

This article was downloaded by: [Statsbiblioteket Tidsskriftafdeling]

On: 05 February 2015, At: 12:20

Publisher: Routledge

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



Oxford Review of Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/core20>

Too pale and stale: prescribed texts used for teaching culturally diverse students in Australia and England

Melissa Reshma Jogie

Published online: 03 Feb 2015.



CrossMark

[Click for updates](#)

To cite this article: Melissa Reshma Jogie (2015): Too pale and stale: prescribed texts used for teaching culturally diverse students in Australia and England, Oxford Review of Education, DOI: [10.1080/03054985.2015.1009826](https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2015.1009826)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2015.1009826>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

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

Too pale and stale: prescribed texts used for teaching culturally diverse students in Australia and England

Melissa Reshma Jogie*

How are English texts selected to teach students from culturally diverse backgrounds in Australia and England? The English curricula in both countries aim for students to read and interpret meanings through texts, while learning about their culture, and that of cultural others. However, the current list of prescribed texts in both curricula are dated and are not frequently changed, nor are new culturally diverse and contemporary texts easily added to reading lists. This makes some curriculum aims difficult to achieve if students are disengaged or do not relate to the content or themes in the prescribed texts. This article proposes that a post-colonial theoretical approach be considered when selecting texts to teach contemporary students from diverse cultural backgrounds. A post-colonial approach does not mean selecting post-colonial texts, or texts that address post-colonial themes, but is rather a method of selecting and comparing literature of any genre that engages with historical and contemporary issues, with particular focus on race, social class and gender. A post-colonial approach would mean that culturally diverse students may better engage with discussions of contemporary issues using a wider range of texts in classrooms.

Keywords: *English Literature; culture; diversity; texts; secondary; post-colonial; Australia; England*

Introduction

At secondary schools English Literature can be studied to investigate how culture is represented and taught, using prescribed texts to educate students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Culture can be defined and channelled through, 'the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure' (Said, 1994, p. xii). Literature is a form of art that can be used in classrooms to express, represent and discuss culture from a

*The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia. Email: Melissa.jogie@anu.edu.au

range of genres and perspectives. There are educational benefits for students who engage with texts from other cultures as, 'students may experience potential richness of a reading that repositions them as *Other*, particularly those who are accustomed to seeing themselves reflected in the cultural mainstream' (Johnston & Mangat, 2012, p. 13). Researchers in the United States with education, cultural and/or literary expertise have consistently called for better engagement and exploration of cultural issues and discussions through the reading and analysis of English texts at schools (Blake, 1998; Brauer & Clark, 2008; Dong, 2005; Friese, Alvermann, Parkes, & Rezak, 2008; Morrell, 2005). This signifies there are seemingly more benefits for students who are exposed to a wide range of texts, which enables them to question their own identity against the backdrop of how their culture, or the culture of others, is represented and discussed through the reading and analysis of texts.

In Australia and England well-known texts are constantly repeated or reshuffled from different modules into other areas or units of study within the curriculum. The arguments made in this paper are based on research into text selection for senior secondary English curricula in Australia and England. To clarify this article does not enter into scholarly debates concerning the definitions and categorisations of what constitutes for instance canonical, modern or contemporary texts. These discussions are sidestepped to better focus on examining the range and frequency of prescribed texts being repeated or recycled on the reading lists, and the subsequent pedagogical and learning issues arising from these patterns of text selection when educating culturally diverse students. In other words, how often are texts repeated and/or new texts added to the prescribed reading list and what are some hindrances resulting from patterns of text selection?

