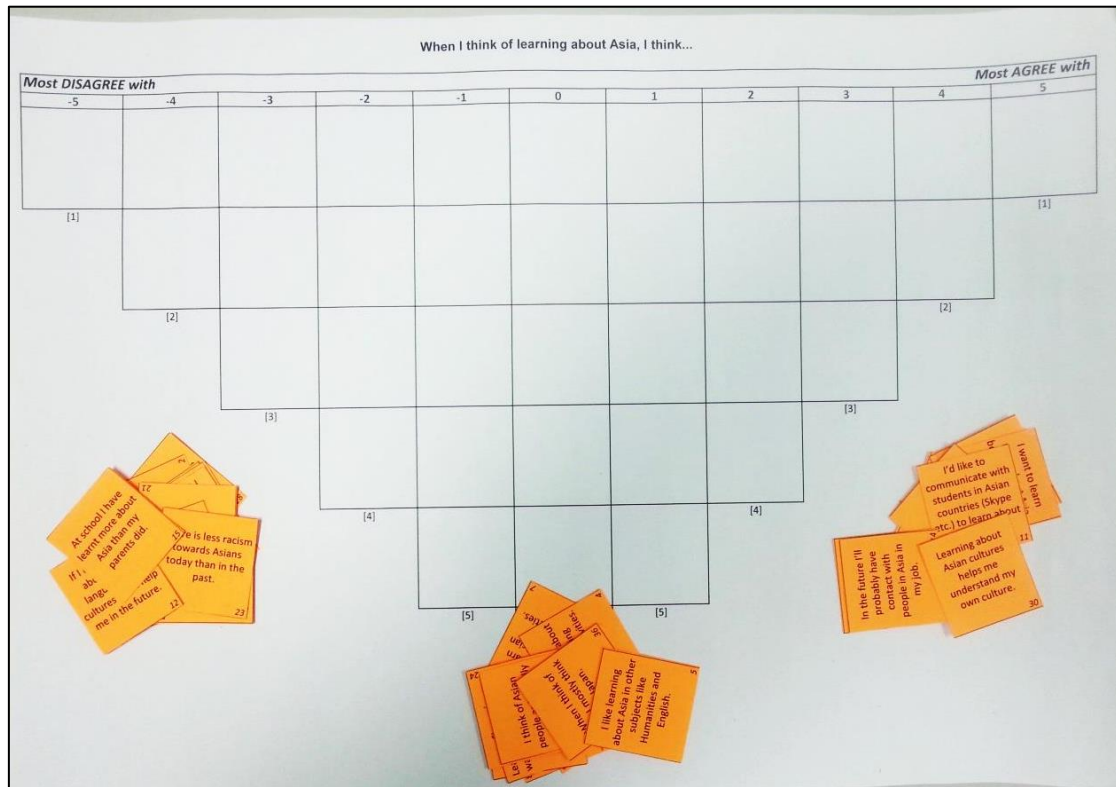


Figure 4.4. Q sort step 1 – students assign cards to 3 groups

Then, starting with the cards in the *agree* pile, the student read the statements again and selected the one he/she agreed with the most and placed it at the extreme right of the grid below *Most AGREE with*. Working in towards the centre of the grid, the student placed the cards according to the strength of agreement with the statements. The factor analysis only takes into consideration the horizontal placing of the statements. The vertical order of statements is irrelevant as each card is given the value of the column it is placed in. This is explained to the participants before sorting the statements. This process was repeated with the cards in the *disagree* pile, with placement starting from the extreme left of the grid. Finally, the cards in the *unsure/not committed* pile

were arranged in the empty squares in the middle columns according to the degree of agreement or disagreement. Once completed the participant was able to analyse the entire arrangement and make any changes to the card positions. In this way, the participant is also able to holistically visualise their attitude to the statements and confirm that this arrangement represents his/her worldview on the topic. Figure 4.5 shows a completed Q sort.

Figure 4.5. Photograph of a student's completed Q sort

Q sort is done with one participant at a time, this step is often done in the form of an interview. As the students were completing the sorts in a shared space in this study, an individual interview was not possible. These written comments help explain the students' choices for the sort and why they agreed or disagreed with the six statements at the extremities.

Using the numerical record sheet (Figure 4.6), the configurations of these arrangements (Q sorts) are then correlated and factor analysed to identify specific respondent groups that ranked statements in similar ways. These factors (Q factors) represent different states of subjectivity and are generalisations of attitudes that the participants hold (Watts & Stenner, 2012). This analysis process is discussed in the next part of this chapter.

NAME: [REDACTED]

YEAR LEVEL 7 / 8 / 9 / 10 / 11 / 12

DATE: 30/7/15

Most disagree with.		WRITE CARD NUMBER IN EACH BOX										Most agree with.	
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5			
31 (1)	8	32	25	1	26	28	19	11	35	27 (1)			
	7 (2)	21	22	24	23	13	6	12	15 (2)				
		30 (3)	36	9	14	20	5	2 (3)					
			4 (4)	18	10	17	29 (4)						
				3 (5)	16	33 (5)							
					34 (6)								

Follow-up Questions

Could you please:

Tell me **what** you agree with and **why** in the three statements you have placed at **+4 and +5?**

1. I think of Asian people as basically all the same because I haven't learnt enough to know what the differences are. I only really knew that Asian people have different cultures and different beliefs.
2. When I think of Asia, I mostly think of China because I learnt and heard more about China when I was younger so I think of it as a major part of Asia and it is bigger than any other countries I know.
3. At school I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did because they said they hardly learnt any languages other than English and at school we learnt heaps of Asian languages.

Tell me **what** you disagree with and **why** in the three statements you have placed at **-4 and -5?**

1. Australia will never be part of Asia. I think this is wrong because we are already part of Asia and a lot of a population is from Asia. Our country has also had a lot to do with Asia.
2. Every student should learn an Asian language at school. I disagree with this because every student should be able to make their own decision without someone telling them what to do.
3. We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies. I disagree with this because we don't really learn about our own politics and some kids would find it boring.

Figure 4.6. Q sort card numbers and a student's post Q sort comments

4.6.5 Q sort analysis and factor extraction

The widely used statistical process of factor analysis is a data reduction technique designed to show commonalities, which in the case of Q methodology, are shared⁴ viewpoints. Instead of trying to look for patterns or similarities within a large and complex data matrix, the factor analysis process uses standard correlation statistics to illuminate the groups of persons who have rank ordered the statements in an analogous way. This similarity indicates a viewpoint that is ‘shared’ across those individuals. These shared viewpoints are called ‘factors’. In this study, for example, the 52 different arrangements of statements were statistically compared for similarities in the placement of statements, and this resulted in five distinct ‘factors’, or viewpoints emerging from the data.

This analysis was conducted with reference to the suggested procedures in Brown (1980), Watts and Stenner (2012, pp. 195-218) and McKeown and Thomas (2013). The process for factor interpretation follows the suggested procedure from Watts and Stenner (2012, pp. 195-218). The statistical tool used in Q methodology is a by-person factor⁵ analysis that looks for patterns or groups of persons who have ranked the statements in a very similar way (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 18). In this study, the Q sorts were analysed using *PQMethod 2.35* (Schmolck, 2002) a specialised open-source software designed specifically for conducting Q sort factor analysis.

⁴ In Q methodology research, the word ‘shared’ is generally used to indicate similarities in the overall arrangement of the statements between individuals (Watts & Stenner, 2005). It does not imply (nor does it exclude) the possibility that these participants may hold these views as a result of co-constructed knowledge processes.

⁵ Conventional factor analysis (also known as ‘r-methodology’) uses correlation to distinguish patterns among items. A by-person factor analysis looks for patterns among the completed Q sorts and it is these Q-sorts, not the items, which load factors. In Q methodology, the participants become the variables and the items (statements) are the cases.

There are commonly two choices for factor extraction in PQMethod; centroid factor analysis (CFA) and principal components analysis (PCA). There are also two factor rotation options; by-hand (also known as theoretical or judgemental rotation); and varimax rotation. By-hand rotation is a manual process in which the researcher usually has an a priori rationale for manipulating the factors to focus on particular viewpoints. Varimax rotation is an automated process based on statistical criteria. It aims to provide the best mathematical solution. CFA gives the researcher more options in terms of data exploration and theoretical (by-hand) factor rotation. This may be useful if there is a particular Q sort that is of interest. An example would be an individual who has a position of power in an organisation and therefore his/her viewpoint may be the one with the most relevance to a study. By-hand rotation allows the researcher to focus on that individual. If the researcher were to use varimax rotation, that particularly idiosyncratic viewpoint may not be as visible. In this study, there were no participants who were considered to be of particular importance compared to the others, and therefore by-hand rotation was not considered necessary. PCA, on the other hand, produces a mathematically best solution in conjunction with varimax rotation. Both Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 99) and McKeown and Thomas (2013, p. 52) agree that in practice, either CFA or PCA will produce very similar results. For this reason, PCA followed by varimax rotation was used during the factor extraction process in PQMethod.

There are well established mathematical and theoretical justifications that guide the factor extraction process. The following explanation of the process used in this study replicates the procedure set out in Brown's authoritative guide to Q methodology (1980, p. 222). The determination of the number of factors to extract can be based on a factor having at least two significant loadings. This means that at least two participants are

expressing that perspective to a relative degree of strength. As per standard practice, to identify a significant factor load, a $P < 0.01$ level was set. Significance of factor loadings is calculated with the formula for zero-order correlation coefficients, i.e., $SE = 1/(\sqrt{n})$, where SE is the standard error and n is the number of Q sort statements. As the current study contains 36 statements, the standard error is 0.167 ($SE = 1/(\sqrt{36}) = 1/6 = 0.167$). Correlations are considered to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level when they are in excess of 2.58 standard errors (irrespective of sign). For this study, that equates to 0.43 ($2.58(SE) = 2.58(.167) = 0.43$). Each of the five extracted factors meets this criteria by having at least two or more significantly loading sorts. Therefore, this standard mathematical test used in Q methodology supports the justification for extracting five shared viewpoints from the total set of Q sorts. To further confirm the validity of this decision, another criterion given by Brown is Humphrey's rule. This rule states that "a factor is significant if the cross product of its two highest loadings (ignoring the sign) exceeds twice the standard error" (1980, p. 223). The five extracted factors all satisfy this rule. Based on these two criteria, the extraction of five factors (shared viewpoints) is justified.

With these criteria met, the extraction of five factors was found to be the solution that accounted for the most participants and the fewest number of factors. Generally it is preferable to minimise as much as possible the number of non-significant sorts, as that ensures that as many as possible of the participants are represented on a factor. All else being equal, it is also generally preferable to have only as many factors as required to represent the shared viewpoints among the participants (Watts & Stenner, 2012). A total of 60 students completed the Q sort process. Of these, eight were excluded from the final analysis as their sorts were either confounding or non-significant. As indicated above, confounding sorts are ones which indicate participants who did not express a

particularly strong view that coincided with one factor, but rather less definitive views that were reflected in two factors simultaneously. Non-significant sorts occur when participants did not express any clearly discernible view that coincided with the five viewpoints.

4.6.6 Factor interpretation

With the factors extracted, the next step in the process is the analysis of the different perspectives. This is done with reference to a table generated by the software which shows the ranking of statements that characterise each factor (perspective). Condensed version of these tables are given in Chapter Six. The complete tables are provided in Appendix G. The analysis can be done both *across* and *within* perspectives. Comparing statement rankings across all the perspectives (reading across the table) focuses on the relative statement ranking of each group, while an analysis of the entire statement arrangement for each factor (reading down the table) enables a holistic appraisal of the entire perspective of the topic. While comparisons across the factor array are useful, it is also important to examine the totality of statement arrangements for each factor in isolation. Since participants are ranking statements with reference to the other statements, the absolute position of a statement (e.g. -1) might not reflect its relative degree of agreeability/disagreeability within a factor. The gestalt nature of a complete Q sort must be considered when ranking comparisons are made across factors. This also applies to statements placed in the zero column. Though this placement can sometimes indicate neutrality, it can also occur where the participant had a large number of statements they either agreed or disagreed with, and gradual placement of cards inwards from the extremities of the grid resulted in these less strongly agreed or disagreed with cards being placed in the zero column. This analysis is presented in Chapter Six.

4.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have provided the rationale for setting this study within the theoretical framework of pragmatism. The typology of the mixed methods research design has also been presented. The background to Q methodology was then explained, along with the process involved in conducting a Q methodology study. The data collection process has been detailed and in the following two results and discussion chapters, this data will be discussed in relation in response to the research questions and to the key concepts from the content and literature chapter (Chapter Two) and conceptual framework chapter (Chapter Three).

Chapter 5: Survey Results & Discussion

Chapters Five and Six present the results and discussion of the findings. This chapter contains the results from the survey instrument, while Chapter Six presents the results of the Q methodology component. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the survey instrument and the theoretical framework used in the 2002 study to analyse the data. This is followed by an evaluation of responses of the Year 8 cohort from 2002 ($n=3779$) and the combined Year 7 and Year 8 cohorts from the current study ($n=90$). Though cohort differences prevent direct comparison of responses, it is possible to ascertain overall variations and similarities in the attitudes expressed by these two groups of students.

Following on from this, the complete set of 200 responses (from Years 7, 8, 9 and 12) collected in the 2015 survey are analysed. This is done with occasional reference to the 2002 responses, though the main focus is on analysing the data in light of the concepts discussed in the conceptual frameworks chapter; namely the modes of constructing and viewing Asia (plurality/plural society, 'Asia as method', and Othering of Asia as absence, threat and opportunity) and the motivational construct of subjective task values (attainment, intrinsic, utility and cost).

5.1 DETAILS OF 2002 SURVEY

The 2002 study was a large-scale national study that sampled schools based on a target population of all schools in all Australian states and territories. This current study, however, is focused on only two schools, and therefore the students are not a representative sample as were those in the 2002 study. Although the survey content was replicated in every detail for the 2015 cohort of students, these differences in cohort

profiles precludes any direct comparison of survey responses. However, it is possible to consider the responses of the 2015 cohort in light of the 2002 representative sample as a way of locating the attitudes of these current students against that national snapshot of students' attitudes towards Asia-related learning. As the data from the 2002 study is the only previous attitudinal data available regarding students' attitudes to Asia, the analysis of those responses can serve as a general point of reference for this current study.

To provide a theoretical framework for the attitude analysis in the 2002 study, the researchers created a five-point scale based on the affective domain in the taxonomy of educational objectives (Krathwohl et al., 1964). The original taxonomy had the following five levels that progressed in a linear mode from the simplest behaviour to the most complex: (1) *Receiving*, (2) *Responding*, (3) *Valuing*, (4) *Organisation*, and (5) *Characterisation*. For the 2002 study, the researchers created another level below *Receiving* (labelled *Avoidance*), as the original taxonomy did not address this negative end of the scale. The original fifth level of *Characterisation*, which involves a thorough change of behaviour and a tendency to steer the behaviour of others, was not addressed in the attitude survey and therefore excluded by the researchers. These five modified levels, and how the researchers described each level with respect to attitudes towards studies of Asia, are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5-1

Description of attitude levels aligned with Taxonomy of Affective Domains (Griffin et al., 2002, p. 32).

Level	Corresponding Taxonomy of Affective Domain Levels	Description of attitude level in relation to studies of Asia
5	Organisation	Keen to learn about Asia and develop relationships, personal involvement and commitment to learn.
4	Valuing	Can see benefits; has a positive approach to learning about Asia, personal involvement and caring approach emerging.
3	Responding	Recognises possible benefits linked to learning about Asia; and importance of Asia as well as the possible differences related to a lack of involvement.
2	Receiving	Personal response to Asia as an entity, willingness to receive information and to participate in basic activities related to Asia.
1	Avoidance	Negative reaction and avoidance of Asian culture and people.

Though the original attitude survey had 30 statements, the researchers in 2002 only listed 23 of these in the reported results. As the responses to the other seven

statements were of interest to this current study, these results have also been included in this chapter for discussion (Table 5.6). The researchers grouped the 23 statements according to their relevance to one of the above affective domain levels. For accuracy of comparison, this current study has replicated these categories. Table 5.2 shows these 23 survey statements grouped by the allocated affective domain.

Table 5-2

Survey statements categorised by affective domain level

	Survey Statement	Level	Affective Domain
1	Countries of Asia are my favourite.	5	Organisation
2	I would like to live in a country in Asia.		
3	Reading books about Asia is fun.		
4	I would like people from Asia to visit my home.		
5	Learning about Asia is fun.		
6	It would be better if Australia had closer relations with Asian countries.	4	Valuing
7	It is important that Australians know lots about Asia.		
8	I enjoy learning things about Asia.		
9	Learning about Asia is valuable.		
10	Thai people have weird religions.		
11	Studying things about Asia is important.	3	Responding
12	Asian cultures are of no interest to me.		
13	Learning about Asia will help me later in life.		
14	I avoid Asian festivals.		
15	Learning about Asia is a good thing.		
16	I would like to visit a country in Asia.	2	Receiving
17	I do NOT need to learn about Asia.		
18	People from countries of Asia contribute little to the world.		
19	Asian cultures are a problem for Australia.	1	Avoidance
20	I try and avoid Asian people or customs.		
21	Australia has nothing to learn from countries like China.		
22	Australia has nothing to learn from countries like Japan.		
23	I have called kids names because of their Asian background.		

Before examining the data, it must be noted that the wording of some of the statements appears problematic. The useful data that statement 10 (*Thai people have weird religions*) can provide is questionable, as students only have an AGREE/DISAGREE response option. As a result, the (possibly significant) proportion of students who have no knowledge of religions in Thailand have no way of indicating this. Statement 20 (*I try and avoid Asian people or customs*), being a double-barrelled statement, is also problematic as students may avoid the celebrations of customs/cultures but not avoid Asian people in general. Despite these concerns, it was decided not to alter any of the statements and to maintain the allocation of statements to their respective categories in order to facilitate the discussion of 2002 and 2015 results. The proportion of responses for each statement in the 2015 survey are also reported individually for all year levels (Table 5.5) to allow for greater precision of analysis.

If this type of survey tool were the only data collection instrument to be used in this study, then the issues mentioned above would have been addressed by developing of an updated set of statements created in conjunction with student input. However, as there were three other data collection stages to follow this one, including the two qualitative data stages of focus groups and written comments following the Q sort, the deficiencies in this survey instrument were considered to be outweighed by the possibility of contextualising the 2015 responses against the 2002 ones.

5.2 DETAILS OF 2015 STUDY

The procedures for conducting the survey were detailed in Chapter Four (section 4.6). Table 5.3 shows the number of participants from each school by year level. From the total of 200 responses, responses from the seventy Year 7 students and twenty Year 8 students have been combined and are discussed with respect to the responses of the

Year 8 students in the 2002 survey. The Year 9 and Year 12 student responses were not included in this comparison section for two reasons. Not only would the increasing age difference potentially impact on responses, but also students from Year 9 onwards usually have more diversity in their subject choices, whereas Year 7 and Year 8 students generally experience the same curriculum across each year level.

Table 5-3.

Survey responses of 2015 cohort by year level and school

	Wattle College	Banksia College	Total
Year 7	48	22	70
Year 8	0	20	20
Year 9	28	30	58
Year 12	28	24	52
Total	104	96	200

5.3 COMPARISON OF COHORT DEMOGRAPHICS

The responses to demographic questions by the Year 8 students in 2002 and the Year 7 and 8 students in 2015 are shown in Figure 5.1.

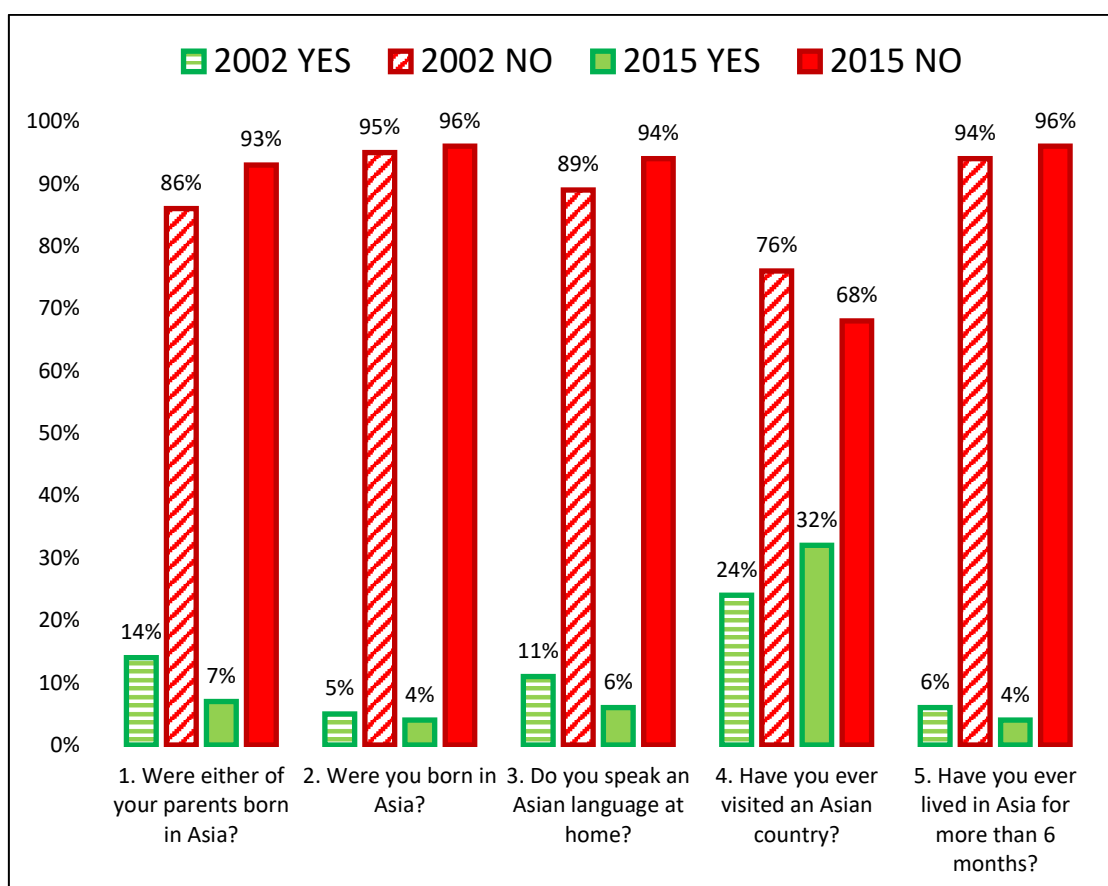


Figure 5.1. Responses to demographic questions for cohorts in 2002 (Year 8: $n=3779$) and 2015 (Years 7&8: $n=90$)

As the graph shows, the two cohorts had similar response patterns to questions two and five. The 2002 survey had higher affirmative responses for parent/s born in Asia, and an Asian language spoken at home (Q1 and Q3). If these two questions were asked today in another national study, it is likely that the affirmative responses would be greater considering the demographic changes that have taken place in the intervening fifteen years (ABS, 2017). These demographic changes are discussed in more detail below in section 5.7. This also serves to highlight that the two schools in the 2015 study have students from less diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

The higher percentage of students who have visited an Asian country in 2015 compared to 2002 may be due to a combination of a more general trend within the broader population of increased travel to the Asia region (ABS, 2016), and possibly

greater opportunities to travel abroad that students in these two schools may experience. Both schools sit very close the average of 1000 for the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ACARA, 2013). The percentage of students who have travelled to Asia is even greater when all of the 200 responses in the 2015 cohort are examined. This data is presented below in section 5.9. Though the current study did not seek to survey a representative sample as the 2002 study did, the responses to these demographic questions indicate some general similarities between the 2002 and 2015 cohorts.