To conduct this analysis texts have been grouped by timeframes or dates of publication; Group A (up to 1900s), Group B (1900–2000) and Group C (2000 to present) and these timeframes are referred to when discussing the prescribed texts currently listed for study in Australia and England. Texts have been grouped into timeframes rather than genres, as conversations about cultural issues are indefinite. For instance themes of race, gender and social class can be revisited and discussed using a range of texts from different time periods. Given this fact there have been statements that, 'texts are not an end in themselves ... texts are not what students learn about but they are the vehicles through which students learn about how meaning is made' (Michaels & Gold, 2006, p. 91). Foundational research conducted in the United States argues against this proposed method of placing the curriculum first and text second, Applebee claims, 'if we build curricula in which texts are related in meaningful ways, learning becomes cumulative and reinforcing' (Applebee, 1994, p. 50). Like Applebee, other academics who conduct wider research into curriculum and multicultural education policies, shed light on a range of issues related to teaching culturally diverse learners, one of which is text selection (Brauer & Clark, 2008; Cai & Ebscohost, 2002; Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001; Dong, 2005; Friese et al., 2008; Gay, 2013; Hickling-Hudson, 2010; Johnston & Mangat, 2012; Lindblom, 2005; Mohammadzadeh, 2009; Sadana, 2009; Subedi,

2013; Thomas, 2012; Tikly, 1999). Based on existing research there are seemingly more benefits for having a wider range of culturally diverse and contemporary texts on the curriculum, since learning aims are apparently easier to achieve if students are motivated to read and engage with prescribed texts.

Overall, texts enable students to engage with a range of perspectives and interpretations of their own culture and those of unfamiliar others. Scholarship has shown reading and discussing other cultures helps differentiate between facts that are simply accepted as natural and those that are perceived more as cultural artefacts (Nussbaum, 1998). Through globalisation the need to discuss cultural differences at schools has become an increasingly important issue for teachers in English classrooms. Therefore it can be assumed that a range of cultural texts ought to be studied at secondary schools since they take students on imaginative adventures where they can discover themes and issues relevant to different people from other times and distant places. Prescribed texts for the secondary school English curricula in Australia and England can be categorised as serving two essential functions; texts are learning aids used to achieve the goals listed in the curricula, and are conduits used to transmit universal messages of and about different cultures at given periods of time. Here the second function is examined in greater detail, investigating how prescribed texts transmit messages about otherness and cultural differences to students from diverse backgrounds in contemporary society. In other words, what do these texts aim to teach contemporary students and to what extent are the prescribed texts successful in achieving these goals?

This article presents an overview of the main issues associated with the current list of prescribed texts on both the Australian and British senior English curricula and puts forward a theoretical argument for including and selecting a wider range of culturally diverse texts to be studied at secondary schools. Based on the above statements, there are apparently more educational benefits to be derived from accessing a wider range of diverse and contemporary texts in an English curriculum. Flexibility and access to more text choices might prove to be advantageous for both educators and their students, as reading a range of texts might easily facilitate more discussions about cultural differences in present society. In other words, this article features discussions that unpack the functions literary texts serve in the secondary English curricula, and argues that a post-colonial approach for selecting these texts will increase not only the range of text choices, but also enhance student engagement in deep and meaningful discussions about identity and culture. The following sections describe the methodology used for conducting the research referenced in this article, followed by detailed descriptions of the curriculum aims and the prescribed text list currently read in Australia and England. This article is part of a doctoral thesis drawing from the fields of English Literature and Education, which investigates how prescribed texts are selected by education boards, interpreted and taught by teachers in secondary schools in Australia and England, and subsequently received by students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Methodology

Australia and England have been selected for this study primarily because of the similarities between both the New South Wales Board of Studies (Australia) and the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (England) senior secondary English curricula. These similarities are presented and discussed further in the Australia and England sections of this article. However, to paraphrase, both English curricula have modules or units specifically focusing on discussing cultural issues, where students are asked to analyse and discuss interpretations of texts and reflect these on their background and identity. Over the last decade there has been a steady increase in the population of Australia and England, where a large percentage of the population is comprised of people from diverse cultural and ethnic groups, most of whom were born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012–2013; United Kingdom Statistics Authority, 2012). To give an example of this diversity, the schools visited for this research in Australia featured a higher quantity of response from students who identified with Chinese (40%) and Malaysian (17%) ancestry; whereas, the schools visited in England had a higher number of responses from students (31%) who identified the United Kingdom (British, Scottish, Irish, Welsh). Yet there was equally a large number of responses from students (31%) who selected South Asia (India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) as countries of ancestry. For these reasons, investigating the range of English texts selected to educate high populations of culturally diverse students will help compare how these Western countries—with shared colonial bonds—are presently catering for the needs of a growing and culturally diverse population.