5.4 ATTITUDE RESULTS FROM 2002

The results of the 2002 attitudinal survey in relation to the five affective domains are shown in Figure 5.2. Students were grouped according to the pattern in their combined responses to the statements for each level. The overall configuration of attitudes among the Year 5 and the Year 8 cohorts were similar, though the Year 8 students had less positive attitudes (10 percent lower) and more negative attitudes (10 percent higher) compared to Year 5 students. When differentiated by gender, the boys at both year levels tended to have more negative attitudes than the girls, though reasons for this were not discussed in that 2002 study.

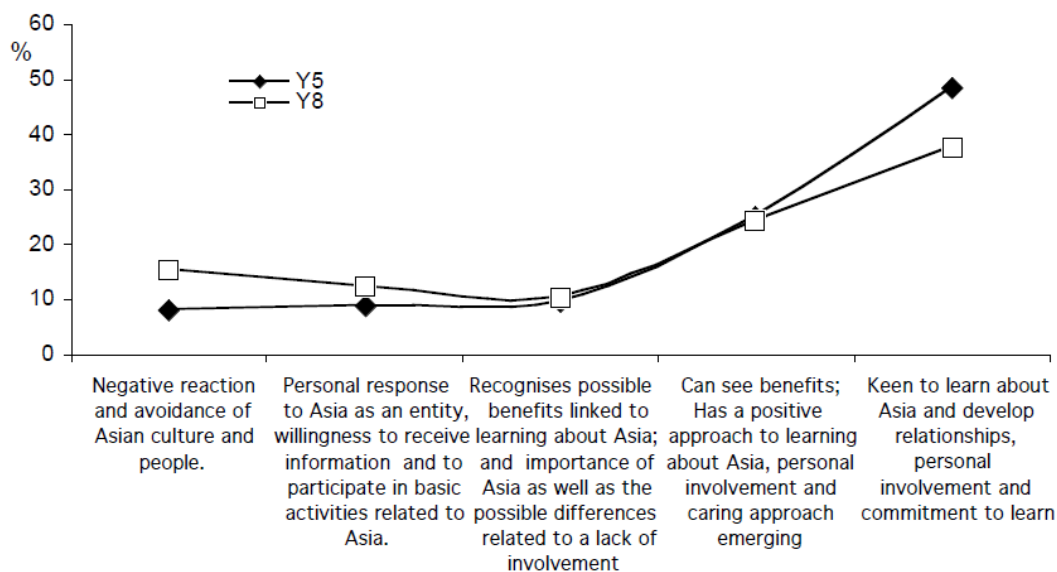


Figure 5.2. Distribution of Year 5 and 8 students' levels of attitude towards learning about Asia (Griffin et al., 2002, p. 3 [Use permitted under the Creative Commons Attribution License CC BY 4.0]).

5.5 EVALUATING THE 2015 AND 2002 SURVEY RESULTS

To evaluate the attitudes of the 2015 cohort against those of the 2002 Year 8 cohort shown above in Figure 5.2, the proportion of agreement with each statement of the five levels is shown in the graphs below. This provides a more detailed way to see to responses to each statement from the 2015 cohort with respect to the combined value for each level shown in the graph in Figure 5.2.

5.5.1 Avoidance

The lowest level of *Avoidance* indicates a negative reaction to learning about Asia and general avoidance of Asian cultures and peoples. As was the case in 2002, the boys also tended to hold more of these indifferent and negative views compared to the girls.

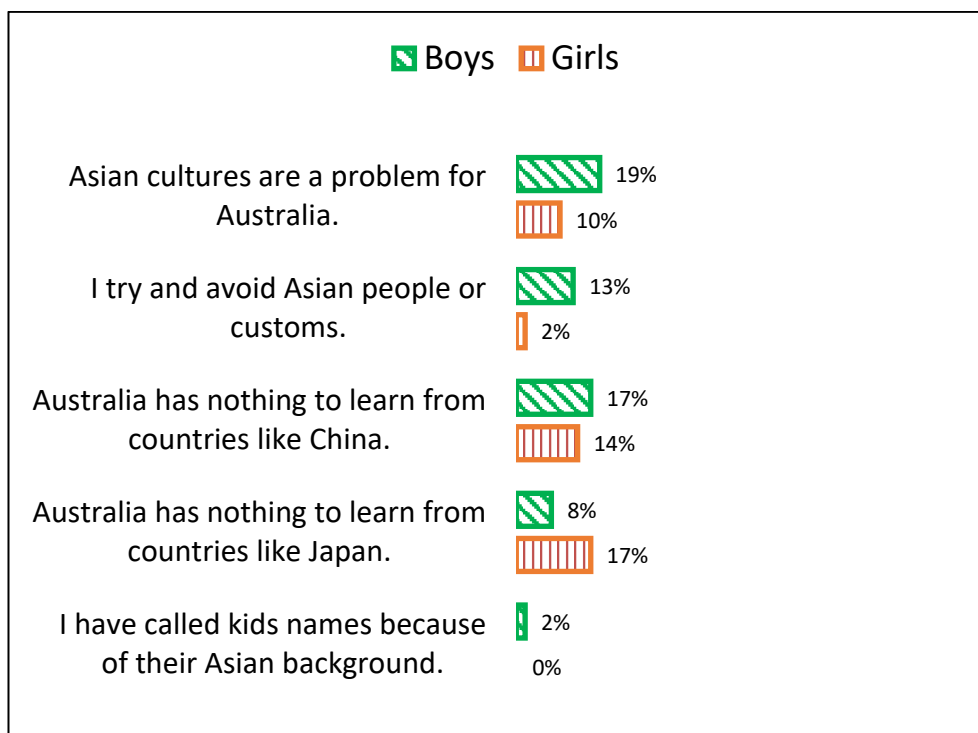


Figure 5.3. Percentage of 'agree' responses to *Avoidance* level statements.

The different language learning experiences of the boys and girls appears to have influenced their responses to the third and fourth statements. The boys learn Japanese, and only 8 percent agreed that Australia has nothing to learn from Japan. The girls, who learn Chinese in Year 7, were less positive in response to statement three, though they still rated China above Japan in terms of a source of learning for Australia. This suggests that the negative responses to this statement could be based more on a lack of knowledge rather than a negative evaluation of the country. With respect to the Othering of Asia and Pan's three dominant modes of viewing Asia, there is some evidence to suggest that the 'Asia as threat' narrative is still influential, with nearly one fifth of boys and 10 percent of girls regarding Asia cultures as problematic for Australia. It is unclear if this refers to Asian cultures within or outside of Australia. Though the proportion is not large, there is an average of approximately 15 percent of students who see little for Australia to learn from countries like Japan and China. This could possibly be reflective of the 'absence of Asia' view in which Australians either do not recognise the external

or internal presence of Asia, or when they do, it is disregarded as being of little relevance. With respect to these views, the fact that approximately 80 percent or more of students disagreed with these statements suggests that those views of Asia are less entrenched in this generation.

Though there are variations in agreement to statements within this level of *Avoidance*, overall these responses from the 2015 cohort broadly align with those of the 2002 cohort.

5.5.2 Receiving

The next affective level of *Receiving* describes a personal response to Asia and some willingness to learn about it. There were three statements allocated to this level, as shown in Figure 5.4.

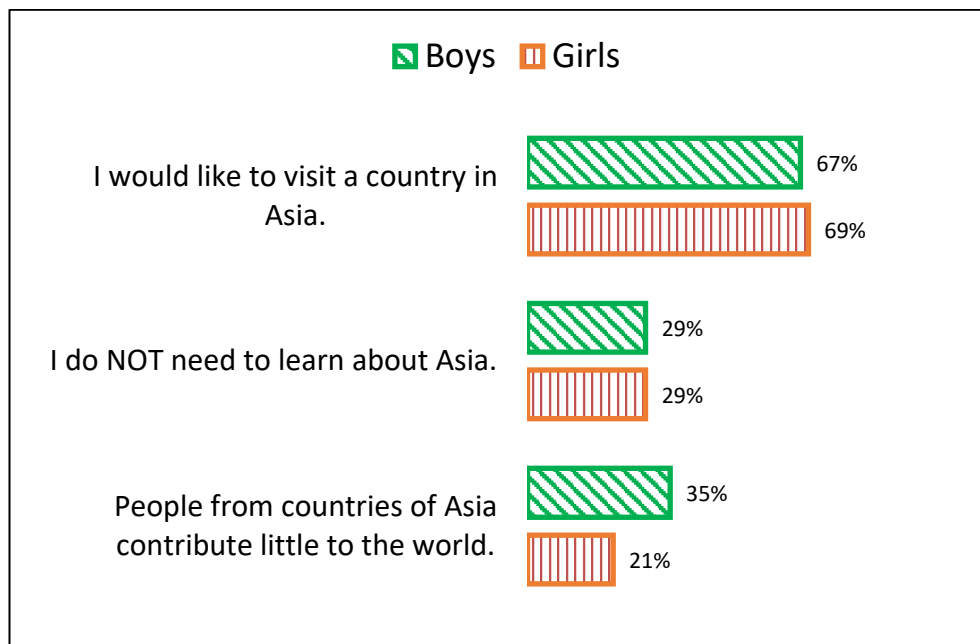


Figure 5.4. Percentage of 'agree' responses to *Receiving* level statements.

Compared to the 2002 results, the proportion of students that responded positively to these statements is higher. Over two-thirds of the students expressed a desire to visit an Asian country, which appears far higher than it was in 2002. As noted in the

demographic question data (Figure 5.1), more of the 2015 cohort have experienced travel to Asia. This response may therefore be an indication of not only these students wanting to travel to Asia again, but also other students, possibly influenced by their peers, expressing a desire to visit an Asian country. Despite this strong intention to travel, nearly a third of all students saw no need to learn about Asia. Looking more closely at the correlation between these two responses, nearly 70 percent of the students who said they do not need to learn about Asia also said they would not like to visit an Asian country. This suggests that there is still a strong sense that learning about Asia is tethered to the narrative of an external Asia, ‘out there’, which can either be explored or ignored depending on imagined future travel in the region. This is also consistent with the ‘absence of Asia’ mode of viewing in which the ‘Asia’ within Australian borders is still invisible or easily ignored by Australians.

Though the relatively high level of agreement (35 percent of boys and 21 percent of girls) to the final statement regarding the perceived minimal contribution of Asian countries to the world appears higher than in 2002, the statement seems to raise more questions than answers. If taken on its face value, it does suggest that the ‘absence of Asia’ perspective is still influential in how these students see the contribution from the Asia region to the world. However, to comprehend this response fully, it would require an understanding of what students are considering when they imagined what the form and nature of contributions could be. Domains such as music, cinema, cuisine, sport, art, and fashion are just a few of the areas of interest for students, and a very general statement like this provides insufficient context in which to gauge the response.

5.5.3 Responding

A student at the level of *Responding* sees potential benefits to learning about Asia, and this echoes the frequently emphasised instrumental value of learning about Asia. The proportion of students who responded positively to the four statements at this affective level seems to be greater than was the case in 2002.

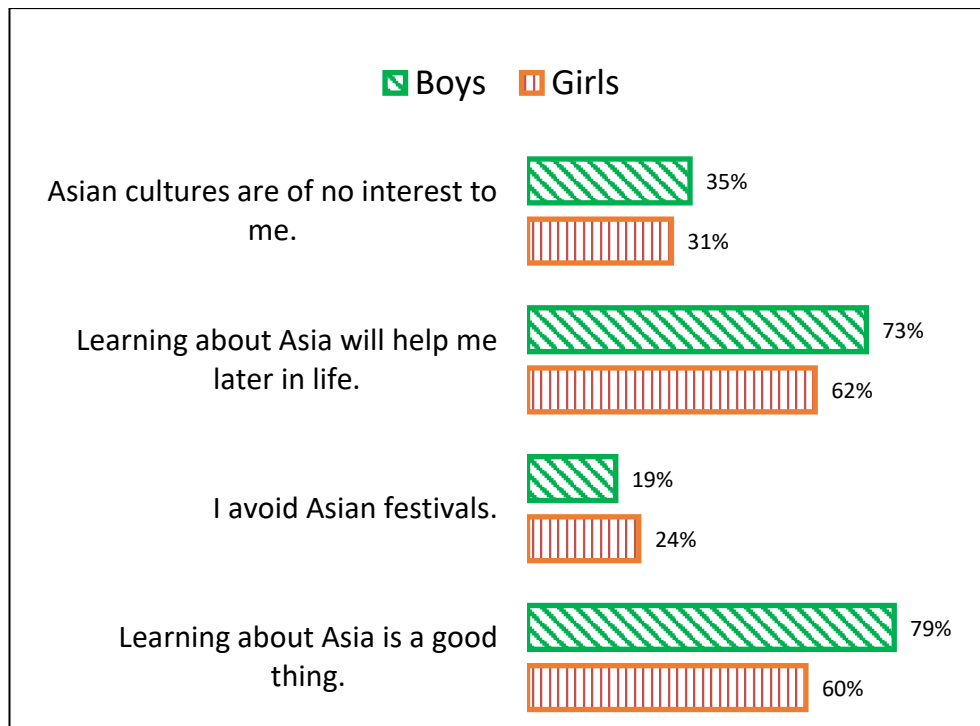


Figure 5.5. Percentage of 'agree' responses to *Responding* level statements.

The responses to statements two and four, which range from nearly two-thirds to three-quarters of students responding that learning about Asia is not only a good thing, but will be beneficial in their future life, indicates an expression of the intrinsic and utility value attached to these statements. This may also align with the 'Asia as opportunity' view, though in this case the personal importance that these two statements imply may indicate a deeper meaning to the idea of 'opportunity'; one which goes beyond the transactional nature of how that mode of viewing Asia has often figured in the Australian view of Asia. Of note for this category, the boys appear to be more positive in their attitudes to both the present value of learning about Asia and for

imagined future scenarios than the cohort of boys were 2002. It is possible that the experience of learning Japanese has introduced previously unknown present and future opportunities for these boys. Only some of the boys in the 2002 study would have been learning an Asian language, and this may account for their less positive responses to these statements.

5.5.4 Valuing

The affective level of *Valuing* adds a degree of personal involvement and an emerging caring approach to the previous level of *Responding*. The responses to these six statements appear generally more positive than those reported in 2002, as shown in Figure 5.6.

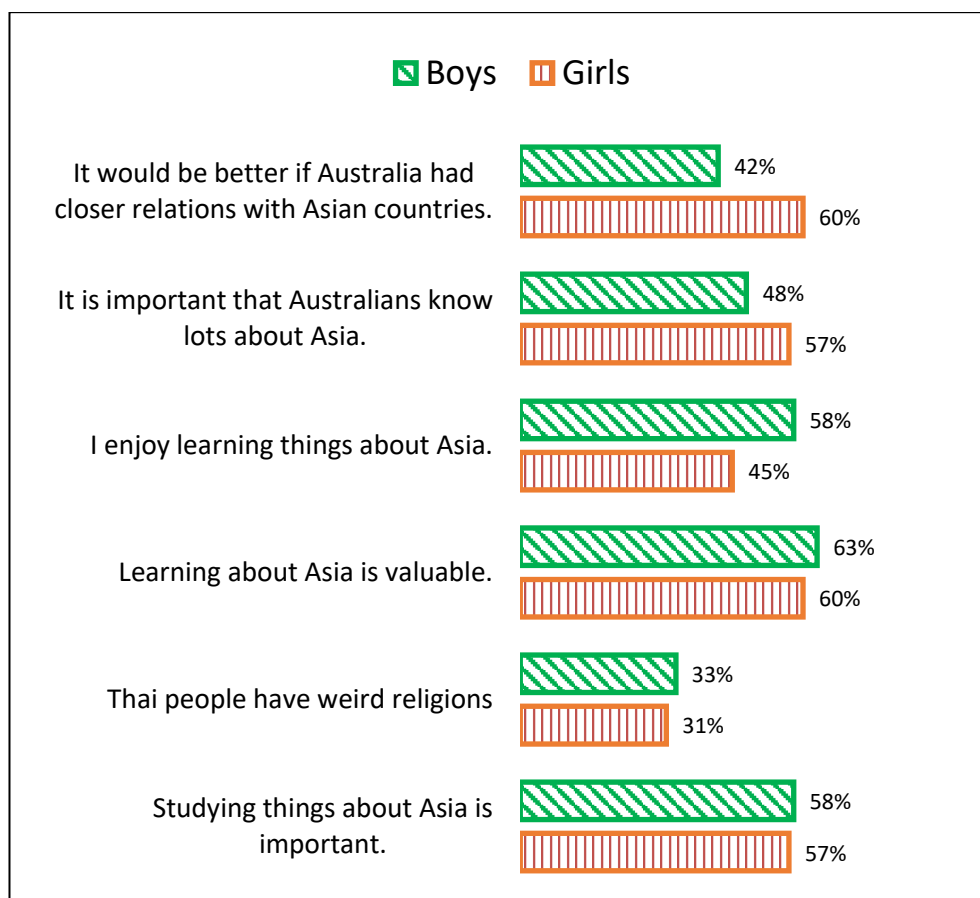


Figure 5.6. Percentage of 'agree' responses to *Valuing* level statements.

The comparison between responses from boys and girls is more complex, with shifts in responses that tend to balance out to an overall similar level of attitude. It is also noticeable that the predominantly instrumentalist language used in some of these statements has a strong resemblance to the language used in many recent rationales for promoting Asia literacy. This also aligns with the ‘Asia as opportunity’ mode of view, though when looking at the set of responses, there may be more depth to this view than just ‘opportunity’. Nearly two thirds of students consider learning about Asia as valuable, though the meaning that students place on the word ‘valuable’ is open to interpretation. As approximately half of the students also expressed enjoyment about Asia-related learning, this may suggest that the value they recognise is not only the instrumental value, but also the intrinsic worth of that learning. This set of responses also serves to counter the idea that Asia is absent from the outlook of the majority of these students, though this may only apply to the view of Asia existing exclusively outside of Australia.

5.5.5 Organisation

Agreement with these statements at the *Organisation* level would place a student at the most positive end of the 2002 modified affective domain scale. Not only do positive responses to these statements indicate students who are keen to learn about Asia, but they also regard this as a personal commitment that may go beyond the utilitarian motivation.

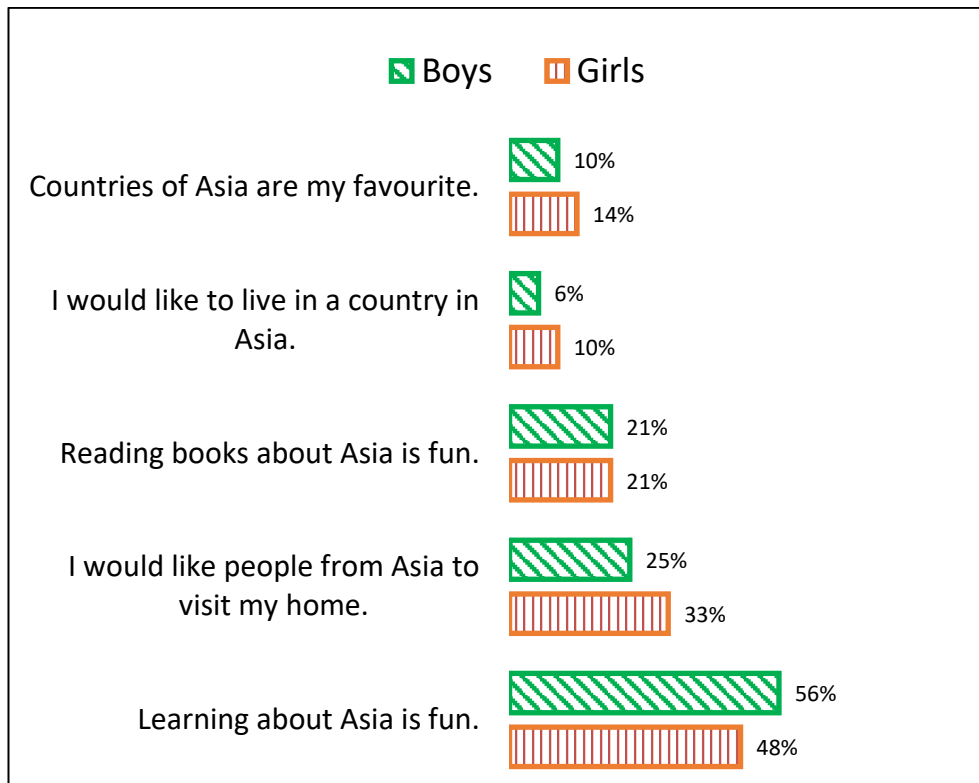


Figure 5.7. Percentage of 'agree' responses to *Organisation* level statements.

The responses from the 2015 cohort suggest fewer students being classified at this affective level when viewed against the responses in the 2002 survey. The lower levels of positive attitudes among boys that was apparent in 2002 is also evident in these responses. Though very few students expressed a wish to live in an Asian country (6 percent of boys and 10 percent of girls), the young age of the students (12-14 years old) would have a strong influence on these responses. It is possible that the view of 'Asia as threat' has had some influence on this attitude. This is less the idea of Asia as a direct threat to Australia, but more a common representation of Asia in Australian mass media as a place of civil unrest, catastrophic natural disasters and endemic poverty (Jakubowicz & Seneviratne, 1996) The responses of the more senior students discussed below in sections 5.9 and 5.10 indicate this appears to change with age.

5.6 SUMMARY OF 2002 AND 2015 ATTITUDES OF YEARS 7/8

While noting that direct comparisons between the 2002 and 2015 data sets were not possible due to cohort variances and different data analysis procedures, some general points can be made. At the first level of *Avoidance*, both cohorts seem to have similar response levels, with the boys in both 2002 and 2015 slightly more representative at this level of negative reaction to learning about Asia than the girls. At the next level of *Receiving*, the students in 2015 seemed to be more inclined to agree with these statements than those in 2002, with little apparent difference between boys and girls.

The level of *Responding* captures some of the utility value in Asia-related learning, and the 2015 cohort appeared to identify considerably more with the statements at this affective domain level than those students in 2002. The boys in the 2015 cohort expressed more positive responses to most of these level 3 statements than the girls, suggesting a greater degree of alignment with this utility aspect of Asia-related learning.

The pattern in responses to statements at the fourth level of *Valuing* also suggests more students in the 2015 aligning with the more personal involvement that this affective domain signifies. The statements at this level express a combination of attainment, intrinsic and utility value, and this may explain why the majority of students were able to identify with, and respond positively to, most of these statements. The responses to statements at the fifth level of *Organisation* shows a reversal in numbers with the 2002 cohort tending to identify more with this level than the students in 2015. The 2002 study reported more girls than boys at the level of *Organisation*, and though this was also the case for the 2015 cohort, this difference seemed less noticeable.

5.7 CONTEXT OF LEARNING RESULTS

The other part of the 2002 survey was a question designed to provide insights into where and how students were learning about Asia. Students were given four options ('lots', 'some things', 'not very much' and 'nothing') to respond to the question; *'How much have you learned about Asia through each of the following things?'* The list contained 30 statements, of which 15 were related to learning about Asia at school and the other 15 were instances of learning about Asia outside of school (Table 5.4). As with the attitude data, the 2002 researchers combined the responses to produce an overall proportion. This data was also further reduced by the collapsing of the four responses to just two; 'lots' and 'some things' were combined under the category of *Learn*; and 'not very much' and 'nothing' were combined under the category of *Not Learned*. Figure 5.8 shows the proportion of these responses for both *At School* and *Outside School*.

The main observations of this 2002 data are that students did not seem to feel they had learnt very much about Asia in both contexts, but surprisingly they felt they had learnt less at school than outside of school. One difficulty in interpreting this type of data is to gauge the relative yardstick students were using when they responded 'nothing', 'not much', 'some things' or 'lots'. For students who come to Asia-related learning in secondary school with little previous learning in their primary schooling, a four-week unit focused on the geography of Asia may lead to a 'lots' response. Yet another student who has studied an Asian language in primary school along with integrated studies with an Asia focus, may judge the same four-week Asia geography unit in secondary school as equal to 'not much', or 'not much' that he/she did not already know.

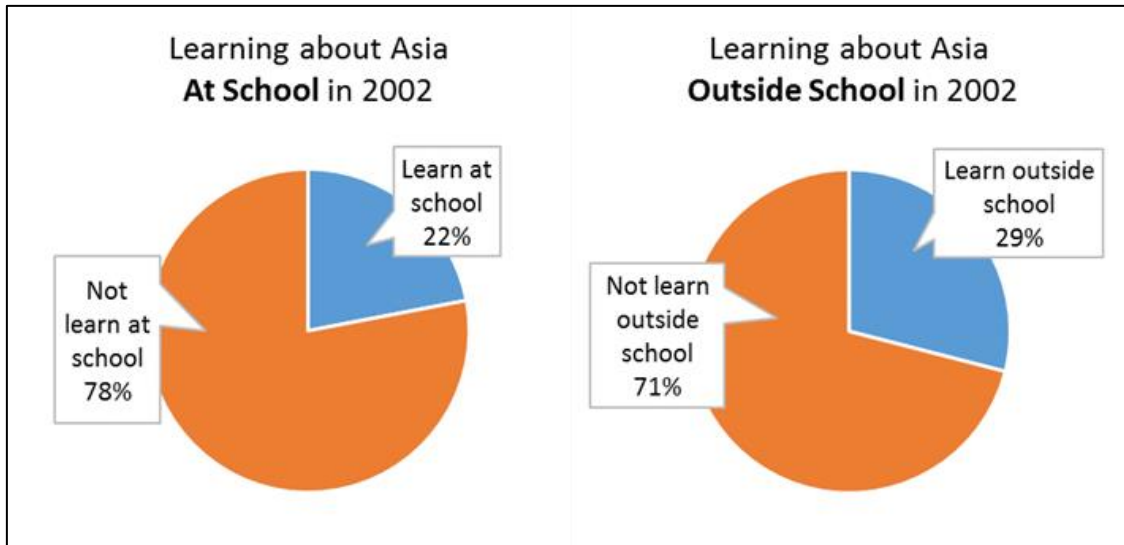


Figure 5.8. How much Year 8 students think they have learnt about Asia at school and outside school – 2002 survey ($n=3779$)

Another challenge in interpreting these responses from the 2002 survey is the presentation of responses as amalgamated into just the two categories of ‘at school’ and ‘outside school’. It would have been of interest to see the responses to individual items to then evaluate whether the 2015 cohort had similar or different perspectives on exactly where they considered their learning about Asia to be most visible, effective or memorable. Though this comparison is not possible, the proportion of responses per statement from the 2015 cohort are shown in Table 5.4 and the prominent elements are discussed below.

Table 5-4

Proportion of responses by Year 7&8 students to the context of learning about Asia in the 2015 study (n=90)

	#	Prompt	lots	some things	not very much	nothing
AT SCHOOL	1	Art, Music or Drama classes	1%	3%	16%	80%
	2	English classes	4%	7%	22%	67%
	3	Humanities & History classes	14%	32%	28%	26%
	4	teachers at your school	11%	31%	34%	23%
	5	school classes	11%	38%	29%	22%
	6	school excursions	1%	8%	21%	70%
	7	school library	1%	13%	30%	56%
	8	homework about Asia	4%	28%	20%	48%
	9	using the internet AT school	8%	32%	27%	33%
	10	Asian language study AT school	30%	24%	21%	24%
	11	school festivals and celebrations	0%	7%	28%	66%
	12	other students in your class	2%	14%	30%	53%
	13	school sporting activities	0%	1%	11%	88%
	14	school friends	2%	11%	26%	61%
	15	after school groups	0%	4%	8%	88%
OUTSIDE SCHOOL	16	using the internet OUTSIDE of school	4%	17%	26%	53%
	17	friends OUTSIDE school	3%	8%	18%	71%
	18	your parents	8%	17%	21%	54%
	19	television or radio	4%	22%	39%	34%
	20	Asian language study OUTSIDE school	1%	8%	8%	83%
	21	travelling in Asia	11%	10%	7%	72%
	22	eating Asian food	19%	38%	26%	18%
	23	your brothers or sisters	1%	7%	20%	72%
	24	community groups	2%	7%	11%	80%
	25	Asian things around your home	2%	8%	16%	74%
	26	comic books about Asia	3%	8%	13%	76%
	27	classes about Asia OUTSIDE school	1%	2%	8%	89%
	28	films about Asia	3%	26%	32%	39%
	29	magazines or newspapers	1%	10%	36%	53%
	30	computer games	1%	14%	21%	63%

Working vertically through the table and combining the first two columns of ‘lots’ and ‘some things’ to match the ‘learnt’ category from 2002, it appears the 2015 cohort have approximately similar estimations of how much they have learnt about Asia at

school. The most noticeable statement is *Asian language study at school*, with 30 percent saying they have learnt ‘lots’ and 24 percent responding ‘some things’. As both schools teach an Asian language, it might be expected that these proportions would be higher, even if only for the number of students who thought they had learnt ‘some things’. Nearly a quarter of all students stating that they feel they have learnt nothing about Asia through their Asian language class is a result that is open to interpretation. It could indicate that their Asian language classes have included very little cultural content, either about that country or other Asian countries that have something in common (i.e. learning in their Japanese classes that Japan’s logographic script originated in China). Another interpretation is that these students consider ‘Asia’ to be much broader than just the countries whose language they are learning. This may suggest that these students have some awareness of the diversity within the Asia region and that knowledge of one country cannot necessarily be applied to other Asian countries. The data from the Q sort component (discussed in the next chapter) suggest that a considerable number of students are interested in learning about a range of Asian countries, and not just the ones most commonly studied (i.e. Japan and China). That Q sort finding may support the second interpretation of the responses to this survey item.

The other responses that indicated the presence of some Asia-related content in the curriculum were the 46 percent who said they have learnt either a lot or some things in their Humanities and History classes, and the 40 percent who have learnt about Asia by using the internet at school. This is contrasted with the very low proportions of learning that students report in other subjects such as English (11 percent), Art, Music and Drama (4 percent), and Sport (1 percent). Only 13 percent of students feel they have learnt about Asia from school friends, and this highlights again the less culturally diverse cohort of students at these schools.

Continuing down the table into the ‘learnt outside school’ statements, the notable ones are the 57 percent of students who feel they have learnt about Asia by eating Asian food, followed by films about Asia (29 percent), television or radio (26 percent) and travel to Asia (21 percent). The fact that these are all examples of experiential and visual/auditory learning suggests that not only are these effective pedagogical approaches, but they are also learning experiences that students tend to recall more readily. If these student responses are indicative of a decrease in the ‘absence of the Asia within Australia’ mindset, then it suggests that the increasing visibility of Asia-related elements in the daily life of Australians could provide initial educational opportunities to begin engaging with this aspect of Australia’s identity.

5.8 SUMMARY OF 2002 AND 2015 CONTEXT OF LEARNING YEARS 7/8

In summary, the responses in Table 5.4 suggest that the Year 7&8 students in the 2015 study have similar evaluations of the learning about Asia, both at school and outside of school as did the Year 8 students in 2002. Many of the statements have aggregate proportions of less than a quarter of students saying that have learnt something about Asia, and this is similar to the 2002 data. The more detailed data for the 2015 cohort does indicate there are some areas where students feel they have learnt something, though this is outweighed by the responses to the majority of statements, with students indicating that these aspects of their school and daily life have afforded little to no learning about Asia.

The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with the complete data set of 200 responses from the 2015 cohort of students, with only occasional references back to the 2002 data set. As the 2015 cohort included students in Years 9, and 12, comparisons of responses with the Year 8 cohort from 2002 are less viable.

The analysis of this 2015 survey data will be predominantly based on the frameworks put forward in Chapter Three; namely, the modes of constructing and viewing Asia (plurality/plural society, ‘Asia as method’, and Othering manifested as absence of Asia, Asia as threat, and Asia as opportunity), and the motivation construct of subjective task values (attainment, intrinsic, utility and cost). Though the survey was not designed specifically to investigate these constructs, it is possible to broadly categorise the survey statements so as to consider what motivates students to engage in Asia-related learning, and to what extent students’ views of Asia are indicative of these ways of imagining Asia.

5.9 DEMOGRAPHICS OF ENTIRE 2015 COHORT

The breakdown of the demographic data shown in Figure 5.9 indicates that there is greater diversity within the 2015 cohort as a whole compared to the 2002 group of Year 8 students.

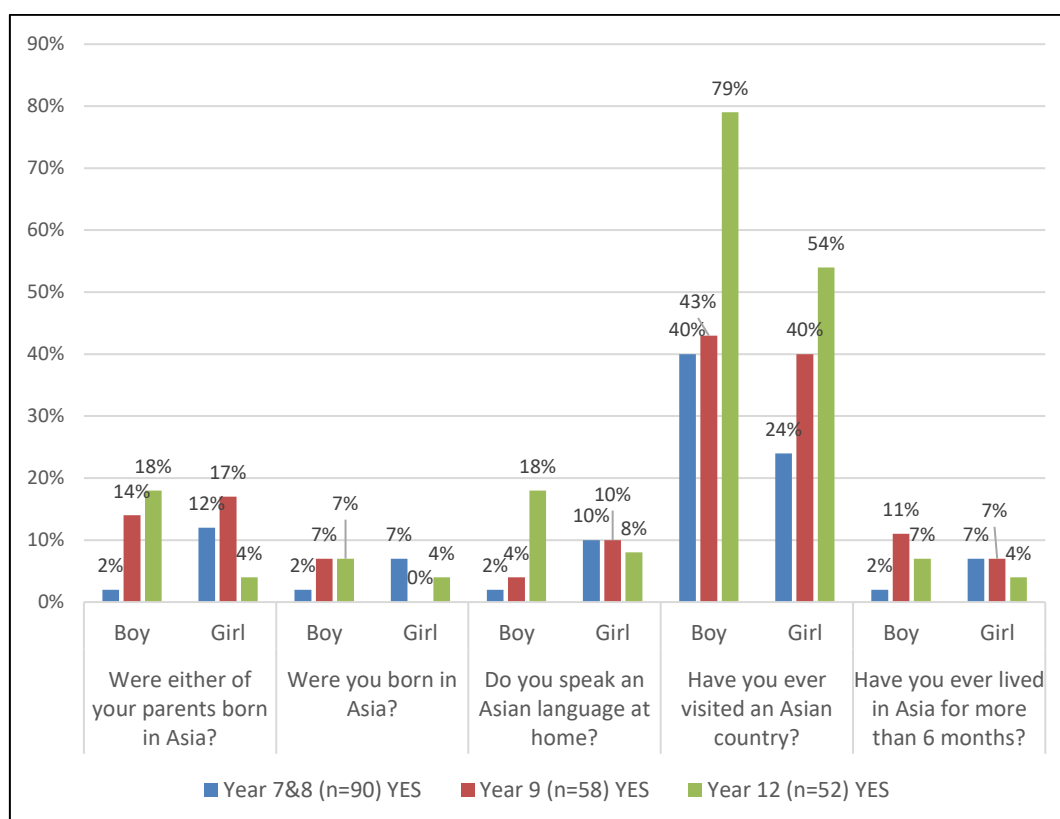


Figure 5.9. Demographics of 2015 cohort by gender and year level - affirmative responses (N=200)

The percentage of students with at least one parent born in Asia more closely matches the broader population, though the number of students born in Asia is still relatively low. The most significant difference is the increased numbers of students who have visited an Asian country, especially the Year 12 students with 79 percent of boys and 54 percent of girls. This is consistent with the increasing mobility of Australians travelling to and within the region. In this 2015 online version of the survey, students could also specify which countries in the Asia region they had visited. These countries and number of students who visited (in brackets) were: Cambodia (2), China (10), India (4), Indonesia (29), Japan (9), Malaysia (6), the Philippines (2), Singapore (12), Sri Lanka (4), Taiwan (2), Thailand (19), and Vietnam (6). As will be seen in the analysis

of the survey responses, this greater mobility appears to be an important influence on students' attitudes to learning about Asia.

Before considering the attitude responses shown in Table 5.5 (next page) in relation to the frameworks discussed in Chapter Three, a brief summary of the responses as per the five affective levels used in the 2002 analysis is presented. Looking at the responses from boys first, it is evident that a more positive attitude to learning about Asia develops as students mature, and this is most apparent in the responses to the statements at level 5 (*Organisation*) of the affective taxonomy. Nearly a third of these students said they would like to live in an Asian country (32 percent) and nearly half consider Asian countries their favourite (46 percent). This general trend is also visible in the responses from the girls, though to a lesser degree. Overall, these responses from the Year 9 and Year 12 students would place fewer students at the level 1 of *Avoidance* and a higher proportion of students located around the third and fourth levels of *Responding* and *Valuing*.

Table 5-5

Percentage of affirmative responses to attitude survey from 2015 cohort (N=200 – subgroup totals in brackets below Year level)

		<i>Boy</i>			<i>Girl</i>		
<i>Survey Statements</i>		Y7 (48)	Y9 (28)	Y12 (28)	Y7&8 (42)	Y9 (30)	Y12 (24)
1	Countries of Asia are my favourite.	10%	18%	46%	14%	23%	17%
2	I would like to live in a country in Asia.	6%	18%	32%	7%	17%	21%
3	Reading books about Asia is fun.	21%	25%	46%	21%	30%	38%
4	I would like people from Asia to visit my home.	25%	39%	39%	33%	37%	38%
5	Learning about Asia is fun.	56%	57%	64%	48%	73%	38%
6	It would be better if Australia had closer relations with Asian countries.	42%	54%	82%	60%	47%	71%
7	It is important that Australians know lots about Asia.	48%	54%	68%	60%	40%	67%
8	I enjoy learning things about Asia.	58%	68%	86%	45%	73%	67%
9	Learning about Asia is valuable.	63%	68%	89%	60%	83%	75%
10	Thai people have weird religions	33%	46%	21%	31%	27%	21%
11	Studying things about Asia is important.	58%	39%	82%	60%	60%	67%
12	Asian cultures are of no interest to me.	35%	32%	18%	29%	17%	33%
13	Learning about Asia will help me later in life.	73%	57%	86%	62%	67%	71%
14	I avoid Asian festivals.	19%	39%	25%	21%	30%	25%
15	Learning about Asia is a good thing.	79%	68%	96%	60%	87%	75%
16	I would like to visit a country in Asia.	67%	75%	82%	69%	83%	71%
17	I do NOT need to learn about Asia.	29%	32%	21%	26%	17%	25%
18	People from countries of Asia contribute little to the world.	35%	29%	11%	21%	23%	8%
19	Asian cultures are a problem for Australia.	19%	11%	7%	7%	13%	8%
20	I try and avoid Asian people or customs.	13%	11%	7%	2%	10%	4%
21	Australia has nothing to learn from countries like Japan.	8%	25%	4%	14%	13%	4%
22	Australia has nothing to learn from countries like China.	17%	29%	7%	12%	13%	4%
23	I have called kids names because of their Asian background.	2%	18%	25%	0%	7%	0%

Though the 2002 attitude survey contained 30 statements, not all of these were included in the affective level results (reasons for this were not given by the researchers). These statements were excluded from the comparisons of the 2015 and 2002 responses, but the statements and affirmative response proportions are presented below in Table 5.6 as they contain some statements that are relevant to the discussion on modes of viewing Asia.

Table 5-6

Seven additional survey statements not included in 2002 analysis

		<i>Boy</i>			<i>Girl</i>		
		% of affirmative responses					
<i>Additional Survey Statements</i>		Y7	Y9	Y12	Y7&8	Y9	Y12
		(48)	(28)	(28)	(42)	(30)	(24)
24	Asian people should all speak English in Australia.	35%	71%	57%	48%	47%	46%
25	People from countries of Asia take up jobs for Australians.	54%	57%	39%	60%	70%	29%
26	All Asian people are the same.	19%	29%	4%	12%	17%	4%
27	Europe is more important to Australia than Asia.	33%	32%	43%	45%	33%	33%
28	Most things happening in Asia right now are bad.	23%	29%	14%	38%	27%	21%
29	Indonesian people are more like Koreans than Australians	40%	46%	39%	55%	37%	33%
30	Asian languages all sound the same to me	35%	32%	25%	45%	43%	58%

5.10 SURVEY RESPONSES AND SUBJECTIVE TASK VALUES

The following discussion will refer to the complete set of responses to the attitude statements (Tables 5.5 and 5.6 above) and the complete set of responses to the context of learning questions (Table A1 in Appendix D). It should also be noted that while the four subjective task values have their own distinct definitions, these values are not absolute. In addition, a student's attitude to a task, activity or statement may be attributable to more than one value. For example, a student who responds positively to

statement 13 (*Learning about Asia will help me later in life*) may do so because it is a statement that accords with a projection of their personal identity or self (attainment value), while also fulfilling a specific career-oriented goal they have in mind (utility value).

In this exploratory study, this analysis is based on both interpretations of the responses to the statements as individual components, as well in relation to the other elements in this multifaceted set of data. This process accords with the pragmatist approach to exploratory studies (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Four in relation to mixed methods typologies, this approach also enables the data to be “combined throughout in such a way as to become interdependent in reaching a common theoretical or research goal” (Bazeley, 2010, p. 432). The conclusion chapter contains a discussion on how these initial findings can be further investigated for confirmation and elaboration.

5.10.1 Attainment value

Attainment value equates to the personal importance of doing well on a task in order to not only attain goals, but also to affirm identities. There are several attitude statements in Table 5.5 that provide some indication of their potential attainment value for students. Agreement with statement 4 (*I would like people from Asia to visit my home*) suggests a student who is open to engagement with people from Asia and seeks to express this aspect of their identity to family members as well. Positive responses to this statement were similar for Year 9 and 12 boys (39 percent each) and for all girls (from 33-39 percent). Three other statements linked to attainment value are statement 11 (*Studying things about Asia is important*), statement 15 (*Learning about Asia is a good thing*), and statement 17 (*I do NOT need to learn about Asia*). Statements 11 and

15 express the similar concept of the value students see in learning about Asia. Responding positively to these statements affirms the importance to students of engaging in this learning. For statement 11, apart from a drop in affirmative responses for Year 9 boys (39 percent), the Year 7s (58 percent) and Year 12s (82 percent) generally saw this learning as important, as did the majority of girls (ranging from 60-67 percent). The affirmations are even higher for statement 15 (*Learning about Asia is a good thing*) with the lowest proportion being Year 7 girls at 60 percent, and the rest ranging from 75 percent of Year 12 girls up to 96 percent of Year 12 boys. The responses to statement 17 (*I do NOT need to learn about Asia*) confirm these levels of attainment value, with the majority of all students disagreeing with the statement that they do not need to learn about Asia.

From the overall responses to these four statements, it appears that a majority of students at all year levels consider Asia-related learning as something of value to them personally. While attainment value appeared to be more significant for the boys as they mature, the girls tended to identify with the attainment value statements more at Year 9 than in the earlier or later years. The factor analysis data in the next chapter provides further information on the presence of attainment value in students' motivation for engaging in learning about Asia.

5.10.2 Utility value

There are five statements (2, 7, 9, 13, and 16) in the attitude survey that give insights into the utility value students assign to learning about Asia, and most of these are linked to the long term goals the students may have. Statement 2 (*I would like to live in a country in Asia*) conveys the most significant form of a future objective, and the responses for boys and girls follows a pattern of minimal agreement at Year 7 (6 percent

of boys and 7 percent of girls) increasing to 18 percent and 17 percent for Year 9 boys and girls, and then reaching 32 percent of Year 12 boys and 21 percent of Year 12 girls. Whether the students were imagining a permanent or temporary residency is unclear, but in either case, the progressive increase in affirmative responses suggests that students do look to countries in the region as potential places to live and work, and this most likely influences their levels of engagement in learning about Asia.

This is also supported by responses to statement 13 (*Learning about Asia will help me later in life*), which clearly links to future goals students have contemplated. Approximately two-thirds of all the girls agreed with the statement, and for boys it ranged from 57 percent of Year 9s up to 86 percent of Year 12s. It is relevant to point out that none of the Year 12 students at either school were studying an Asian language, as they had either discontinued Chinese when it became optional (for the girls) or Japanese was not yet on offer at the senior years for the boys.

The overall responses to these five utility value related statements suggest that while an average of 15 percent of girls and 19 percent of boys expressed an intention of living in an Asian country in the future, the majority of students at all year levels considered Asia-related learning as useful for them. As with attainment value, the responses from the boys tended to be more evident of the utility value of Asia-related learning as they mature, whereas for the girls this trend was less clear, with the responses from Year 9 and Year 12 girls varying in terms of highest rates of affirmative responses to these five statements. The factor analysis data in the next chapter provides further information on the presence of this utility value in students' motivation for engaging in learning about Asia.

5.10.3 Intrinsic value

Intrinsic value is the enjoyment of doing the task rather than any eventual utility value, though it does not preclude it. The five statements that linked most strongly to this concept are statement 3 (*Reading books about Asia is fun*), statement 5 (*Learning about Asia is fun*), statement 8 (*I enjoy learning things about Asia*), statement 12 (*Asian cultures are of no interest to me*), and statement 14 (*I avoid Asian festivals*). Though reading books about Asia was not overwhelmingly seen as a ‘fun’ activity (average of 31 percent of boys and 30 percent of girls agreed), more students stated that they enjoy learning things about Asia (average of 71 percent of boys and 62 percent of girls agreed with statement 8). This relatively high level of enjoyment is worth considering in respect to the student evaluations of how little they feel they have learnt about Asia at school (Table A1 in Appendix D). This suggests an opportunity for more Asia-related content in the curriculum to leverage this expression of enjoyment that the majority of students have indicated.

The strong disagreement with statement 12 (*Asian cultures are of no interest to me*) and statement 14 (*I avoid Asian festivals*) suggests that there are opportunities for teachers to leverage this interest by exploring these cultural learning experiences that the majority of students at all year levels have expressed an interest in. A potential issue with traditional ‘multicultural’ events however, is that they often fail to go beyond the superficial manifestations of cultural diversity. This is often the case in the ‘flags, food and festivals’ approach which can be limited to tokenistic activities that reinforce stereotypes (Charles, Arber, Halse, & Mahoney, 2013; Mansouri, Elias, & Sweld, 2017; Walton et al., 2012). To overcome these limitations, those authors and others (Sleeter & Grant, 2009) often point to a more critical and self-reflective approach to engaging

students with these experiential events, as this can then open up possibilities for deeper and meaningful learning to occur.

Examples of these approaches discussed previously (section 2.3.3.3) were the ‘cultural suitcase’ activity for U.S. primary students (Hantula, 1972), and (section 2.4.5) Hamston’s work with Year 5 Australian students exploring a studies of Asia unit of work (Hamston, 2003, 2006) These types of learning experiences also begin to redress the consequences of the Othering process that blinkers students’ view to a narrow focus on the differences *between* Australia and Asian countries, and tends to limit space for critical reflection on the differences *within* both Australia and *within* Asian countries.