For senior secondary education (16–18 year olds) there are several different Education Departments and Examination Boards in Australia and England. For comparative purposes only one administrative education board per country is discussed. The Australian system selected is the Board of Studies New South Wales (NSW), which administers the Higher School Certificate (HSC). The British examination board chosen is the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), which administers English A-Level examinations. Each administrative board performs similar duties in terms of designing curricula, setting prescribed texts for study, providing learning support for teachers, and managing the setting and marking of examinations for schools in each country. In this article only the prescribed text list, for one compulsory section or module per English curricula is presented and analysed. As these administrative boards do not list the same prescribed texts, they have been selected for this research on the basis that they share similarities in terms of the learning goals set in both curricula and these are examined in greater detail under the Australia and England sections.

The methods of data collection include interviews with English teachers and observations of their senior classes. Interviews were conducted with Senior English Officers at both Curriculum Boards in each country. Eight secondary schools were visited (four per country), which resulted in a total of 24 interviews with senior secondary English teachers. All schools were selected from urban areas within

Sydney (New South Wales) and London (Greater London) due to the higher concentrations of diverse cultural communities based in these regions. This article focuses on the qualitative responses from interviews conducted with the education boards and participating teachers. The following summarises a few of the main issues with the current text selection process in both countries. These issues are presented to broadly frame discussions, based on previous scholarly research, concerning the selection of prescribed texts for English studies. These issues set the premise for analysing the current list of prescribed texts set for the cultural modules of study in both Australia and England senior secondary English curricula.

Summary of current issues with prescribed texts

In Australia and England there is a growing disconnection between the texts selected to be on the English curricula and the student population these texts are meant to educate. Recent academic publications about the text selection process in other regions such as North-American schools show that:

Most of the well-loved texts that have remained on school reading lists for decades continue to be taught, with little attempt to deconstruct or address issues of race, class, gender that appear in the literature, or to uncover the ideologies of the texts. Often, the introduction of some new multicultural texts is presented as an ‘add-on’ to existing literature and taught as a culture tour of exotic and unknown places. (Johnston & Mangat, 2012, p. ix)

Similarly, the well-known or canonical texts in both the Australian and British senior English curricula have been on the prescribed reading list for decades. The number of well-known texts published pre-1900 to 2000 in both curricula far outweighs the presence of texts published from 2000 onwards. The prescribed lists presented (under the Australia and England sections) are comprised of a majority of texts from the 18th century, 19th century and those published from 1950 to 1970. There is an emerging pattern whereby well-known texts have been dominating the reading lists (see Tables 1 and 3) despite revisions to the curriculum, which usually occurs every three or four years in each country. This article highlights how patterns of repeating well-known texts can become problematic in the education system, in terms of it becoming repetitive for educators and irrelevant or boring for the contemporary students who are required to study these texts.

In 2012 research in the United States adds to the existing scholarship that cultural discussions concerning race, social class and gender are carefully managed as these are contentious issues particularly in secondary schools (Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001; Johnston & Mangat, 2012; Quayson, 2000). To an extent in Australia and England there are also varying levels of fear associated with teaching cultural texts that raise contentious issues related to race, social class and gender. Interviews conducted in 2013 found that most educators (90% of teachers interviewed) expressed there was little need to address contentious issues if these themes were not identified or related to the learning outcomes in the curriculum. This