5.10.4 Cost

The final subject task value is cost. This is defined as the time and effort needed to be devoted to the task, and what may be foregone if that task is undertaken. It is often linked to the negative aspects of engaging in a task. While there are no statements that explicitly expressed this value, it can be inferred from statement 17 (*I do NOT need to learn about Asia*). Agreement with this statement may be influenced by students making a judgement on what they regard as the important curriculum to learn at school. There is some evidence to support this suggestion from written comments students made with reference to the Q sort (e.g. section 6.4.2). Within the limited space that a school subject timetable allows, there may be a perception that any Asia-related learning must necessarily come at the expense of other learning. Approximately a quarter of all students agreed with this statement, so it is conceivable that this could be a factor for them.

This was also commented on by parents in the study on parents’ attitudes towards studies of Asia (section 2.4.6 of Chapter Two). Some parents were concerned that the

inclusion of a focus on Asia-related learning would necessarily reduce space for studies of other regions, or limit the time available for core literacy and numeracy teaching. This also links to the discussion in section 2.4.1 (Chapter Two), which examined the arguments for and against learning about Asia, either as a distinct subject or embedded across the curriculum as it is now in the Australian Curriculum. The fact that the recent review of the Australian curriculum (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014) also criticised this Asia priority (along with the two other priorities and general capabilities) for overcrowding the curriculum, indicates that there is a significant proportion of the population that cling to a traditional curriculum hierarchy, a structure that resists interdisciplinary elements (Bleazby, 2015). This is despite the fact that this ‘zero-sum game’ approach to curriculum construction, in which more of one thing by default must mean less of another, has been shown to be a flawed way to judge the implementation of areas of learning that are broader than single subject domains (Louden, 2018).

5.11 SURVEY RESPONSES AND MODES OF VIEWING ASIA

While the statements used in this survey did not touch on the concepts of plurality and plural societies, there are statements that are linked to the other modes of viewing Asia as discussed in the conceptual frameworks chapter. These were the ‘Asia as method’ (postcolonial discourse) and the Othering of Asia via the three dominant modes of viewing it as either ‘absence’, ‘threat’ or ‘opportunity’. The responses to these statements are discussed below.

5.11.1 Othering of Asia – Absence

This mode of regarding Asia as both externally separate (and often invisible) from Australia, and as being excluded from imaginations of national identity can also be extended to regarding Asia without distinction; as a homogenised, static Other. There

are several statements that can be linked to this mode of view, particularly in the responses to ‘learning outside school’ section of the survey (Table A1, Appendix D). Looking at the responses by year level (Years 7&8, Year 9, and Year 12) the proportion of students who stated ‘nothing’ to how much they have learnt about Asia through television or radio were 40 percent, 39 percent, and 7 percent for the boys; 29 percent, 23 percent, and 29 percent for the girls. When the ‘not very much’ responses are included in these numbers, the results were 82 percent, 82 percent, and 46 percent for the boys; 65 percent, 63 percent, and 54 percent for the girls. These numbers suggest that, apart from the Year 12 boys, the majority of all the other groups of students feel that they have learned either nothing or very little about Asia through mass media. It is unfortunate that the itemised responses to this statement are not available for the 2002 cohort, as this would be an interesting comparison to see if this pattern of responses has changed over this thirteen-year period, especially considering the rapid changes that have taken place in how media is produced and consumed during this period.

On the face of it, the 2015 responses seem to confirm the idea that ‘Asia’ is still very much invisible within Australia and in the mass media. Though not directly linked to the notion of learning about Asia via mass media, the perception that the growing proportion of the demographic with an Asian background is not represented in the content Australians see on their televisions is confirmed by empirical research. A recent report by Screen Australia (2016) found that while the cultural diversity that is visible on Australian TV screens is gradually changing to more accurately reflect the diversity of the population, the disproportionately small number of roles for actors of Asian background has only marginally increased in recent years.

While this may be one factor that perpetuates the ‘invisibility’ of the Asia within Australia, the more recent developments in social media and personalised media streams may also be having an influence on what students are exposed to. Though high-speed broadband and social media platforms are able to provide greater connectivity between Australia and the Asia region (schools connecting via skype, creating virtual classrooms across borders etc.) the possibilities that these new technologies offer can conversely function as filters through which students can become less exposed to diverse cultures and ideas. With younger people turning more and more to social media to access news and opinion, there is evidence to suggest that an ‘echo chamber’ effect can occur when social media users are increasingly being exposed to a narrower range of ideas and beliefs; and the repetition of these can lead to opinion reinforcement (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015; Garrett, 2009).

The relevance of this phenomenon to understanding students’ responses to questions of how new and old media influence their views of Asia is that although students may, in theory, have unlimited virtual access to a wide range of Asia-related content, in actual practice students may be less likely to encounter Asian cultures, peoples and languages than they would have done in the past through traditional forms of mass media. For students who are more driven to learn about Asia, due to either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, these new media platforms and diverse content may provide greater opportunities to accelerate their learning. But for those students who are less interested, the filtering options may result in them being exposed to less Asia-related content that was prevalent during the era of traditional mass media dominance. The low number of students with an Asian background also needs to be taken into consideration in the assessment of this data as the students in this study may be less likely to be experience Asia- related content at home.

A related phenomenon to the absence of Asia mode of view is to cast Asia as without distinction; as a homogenised and often static entity. The three survey statements that can be linked to this view are statements 26, 29 and 30. Though agreement levels to statement 26 (*All Asian people are the same*) rose slightly for Year 9s, both boys and girls disagreed with this statement quite emphatically, with only 4 percent of Year 12 boys and girls holding this view. The Q sort contained a similar statement (#27 – *I think of Asian people as basically all the same*), and this was also disagreed with by the majority of students, though their written comments provided differing reasons for the disagreement. While some students spoke of the diversity within and between Asian states, other students seemed to reject this statement on the humanistic grounds that every human is an individual and should be treated as such (section 6.3.1).

The responses to statement 30 (*Asian languages all sound the same to me*) are suggestive of the limited opportunities students may have had to study more than one Asian language, and the generally low levels of sustained language learning in Australian schools (as discussed in section 2.4.9). Approximately half of the girls at each year level agreed with this statement, as did approximately a third of the boys at each year level. Of interest is that the highest level of agreement was from the Year 12 girls (58 percent) whilst the lowest was from the Year 12 boys (25 percent). This is surprising considering all the Year 12 girls would have studied Chinese for at least a year during their Year 7 and 8 studies, while the Year 12 boys only had the option of studying Italian throughout their secondary studies, as Japanese was only included in their school curriculum in the junior years after they were already entering senior school.

The responses to statement 29 (*Indonesian people are more like Koreans than Australians*) are also intriguing. An average of 40 percent of all students agreed with this statement, which means that 60 percent of these students consider Australians and Indonesians to be more alike than Indonesians are to Koreans. Without more detail on which aspects of these imagined national identities students were referring to, it is difficult to interpret the meaning of these responses. It is, however, interesting to note that recent detailed research into Australian and Indonesian perceptions of one another showed that 57 percent of Australians held unfavourable views towards Indonesia (Ramadge & L’Huillier, 2016). This contrasts with 61 percent of Australians holding favourable views of South Korea (Pew Research Center, 2015). Though this might be unrelated, there is another set of responses in the survey of students’ attitudes that could be relevant to understanding these student responses. Of the places in Asia that these students said they had travelled to, Indonesia was the most visited (section 5.9), whereas no students said they had been to South Korea. To understand any possible relationship between these responses would require more detailed research, but the connection between experiencing a culture firsthand, and then being able to contemplate the similarities and differences between peoples could be a factor in the student responses to statement 29. It may also suggest that as mobility within the region continues to grow, and more and more Australians have firsthand experiences in various Asian countries, the Othering of Asia as a homogenised entity will gradually continue to be disrupted.

5.11.2 Othering of Asia – Threat

There are five statements that can be interpreted as indicative the ‘Asia as threat’ mode of view. There are statements 19, 20, 24, 25 and 28. Responses to statement 19 (*Asian cultures are a problem for Australia*) are either in the single digits or low teens

for most groups of respondents. The highest level of agreement was 19 percent by the Year 7 boys. The Q sort data corresponds with this relatively low level of anxiety about the impact of Asian cultures on Australia. Responses to statement 20 (*I try to avoid Asian people or customs*) follow a similar pattern.

Statement 24 (*Asian people should all speak English in Australia*) touches on a topic that is often one of the contentious issues raised during the immigration debates that frequently erupt in the national discourse (section 2.3.1), with the levels of English proficiency among migrants to Australia regularly questioned by some politicians and media outlets. The current centre-right government recently attempted (unsuccessfully) to increase the levels of English proficiency for migrants if they wished to remain in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017). The responses to statement 24 indicate that in four out of the six groups of students, a majority did not think Asians should have to speak English in Australia. Though the students in these two schools are predominantly from monolingual, Anglo backgrounds, it is notable that approximately half of the students do not consider English language as a necessary requirement for permanently residing in Australia.

Another controversial issue is whether migrants are viewed as taking away jobs from Australians (statement 25: *People from countries of Asia take up jobs for Australians*). Considering the young ages of the participants, it is reasonable to assume that their attitudes to this statement are influenced to varying degrees by the attitudes expressed by their parents and other adult family and friends. This may explain why the levels of agreement are higher for the Year 7s (54 percent of boys and 60 percent of girls) and Year 9s (57 percent of boys and 70 percent of girls), but this decreases as students mature (3 percent of Year 12 boys and 29 percent of Year 12 girls). This may

indicate the development a more sophisticated understanding of the issue and an awareness that the realities of migration to Australia contradict this perception (Hugo et al., 2011; Parsons, 2013).

Responses to the final statement (*Most things happening in Asia right now are bad*) are important to consider in light of how the Asia region has often been portrayed in the Australian media as beset by poverty and unrest (Broinowski, 1992; Walker, 2012). The student responses suggest that only about a quarter of students have this negative view of Asia. This points to a more positive outlook and that these students seem less encumbered by negative stereotypes.

5.11.3 Othering of Asia – Opportunity

The ‘Asia as opportunity’ mode of viewing, often characterised as an instrumentalist approach to any learning or engagement with Asia, has been discussed above (section 5.10.2) in relation to the utility value students identify with. An additional statement that could be interpreted in that predominantly economic sense of value is statement 9 (*Learning about Asia is valuable*). Approximately two thirds of all students agreed with this statement, with the Year 12 boys voicing the strongest agreement at 89 percent. The difficulty with interpreting the responses to this statement is that the term *valuable* could also refer to the value students see in learning about Asia for its own sake. The Q analysis data in the following chapter provides greater scope to determine the presence of this mode of viewing Asia.

5.11.4 Asia as method

This mode of viewing Asia is one which is more attuned to the rapid changes that have been taking place in terms of global realignments in centres of economic, geopolitical and cultural centre of power. This is most evident in the economic growth

of many Asian countries. As was discussed in Chapter Three, these changes in power relationships will most likely necessitate a critical examination of how the current dominant modes of viewing Asia within Australia may need to be reimagined in a world in which Asian countries weigh up the necessity of engaging with Australia (Broinowski, 2004; Rizvi, 2017).

Though this broader level of discourse was not part of the attitude survey, the influence of these changes on students' attitudes may be possible to gauge by analysing statements 6 (*It would be better if Australia had closer relations with Asian countries*), 18 (*People from countries of Asia contribute little to the world*), 21 (*Australia has nothing to learn from countries like Japan*), and 22 (*Australia has nothing to learn from countries like China*). As students mature, their acknowledgment of the importance of close relations with Asian countries generally strengthens. Agreement levels with statement 6 (*It would be better if Australia had closer relations with Asian countries*) are 42 percent of Year 7 boys to 82 percent of Year 12s, and for girls, 60 percent of the Year 7s and 71 percent of the Year 12s. Though the motives for this engagement cannot be ascertained from this survey alone, the strong support for this suggests that many of the students consider closer engagement with Asia as something to be cultivated.

This ties into the responses to statement 18 (*People from countries of Asia contribute little to the world*), which shows students becoming increasingly aware of the contributions of Asian countries to the world. Only 11 percent of Year 12 boys and 8 percent of Year 12 girls disagreed with this statement. Further evidence of this is seen in responses to statements 21 and 22, where the students who think Australia has nothing to learn from Japan and China is in the low single digits (between 4 percent and 7 percent for both boys and girls). So not only are students indicating greater

understanding of the diversity within Asia, responses to statement 27 (*Europe is more important to Australia than Asia*) suggests approximately two-thirds of students regard relationships with Asia as more important than those with Europe. Though it is unclear if this sentiment is based on predominantly economic importance, it still shows an appreciation of the ever-increasing links Australia has with the region.

5.12 SUMMARY

As discussed in the scope and limitations of this study, the profile of the cohorts in these schools do not enable broader generalisations of these results to the wider Australian school population. However, despite this and the noted limitations of this survey tool, and the differences in the 2002 and 2015 sample sizes and participant characteristics, the data generated from it has provided some insights into how the attitudes of this cohort of students in 2015 compared to the representative sample of Australian students in 2002. The major findings are that these current students appear to have been influenced by the instrumentalist framing of ‘Asia literacy’ (reflected in the ‘Asia as opportunity’ mode of viewing), with a majority of students expressing agreement with statements that echo the importance of Asia for Australia’s future. Though students were generally interested in learning about Asia, the intrinsic motivation appeared to be less of a driver compared to more utilitarian incentives. For the comparable cohorts of Years 7 and 8 in 2002 and 2015, the boys were generally more likely to identify with the statements at the negative affective domain level, and less likely to identify with the most positive affective domain levels.

A surprising finding from the context of learning component of the data was that these students in 2015 did not feel that they had learnt anymore about Asia, either in school or outside of it, than the students in 2002. Considering how much has been

spoken about the need to increase levels of ‘Asia literacy’, these students seem to be indicating that what is currently being offered in schools is below their expectations.

This is also important in light of the relatively high percentage of students who responded that they felt they had learnt little about Asia during their language classes. As schools often relegate the teaching of the Asia priority to teachers of Asian languages, these responses question the suitability of that approach. This, along with other findings, have implications for current teachers and for initial teacher education courses which will be discussed in the final conclusions chapter.

In the following chapter, the combination of factor analysis data and qualitative data continues this exploration of students’ views of Asia and their motivations towards Asia-related learning.

Chapter 6: Q Results & Discussion

This chapter contains the results and discussion of the Q methodology component of the research, and the discussion of results addresses both of the research sub-questions:

SQ1: How do students view 'Asia'?

SQ2: How does motivation theory (EVT) help explain students' attitudes to Asia-related learning?

Both quantitative and qualitative data are drawn upon during this discussion. The quantitative data is in the form of the factors (shared viewpoints) that emerged from the factor analysis process. I begin the chapter with an overview of the factor analysis results and an explanation of the standard ways to analyse the results. To assist the reader to visualise the key characteristics of each viewpoint, the six statements placed at both extremes of the composite Q sort grid are provided in table format preceding the analysis of each factor. This provides a concise view of the six statements there were most agreed with within this perspective, and the six that were most disagreed with. The complete tables of the rank ordering of all 36 statements for each factor are provided in Appendix G. Appendix H shows these arrangements visually as sorted onto the original Q sort grid. Each factor is then examined in more detail with respect to the dominant modes of viewing Asia (plurality/plural society, 'Asia as method', and Othering as absence, threat and opportunity) as discussed in Chapter Three.

The second level of analysis is focused on students' motivations to engage with Asia-related learning. Using the motivational construct of subjective task values;

comprising attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value and cost as discussed in Chapter Three, each perspective is analysed in order to determine the nature of motivational values students hold. This is done by considering the semantic characteristics of the key statements that exemplify each perspective with respect to the definitions of the four subjective task values. Statements vary in their strength of identification with a value, and some statements may encompass more than one value.

Qualitative data is also used during this analysis. The majority of it is derived from the written explanations that students gave for their choices of statements placed at the extremes of the sorting grid. Additional qualitative data is sourced from the transcripts of the focus group sessions. These written and spoken comments are interwoven throughout these quantitative data results to add depth to the analysis, illustrate observations with examples from students, and to foreground the student voice.

The final part of the analysis of each factor follows the common approach in Q methodology studies of combining the overall pattern of significant statements for each factor into a descriptive narrative of that factor. This narrative, which paraphrases the Q sort statements, provides a synopsis of the viewpoint of participants within that factor. This synopsis also helps to define a name for each factor. These narratives are presented after the analysis of each factor.

6.1 REVIEW OF KEY TERMS

Factor analysis is a data reduction technique designed to show commonalities, which in the case of Q methodology, are *shared* viewpoints. These shared viewpoints, called *factors*, are identified by how the participants have rank ordered the statements. In this study, the 52 different arrangements of statements were statistically compared for

similarities in the placement of statements, and this resulted in five distinct *factors*, or viewpoints emerging from the data. In this chapter, where the statistical results are presented, the word *factor* is used in terms of how participants have ranked the statements. In the discussion sections, the terms *factor*, *perspective* or *viewpoint* are used interchangeably to refer to this concept of ‘factor’.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF FACTOR ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The Q methodology process and analysis procedures were detailed in Chapter Four. From that analysis, five factors were identified. Factor 1 contained two bipolar sorts. Bipolar sorts are essentially participants who have ranked the statements in an opposite arrangement to how the majority of students within that factor have arranged the statements. This indicates that the views of these two students were diametrically opposed to the other 25 of their peers within that group. As is common practice in Q methodology, these bipolar sorts remain within Factor 1, but are labelled Factor 1b to distinguish them from the 25 other sorts, now labelled Factor 1a. The number of sorts within each factor is shown in Table 6.1, along with their proportion of total sorts, the explained variance, and the cumulative explained variance. Variance indicates the “proportion of the meaning and variability in a Q sort or study that is held in common with, or by, the group” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 98). In other words, the variance indicates the proportion of shared meaning that the factor represents. The cumulative explained variance is the addition of each preceding percentage of explained variance. Though Q methodology places greater importance on other rationale for extracting factors (as discussed in Chapter Four), it is still standard practice to report these variance results along with the other factor information. The percentages for explained

and cumulative variance are all within acceptable parameters of a Q methodology factor analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Table 6-1

Five factors with loading breakdown

	Factors					
	F1		F2	F3	F4	F5
	F1a	F1b				
Number of sorts	25	2	10	7	5	3
% of total sorts ($N = 52$)	48%	4%	19%	13%	10%	6%
Explained Variance	23%		11%	8%	9%	6%
Cumulative explained Variance	23%		34%	42%	51%	57%

To visualise the spread of each factor, a graphical representation of each factor as a proportion is also shown in Figure 6.1.

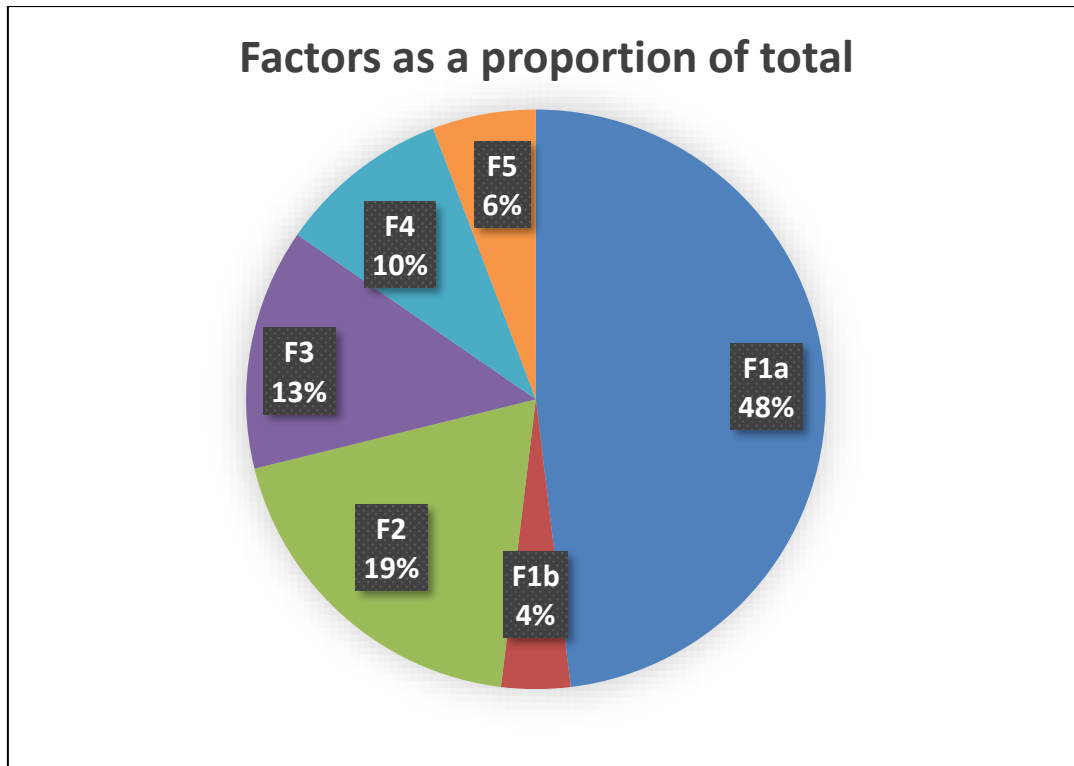


Figure 6.1. Factor loadings as a proportion of total.

As can be seen, almost half of the participants (48 percent) loaded onto Factor 1a, which indicates that almost half of the students share a similar attitude towards various aspects of Asia-related learning. Though Factors 4 and 5 have relatively fewer participants, the characteristics of their viewpoints are quite distinctive, with strong opinions on what they think about Asia-related learning. The entirety of these perspectives can be seen in Table 6.2. This table shows the 36 statements listed under the six sub-themes. The six factor array columns to the right of the statements (labelled F1a, F1b, F2, F3, F4 and F5) show the ranking given to each statement in the idealised sort for each factor. An idealised Q sort, or an exemplifying Q sort, shows the typical ranking given to each statement by participants who loaded on that factor. For example,

the students who loaded onto Factor 1a typically placed statement 1 (*There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school*) either in the zero column or very close to it. This suggest neither strong agreement nor disagreement with that statement.

Appendix H shows these exemplifying sorts for each factor as they would appear on the original sorting grid.

Table 6-2

Statements by sub-theme and factor arrays for all factors

#	STATEMENTS	FACTOR ARRAY					
	<i>ASIA-RELATED LEARNING IN SCHOOL AND SCHOOL SUBJECTS</i>	F1a	F1b	F2	F3	F4	F5
1	There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	-1	0	-1	3	3	2
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	1	1	3	0	1	0
4	I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	1	2	1	0	1	0
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	0	-3	1	2	5	-3
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	0	-1	2	3	-3	-1
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	1	-5	-2	-5	-4	-3
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	2	-4	-4	-4	-1	3
9	My teachers know a lot about Asia.	0	1	0	1	0	1
	<i>ASIA-RELATED LEARNING AND MY FUTURE</i>	F1a	F1b	F2	F3	F4	F5
10	I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	2	-1	0	-2	0	-2
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	1	-2	-1	2	2	-4
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	3	4	0	1	1	3
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	5	-2	-1	-1	-1	-3
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	4	0	1	3	0	-2
	<i>PARENTS AND ASIA-RELATED LEARNING</i>	F1a	F1b	F2	F3	F4	F5

15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	0	1	3	5	0	2
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	2	0	0	0	2	3
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	-3	1	-2	-1	-1	-2
ASIA-RELATED LEARNING IN GENERAL LIFE		F1a	F1b	F2	F3	F4	F5
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	-1	3	2	-2	4	1
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	1	-2	-3	0	-1	4
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	4	-3	1	2	2	0
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-2	-2	-3	-4	-2	-2
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	0	-1	0	-3	3	-5
INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING		F1a	F1b	F2	F3	F4	F5
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	-1	-4	5	1	-4	1
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	-2	3	1	1	1	-1
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	-4	2	-2	-3	-2	2
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	-1	-3	2	-1	-2	-1
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-4	2	-4	4	-5	-1
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	2	0	3	1	2	0
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	3	0	4	2	3	1
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	-1	-1	-1	-3	-2	0
AUSTRALIA AND ASIA		F1a	F1b	F2	F3	F4	F5
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	-3	4	0	-1	0	1
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-5	5	-5	-2	-3	-4
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	3	1	4	0	0	4
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	-3	2	2	0	1	2
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	-2	3	-2	4	4	5
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	-2	0	-3	-2	-3	0

The factor array in Table 6.2 serves primarily to make comparisons across factors, and can quickly illuminate key points of difference between perspectives. For example, the rankings of statement 5 (*I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English*) indicates a key point of difference that distinguishes perspective four from the other perspectives. These students hold a significantly more positive attitude to learning about Asia in other subjects such as English and Humanities than do their fellow students who loaded onto the other factors. With fewer spaces available for the plus and negative 4 and 5 positions on the grid (only one available place for ± 5 and two places for ± 4), the statements placed in these spots can be seen as significant markers of this perspective. This is especially so when the other perspectives have a statement at the opposite end of the spectrum, as is the case for statement 13 (*I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time*). With all the other perspectives allocating this statement about living and working in Asia to the disagree side of the grid, the choice of this statement as the one most agreed with by participants on Factor 1a makes it potentially even more important as a key marker in this perspective.

The following sections examine each perspective in detail by considering how the arrangements of statements, especially the six at either extreme, interact to express the viewpoint of each factor. This analysis is also done with respect to the modes of viewing Asia, and the motivational construct of subjective task values.

6.3 PERSPECTIVE 1A - ASIA IS IMPORTANT IN MY FUTURE

Of the total 52 sorts, 27 students loaded significantly on this factor. However, two of these sorts were bipolar, which signifies that these two students created Q sorts that were almost diametrically opposed to the other 25. Therefore, this factor has been split into viewpoints 1a and 1b. Viewpoint 1a (25 sorts) represents 48 percent of the total number of sorts.

Table 6-3

Exemplar sort for Perspective 1a - Asia is important in my future.

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z-score ⁶
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	5	1.394
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	4	1.354
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	4	1.334
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	3	1.233
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	3	1.202
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	3	1.124
<i>See Appendices G and H for complete exemplar of sort arrays</i>			
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	-3	-1.448
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	-3	-1.451
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	-3	-1.496
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	-4	-1.726
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-4	-1.839
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-5	-1.955

Table 6.3 shows a reduced version of an exemplar, or composite sort for this factor (Appendix G contains complete arrays for all perspectives). In essence, these 25 students loaded significantly onto this factor because their arrangement of the 36

⁶ The z-score, or standardised score, enables cross-factor comparisons and can inform the factor interpretation process.

statements exhibited a significantly shared perspective, and Table 6.4 shows the statements they typically placed at the extremities of the grid. For example, many of these students would have placed statement 13 (*I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time*) at the extreme end of the MOST AGREE WITH side of the grid indicating that they strongly agree with this statement. Similarly, many of these students would have placed statement 32 (*Asians are not really part of the Australian population*) at the extreme end of the MOST DISAGREE WITH side of the grid indicating their strong disagreement with this statement.

6.3.1 Modes of viewing Asia

Considering this perspective with reference to the 'absence of Asia' mode of view, the statements these students tended to place at the negative extreme suggests that they were more aware of the external and internal presence of Asia. They tended to disagree most strongly with statement 32 (*Asians are not really part of the Australian population*), an attitude that indicates both an awareness of Asian-background people in Australia as well as an acceptance of them as part of the broader Australian population. For some students, this goes beyond acceptance and is expressed as a desire to have greater interactions and increased cultural engagement. These attitudes also suggest a diminishing of the view of Asia as being a predominantly external entity that is not part of Australia's self-identity. This sentiment was reinforced by the strong agreement with statements 20 (*It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia*) and 29 (*There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia*). Students made various comments on this perspective, and each of the comments from the post-sort written reflections below demonstrates a slightly different rationale for these attitudes.

I think that Asians are part of Australia's population because they have provided multiple things for Australia and introduced many different cultural aspects. (Year 9 boy)

I disagree with these statements because they aren't true. Asian culture, especially these, days is having a growing cultural effect on Australia. (Year 12 boy)

I don't agree that Asians are not part of the Australian population because there are many Asians here and Australia is a very multicultural country. (Year 9 girl)

Asian Australians are people in their own right who don't need to conform as Australia is a multicultural country. All they're doing is enhancing our own society. (Year 12 boy)

Being able to communicate with different Asian languages is becoming more important because of the increase of Asian population in Australia. (Year 9 boy)

I also agree that it'd be good to communicate with Asians within Australia because rather they all just learn English, we can help out and learn their language. (Year 9 girl)

On the topic of Australia being a multicultural country, it is not always clear what this signifies for students in relation to learning about Asian cultures. The following comment is an example of this:

I agree with them because Australia is a multicultural country, so we should learn more about the cultures outside of Australia. (Year 9 boy)

Though it could be read as Asian cultures exist only outside of Australia, another interpretation is that for this student, living in a multicultural nation may bring with it the obligation for all Australians to know more about the cultures of the people who are part of this multicultural society.

One criticism of the Asia literacy priority discussed in Chapter Three has been the tendency to speak of Asia either as a generic, homogenous entity, or one which is only relevant to Australia's relationships with the economically powerful nations within Asia. This group of students appear to be expressing similar criticisms with their disagreement with statement 35 (*When I think of Asia I mostly think of China*), statement 36 (*When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan*), and statement 21 (*We only need to know about the important Asian countries*).

I say we need to know all about Asia and its cultures, not just the BIG countries' cultures. (Year 7 boy)

I also disagreed that we only need to learn about the important Asian countries because they are all important and have their own way of doing things. (Year 7 girl)

We only need to know about the important countries - no, we should learn about all of them because they are all different with their own little secrets within them. (Year 9 boy)

These comments also provide some context to the ‘Asia as opportunity’ related statements that this group tended to agree with, and this comment from a Year 12 boy echoes some of the rhetoric that is used to promote Asia literacy:

I placed these in to their position because I believe it is imperative to realise the economic power that these countries have. They are incredible at manufacturing and will thus have a large impact on Australia and our economy. It is important to be able to communicate with such powerful and efficient allies. (Year 12 boy)

But other comments suggest some more nuance in the attitudes of these students. Though statement 13 (*I’d like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time*), statement 33 (*Asia is becoming more important to Australia*) and statement 12 (*If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future*) may be interpreted as being exemplars of the view of Asia only in terms of what Australia can gain from engagement, the students’ comments suggest that their concept of opportunity was also for intercultural understanding and some self-reflection. The following comments are examples of this:

Learning about other cultures does help me understand my own culture because when I see the difference between cultures I see what’s the same as well. (Year 7 girl)

I agree that Asia is becoming more important to Australia, as well as that learning about their cultures helps me understand my own, and that there’s lots to learn from these cultures. (Year 10 boy)

All Asians are definitely not the same though they may show similarities, each culture and person is different in their own way no matter what their nationalities. (Year 12 boy)

While the references to “other cultures” and “their cultures” may suggest a binary view of ‘us’ and ‘them’, it could also be interpreted as an acknowledgment of the plurality mode of viewing Asia. As the Year 10 boy also writes that “there’s lots to learn from these cultures”, it is possible that he does not consider this binary immutable.

6.3.2 Motivation and Asia-related learning

With respect to the four subjective task values components, it is evident that the attainment value characterises the attitudes to Asia-related learning expressed by this cohort. Two of their top three statements (*S#13: I’d like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time*, and *S#14: In the future, I’ll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job*) suggest that their application to learning about Asia is not only an important aspect of their identity now, but also a demonstration of their engagement in this learning to achieve future goals. This intention to live and work in Asia sets this cohort apart from the other factors, which all had statement 13 on the disagree section of the grid. This difference is also evident in the fact that this viewpoint was the only one of the five that expressed positive attitudes to all of the statements within the sub-theme of *Asia-related learning and my future* (S#10, S#11, S#12, S#13, and S#14).

Their third ranking statement (*S#20: It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia*) also affirms the personal importance of this learning and indicates that this is not a purely utilitarian mindset that drives this interest. From this, it would appear that there is also an intrinsic value that these students gain

from participating in these studies. This viewpoint also displays a generally positive outlook to learning about Asia at school. Unlike some of the other viewpoints, these students supported the idea of everyone learning an Asian language at school (*S#8: Every student should learn an Asian language at school*), a statement that tended to polarise the respondents.

Of the four subjective task values, this perspective has strong connection with attainment value, as evidenced by the combination of agreement with the statements that align with both intrinsic and utility value. As mentioned above in the introduction to this chapter, the interpretation of factors in Q studies usually leads to the pulling together of a narrative which captures the perspective of this factor. This is not an arbitrary process, as the narrative is derived from the participant's arrangement of statements. Drawing together the significant statements that characterise this perspective, this factor has been called 'Asia is important in my future'. Students who hold this viewpoint of Asia-related learning might be described in the following way:

Learning about Asia is important for these students as they plan to spend time living and possibly working in the Asia region. Studying an Asian language is useful for them now as it can help them to communicate with people of Asian background in Australia, plus they believe they will probably have contact with people from Asia in their future careers. They think there are lots of things to learn from Asian cultures and traditions, but they would also like to know more about Asian politics and current affairs. They think Asia is becoming more important to Australia, and their parents also support them learning an Asian language. They have an understanding of the diversity of the

Asia region, and they regard people of Asian background as full members of the Australian population who should be allowed to live according to their own way of life. To them Australia can be considered a part of Asia, even with its multicultural society.

6.4 PERSPECTIVE 1B - ASIA DOESN'T INTEREST ME

This factor represents a bipolar view with respect to the previous factor, as the overall configuration of their statements on the grid resembled an almost reverse positioning of Factor 1a statements on the grid. Though only two participants (a Year 7 boy and girl) loaded on this factor, it is such a strongly divergent view that it is important to give voice to this perspective in the results and discussion.

Table 6-4

Exemplar sort for Perspective 1b - Asia doesn't interest me

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z-score
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	5	2.038
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	4	1.98
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	4	1.339
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	3	1.204
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	3	1.146
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	3	1.146
<i>See Appendices G and H for complete exemplar of sort arrays</i>			
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	-3	-0.893
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	-3	-1.146
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	-3	-1.204
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	-4	-1.474

8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	-4	-1.592
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-5	-2.038

6.4.1 Modes of viewing Asia

Though bipolar viewpoints typically indicate a diametrical opposed view, the attitudes of these students are more complex. Rather than exhibiting attitudes that suggest they are unaware of Asia (internally and externally), it appears that they are aware of representations of Asia within Australia (*S#18: I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV*) and there is a relatively strong element of ‘Asia as threat’ reflected in their arrangement of the statements and post-sort comments. The Year 7 boy’s post-sort comment in relation to statement 32 can be seen as a reflection of the more recent ‘Asia as threat’ narrative in which the previous fears of Asian invasions have been transferred to perceived threats from an influx of ‘boat people’ and ‘illegal migration’ (Pan, 2015a).

Asians are not really part of the Australian population because some of them sneak over here. (Year 7 boy)

The binary view of Asia and Australia as fundamentally incompatible is visible in their agreement with statement 32 (*Asians are not really part of the Australian population*), statement 24 (*Asian people are really different from Australians*) and statement 25 (*Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life*). The Year 7 girl’s comment reinforces this view:

Asian people have different ways of life and that makes them different and they wouldn't be a part of Australia because they like to do things different. (Year 7 girl)

Though it also indicates the view of a homogenous Australia, the reference to “different ways of life” does suggest that the student considers Asia to consist of diverse cultures that have their own customs. It may be the case that this negative reaction to this diversity is perceived as the ‘threat’ to the student’s concept of a homogenous Australia. This apparent threat of the ‘Asia within’ is also projected externally to a rejection of Australia being considered both *in* and *of* the region, as evidence in the strong agreement with statement 31 (*Australian will never be part of Asia*).

Another intriguing aspect of this perspective is that the students strongly disagreed with statement 23 (*There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past*). The Year 7 boy also commented on this in his written reflection:

There are way more people being racists today about Asians. (Year 7 boy)

This boy also made the comment above about Asians not being part of Australia “because some of them sneak over here.” Though the two comments may not be related, it is possible that the presence of a strong ‘Asia as threat’ mode of view has heightened his awareness of episodes of racism towards people of Asian background.

Considering that both of the students that loaded on this factor are in Year 7, it is worth looking at what external factors may be influencing these attitudes. Of all the perspectives, this was the only one to agree with statement 17 (*My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia*). It is also one of only two factors that indicated a

relatively elevated level of seeing and hearing a lot about Asia on TV and the radio (S#18). This heightened sense of awareness, lack of encouragement to engage with Asia-related learning from parents, and a firm rejection of greater communication with people of Asian background in Australia (S#20), suggests a negative attitude towards Asians in general, and fear of being overwhelmed by their presence.

6.4.2 Motivation and Asia-related learning

A bipolar sort would suggest that the subjective task values of this perspective would be the reverse of the previous one. And to some extent, that is true. Statements that carry a high attainment value significance (S#11, S#13, and S #14) are ranked low by these students. Yet, somewhat idiosyncratically, statement 12 (*If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future*) appears in their top three, and is ranked higher by this group than any other cohort. This suggests that despite a lack of interest or personal investment in learning about Asia, these students were still aware of a utility value that they may gain by engaging in Asia-related learning. This is a strong example of utility value existing even when there is no actual interest in participating in the task for its own sake.

The relative cost of learning about Asia also seems to have influenced the attitudes of these students. The students explained their strong disagreement with statement 7 (*We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies*) on the basis that this reduces the time available to learn about one's own society.

We should (not) learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.

There are different countries and no one really cares when we don't know enough about our own. (Year 7 boy)

I disagree with learning more about politics because we don't need to and if anything we should be learning more about Australian politics.

(Year 7 girl)

Overall, the students who hold this perspective exhibit generally negative attainment and intrinsic values and place great emphasis on the cost of learning about Asia. Drawing together the significant statements that characterise this perspective, the attitude to Asia-related learning of students who hold this viewpoint could be expressed in the following way:

These students don't consider Australia as part of Asia, and they think Asians in Australia are not really Australians. For them, if Asians want to be here, they should follow the Australian way of life. They see quite a lot about Asia on the TV, and they think Asians are really different from Australians. They believe that there's definitely more racism towards Asians today than in the past. They don't think they should have to learn an Asian language, even though they believe it would probably be useful in their future. They much prefer hands-on activities if they have to learn about Asia at all. They've got absolutely no interest in learning about Asian politics or modern ways of life in Asian countries.

6.5 PERSPECTIVE 2 – OPTIMISTIC AND CURIOUS

This perspective has the second largest number of significantly loaded Q sorts (19 percent of total). As the statements in Table 6.5 show, these students identified quite strongly with statements that touched on learning about the cultures of Asia and the diversity within.

Table 6-5

Exemplar sort for Perspective 2 – Optimistic and curious

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z-score
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	5	1.946
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	4	1.925
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	4	1.606
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	3	1.191
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	3	0.867
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	3	0.782
<i>See Appendices G and H for complete exemplar of sort arrays</i>			
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	-3	-0.856
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-3	-1.357
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	-3	-1.605
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	-4	-1.79
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-4	-1.997

32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-5	-2.106
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6.5.1 Modes of viewing Asia

The modes of viewing Asia within this group are somewhat similar to those expressed in Factor 1a. This group of students also appear to reject the notion of Asia as a homogenous entity that can be understood by a narrow focus on the larger countries (measured either geographically, demographically or economically). They expressed agreement with statement 29 (*There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia*), statement 3 (*I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, and not just the big ones*), and they disagreed with statement 21 (*We only need to know about the important Asia countries*).

I agree because each culture has a different story, therefore each country in Asia has a lot to learn about. (Year 9 girl)

There is a lot we can learn from Asia and as our cultures are coming closer together, it is important that we learn more about Asia. (Year 9 boy)

Though they appear to distinguish between Asian nations outside of Australia, the motivation to learn about Asia for some students appears to be linked strongly to potential external engagement with Asia and not with the Asia within Australia. The comments from these three boys indicate that the view of ‘Asia as absent’ within Australia is characteristic of their outlook.

I think that if you want to go to Asia you should know a bit about the Asian culture, language and so on and the parents should let the children learn about Asia. (Year 7 boy)

We shouldn't have to learn about Asia if we don't live there. (Year 9 boy)

I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions so that I can understand their culture more if I travel there. (Year 12 boy)

However, there is some recognition of the Asian presence within Australia, which in the case of this Year 11 boy, adds to the existing diversity of Australian society. He wrote the following comment in response to statement 31 (*Australia will never be a part of Asia*), which he had expressed agreement with.

Australians may have close relations with Asian countries but we have many distinguishing factors that separate our culture and way of life. We have a large amount of Asian citizens in our country, but we also have other living citizens included. (Year 11 boy)

There were a few other comments that seemed to make a similar distinction between Australia as a multicultural nation and Asian nations which, though different from one another, are regarded as internally homogenous. This can be linked to the concept of plurality and plural societies (Shamsul, 2006) discussed in Chapter Three. This student's view of Asia conforms to the modern mode of viewing 'Asia' in terms of plural societies that are visible as nation states. The pre-colonial plurality notion of Asia, on the other hand, refers more to a freer flow of peoples and cultures. Where

students are pointing to the Australia's multicultural society as a point of difference with Asian nations, it suggests that knowledge of 'Asia' based on the plural society framework has been the dominant way that Asia has been represented in this student's learning.

6.5.2 Motivation and Asia-related learning

Though this perspective contains some relatively positive attitudes towards the potential value in learning about Asia, this is expressed more from a position of curiosity and intrinsic interest rather than the attainment value or utility value that marked Factor 1a. Statements that express the value of intercultural learning (S# 29: *There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia*, and S#28: *I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions*) were all ranked highly by this group. This is despite the fact that statements which refer to the value of learning about Asia for future work and travel (S#13 and S#12) were either ranked neutrally or negatively.

I would not like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time because I am not interested in working there. (Year 9 girl)

The standout statement for this group was their firm agreement with statement 3 (*I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones*). They agreed with this statement more than any of the other perspectives. This increased curiosity also extends to learning about Asia in other ways such as by doing hands-on activities such as art and craft, cooking and digital technologies (S#4) and by practicing Asian sports in P.E. (S#6). As with two of the other perspectives, that are strongly opposed to compulsory Asian language study at school (S#8).

I don't think all kids need to learn an Asian language because some people don't like Asia. (Year 9 boy)

This sentiment is also evident in their disagreement with statement 1 (*There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school*). One possible interpretation of this is that where students have experienced Asia-related learning embedded in meaningful and engaging ways in these subjects, they may value this Asia focus across the curriculum. However, where they perceive it as something akin to a zero-sum game, where adding extra Asia-related content comes at the perceived expense of existing content, they seem to reject this approach. This notion of cross-curriculum priorities and the general capabilities as being considered 'additions' to an already 'crowded curriculum' was discussed in section 5.10.4 in the previous chapter. As with that example, the value of relative cost may help explain this attitude. If learning more about Asia is perceived by students as coming at the expense of the other content that they value, then the perceived benefits of engaging in that activity do not outweigh the costs for them. Overcoming this perception is a challenge for teachers who are trying to incorporate the Asia priority into subject areas where it has previously been absent.

Considering the complete arrangement of statement from this cohort of students, it appears that they give emphasis to the intrinsic value in learning about Asia. Drawing together the significant statements that characterise this perspective, students who express this attitude to Asia-related could be described in the following way:

They're quite optimistic in their attitude to learning about Asia, especially if this is meaningful, hands-on learning that allows them to explore the whole range of learning opportunities. This could even be

in other subjects like English and Humanities. They don't think they need to learn an Asian language if they don't want to, though they'd like to communicate more with Asian people in Australia. They think they know about the diversity within Asia, but they'd really like to learn more about all the countries in Asia and not just the big, economically important ones. In the future they think they probably won't work in Asia, but may have contact with people from Asia in their careers.

6.6 PERSPECTIVE 3 – I’M OK WITH WHAT I’VE LEARNT SO FAR

This perspective was prominent for 13 percent of the total cohort. From the top three statements in Table 6.6, it is apparent that this group of students associate Asia most strongly with China.

Table 6-6

Exemplar sort for Perspective 3 - I'm OK with what I've learnt so far

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z- score
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	5	2.197
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	4	1.963
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	4	1.729
2	I think I’ve learnt a lot about Asia at school.	3	1.458
6	I’d like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	3	1.108
14	In the future, I’ll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	3	0.945
<i>See Appendices G and H for complete exemplar of sort arrays</i>			
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	-3	-1.07
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	-3	-1.141
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	-3	-1.187
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	-4	-1.435
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-4	-1.679
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-5	-1.823

6.6.1 Modes of viewing Asia

This perspective is the most evident example of the homogenous, generic view of Asia, as shown by the strong agreement with statement 27 (*I think of Asian people as basically all the same*). Every other perspective, except for the two students in Factor 1b, expressed disagreement with this statement, with both Factor 1a and Factor 2 positioning this statement at negative 4, and Factor 4 at negative 5. On the surface, this view may be considered emblematic of a lack of knowledge of the diversity within Asia. However, the written statements suggest a deeper level of thought at play. It seems that some students are expressing this view not because they actually think all Asian people are basically the same, but rather because they feel they have not learnt enough about the differences to express these distinctions, even though they are aware of them. This comment from a Year 7 boy explains this perspective:

I think of Asia people as basically all the same because I haven't learnt enough to know what the differences are. I only really know that Asian people have different cultures and different beliefs. (Year 7 boy)

This appears to strongly suggest the influence of the 'absence of Asia' mode of view, though there is also a suggestion that the boy acknowledges this lack of understanding. He is aware of some differences in cultures and beliefs, but seems to be willing to learn more to improve his understanding. One interpretation of this is that while the 'absence of Asia' and the Othering of Asia as a homogenised entity are still prevalent, there is also a curiosity and willingness for engagement that teachers with the right preparation and knowledge can leverage in order to help students move past these inhibiting ways of viewing Asia. In relation to the research method used for this stage

(Q methodology) this is a good example of how the combination of quantitative and qualitative data can help build a more informed understanding of participant attitudes.

This group of students also strongly aligned with the image of Asia dominated by China, though this was also a characteristic of Factor 1b, Factor 4 and Factor 5. As the following comments from two Year 9 girls indicate, this view is strongly influenced by their Chinese language learning at school.

At school I have learnt more about Asia than my parents. From studying Chinese at school, I have learnt many things about Asian culture. (Year 9 girl)

I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school because we do Chinese and a lot of Asia work in Humanities and English. (Year 9 girl)

And even for the Year 7 boy who is studying Japanese at secondary school, it appears that his previous primary school studies had a strong focus on China.

When I think of Asia I mostly think of China because I learnt and heard more about China when I was younger so I think of it as a major part of Asia and it is bigger than any other countries I know. (Year 7 boy)

As a possible reaction against that focus on China as the primary avenue for learning about Asia, this cohort of students had the strongest disagreement with statement 21 (*We only need to know about the important Asian countries*). The following comment from a Year 9 student helps explain this attitude:

I agree that we should learn about the smaller Asian countries because nearly everyone knows about the big ones already. (Year 9 girl)

This perspective speaks to the ‘Asia as opportunity’ view in which the instrumentalist focus tends to prioritise the economically important countries while marginalising learning about other Asian countries. While the student is not explicitly saying that learning about the larger nations should not take place, she does seem to be suggesting that students are interested in learning about Asia that goes beyond the instrumentalist rationale for Asia literacy.