Table 1. Australia prescribed texts on the English Curriculum 2006–2020

Text Category	2006–2008 (Journey)	2009–2014 (Belonging)	2015–2020 (Discovery)
Prose Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Mark Twain, 1885)• Ender’s Game (Orson Card, 1985)• Empire of the Sun (JG Ballard, 1984)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great Expectations (Charles Dickens, 1861)• The Joy luck Club (Amy Tan, 1989)• Swallow the Air (Tara J. Winch, 2006)• *The Namesake (Jhumpa Lahiri, 2003)• Heat and Dust (Ruth P. Jhabvala, 1975)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Awakening (Kate Chopin, 1899)• Wrack (James Bradley, 1997)• Swallow the Air (Tara J. Winch, 2006)
Non-fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lionheart (Jesse Martin, 2001)• On Giants’ Shoulders (Melvyn Bragg, 1999)• My Place (Sally Morgan, 1982)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• *Romulus, My Father (Raimond Gaita, 1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Short History of Nearly Everything (Bill Bryson, 2003)• The Motorcycle Diaries (Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, 2003)
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Away (Michael Gow, 1986)• *Cosi (Louis Nowra, 1992)• The Tempest (Shakespeare)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• *The Crucible (Arthur Miller, 1953)• Rainbow’s End (Jane Harrison, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Away (Michael Gow, 1986)• Rainbow’s End (Jane Harrison, 2005)
Poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immigrant Chronicle (Peter Skrzynecki, 1975) (<i>Selected poems- ‘Immigrants at</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immigrant Chronicle (Peter Skrzynecki, 1975) (<i>Selected poems- ‘Immigrants at</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• *Rosemary Dobson (1920–2012) (<i>Selected Poems- ‘Young girl at the window’, ‘Wonder’,</i>

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Text Category	2006–2008 (Journey)	2009–2014 (Belonging)	2015–2020 (Discovery)
	<i>Central Station</i> 1951', <i>Feliks</i> <i>Skrzynecki</i> ', 'Crossing the <i>Red Sea</i> ', 'Leaving home', 'Migrant hostel', <i>A drive in the</i> <i>country</i> ', 'Postcard'. • *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Complete Poems (1912) (Selected poems- 'Rime of the <i>Ancient Mariner</i> (1834)', 'This <i>Lime Tree Bower</i> <i>My Prison</i> ', 'Frost at <i>Midnight</i> ', <i>Kubla Khan</i> ') • *Imagined Corners (Ken Watson ed, 1999) (Selected poems 'The one who got away' (S. Bhatt), 'Of <i>Eurydice</i> ' (I. Lalic), 'Fax X' (G. Lewis), 'A <i>Righteous Day</i> ' (Mudrooroo), 'The French <i>Prisoner</i> ' (J. Pilinsky), 'A <i>Dream</i> ' (V. Sereni), 'Worried over days past' (X. <i>Quynh</i>)	<i>Central Station</i> 1951', <i>Feliks</i> <i>Skrzynecki</i> ', 'Postcard', 'Migrant hostel', 'St Patrick's college', 'Ancestors', 10 <i>Mary Street</i> ', 'In the folk museum') • *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson (1955) (Selected poems, 66 'This is my letter to the world', 67 'I died for beauty but was scarce', 82 'I had been hungry all the years', 83 'I gave myself to him', 127 'A narrow fellow in the grass', 154 'A word dropped careless on the page', 161 'What mystery pervades a well!', 181 'Saddest noise, the sweetest noise' • The Simple Gift (Steven Herrick, 2000)	<i>Painter of</i> <i>Antwerp</i> ', 'Traveller's <i>Tale</i> ', 'The <i>Tiger</i> ', 'Cock <i>Crow</i> ', 'Ghost town: New England') • *Robert Frost (1874–1963) (Selected poems- 'The Tuft of <i>Flowers</i> ', 'Mending Wall', 'Home Burial', 'After Apple- Picking', 'Fire and Ice', 'Stopping by <i>Woods on a</i> <i>Snowy</i> <i>Evening</i> ') • Robert Gray (1762–1834) (Selected poems 'Journey: the <i>North Coast</i> ', 'The <i>Meatworks</i> ', 'North Coast <i>Town</i> ', 'Late <i>Ferry</i> ', 'Flames and Dangling <i>Wire</i> ', 'Diptych')