6.6.2 Motivation and Asia-related learning

Of all the perspectives, this one displays the least distinctive alignment with a single subjective task value. The scattering of statements that are indicative of each of the four task values in their rankings suggest that a combination of all four values play a role in influencing these students’ attitudes to Asia related learning. This could be a result of these students having narrower views of what interests or motivates them. This would then be evident in their agreement with some aspects of a statement, but reduced agreement or even disagreement with a similar value statement that lacked this particular focus of their interest.

In the discussion of motivational theories presented in the conceptual frameworks chapter, it was noted that a challenge for research into attitudes is the complexity inherent in human behaviour. The arrangement of the statements done by these students exemplifies how they have responded differently to statements which express similar attitudes. This group represents 13 percent of the total participants. This indicates that while 87 percent of the students who completed the Q sort had some reasonably well-formed attitudes to Asia-related learning, these students who loaded on this factor either

were less sure of their attitudes, or have been influenced by a broad range of motivations for engaging in Asia-related learning.

While these students did not support learning about Asia via a variety of school subjects (S#1), they are quite positive towards learning about Asia in Humanities and English (S#5) and very keen to practise Asian sports in Physical Education classes (S#6).

The second sentence I put at +4 was I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E. because my favourite subject is P.E. and it would be interesting to see what equipment they use. They would have similar sports because they also compete in the Olympics. (Year 7 girl)

Because it would be awesome to learn their traditional sports. (Year 7 boy)

As with some of the other perspectives, they strongly rejected the compulsory study of an Asian language (S#8), and the proposal to learn more about Asian politics and modern societies (S#7). They are one of the two groups that think they have learnt a lot about Asia at school (S#2), with some agreement that their teachers know a lot about Asia (S#9). Out of all the perspectives, these students expressed the greatest agreement that they had learnt more about Asia than their parents had (S#15). This may partly explain why these students feel that they have learnt a lot about Asia at school (S#2) and not from their families, from visiting Asia, or from talking to people who have travelled there (S#22).

Though these students do not express strong intentions to live or work in Asia (S#13), they do think it likely that they will have contact with people in Asia in their future careers (S#14). They also expressed an interest in communicating with students in Asia using technology (S#11).

I'd like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.)
to learn about their culture – this would make me more knowledgeable
about their country and the way they live. (Year 9 girl)

These students said they have not learnt much about Asia from either travelling there or by talking to people who have (S#22), yet they firmly disagree with the notion of only learning about the important Asian countries (S#21), more so than any other perspective. They indicated a minimal exposure to, or awareness of Asia related media (S#18), but expressed a positive disposition to communicating with Asian people they meet in Australia (S#20).

As of now, I'm a coach at my gymnastics club and all different kids
come into the gym so I think it would help if I knew more about Asian
languages and cultures. (Year 9 girl)

As with the students holding perspective 1, these students rejected the statement that Asian people in Australia should follow an 'Australian way of life' (S#25). What distinguishes them the most from the other groups is how they perceived little difference between the different peoples of Asia (S#27) and their minimal amount of self-reflection in terms of understanding more about their own culture through the study of Asian cultures (S#30).

I think of Asian people as basically all the same because they all look very similar. (Year 9 girl)

I haven't learnt much about Asian cultures but when I have it doesn't make me think about my cultures. (Year 7 boy)

Drawing together the significant statements that characterise this perspective, a student who holds this viewpoint of Asia-related learning could be described in the following way:

They don't think too much about learning about Asia, but they think they've learnt quite a lot. There's still plenty they don't know, especially the differences between all the Asian countries, and that's why they're interested in their different cultures. Their favourite thing is learning about all the traditional sports and customs in Asia. They don't enjoy learning an Asian language, but if it could be more interactive with technology and activities, then maybe it would be OK. They don't see any problems with Asian people living in Australia, and they think there's less racism now than in the past. Overall, they're happy with what they're learning about Asia.

6.7 PERSPECTIVE 4 - ASIA IS PART OF MY LIVED EXPERIENCE

This perspective was prominent for 10 percent of the total cohort, with four Year 9 girls and one Year 9 boy loading on this factor. The firsthand experience of travelling to parts of Asia is something that seems to set the group apart from the other perspectives.

Table 6-7

Exemplar sort for Perspective 4 – Asia is part of my lived experience

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	5	1.796
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	4	1.378
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	4	1.35
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	3	1.35
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	3	1.247
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	3	1.118
<i>See Appendices G and H for complete exemplar of sort arrays</i>			
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	-3	-1.095
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-3	-1.125
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	-3	-1.154
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	-4	-1.329
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-4	-1.67
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-5	-2.032

6.7.1 Modes of viewing Asia

The distinguishing feature of this group is the greater degree of learning they have had about Asia, either from direct experience traveling in the region or via talking to those who have:

Most of what I know about Asia is travelling there and talking to others from there. I most agree with this because I have been there and talk to cousins sometimes (Year 9 girl).

Though it is unclear which parts of Asia these particular students have travelled to, the experience seems to have removed any views these student may have had of Asia as a generic, homogenous location. This group had the strongest disagreement with statement 27 (*I think of Asian people as basically all the same*). Their disagreement with statement 21 (*We only need to know about the important Asian countries*) and agreement with statement 29 (*There are lots of things to learn from different cultures in Asia*) may also be a reflection of travel to a greater variety of countries in the region. It is also possible that the personal experience has made them more aware of the Asian presence in Australia, as they agreed quite strongly with statement 18 (*I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV*). There is an interesting comparison here with the students who loaded on Factor 1b. Those students also agreed with statement 18, but seemingly from a perspective of 'Asia as threat'. In contrast, these students in Factor 4 seem to regard this increasing Asian presence within Australian as a positive phenomenon. This type of comparison that a holistic approach to analysing the Q sort makes possible, demonstrates the importance of considering the rankings in the context of the entire arrangement of statements.

The travel experiences of this cohort seems to have sparked greater curiosity to learn more about Asia across the curriculum, rather than just through their language classes, which may help explain their very strong agreement with statement 5 (*I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English*). Strong agreement with this statement is a key distinguishing feature in this factor that sets them apart from the other factors.

With respect to the discussion in the conceptual frameworks chapter (section 3.2.1.1) of a gradual increase in literature that is either that from an (Australian) Asian perspective or with Asia-related content, these students seem to be ready and willing to engage with this aspect of Asia-related learning. The inclusion of more Asia-related novels within the set texts for English and Literature subjects opens up possibilities for a greater variety of voices and perspectives (both Asian and Asia-Australian). The student comments on this statement tend to support this interpretation:

I agree that I like learning about Asia in subjects other than Chinese because we learn a range of different aspects of Asia through different subjects. (Year 9 girl)

I would like to learn more about Asia in more subjects because they are very interesting. (Year 9 boy)

I like learning about Asia in other subjects because I find it beneficial and informative. (Year 9 girl)

I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school because we learn Chinese and subjects like English and Humanities include a lot of topics about Asia. (Year 9 girl)

However, the mildly negative responses to statement 30 (*Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture*) does pose questions about the degree to which these personal (via travel) and educational (in diverse subjects) encounters have prompted these students to reflect on their own cultural understandings in a critical way:

I disagree that learning Asian cultures helps me to understand my own because I have never questioned or thought about my culture in depth. (Year 9 girl)

6.7.2 Motivation and Asia-related learning

Though these students are generally positive with respect to learning about Asia, spending time living and working in Asia in a future career is not necessarily a strong motivator (S#13 and #14). This suggests that their motivation comes more from an intrinsic value driver rather than the utility value that so strongly characterises Factor 1a.

Viewing the complete ranking of statements in this perspective suggests a complex interaction of elements that have influenced these students' attitudes to Asia-related learning. The intrinsic value is evident in many of the statements they agreed with, but this is matched with a desire to learn about Asia is an expression of themselves as individuals. However, this aspect of attainment value has less of the future goal influence that was a marker of Factor 1a. A key difference with students in this group is the importance they have placed on learning about Asia either through personal travel or

from travel of family members. This suggests a group of students who regard themselves as having some firsthand experience of Asia and this is something they want to be valued in their schooling.

Drawing together the significant statements that characterise this perspective, students who hold this viewpoint towards Asia-related learning could be described in the following way:

Asia is not something new for these students. They've done some travelling with their families and been to some different Asian countries. That's why they'd really like to learn more about Asia in subjects like Humanities and English, because for them it's not just about learning the language (even though their parents really encourage them to keep up their Japanese/Chinese language studies). They think learning more about Asia will help them in the future, but they're not sure if they'll go to an Asian country to work and live. One thing they realised while travelling in Asia was how interesting it is to learn about other cultures and traditions. It made them understand the great diversity that there is within Asia. They think Asian people can be part of Australia, but they think there is still a lot of racism against Asians.

6.8 PERSPECTIVE 5 - LANGUAGE LEARNING IS MY FOCUS

Apart from the bipolar Factor 1b, this is the smallest group of students. As will be discussed below, the key distinguishing characteristic for these students was the importance placed on language learning.

Table 6-8

Exemplar sort for Perspective 5 – Language learning is my focus

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z- score
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	5	1.87
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	4	1.691
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	4	1.326
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	3	1.309
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	3	1.26
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	3	1.246
<i>See Appendices G and H for complete exemplar of sort arrays</i>			
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	-3	-0.975
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-3	-1.155
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	-3	-1.357
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	-4	-1.574
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-4	-1.605
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	-5	-1.87

6.8.1 Modes of viewing Asia

For these students, Asia seemed to be represented by its languages. Four of the other factors disagreed (three of them strongly) with statement 8 (*Every student should learn an Asian language at school*), and Factor 1a expressed only mild agreement. These students, however, expressed the most agreement with it, and with how valuable learning Asian languages and cultures would be for them now and in the future (S#19 and S#12). This focus on language learning seems to be partly reflective of the ‘Asia as opportunity’ view in which learning an Asian language is promoted as a skill that has career relevance. This comment from a Year 10 boy clearly shows how the focus on China within much recent Asia literacy discussion has contributed to forming his attitude to Asia-related learning:

I agree with numbers 8, 12 and 35 because China is a huge part of Asia and is most of our trading and we should all know a language because it is a great ace to have up our sleeve and will help us a lot in the future. (Year 10 boy)

The strong focus on language learning in this group may be partly attributed to the significant parental influence. More than the other perspectives, these students indicated that their parents think it is useful to learn an Asian language (S#16) and that they encourage them to learn about Asia (S#17).

My parents think that we might actually have to negotiate with Asian societies more and more. Which is why it is important to understand Asian cultures. (Year 7 boy)

This emphasises again the strong influence of the ‘Asia as opportunity’ narrative and how parents pass this way of viewing Asia onto their children. There is also a suggestion that parents are conscious of the growing importance of the Asia region as a centre of economic and geopolitical power. If this is considered in light of the some of the rationales that are driving the ‘Asia as method’ discourse discussed in Chapter Three, it may point to a growing awareness that it will no longer be enough for Australia to rely on its privileged status as an English-speaking, Western country that has the good fortune of being geographically located in the Asia-Pacific region. The view of the parents of the Year 7 boy may be an indication that there is a growing awareness of how Australia’s integration in the region on multiple levels brings into question the theories and forms of knowledge that have been relied on to inform our understanding of the region. This will then necessitate a willingness to engage with bodies of new and reinvented knowledge and theory produced from within Asia.

6.8.2 Motivation and Asia-related learning

As mentioned above, the distinguishing feature of this group is how much importance they placed on language learning, though this interest did not extend to learning more about Asia in other subjects in school. Though these students have had very little experience of Asia, either first hand or via contact with those who have travelled there, they expressed a strong agreement with the value that language learning may afford them in the future. While learning an Asian language is something this group values, they appear to see this as something related to a future career in Australia and not for extended periods of stay in the Asia region. All of these elements suggest that these students see high levels of intrinsic value in language learning, and this is reinforced by the self-validation and attainment value that they received from language learning.

This group had the strongest disagreement with the statement concerning learning about Asia mostly either through personal travel or from talking to other people who had travelled there (S#22) and the most agreement with more knowledge about Asian languages and cultures being of benefit to them right now (S#19). This is an interesting combination as one interpretation could be that without the personal or family experiences to draw on, these students do not feel sufficiently informed about Asia to the extent that they would like.

I've never been to Asia or heard anyone talk about Asia so I haven't learnt anything that way. (Year 10 boy)

I also agree that both myself and others can learn a lot from Asian cultures. I think this because embracing the cultures of others helps us to see what they do better and then improve our own cultures by following in their footsteps. (Year 10 boy)

Drawing together the significant statements that characterise this perspective, students who hold this viewpoint towards Asia-related learning could be described in the following way:

They think Asian countries, especially China, are getting more and more important and this is a reason why they're keen to learn an Asian language. Their parents think the same and they encourage them a lot. They've heard that learning a language can also help with other learning, so they plan to keep studying it all the way through school. They're not too interested in learning about Asia in other school subjects. They've never really travelled to Asia and they think they

probably won't end up working in an Asian country. But they'd like to use what they know about Asia and Japanese/Chinese now in their daily life. Maybe in the future they can still use this knowledge of a language in their work here in Australia. They think Asians are generally welcome here in Australia and racism is less common these days.

6.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has explored students' attitudes towards Asia-related learning through the two conceptual constructs of modes of viewing Asia, and motivation linked to subjective task values. By examining each of the perspectives that emerged from the factor analysis, it was evident that although students' attitudes are complex, there are a number of characteristics within each perspectives that are clearly identifiable. While the dominant modes of viewing Asia (absent, threat or opportunity) are apparent to varying degrees in some of the students' outlooks, there were also a diversity of views and indications that others ways of 'imagining Asia' are present. This complexity in attitudes also extends to the range of motivations that students have for engaging with Asia-related learning, with the four subjective task values prominent to varying degrees among the five major perspectives.

The most common viewpoint shared by almost half of the students is that they value Asia-related learning and they regard it as important for their future. The written comments from these students suggest that the 'absence of Asia' and Asia as threat' modes of viewing Asia are less prevalent. While an instrumentalist stance is often present in their views, this is also mixed with strong intrinsic interest from some students, and a seemingly genuine interest in developing deeper levels of understanding.

Of the remaining factors, apart from a small group who hold negative attitudes, there is a generally positive disposition towards Asia-related learning, but for different reasons. While some students express high levels of interest in learning about Asia in a variety of subjects, other students are less enthusiastic about this cross-curriculum approach. Learning an Asian language is of strong interest to some students, but this also is a point that divides opinion.

This variety of perspectives demonstrates that student motivation for engaging in Asia-related learning is influenced by a large range of experiences, interests and expectations, and these are all relevant to any teaching or curriculum development that seeks to develop these students' levels of knowledge, understanding and capabilities to engage with any Asia-related learning. As previously stated, these results from this exploratory study would need to be further researched in other education contexts where which student cohorts differ from the ones in these two schools. Bearing this in mind, the implications of these results for future teaching and research in the 'Asia literacy' space are discussed in the next conclusion chapter.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

This thesis was grounded in the belief that discussions of Asia-related learning in Australian schools can be enriched with greater consideration given to the experiences, understandings, and motivations of students. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore students' views of Asia, and the motivations they have towards Asia-related learning. In particular, the study sought to determine the ways that students were constructing and imaging Asia, and whether the subjective values they held towards Asia-related learning helped explain their motivations to engage or not engage with this learning.

In this concluding chapter, a summary of the research processes is followed by a review of the key findings and the implications of these findings. The limitations of this study are then presented, before concluding with potential directions of future research to build on this exploratory study.

7.1 ACHIEVING THE RESEARCH AIMS

The grounding of this research within the framework of pragmatism was influenced by how Dewey envisioned pragmatism as an inquiry approach ideal for problematic situations that require attention and action (Morgan, 2013). It was also a framework that was theoretically consistent with a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. In this exploratory study into the relatively unknown field of students' attitudes to Asia-related learning, it was regarded as highly beneficial to utilise whatever method, be it qualitative or quantitative, that could aid in the investigation of this question.

The first step in this process was to examine what could be built on from previous studies. Though a basic survey instrument used in a 2002 national study had its limitations, it could still allow for some overall comparison of attitudes between the students in 2002 and the students in 2015. Therefore, it was replicated in this study as a first stage in the data collection process.

To go beyond the limitations of that survey, semi-structured focus groups were used to allow students to express opinions on the topic of Asia-related learning, and to develop the concourse for the Q sort process. These focus groups also provided additional data that helped in the interpretation of the factors that emerged from the statistical analysis. Finally, the Q sorts allowed students to rank order the statements so that they could holistically express their perspectives on Asia-related learning. Importantly, this participant-centred research approach was carried out in a systematic, transparent and reproducible process so that this exploratory study could be scaled-up for any future follow-up studies. Using Q methodology allowed this study to go past the anecdotal and generate a framework for future studies.

7.2 KEY FINDINGS

The key findings are presented with reference to the two research sub-questions. These findings can also be viewed in their totality as a cumulative response to the main research question of:

What are students' views of Asia and what are their motivations towards Asia-related learning?

7.2.1 Survey instrument

The survey component of this study provided data that responds directly to the following two sub-questions:

SQ1: How do students view 'Asia'?

SQ2: How does motivation theory (EVT) help explain students' attitudes to Asia-related learning?

7.2.1.1 2002 and 2015 Cohorts

Despite its noted limitations, this survey tool provided some insights into how the attitudes of this cohort of Year 7 and 8 students in 2015 compared to the sample of Year 8 students in 2002. The major findings are that these current students appear to have been more influenced by the instrumentalist framing of 'Asia literacy' (reflected in the 'Asia as opportunity' mode of viewing) than students were in 2002. The 'absence of Asia' mode of view, particularly the absence of Asia within Australia, was still evident in the responses of many of the 2015 students. However, this finding must be qualified by noting that the content of the statements used in the survey tended to reinforce this 'Asia as out there' construct. While the 'absence of Asia' view was still apparent among the 2015 cohort, the responses of only a minority of students suggested the prevalence of the 'Asia as threat' mode of view. As with the 2002 cohort, this was more evident in the responses of the boys than those of the girls, with twice as many boys as girls agreeing that Asian cultures are a problem for Australia. While the boys were also more likely than the girls to agree with statements that aligned with an 'Asia as threat' mode of viewing, approximately 80 percent of boys disagreed with these statements.

Though the 2015 cohort of students were generally interested in learning about Asia, intrinsic motivation appeared to be less of a driver for them compared to the 2002 cohort. The 2015 students responded more positively to statements that aligned with a utilitarian incentive for engagement with Asia-related learning. This is evident in the high levels of agreement the 2015 cohort expressed to statements that echo the importance of Asia for Australia's future.

A surprising finding was that these students in 2015 did not rate their learning about Asia, either in school or outside of it, any higher than the students in 2002. Considering how this cohort of students have come through schooling during the years when much has been spoken about the need to increase levels of ‘Asia literacy’, these results suggest that Asia related learning for these students in 2015 has not quantitatively changed with respect to the findings from 2002.

7.2.1.2 2015 Cohort

When the survey results of the complete 2015 cohort (including students in Year 9 and 12), are considered in isolation, there are important findings to consider. The most noticeable one is that as students mature, they are more likely to exhibit attitudes towards learning about Asia that would place them at the third and fourth levels of *Responding* and *Valuing*, and less so at the first level of *Avoidance*. In particular, the statements at the *Responding* and *Valuing* levels that framed learning about Asia for its utility value received high levels of support from students in the middle and senior years of schooling.

Though the intrinsic value of learning about Asia was not as evident compared to the perceived utility value, a majority of students at nearly all year levels agreed that they enjoy learning things about Asia. This relatively high level of enjoyment is worth considering in respect to the student evaluations of how little they feel they have learnt about Asia at school. This suggests an opportunity for more Asia-related content in the curriculum to leverage this expression of enjoyment that the majority of students have indicated. The strong disagreement with statements that suggested students avoided Asian cultures and had no interest in them also indicates that there are opportunities for the curriculum to cater to this interest in engaging more with these cultural learning experiences.

The final component of the survey that warrants attention are the responses to statements that were not included in the reported results from the 2002 study. Though the students in these two schools in the 2015 study were predominantly from monolingual, Anglo backgrounds, it was surprising that approximately half of the students disagreed with the statement that Asian people should all speak English in Australia. This is particularly interesting as the levels of English proficiency among migrants to Australia is a controversial topic that is regularly raised by some politicians and media outlets. Of similar interest, are the two-thirds of students who disagreed with the statement that Europe is more important to Australia than Asia. Though it is unclear if this sentiment is based on predominantly economic importance, it still shows an appreciation of the ever-increasing links Australia has with the region.

7.2.2 Q Methodology findings

The Q component of this study provided data that responds directly to the following two sub-questions:

SQ1: How do students view 'Asia'?

SQ2: How does motivation theory (EVT) help explain students' attitudes to Asia-related learning?

The factor analysis of the 52 Q sorts produced six distinct perspectives, one of which was a bipolar factor indicating two students whose views were diametrically opposed to 25 of their peers. Apart from the strong rejection of Asia-related learning expressed by these two students within this bipolar factor, the other perspectives of all 50 students expressed attitudes towards Asia-related learning that ranged from strongly enthusiastic (48 percent of students) to varying degrees of interest that focused on particular aspects of Asia-related learning. In response to sub-question one, the modes

of viewing that aligned with either ‘Asia as absent’ or ‘Asia as threat’ were considerably less evident compared to the view of ‘Asia as opportunity’. In addition, while all of these three dominant modes of viewing Asia (absent, threat or opportunity) were still apparent to varying degrees in many of the students’ outlooks, there were also signs that some students are moving beyond these views of Asia and are developing more nuanced and informed attitudes. The influence of other factors such as greater mobility between Asia and Australia, increased levels of connectivity, and the growing economic and geopolitical presence of Asian states all seem to be having an impact on the attitudes many of these students have towards Asia-related learning.

The complexity in responses also extends to the range of motivations they have for engaging with Asia-related learning. In response to sub-question two, the subjective task values in the motivational model enabled a clear delineation between most of the perspectives with respect to what was motivating each group to engage with Asia-related learning. As most of the 36 statements in the Q sort could be associated with one of the four subjective task values, this proved to be an effective way to distinguish between the perspectives and explain the attitudes to Asia-related learning of students within those perspectives. More specific details of each of these perspectives with respect to the two sub-questions are presented below.

The most common perspective shared by almost half of the students (F1a) was that they value Asia-related learning and they regard it as important for their future. In many of their written comments, it was apparent that the ‘absence of Asia’ and the ‘Asia as threat’ modes of viewing Asia are less prevalent for this cohort of 25 students. While an instrumentalist stance (‘Asia as opportunity’) seems to be present in their views, this is also mixed with strong intrinsic interest from some students, and a seemingly genuine interest in developing deeper understanding. For some students, this is expressed as a

desire to have greater interactions and increased cultural engagement. These attitudes also suggest a diminishing of the view of Asia as being a predominantly external entity that is not part of Australia's self-identity. These students also indicated a negative reaction towards the framing of Asia either as a generic, homogenous entity, or one which is only limited to Australia's relationships with the economically powerful nations within Asia. This was further emphasised where students reframed the 'Asia as opportunity' construct to be an opportunity for intercultural understanding and personal self-reflection.