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Text Category	2006-2008 (Journey)	2009-2014 (Belonging)	2015-2020 (Discovery)
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Rabbit-Proof-Fence (Phillip Noyce, 2002) • Contact (Robert Zemeckis, 2001) • Life is Beautiful (Roberto Benigni, 1999) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Strictly Ballroom (Baz Luhrmann, 1992) • *Ten Canoes (Rolf De Heer, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life of Pi (Ang Lee, 2012)
Media			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frank Hurley-The Man who Made History (Simon Nasht, 2005) • Go back to where you came from- Series 1: Episodes 1,2,3 and the Reponse (Ivan O'Mahoney, 2012)
Shakespeare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tempest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you like it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tempest

presents another concern, in that teachers might avoid discussing contentious themes even though these might prove beneficial in the classroom for addressing cultural stereotypes in society. Despite the requirements of the curriculum, English teachers with approximately ten years experience or more (in both countries) were more confident about openly discussing contentious issues with their students. This was in contrast to novice teachers with five years of experience or less, who voiced their uncertainties with managing discussions about contentious issues in the classroom. In Australia and England, the Education Boards clarified that any unwillingness to add new texts to the reading list was not because they have associated these texts as carriers of contentious themes. Both Australian and British Curriculum Officers advised that new cultural texts were difficult to add to the prescribed reading list, because of the apparent lack of critical material or training available for

teachers to confidently teach these texts. In Australia the English Curriculum Officer stated, ‘... we select texts that have existing resources so teachers do not have to reinvent the wheel’ (Interview, Sydney, May 2013). Similarly in England, the English Curriculum Officer explained, ‘... feedback on texts for specifications show us that teachers often choose texts they are familiar with and those are the texts they have previously taught.’ (Interview, Guildford, September 2013). However, the majority of teachers interviewed (approximately 80%) stated the rationale given by Education Boards for not adding a larger variety of cultural texts to the curriculum was a seemingly poor explanation for constantly reshuffling existing texts throughout the prescribed reading list. When questioned about this, the Education boards expressed little or no interest for investigating new methods or approaches to include more contemporary texts on the prescribed reading lists, despite concerns from teachers about reducing the comprehensive quality of education students receive by repeating or recycling well-known texts.

Teachers interviewed for this research (in both countries) expressed concern about the current prescribed texts on the reading lists stating that texts became boring for them and generally disengaged their students. Aside from losing motivation as educators when required to teach the same texts year after year, they voiced concerns about it becoming increasingly difficult to teach the extensive history around canonical texts, in addition to covering all of the outlined learning goals of the curriculum. Teachers felt they had fewer options available to them when choosing texts that suited the needs and learning abilities of their students. It is important to note that this argument is not about reducing the challenges associated with teaching well-known texts. It is also not about removing these well-known texts, but rather for providing additional options—in the form of contemporary and culturally diverse texts—that may provoke deeper and more meaningful discussions, which students might engage with more as they relate closely to their world and identity. This article argues that changing the approach used for text selection is one method by which to establish a better balance between well-known and contemporary texts on the prescribed reading lists.

Australia

The Board of Studies established its aim of teaching English, ‘to enable students to understand, use, enjoy and value the English language in its various textual forms and to become thoughtful and imaginative and effective communicators in a diverse and changing society’ (New South Wales Board of Studies, 2012, p. 7). The Board of Studies is responsible for the setting of the education curriculum and final secondary examinations, known as the HSC, which was an examination first held in 1967 (Barcan, 2003). There are currently some texts on the curriculum, which have been there for over 50 years, for example Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* (1861) that focuses on imperialism and connections to the British Empire (Said, 1994). Since its introduction *Great Expectations* has constantly been shuffled into different areas of the curriculum, not always as a prescribed text. In the current

2009–2014 curriculum (see Table 1) it has resurfaced yet again as a prescribed text. While the themes present in *Great Expectations* are timeless, it is difficult to comprehend why it is the only one of Dickens' many novels consistently repeated on the curriculum. Even if the argument is made that it is a classical text and undoubtedly a shorter text to teach, it is also a choice of one in five fictional texts for the 2009–2014 prescribed list (see Table 1). There are also other short novels by Dickens that can be considered for example *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Oliver Twist* or even *Hard Times*. The question remains, how has the curriculum changed in the last 50 years, and how do these selected texts meet the educational demands of a growing and diverse population? Is *Great Expectations* still a text that appeals to contemporary students at secondary school? The following section explores the extent to which the current aims can be achieved by studying the range of prescribed texts set on the reading list.

The Area of Study is a compulsory theme-based component of study for both Standard and Advanced English courses in the HSC and it comprises 40% of the study towards the final examination (New South Wales Board of Studies, 2010). The Area of Study guides students to:

Explore and examine relationships between language and text, and interrelationships among texts. [Students] examine closely the individual qualities of texts while considering the texts' relationships to the wider context of the Area of Study. They synthesise ideas to clarify meaning and develop new meanings. They take into account whether aspects such as context, purpose and register, text structures, stylistic features, grammatical features and vocabulary are appropriate to the particular text. (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2007, p. 9; 2013, p. 9)

In the past Area of Study themes have included: 'changing' (2001–2003), 'journeys' (2004–2008), 'belonging' (2009–2014) and now 'discovery' (2015–2020) (New South Wales Government). These concepts or themes are quite broad yet similar in scope, as the aims do not vary widely. Although some new texts are introduced with new themes, the old prescribed texts are usually shuffled from other sections of the curriculum and used again to study the new theme. For analysis purposes the information from Table 1 has been reorganised into Table 2 to illustrate the representation of these texts according to timeframes. Table 2 shows that over 14 years the Area of Study curriculum (from 2004 to 2020) has had 16% of the prescribed texts belonging to Group A (up to 1900), 47% of the texts are from Group B (1900–2000), and 37% of texts are from Group C (2000 to present). These figures show that most texts taught for the Area of Study come from Group B, which hosts the largest number of texts that were published from 1963 to 1997. Based on this table it can be argued that despite changes to the Area of Study themes, the prescribed texts are not often changed nor are new texts frequently added to the reading list.

In June 2013 the English Stage 6 HSC curriculum for 2015–2020 was published, announcing the new theme 'discovery' along with an updated text list (see Table 1). The theme 'discovery' is very similar to the previous theme 'belonging'. The 'discovery' theme is described as, 'an individual's discoveries and their process of discovering can vary according to personal, cultural, historical and social

Table 2. Area of study texts into timeframes

Group A (Pre-1900)	Group B (1900–2000)	Group C (2000– present)
As You Like it (1598-1600)	Poetry R. Frost (1874-1963)	The Simple Gift (2000)
The Tempest (1610-1611)	Poetry of S. Coleridge (1912)	Lionheart (2001)
Poetry R. Gray (1762-1834)	The Crucible (1953)	Contact (2001)
Great Expectations (1861)	Poetry of E. Dickinson (1955)	Rabbit-Proof Fence (2002)
Huckleberry Finn (1885)	Poetry P. Skrzynecki (1975)	The Namesake (2003)
The Awakening (1899)	Heat and Dust (1975)	Short History Everything (2003)
	Empire of the Sun (1984)	Motorcycle Diaries (2003)
	Ender’s Game (1985)	Rainbow’s End (2005)
	Away (1986)	The Man Made History (2005)
	My Place (1982)	Ten Canoes (2006)
	Joy Luck Club (1989)	Swallow the Air (2006)
	Così (1992)	Poetry R. Dobson (1920-2012)
	Strictly Ballroom (1992)	Life of Pi (2012)
	On Giants’ Shoulders (1999)	Go back to came from (2012)
	Imagined Corners (1999)	
	Life is Beautiful (1999)	
	Romulus, My Father (1998)	
	Wrack (1997)	