Within the next two factors, which accounted for 32 percent of all participants, there is a generally positive view of Asia-related learning, but for different reasons. While some students expressed high levels of interest in learning about Asia in a variety of school subjects, other students are less enthusiastic about this cross-curriculum approach. Learning an Asian language is of strong interest to some students, but this also is a point that divides opinion. While the majority of students acknowledged the value of learning an Asian language, they are less inclined to agree with compulsory language study. In all the perspectives, apart from the two bipolar sorts, there was a high level of acceptance of Asians within Australian society. These students rejected the overtly racist statements and overall expressed views that indicated an open and egalitarian view. There was an awareness of the value of having a diverse culture and some acknowledgement of the diversity of the cultures. As with the views of the most common perspective (F1a), some of these students appear to be in accord with the strongly instrumentalist position that learning about Asia will be of practical value to them in the immediate and longer term future. These students have some sense of the career opportunities that learning about Asia may provide, and the influence of parental opinion may be a factor here.

Turning to two of the smaller factor groups, it was evident that these students see value in learning about Asia, but are less concerned with the practical usefulness of it and are more inclined to want to learn about Asia for the intrinsic value it offers. A considerable portion of these students may have travelled within Asia, and these experiences seem to have both opened up their minds to new cultures, ways of life, and ways of thinking. They seem to be aware of the complex nature of the region and are interested in the less well-known aspects of it. The final group of students were neither refuting a presence of Asia in the curriculum, but nor were they particularly strong in supporting this. These students agreed with the value of learning about Asia, but were also clear in wanting to have this as a balanced mix with sufficient attention paid to learning about their own culture(s).

7.2.3 Overall findings

Considering the overarching research question of '*What are students' views of Asia and what are their motivations towards Asia-related learning?*', the synthesis of the findings above, along with the more detailed discussions of results in Chapters Five and Six, indicate that students' attitudes are extremely complex and multifaceted. In addition to being drawn to areas of Asia-related learning that they find personally appealing, many students also appear to be influenced by previous personal experiences that have involved some aspect of Asia, as well as the possible future connections with Asia in the medium and long term futures they have contemplated. These connections are not limited to Asia as a solely external construct, but also the growing Asia that is within Australia. Though there are theoretical complexities inherent in how 'Asia' has been constructed within these discourses, the framework of typologies of students' attitudes and motivations towards Asia related learning that have emerged from this

study is a useful starting point for exploring the attitudes and motivations of all students towards this important area of the curriculum.

Stepping back from the specific research questions and considering some of the broader themes raised during this study, the findings also point to the inherent limitations of the political rhetoric around ‘Asia literacy’, and how students’ views of Asia and their engagement with the ‘Asia literacy’ enacted in their schooling appear to be circumscribed by these limitations. Though the survey and Q sort findings suggested a wide variety of views and motivations with respect to Asia and Asia-related learning, by and large these views and motivations are seemingly trapped within the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy that the Asia literacy discourse generates with its instrumentalist objectification of ‘Asia’. As the historical discussion in Chapter Two, and the Othering of Asia discussion in Chapter Three have demonstrated, questions about what is ‘Asia’ and ‘Asia literacy’ cannot be meaningfully approached without the concurrent exploration of what Iwabuchi refers to as “Australia literacy” (Iwabuchi, 2015, p. xvi). As Iwabuchi notes, this ‘Australia literacy’ project would assist in moving beyond the binaries, as it would allow Australians to “reflexively rethink why and how ‘us’ has been perceived in a particular way that does not embrace ‘them’ as being with or part of ‘us’” (p. xvi).

In the following sections, I draw on these findings discussed above to suggest possible implications for teachers, teacher educators, and those involved in curriculum and policy formulation. Though these implications are primarily drawn from the empirical findings of students’ views of Asia, and their motivations towards Asia-related studies, this reconceptualisation of ‘Asia literacy’ to an ‘Asia/Australia literacy’ framework can serve to guide this future work.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR ASIA-RELATED TEACHING

The resultant findings are relevant for informing the practices of current and future teachers, as well as teacher educators and curriculum and policy developers.

7.3.1 Implications for current teachers

At the level of the individual teacher, the students' perspectives can be used to inform the variety and forms of Asia-related content that teachers draw on to meaningfully embed the Asia cross-curriculum priority. As these findings suggest that many students' views of Asia are strongly influenced by the dominant modes of viewing and Othering Asia, an important aspect of this teaching would be an explicit and critical approach to questioning the origins of these normalised ways of representing 'Asia'. Examples of this pedagogy that use the Asia priority as a reference can be found in work on critical approaches to citizenship (Tudball, 2017; Tudball & Henderson, 2013) and the dialogical approach to studies of Asia (Hamston, 2006). This would then open up opportunities for what Nozoki referred to as the disruption of the cultural hegemony that has created this Othering of Asia (2007, 2009).

To enhance the efficacy of this critical approach, teachers can be informed by an awareness of the various motivations students may currently have towards Asia-related learning. Knowing what engages or drives students can lead to more effective differentiation of Asia-related teaching to suit the variety of experiences, interests and motivations of students that this study has revealed. Though differentiation is often associated with teaching in the traditional subject domains, the findings from this study show that students' motivations towards Asia-related studies are extremely varied and complex. As much of this learning can take place outside of the classroom, many students come to school having had a wide variety of experiences and opportunities. If teachers do not take these into consideration and appropriately differentiate the learning

possibilities, not only is there a risk that the teaching will be ineffective for many students, it also potentially limits the student engagement with self-reflective learning that explores their views of Asia.

For educators interested in action research within their own classrooms, the statements and the Q sort process can be used with other cohorts of students to explore what perspectives are commonly held by the students in their schools. The analysis provided in this thesis of the perspectives in relation to the modes of viewing Asia, and the subjective task values, can also be referred to when teachers explore the influences and drivers behind the attitudes of their students.

7.3.2 Implications for initial teacher education

In the initial teacher education space, there are multiple applications of these findings. At the basic level of informing pre-service teachers about current students' attitudes towards Asia-related learning, the perspectives provide useful reference points on the attitudes they will likely encounter during their professional experience placements in schools and for future teaching post-graduation. This could extend to considering ways that they could plan their teaching to ensure opportunities were provided for students holding all of these perspectives to be involved in any Asia-related learning.

At the level of critical self-reflection, pre-service teachers could engage not only with the perspectives, but also the dominant modes of viewing Asia that have characterised Australian attitudes towards Asia. This would ensure that teachers are better prepared to support students as they critically examine the modes of viewing Asia that have been normalised over time. This includes the Othering of Asia as it manifests in various forms (as threat, as opportunity, as a homogenised entity, and as an absence from Australian consciousness). This type of activity would serve to not only for pre-

service teachers to critically reflect on the views of Asia they may hold, but to also prepare them to effectively support their students with this learning.

7.3.3 Implications for curriculum and policy development

For curriculum or domain leaders responsible for embedding the cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia into their school's curriculum, the student perspectives that have emerged from the factor analysis can be used as reference points to consider which ones may be present in the attitudes of the students in their schools. This greater level of understanding of the individual student's attitudes to Asia-related learning, and knowing what motivates them to be engaged, can provide valuable information in planning for individual student needs. This extends to ensuring that current and future curriculum content is not reinforcing students' existing perceptions and modes of Othering Asia.

This information can also be useful during the professional development of teachers. Instead of approaching the teaching of the Asia-priority with a focus on what the various stakeholders have prioritised as important, this professional development could start from a discussion of what students have said is important to them, and what motivates them to engage with Asia-related learning.

7.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

One limitation of the study was the decision not to attempt to collect detailed demographic data about the participants. While it is possible to make a case for investigating the influence family background (i.e. Asian background) may have on a student's views and attitudes, this would have entailed adopting an in-depth, case study approach at the level of the individual, something that was beyond what was practical given the number of participants, the resources and time available for this study. In addition, it also raises issues of superficially categorising students' views and attitudes

as being determined by family background. As the contested notions of ‘Asia’ and ‘Asian’ (discussed in sections 1.5.1 and 3.1) suggest, any attempt to link student identities to superficial demographic data can unwittingly become an exercise in essentialism (Pung, 2008).

One limitation was the decision not to include references to samples of any Asia-related curriculum content that these students were studying. Though the possibility of including data generated from a curriculum audit was contemplated during the initial planning of this study, it was decided not to go ahead with this for the practical and methodological reasons outlined in section 1.5 of the Introduction Chapter. For future studies in this area of students’ attitudes towards Asia-related learning, the inclusion of example units of work or other content may provide additional opportunities to explore students’ views in relation to specific ways that Asia has been positioned by the curriculum and how it is taught in specific school settings.

Another limitation was that most of the students in this study had at least half a year’s experience studying an Asian language (Japanese and Chinese). Though these two languages are among the six most widely taught in Australian schools (1st and 6th respectively), there are many schools where no Asian language is offered (Curnow et al., 2014; Kohler et al., 2014; Sturak & Naughten, 2010). However, a benefit of using the systematic and transparent process within Q methodology means that other cohorts of students can also carry out the Q sorts using the same set of statements. As each step in the statistical analysis process has been detailed in this study, it is possible for the quantity and profile of factors to be compared and discussed with reference to the same theoretical constructs.

As was noted at the beginning and throughout this thesis, the main limitation of this study relates to the characteristics of the cohort, as the participants from these two

schools cannot be regarded as representative of all secondary school students. Compared to the average numbers of students with a language background other than English across the state of Victoria (Victorian State Government, 2017), these two schools are less diverse, which would also imply relatively fewer numbers of students identifying as Asian-background. As noted in the Context Chapter (section 2.3), migration to Australia from the Asian region has grown significantly in recent years. However, as recent research has shown, the distribution of these migrants is not uniform, with some concentrations of specific Asian communities in parts of Melbourne and Sydney, while there are substantial areas with few Asians (Forrest et al., 2017). Therefore, the locations of these two schools, in areas with relatively fewer Asian-background residents, is relevant to the findings in two ways.

Firstly, the attitudes and views of Asia explored in this study are predominantly from the perspectives of non-Asian background students. This must be taken into consideration when evaluating the student perceptions of how much they feel they have learnt about Asia, both in and outside of school. Future research in schools with more Asian-background students would provide data that could be analysed for any differences in these perceptions.

Conversely, as there are a significant number of schools that have similarly low numbers of Asian-background students ((Forrest et al., 2017), the results from this study provide some insights into how the rhetoric surrounding the Asia literacy discourse is still largely disconnected from the daily life of many Australian students. So while this study has not been able to capture the voices of a significant number of Asian-background students, it has provided some insights into the voices of those large numbers of students for whom Asia-related learning remains largely non-existent in their school and personal life.

7.4.1 Future research directions

As an exploratory study into a mostly unknown field of knowledge, this research has had to draw on a range of methods and theoretical constructs. Therefore, future research that can build on this research approach will not only be useful for confirming these findings, but also useful for testing the methods and theoretical constructs that have been used.

For future research that uses the student-generated Q sort statements, there are also possibilities to expand the data collection range by utilising online Q sorting software. This could open up possibilities to do more selective sampling of participants in order to ascertain the generalisability of these results. For studies that seek to broaden the scope even further, the Q sort statements could also be used to construct a Likert-type attitude scale for a larger study. There are examples of this type of approach in other fields (Anderson et al., 1997; Baker et al., 2010; Danielson, 2009). This would also allow for various demographic characteristics to be explored in relation to the factors.

7.5 FINAL WORDS

As I indicated at the beginning of this thesis, the impetus for commencing this study was the recognition that amongst all the various perspectives and layers within the discourses and debates surrounding how Asia-related teaching and learning should be enacted in Australian schools, it was almost impossible to hear the voices of students. This absence is notable when viewed against the general consensus that, in one way or another, whether internally and externally, ‘Asia’ appears destined to be an ever-growing presence in Australia’s future. Since it is these very students who should be benefitting from an education system designed to prepare them to be active and engaged

citizens in this rapidly changing future, the absence of their voices in this discussion seems to limit the agency of students in their education.

The influential educator and philosopher Paolo Freire, when writing about respecting what students know, asked, “why not establish an “intimate” connection between knowledge considered basic to any school curriculum and knowledge that is the fruit of the lived experience of these students as individuals?” (Freire, 1998, p. 36). This study has sought to provide some indications of the lived experiences of these students, so that these voices can be included in these ongoing discussions, and resultant actions are informed by these voices.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: MONASH UNIVERSITY ETHICS APPROVAL (MUHREC)
APPROVAL

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT EXPLANATORY STATEMENT AND CONSENT
FORMS

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT (IMAGES FROM 2002 STUDY BY
GRIFFIN ET AL – REPRINTED UNDER CREATIVE COMMONS COPYRIGHT)

APPENDIX D: COMPLETE SET OF CONTEXT OF LEARNING RESPONSES
(FROM SURVEY)

APPENDIX E: SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP SAMPLE PROMPTS

APPENDIX F: THIRTY-SIX STATEMENTS USED IN Q SORT

APPENDIX G: COMPOSITE FACTOR ARRAYS FOR ALL FACTORS YEAR AND
GENDER BREAKDOWN FOR PARTICIPANTS ON EACH FACTOR

APPENDIX H: VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF EXEMPLAR SORTS FOR EACH
FACTOR

Appendix A: Monash University ethics approval (MUHREC)



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project Number: CF15/806 - 2015000364

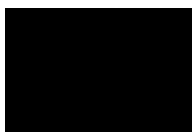
Project Title: A mixed-methods study of Australian secondary students' attitudes to 'Asia literacy'

Chief Investigator: Assoc Prof Lucas Walsh

Approved: From: 26 March 2015 To: 26 March 2020

Terms of approval - Failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel): Require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. Future correspondence: Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. Annual reports: Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. Final report: A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. Monitoring: Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. Retention and storage of data: The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.



Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Marianne Turner, Mr Gary Bonar

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Appendix B: Participant explanatory statement and consent forms



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Project: A mixed-methods study of Australian secondary students' attitudes to 'Asia literacy'

This information statement is for you to keep.

My name is Gary Bonar and I am conducting a research project under the supervision of Associate Professor Lucas Walsh and Dr Marianne Turner. The project is working towards completing a Doctoral Degree at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis, which is the equivalent of a short book. Please read this explanatory statement in full with your parent(s)/guardian before making a decision to participate.

Background

One of the features of the new Australian Curriculum is an emphasis on Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. This means that students will have more opportunities to learn about Asia and Asian languages. However, one area we don't have much information about is what do current students understand and think about learning about Asia and Asian languages. Previous research has shown that when the attitudes, experiences and opinions of students are explored, this information can have a significant benefit for student outcomes. The aims of this study are to explore students' attitudes towards Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and what influences and informs these attitudes. Your contribution to my project will be highly valuable to me as it will help to add student voice to this discussion.

What does this research involve for you?

Data for this project will be collected in 2015. You will be asked to participate in the following activities:

- Complete a 15-20 minute online survey with questions about your experiences of studies of Asia and contacts with Asia.
- Participate in a focus group discussion with some other students to discuss understandings and attitudes towards Asia literacy. This will take about 30 minutes.
- You may be present while classroom observations take place in school classrooms during normal lessons.
- Arrange statements about Asia literacy according to your perspective. This activity takes approximately 10-20 minutes.
- Some students may be asked if they would like to participate in follow up interviews to discuss the research results in more detail.

Why were you chosen for this research?

Your school offers an Asian language as part of the curriculum and an important aspect of this research is to understand the student experience of learning an Asian language and what influences the decisions regarding language study. **However, you do not need to be currently studying an Asian language to be part of this project.** Students not studying an Asian language and those students not planning to continue studying are encouraged to be involved.

Page 1 of 3

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

If you would like to participate in this research you need to take this explanatory statement and consent form home to discuss it with your parent(s)/guardians and then return the signed consent form. This project is voluntary and you can change your mind about it later. You just have to tell me or your parents or teacher and I will take you out of the project. You won't have to explain why. However, should you withdraw from the study you will not be able to withdraw any data that may have already been collected.

Possible risks to participants

This project involves you providing information about your experiences and your attitudes towards learning about Asia and it is expected that participation will cause you little discomfort or inconvenience beyond the normal experience of everyday life. If at any time you do feel uncomfortable or upset you can discuss this with the researcher if you wish, and you can withdraw from the project at any time. Counselling will be available to all participants (if required) and can also be accessed by contacting the researcher or his supervisors.

There is a very low risk of being identified as a participant in this research in the presentations or publications that arise from it. All data collected will be coded with pseudonyms so that your real name and the name of your school are not used.

Participating, or not participating, in this research will have no negative or positive impacts of your current studies at school.

Confidentiality

The collected data will only be accessed by me and my supervisors to ensure your confidentiality and anonymity. The focus group discussions and interviews will be recorded and then written down to assist my data analysis, but you will not be specifically named in these transcriptions. In publications, I will use either unidentified generic statements or pseudonyms to describe comments from participants.

Storage of data

The collected data will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations on a secure hard-drive at Monash University that can only be accessed by me and my supervisors. The data will be destroyed after five years.

Use of data for other purposes

Data collected will only be used for research purposes, including the proposed research project and publications derived from it.

Results

The results of this project will be published as a thesis, in scholarly journals and presented at academic conferences or seminars. If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research findings, please contact Gary Bonar at [REDACTED]

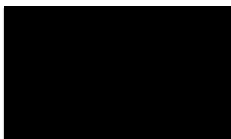
Participation in the Project

The consent form that you have been provided with will give you some further information about the project. When you are satisfied that you have a good understanding of the project and the commitment it involves, and if you have made a decision to participate in the project, please sign the consent form and return it to the researcher. **Both students and parents/guardians need to sign the consent form.**

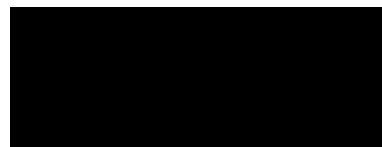
Contacts and Complaints

If you would like to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please use the contact details below.	Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project (CF15/806 – 2015000364), you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC)
<p>Gary Bonar Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Supervisors</p> <p>Associate Professor. Lucas Walsh Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Dr Marianne Turner Tel: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]</p>	<p>Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Room 111, Building 3e Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Email: muhrec@monash.edu Fax: +61 3 9905 3831</p>

Thank you,



Gary Bonar



Associate Professor Lucas Walsh
(Chief Investigator)



CONSENT FORM STUDENTS & PARENT/GUARDIAN

Project: 'A mixed-methods study of Australian secondary students' attitudes to 'Asia literacy'.

Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Lucas Walsh Faculty of Education Phone: [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]	Student Researcher: Gary Bonar Faculty of Education Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]
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FOR STUDENTS

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the [Explanatory Statement](#) and I hereby consent to participate in this project. I understand that my voluntary participation is for the collection of research data and that I can withdraw my participation at any time. I understand that to access the results of this research project I can contact the chief investigator and/or student researcher who has supplied me with their contact details.

I consent to the following:	Yes	No
Completing a survey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking part in a focus group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio recording during the focus group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arranging statements about Asia literacy from my point of view.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking part in a possible follow up interview.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The data that I provide during this research may be used by Gary Bonar in future research projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FULL NAME OF PARTICIPANT _____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN

I (the parent/guardian) have read and understand the information provided in the Explanatory Statement. I agree for my child to participate in this study, realizing that I can withdraw my consent at any time without affecting my relationship with the school. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published, but only in a form that does not identify my child. I understand that to access the results of this research project I can contact the chief investigator and/or student researcher who has supplied me with their contact details.

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

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Submitted as a candidate for the National Geographic Society Explorer Award

agree	disagree	Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Countries of Asia are my favourite.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I enjoy learning things about Asia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning about Asia is valuable.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thai people have weird religions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indonesian people are more like Koreans than Australians.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning about Asia is a good thing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like people from Asia to visit my home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning about Asia is fun.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People from countries of Asia contribute little to the world.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading books about Asia is fun.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have called kids names because of their Asian background.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to visit a country in Asia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It would be better if Australia had closer relations with Asian countries.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian languages sound the same to me.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I try and avoid Asian people or customs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to live in a country in Asia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Europe is more important to Australia than Asia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I avoid Asian festivals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning about Asia will help me later in life.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People from countries of Asia take up jobs for Australians.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Studying things about Asia is important.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Australia has nothing to learn from countries like Japan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is important that Australians know lots about Asia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian people should all speak English in Australia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian cultures are a problem for Australia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian cultures are of no interest to me.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do NOT need to learn about Asia.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Most things happening in Asia right now are bad.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All Asian people are the same.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Australia has nothing to learn from countries like Indonesia.

STOP HERE

ANSWER SECTION

Practice question 1					Practice question 2				
A	B	C	D		A	B	C	D	
1	A	B	C	D	16	A	B	C	D
2	A	B	C	D	17	A	B	C	D
3	A	B	C	D	18	A	B	C	D
4	A	B	C	D	19	A	B	C	D
5	A	B	C	D	20	A	B	C	D
6	A	B	C	D	21	A	B	C	D
7	A	B	C	D	22	A	B	C	D
8	A	B	C	D	23	A	B	C	D
9	A	B	C	D	24	A	B	C	D
10	A	B	C	D	25	A	B	C	D
11	A	B	C	D	26	A	B	C	D
12	A	B	C	D	27	A	B	C	D
13	A	B	C	D	28	A	B	C	D
14	A	B	C	D	29	A	B	C	D
15	A	B	C	D	30	A	B	C	D
					31	A	B	C	D
					32	A	B	C	D
					33	A	B	C	D
					34	A	B	C	D
					35	A	B	C	D
					36	A	B	C	D
					37	A	B	C	D
					38	A	B	C	D
					39	A	B	C	D
					40	A	B	C	D
					41	A	B	C	D
					42	A	B	C	D
					43	A	B	C	D
					44	A	B	C	D
					45	A	B	C	D
					46	A	B	C	D
					47	A	B	C	D
					48	A	B	C	D
					49	A	B	C	D
					50	A	B	C	D
					51	A	B	C	D
					52	A	B	C	D
					53	A	B	C	D
					54	A	B	C	D
					55	A	B	C	D
					56	A	B	C	D
					57	A	B	C	D
					58	A	B	C	D
					59	A	B	C	D
					60	A	B	C	D

Appendix D: Complete set of context of learning responses (from survey*)

		Boy		Girl			
		Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
		7	9	12	7&8	9	12
Learning AT school		(48)	(28)	(28)	(42)	(30)	(24)
Art, Music or Drama classes	lots	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	4%
	some things	2%	7%	0%	5%	3%	8%
	not very much	17%	14%	29%	14%	27%	25%
	nothing	81%	79%	71%	79%	70%	63%
English classes	lots	4%	0%	0%	5%	10%	0%
	some things	4%	14%	21%	10%	17%	17%
	not very much	21%	32%	32%	24%	33%	42%
	nothing	71%	54%	46%	62%	40%	42%
Humanities & History classes	lots	2%	36%	0%	29%	3%	0%
	some things	19%	46%	64%	48%	43%	58%
	not very much	31%	18%	32%	24%	50%	25%
	nothing	48%	0%	4%	0%	3%	17%
teachers at your school	lots	6%	32%	21%	17%	13%	0%
	some things	29%	21%	46%	33%	50%	38%
	not very much	31%	29%	25%	38%	30%	38%
	nothing	33%	18%	7%	12%	7%	25%
school classes	lots	10%	25%	14%	12%	13%	0%
	some things	35%	36%	36%	40%	53%	21%
	not very much	29%	25%	43%	29%	27%	63%
	nothing	25%	14%	7%	19%	7%	17%
school excursions	lots	2%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%
	some things	4%	21%	25%	12%	27%	33%
	not very much	19%	32%	32%	24%	30%	46%
	nothing	75%	46%	32%	64%	43%	21%
school library	lots	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
	some things	15%	14%	25%	12%	17%	8%
	not very much	31%	36%	29%	29%	57%	42%
	nothing	54%	50%	46%	57%	27%	50%
homework about Asia	lots	2%	21%	7%	7%	7%	4%
	some things	29%	32%	46%	26%	43%	21%
	not very much	13%	36%	32%	29%	43%	29%
	nothing	56%	11%	14%	38%	7%	46%
using the internet AT SCHOOL	lots	8%	18%	14%	7%	17%	0%
	some things	33%	43%	57%	31%	33%	42%
	not very much	21%	21%	18%	33%	33%	29%
	nothing	38%	18%	11%	29%	17%	29%
Asian language study AT SCHOOL	lots	27%	46%	39%	33%	40%	8%
	some things	27%	25%	11%	21%	23%	33%
	not very much	13%	14%	21%	31%	17%	17%
	nothing	33%	14%	29%	14%	20%	42%
	lots	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%