contexts and values ... discoveries may be ... viewed from different perspectives and their worth may be reassessed over time ... discoveries may differ for individuals and their worlds’ (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2013, p. 9). Compared to its predecessor ‘belonging’ was described thus: ‘ideas of belonging or of not belonging ... are shaped within personal, cultural, historical and social contexts. A sense of belonging can emerge from the connections made with people, places, groups, communities and the larger world’ (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2007, p. 10). Both descriptions are deliberately open-ended as the theme is taught as a guide for reading and responding to texts. Australian teachers generally agreed that teaching to a theme has been quite useful in terms of providing a point of reference for their students to make connections between concepts and texts. However, many shared concerns about the long-term disadvantages of theme teaching, arguing that, ‘... theme teaching is brilliant but it only works when the texts are compatible with the curriculum, when we [teachers] have to fish for the connections it feels dishonest and misleading’ (Teacher 5, Sydney, 2013). To elaborate on this point when texts are not compatible with themes there are risks, for example students leaving secondary school believing that Shakespeare’s *All’s Well That Ends Well* is a text only about ‘belonging’. Another limitation identified in the Board of Studies NSW English curriculum is that it, ‘provides teachers with information about what to teach but not how to teach—the notion of informed prescription and informed professionalism’ (Moni, 2012, p. 15). Teachers are responsible for designing creative strategies and sourcing additional resources for teaching these texts, therefore how well students understand texts is entirely dependent on the

skills of their teachers. In response to this teachers commented that the limitation of the Area of Study has not necessarily been the themes, but the limited choices of prescribed texts provided to teach these themes.

England

The AQA was established in April 2000 following the merger of the Associated Examining Board and the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board, making it the largest of the three Awarding Bodies currently in the United Kingdom (Kelly, 2013). The AQA was selected for this research as it is responsible for the setting and marking of approximately half of all GCSEs and A-Levels taken each year (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), 2014). Currently, the British education system is undergoing substantial curriculum reform, including dynamic changes proposed for the study and testing of the A-Level programme. These changes have been brought about as a result of the United Kingdom's decline in league table performances when compared to other countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results.¹ To briefly summarise, the major changes proposed by the current government to improve British standards of education include: making the examination system tougher by removing the current modular system of testing and moving to a linear system, which means students sit one final exam at the end of two years of study rather than a series of modules over two years. A secondary change includes reducing the numbers of re-sits of examinations students are allowed to take per course. These changes to the British education system seem to partition students at a young age, separating high achievers from lower achievers and the resulting division will inevitably affect their future education opportunities. Reay suggests, '... unfortunately [in the 21st century] all the evidence seems to indicate that the contemporary [British] education system retains powerful remnants of the past elite prejudices. We still have an education system in which working-class education is made to serve the middle-class interests' (2006, pp. 293–294). If the British contemporary education system retains past prejudices in terms of how it performs as a whole system, then what story can the prescribed texts listed on the AQA English curriculum convey?

The AQA English curriculum is divided into three areas: English Literature, English Language, and English Language and Literature. Each area is further subdivided into two types of specifications known as Spec-A and Spec-B, noting there is a new and separate Creative Writing specification (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, 2014a). Spec-A is based on a traditional approach to English and has been designed with the intention to train students for first-year University. It focuses on texts and context in terms of genre, emphasising when and how texts were written and the related issues within these texts. This paper examines the prescribed texts listed for a Spec-A unit called the 'Struggle for Identity in Modern Literature'. The range of texts listed for the Struggle for Identity unit is restricted to designated time frames listed in the curriculum. In other words, conditions on set texts are that one text must have been written between 1800 and 1945, and one

text must have been written post-1900 and have a link to a Victorian theme or setting. For the Struggle for Identity module students are expected to read texts, ‘between 1800 and the present day across different genres, genders, culture, setting and place’, and reflect on issues raised in these texts in comparison to those found in contemporary society (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, 2014b, p. 6). Students are expected to study six texts at the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level, from these designated time periods.² It is compulsory that students study a set text each for poetry, drama and prose and an additional text under each category for wider reading (see Table 3).