		Boy				Girl	
		Year 7	Year 9	Year 12	Year 7&8	Year 9	Year 12
school festivals and	some things	2%	7%	18%	12%	30%	25%
	not very much	23%	25%	29%	33%	20%	25%
	nothing	75%	61%	54%	55%	50%	50%
other students in your class	lots	2%	0%	4%	2%	3%	0%
	some things	15%	18%	25%	14%	13%	25%
	not very much	33%	25%	54%	26%	53%	33%
	nothing	50%	57%	18%	57%	30%	42%
school sporting activities	lots	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	some things	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
	not very much	6%	14%	25%	17%	17%	21%
	nothing	94%	86%	75%	81%	83%	79%
school friends	lots	2%	4%	4%	2%	0%	4%
	some things	13%	11%	29%	10%	20%	25%
	not very much	21%	29%	29%	31%	40%	21%
	nothing	65%	57%	39%	57%	40%	50%
after school groups	lots	0%	0%	7%	0%	7%	0%
	some things	2%	7%	7%	7%	3%	4%
	not very much	0%	11%	18%	17%	20%	21%
	nothing	98%	82%	68%	76%	70%	75%

*Some totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

		Boy				Girl	
		Year 7	Year 9	Year 7	Year 9	Year 7	Year 9
Learning OUTSIDE school		(48)	(28)	(48)	(28)	(48)	(28)
using the internet OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL	lots	2%	11%	29%	7%	3%	4%
	some things	15%	25%	25%	19%	30%	25%
	not very much	29%	25%	36%	21%	43%	38%
	nothing	54%	39%	11%	52%	23%	33%
friends OUTSIDE school	lots	2%	0%	7%	5%	0%	0%
	some things	10%	7%	7%	5%	27%	8%
	not very much	17%	18%	39%	19%	17%	33%
	nothing	71%	75%	46%	71%	57%	58%
your parents	lots	2%	4%	18%	14%	7%	8%
	some things	10%	18%	21%	24%	27%	17%
	not very much	19%	36%	32%	24%	40%	25%
	nothing	69%	43%	29%	38%	27%	50%
television or radio	lots	2%	4%	18%	7%	17%	4%
	some things	17%	14%	36%	29%	20%	42%
	not very much	42%	43%	39%	36%	40%	25%
	nothing	40%	39%	7%	29%	23%	29%
Asian language	lots	0%	0%	4%	2%	3%	4%
	some things	4%	4%	11%	12%	3%	0%

		Boy		Girl			
		Year 7	Year 9	Year 7	Year 9	Year 7	Year 9
Learning OUTSIDE school		(48)	(28)	(48)	(28)	(48)	(28)
study OUTSIDE school	not very much	2%	21%	29%	14%	20%	17%
	nothing	94%	75%	57%	71%	73%	79%
travelling in Asia	lots	10%	11%	57%	12%	3%	25%
	some things	13%	14%	14%	7%	20%	25%
	not very much	6%	14%	4%	7%	10%	13%
eating Asian food	nothing	71%	61%	25%	74%	67%	38%
	lots	17%	21%	29%	21%	23%	21%
	some things	31%	46%	50%	45%	40%	33%
	not very much	25%	25%	14%	26%	37%	25%
your brothers or sisters	nothing	27%	7%	7%	7%	0%	21%
	lots	0%	4%	4%	2%	0%	8%
	some things	4%	0%	21%	10%	10%	4%
	not very much	19%	21%	18%	21%	23%	33%
community groups	nothing	77%	75%	57%	67%	67%	54%
	lots	0%	0%	7%	5%	7%	0%
	some things	4%	4%	4%	10%	10%	4%
	not very much	8%	11%	32%	14%	20%	25%
Asian things around your home	nothing	88%	86%	57%	71%	63%	71%
	lots	2%	0%	11%	2%	3%	0%
	some things	4%	11%	25%	12%	13%	8%
	not very much	17%	32%	25%	14%	30%	42%
comic books about Asia	nothing	77%	57%	39%	71%	53%	50%
	lots	2%	0%	7%	5%	0%	4%
	some things	8%	18%	18%	7%	17%	4%
	not very much	15%	21%	32%	12%	23%	17%
classes about Asia OUTSIDE school	nothing	75%	61%	43%	76%	60%	75%
	lots	0%	0%	0%	2%	7%	4%
	some things	0%	7%	7%	5%	0%	0%
	not very much	0%	11%	11%	17%	10%	4%
films about Asia	nothing	100%	82%	82%	76%	83%	92%
	lots	4%	11%	25%	2%	17%	8%
	some things	29%	32%	32%	21%	37%	29%
	not very much	27%	36%	29%	38%	20%	38%
magazines or newspapers	nothing	40%	21%	14%	38%	27%	25%
	lots	0%	7%	0%	2%	3%	0%
	some things	6%	21%	43%	14%	13%	29%
	not very much	33%	32%	32%	38%	43%	42%
computer games	nothing	60%	39%	25%	45%	40%	29%
	lots	0%	0%	14%	2%	3%	4%
	some things	25%	21%	25%	2%	20%	4%
	not very much	23%	36%	39%	19%	23%	17%
	nothing	52%	43%	21%	76%	53%	75%

Appendix E: Semi-structured focus group sample prompts (non-exclusive)

What do you understand about Asia literacy?

Have you studied a lot about Asia? What kinds of things?

What do you like about studying about Asia? What don't you like?

What is Asia for you?

Is Australia part of Asia?

Will it ever be part of Asia?

Do you think you have learnt more about Asia than your parents?

How important is it for you to know about Asia (now, further studies, future work, travels)

What comes to mind when people talk about Asia?

When people talk about students becoming more 'Asia literate' what do you think they mean?

Is learning about Asia valued in society?

What do you think would be good ways to learn about Asia?

What differences have you notice about primary and secondary studies of Asia?

What do you think your parents think about learning more about Asia?

What about your teachers at school?

What about your friends?

Appendix F: Thirty-six statements used in Q sort

ASIA-RELATED LEARNING IN SCHOOL AND SCHOOL SUBJECTS

There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.

I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.

I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.

I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.

I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.

I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.

We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.

Every student should learn an Asian language at school.

My teachers know a lot about Asia.

ASIA-RELATED LEARNING AND MY FUTURE

I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.

I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.

If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.

I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.

In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.

PARENTS AND ASIA-RELATED LEARNING

At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.

My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.

My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.

ASIA-RELATED LEARNING IN GENERAL LIFE

I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.

If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.

It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.

We only need to know about the important Asian countries.

Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.

Asian people are really different from Australians.

Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.

Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.

I think of Asian people as basically all the same.

I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.

There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.

Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.

AUSTRALIA AND ASIA

Australia will never be a part of Asia.

Asians are not really part of the Australian population.

Asia is becoming more important to Australia.

Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.

When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.

When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.

Appendix G: Composite factor arrays with year and gender breakdown

Perspective 1a: Asia is important in my future

Table A1

Breakdown of perspective 1a participants

	Male	Female	Total
Year 7	1	5	6
Year 9	4	3	7
Year 10	4		4
Year 11	3		3
Year 12	4	1	5
Total	16	9	25

Table A2

Exemplar sort for perspective 1a participants

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z-score
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	5	1.394
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	4	1.354
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	4	1.334
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	3	1.233
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	3	1.202
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	3	1.124
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	2	1.078
10	I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	2	0.881
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	2	0.664
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	2	0.64
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	1	0.607
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	1	0.604
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	1	0.593
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	1	0.514
4	I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	1	0.473
1	There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	0	0.414

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	0	0.33
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	0	0.076
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	0	-0.006
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	0	-0.038
9	My teachers know a lot about Asia.	0	-0.041
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	-1	-0.043
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	-1	-0.049
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	-1	-0.099
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	-1	-0.344
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	-1	-0.403
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	-2	-0.556
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	-2	-0.725
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	-2	-0.849
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-2	-1.446
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	-3	-1.448
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	-3	-1.451
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	-3	-1.496
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	-4	-1.726
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-4	-1.839
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-5	-1.955

Perspective 1b: Asia doesn't interest me

Table A3

Breakdown of perspective 1b participants

	Male	Female	Total
Year 7	1	1	2
Year 9			
Year 10			
Year 11			
Year 12			
Total	1	1	2

Table A4

Exemplar sort for perspective 1b participants

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z-score
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	5	2.038
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	4	1.98
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	4	1.339
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	3	1.204
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	3	1.146
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	3	1.146
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	2	1.028
4	I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	2	0.834
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	2	0.699
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	2	0.699
9	My teachers know a lot about Asia.	1	0.64
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	1	0.581
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	1	0.505
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	1	0.505
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	1	0.446
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	0	0.194
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	0	0.135
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	0	-0.135
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	0	-0.194
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	0	-0.194
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	0	-0.194
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	-1	-0.446

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	-1	-0.505
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	-1	-0.505
1	There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	-1	-0.64
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-1	-0.758
10	I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	-2	-0.758
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	-2	-0.775
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	-2	-0.834
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	-2	-0.834
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	-3	-0.893
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	-3	-1.146
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	-3	-1.204
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	-4	-1.474
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	-4	-1.592
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-5	-2.038

Perspective 2: Optimistic and curious

Table A5

Breakdown of perspective 2 participants

	Male	Female	Total
Year 7	2		2
Year 9	2	2	4
Year 10	1		1
Year 11	1		1
Year 12	1	1	1
Total	7	3	10

Table A6

Exemplar sort for perspective 2 participants

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z-score
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	5	1.946
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	4	1.925
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	4	1.606
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	3	1.191
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	3	0.867
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	3	0.782
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	2	0.774
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	2	0.692
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	2	0.64
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	2	0.587
4	I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	1	0.558
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	1	0.52
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	1	0.331
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	1	0.311
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	1	0.274
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	0	0.26
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	0	0.2
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	0	0.189
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	0	0.105

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
10	I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	0	0.091
9	My teachers know a lot about Asia.	0	-0.006
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	-1	-0.071
1	There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	-1	-0.137
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	-1	-0.161
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	-1	-0.452
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	-1	-0.477
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	-2	-0.607
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	-2	-0.678
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-2	-0.744
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	-2	-0.806
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	-3	-0.856
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-3	-1.357
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	-3	-1.605
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	-4	-1.79
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-4	-1.997
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-5	-2.106

Perspective 3: I'm happy with what I'm learning about Asia

Table A7

Breakdown of perspective 3 participants

	Male		Female	Total
Year 7	2		1	3
Year 9			4	4
Year 10				
Year 11				
Year 12				
Total	2		5	7

Table A8

Exemplar sort for perspective 3 participants

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	5	2.197
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	4	1.963
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	4	1.729
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	3	1.458
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	3	1.108
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	3	0.945
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	2	0.756
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	2	0.738
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	2	0.634
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	2	0.588
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	1	0.478
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	1	0.438
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	1	0.396
9	My teachers know a lot about Asia.	1	0.365
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	1	0.327
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	0	0.238
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	0	0.174
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	0	0.066
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	0	-0.065
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	0	-0.285

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
4	I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	0	-0.3
1	There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	-1	-0.311
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	-1	-0.401
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	-1	-0.439
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	-1	-0.462
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	-1	-0.584
10	I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	-2	-0.616
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	-2	-0.716
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	-2	-1.032
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-2	-1.053
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	-3	-1.07
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	-3	-1.141
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	-3	-1.187
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	-4	-1.435
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-4	-1.679
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-5	-1.823

Perspective 4: Asia is part of my lived experience - want more nuance

Table A9

Breakdown of perspective 4 participants

	Male	Female	Total
Year 7			
Year 9	1	4	5
Year 10			
Year 11			
Year 12			
Total	1	4	5

Table A10

Exemplar sort for perspective 4 participants

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	5	1.796
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	4	1.378
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	4	1.35
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	3	1.35
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	3	1.247
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	3	1.118
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	2	1.088
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	2	0.972
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	2	0.897
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	2	0.866
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	1	0.8
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	1	0.586
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	1	0.53
4	I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	1	0.504
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	1	0.444
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	0	0.342
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	0	0.297
9	My teachers know a lot about Asia.	0	0.247
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	0	-0.246
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	0	-0.321

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
10	I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	0	-0.419
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	-1	-0.456
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	-1	-0.5
1	There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	-1	-0.535
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	-1	-0.631
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	-1	-0.685
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	-2	-0.691
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	-2	-0.913
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-2	-0.987
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	-2	-1.02
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	-3	-1.095
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-3	-1.125
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	-3	-1.154
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	-4	-1.329
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-4	-1.67
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-5	-2.032

Perspective 5: Language learning is my focus

Table A11

Breakdown of perspective 1a participants

	Male	Female	Total
Year 7	1		1
Year 9		1	1
Year 10	1		1
Year 11			
Year 12			
Total	2	1	3

Table A12

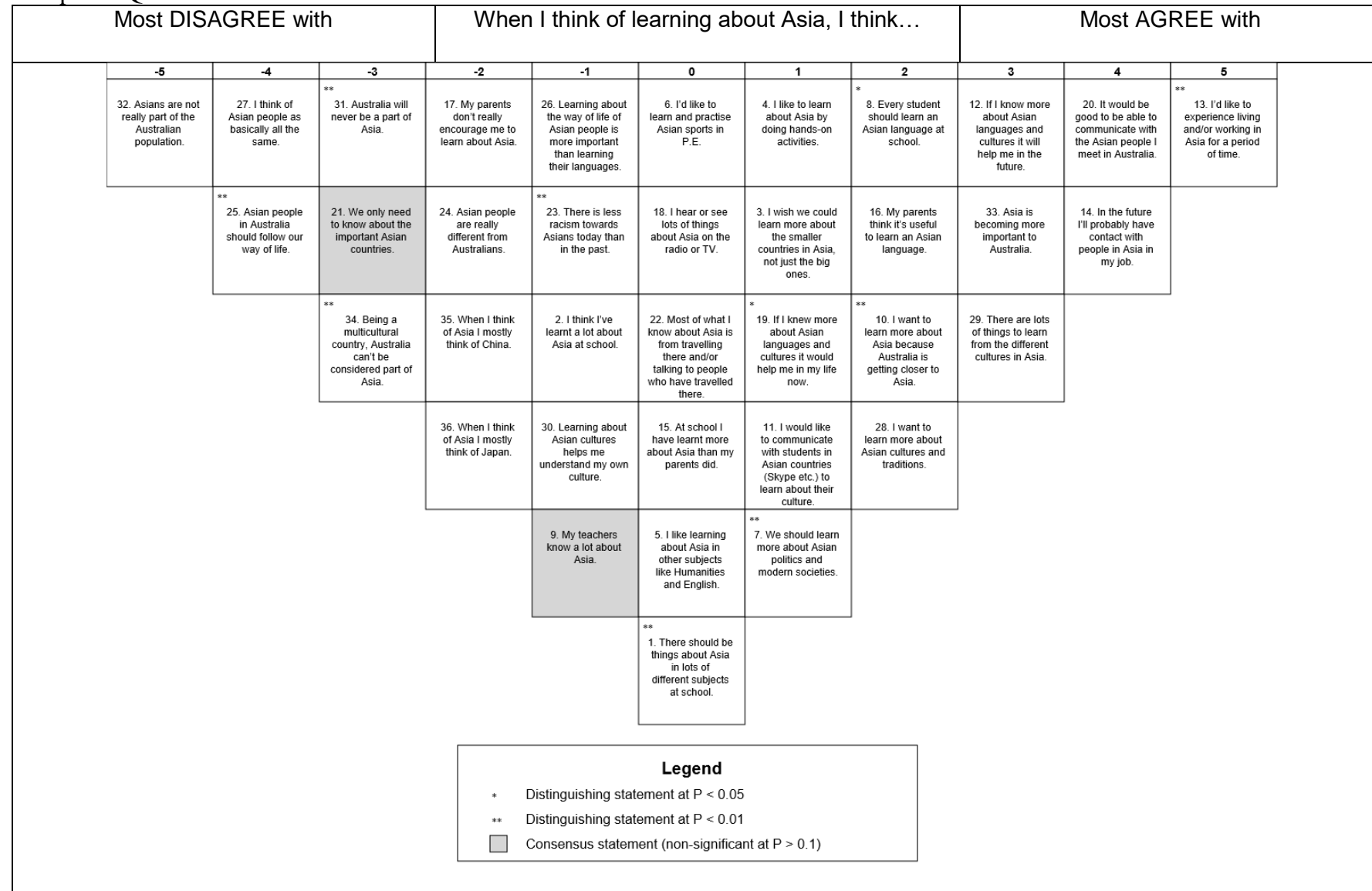
Exemplar sort for perspective 5 participants

#	Statement	Factor Array Position	Z-score
35	When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	5	1.87
33	Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	4	1.691
19	If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	4	1.326
12	If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	3	1.309
8	Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	3	1.26
16	My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	3	1.246
25	Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	2	1.055
2	I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	2	0.758
15	At school, I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	2	0.716
34	Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	2	0.673
23	There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	1	0.642
31	Australia will never be a part of Asia.	1	0.599
29	There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	1	0.598
9	My teachers know a lot about Asia.	1	0.53
18	I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	1	0.402
36	When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	0	0.377
3	I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	0	0.265
20	It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	0	0.148
28	I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	0	0
4	I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	0	-0.26

#	Statement	Factor Array Positon	Z-score
30	Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	0	-0.334
27	I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	-1	-0.473
6	I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	-1	-0.488
1	There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	-1	-0.562
26	Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	-1	-0.599
24	Asian people are really different from Australians.	-1	-0.69
14	In the future, I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	-2	-0.853
21	We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	-2	-0.864
10	I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	-2	-0.901
17	My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	-2	-0.906
5	I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	-3	-0.975
7	We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	-3	-1.155
13	I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	-3	-1.357
11	I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	-4	-1.574
32	Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	-4	-1.605
22	Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	-5	-1.87

Appendix H: Visual representations of exemplar sorts for each factor

Composite Q-sort for Factor 1a



Composite Q-sort for Factor 1b

Most DISAGREE with			When I think of learning about Asia, I think...					Most AGREE with		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	8. Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	** 20. It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	19. If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	10. I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	36. When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	15. At school I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	34. Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	18. I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	12. If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	** 32. Asians are not really part of the Australian population.
	23. There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	26. Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	13. I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	1. There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	28. I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	* 17. My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	** 27. I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	35. When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	** 31. Australia will never be a part of Asia.	
		5. I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	11. I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	22. Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	14. In the future I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	3. I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	4. I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	24. Asian people are really different from Australians.		
			21. We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	6. I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	2. I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	33. Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	25. Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.			
				30. Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	29. There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	9. My teachers know a lot about Asia.				
					16. My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.					

Legend

* Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$

** Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$

Consensus statement (non-significant at $P > 0.1$)

Composite Q-sort for Factor 2

Most DISAGREE with			When I think of learning about Asia, I think...					Most AGREE with		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
32. Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	27. I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	36. When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	25. Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	30. Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	9. My teachers know a lot about Asia.	24. Asian people are really different from Australians.	34. Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	3. I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	33. Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	** 23. There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.
	8. Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	21. We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	7. We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	11. I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	10. I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	5. I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	** 26. Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	15. At school I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	* 29. There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	
		19. If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	35. When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	13. I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	12. If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	14. In the future I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	6. I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	28. I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.		
			17. My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	1. There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	31. Australia will never be a part of Asia.	20. It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	18. I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.			
				2. I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	16. My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	4. I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.				
					22. Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.					

Legend

- * Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$
- ** Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$
- Consensus statement (non-significant at $P > 0.1$)

Composite Q-sort for Factor 3

Most DISAGREE with			When I think of learning about Asia, I think...					Most AGREE with		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	21. We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	22. Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	32. Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	31. Australia will never be a part of Asia.	4. I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	24. Asian people are really different from Australians.	29. There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	14. In the future I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	35. When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	** 15. At school I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.
	8. Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	30. Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	** 18. I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	26. Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	* 34. Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	9. My teachers know a lot about Asia.	5. I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	6. I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	** 27. I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	
		25. Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	36. When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	13. I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	3. I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	12. If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	11. I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	2. I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.		
			10. I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	17. My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	* 19. If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	23. There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	20. It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.			
				1. There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	16. My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	28. I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.				
					33. Asia is becoming more important to Australia.					

Legend

- * Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$
- ** Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$
- Consensus statement (non-significant at $P > 0.1$)

Composite Q-sort for Factor 4

Most DISAGREE with			When I think of learning about Asia, I think...					Most AGREE with		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
27. I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	7. We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	36. When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.	25. Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.	* 8. Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	10. I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	24. Asian people are really different from Australians.	11. I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	2. I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	35. When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.	** 5. I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.
	23. There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.	32. Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	21. We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	19. If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	33. Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	4. I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	20. It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	** 22. Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	18. I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	
		6. I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	26. Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	1. There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	31. Australia will never be a part of Asia.	34. Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	16. My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	29. There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.		
			30. Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	13. I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	9. My teachers know a lot about Asia.	12. If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.	28. I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.			
				17. My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	15. At school I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	3. I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.				
					14. In the future I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.					

Legend

* Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$

** Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$

Consensus statement (non-significant at $P > 0.1$)

Composite Q-sort for Factor 5

Most DISAGREE with			When I think of learning about Asia, I think...					Most AGREE with		
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
* 22. Most of what I know about Asia is from travelling there and/or talking to people who have travelled there.	32. Asians are not really part of the Australian population.	13. I'd like to experience living and/or working in Asia for a period of time.	17. My parents don't really encourage me to learn about Asia.	24. Asian people are really different from Australians.	30. Learning about Asian cultures helps me understand my own culture.	18. I hear or see lots of things about Asia on the radio or TV.	34. Being a multicultural country, Australia can't be considered part of Asia.	16. My parents think it's useful to learn an Asian language.	* 19. If I knew more about Asian languages and cultures it would help me in my life now.	35. When I think of Asia I mostly think of China.
	11. I would like to communicate with students in Asian countries (Skype etc.) to learn about their culture.	7. We should learn more about Asian politics and modern societies.	10. I want to learn more about Asia because Australia is getting closer to Asia.	26. Learning about the way of life of Asian people is more important than learning their languages.	4. I like to learn about Asia by doing hands-on activities.	9. My teachers know a lot about Asia.	15. At school I have learnt more about Asia than my parents did.	* 8. Every student should learn an Asian language at school.	33. Asia is becoming more important to Australia.	
		5. I like learning about Asia in other subjects like Humanities and English.	21. We only need to know about the important Asian countries.	1. There should be things about Asia in lots of different subjects at school.	28. I want to learn more about Asian cultures and traditions.	29. There are lots of things to learn from the different cultures in Asia.	2. I think I've learnt a lot about Asia at school.	12. If I know more about Asian languages and cultures it will help me in the future.		
			14. In the future I'll probably have contact with people in Asia in my job.	6. I'd like to learn and practise Asian sports in P.E.	20. It would be good to be able to communicate with the Asian people I meet in Australia.	31. Australia will never be a part of Asia.	25. Asian people in Australia should follow our way of life.			
				** 27. I think of Asian people as basically all the same.	3. I wish we could learn more about the smaller countries in Asia, not just the big ones.	23. There is less racism towards Asians today than in the past.				
					36. When I think of Asia I mostly think of Japan.					

Legend

* Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.05$

** Distinguishing statement at $P < 0.01$

Consensus statement (non-significant at $P > 0.1$)