Although the text list includes a range of texts published during different time-periods, the curriculum aims are not easily reflected through the selection of texts. For instance the criteria for selecting texts by time periods is to ensure:

... that the candidates travel across a century whichever option they choose ... The struggle for identity ... [option] encompasses writing from the turn of the century in Robert Tressell’s novel and provides opportunities for study of all genres from the 1930s as well as a concentration of utterly contemporary and international literature written in English. (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, 2014b, p. 6)

While the curriculum does provide a range of genres for study there is a relatively minor representation of contemporary and international literature actually listed on both the prescribed and wider reading lists for this option. The aims of the curriculum (identified above) are not reflected in the selection of prescribed texts for this option. In other words the study option is the ‘Struggle for identity in modern literature’, but the literature selected for study is dated, and has few modern or contemporary text options. The reformed curriculum for 2015–2017 was released in September 2014, where the Struggle for Identity option is now called ‘Modern Times: Literature from 1945 to present day’. Table 4 shows that over eight years of this module none of the texts belong to Group A (pre-1900), however there is considerably more emphasis of choice from 2009 to 2017, which has 81% of the prescribed texts from Group B (1900–2000), whereas 19% of texts are from Group C (2000 to present). Even the new texts added for the 2015–2017 curriculum (marked by an asterisk in Table 4) fall under Group B, where only one of these texts, *The Help*, was published in 2009. This evidence suggests that the reformed AQA A-Level curriculum seems to include even more well-known classical texts (published prior to 2000) rather than a wider range of contemporary and culturally diverse options for study. As it was earlier stated, literature is timeless, and the range of issues discussed in any given text give examples that students can relate to, regardless of their age or background. Although there is a large selection of texts in the wider reading list (approximately 88 books in total) there are only 16 texts (or 18%) published after the turn of the century and not many of them are representative of a range of cultural backgrounds.

The texts on the AQA English prescribed list are, from the Board’s perspective, heavily influenced by teachers’ choice rather than students’ interest. Currently the student population of schools in England is made up of a range of diverse cultural

Table 3. England prescribed texts on the English Curriculum 2009–2017

Text Category	2009–2010 Struggle for Identity	2010–2014 Struggle for Identity	2015 (2015–2017 onwards) Modern Times
Prose Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Handmaid’s Tale 1985 (Margaret Atwood)• Wise Children 1991 (Angela Carter)• Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard 1998 (Kiran Desai)• The Woman Who Walked Into Doors 1996 (Roddy Doyle)• Spies 2002 (Michael Frayn)• Snow Falling on Cedars 1994 (David Guterson)• Trumpet 1998 (Jackie Kay)• Beloved 1987 (Toni Morrison)• Vernon God Little 2003 (D.B.C. Pierre)• The Color Purple 1982 (Alice Walker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Handmaid’s Tale 1985 (Margaret Atwood)• Wise Children 1991 (Angela Carter)• Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard 1998 (Kiran Desai)• The Woman Who Walked Into Doors 1996 (Roddy Doyle)• Spies 2002 (Michael Frayn)• Snow Falling on Cedars 1994 (David Guterson)• Trumpet 1998 (Jackie Kay)• Beloved 1987 (Toni Morrison)• Vernon God Little 2003 (D.B.C. Pierre)• The Color Purple 1982 (Alice Walker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Handmaid’s Tale 1985 (Margaret Atwood)• Waterland 1983 (Graham Swift)• Spies 2002 (Michael Frayn)• One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest 1962 (Ken Kesey)• The God of Small Things 1997 (Arundhati Roy)• The Help 2009 (Kathryn Stockett)• The Color Purple 1982 (Alice Walker)• Oranges are not the Only Fruit 1985 (Jeanette Winterson)• Revolutionary Road 1961 (Richard Yates)
Poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• And Still I Rise 1978 (Maya Angelou)• Feminine Gospels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• And Still I Rise 1978 (Maya Angelou)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feminine Gospels 2002 (Carol Ann Duffy)

(Continued)

Table 3. (Continued)

Text Category	2009–2010 Struggle for Identity	2010–2014 Struggle for Identity	2015 (2015–2017 onwards) Modern Times
	<p>2002 (Carol Ann Duffy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skirrid Hill 2005 (Owen Sheers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feminine Gospels 2002 (Carol Ann Duffy)• Skirrid Hill 2005 (Owen Sheers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skirrid Hill 2005 (Owen Sheers)• Selected Poems 2013 Edition 2013 (Tony Harrison)• New Selected Poems 1966–1987(Seamus Heaney)• Birthday Letters 1998 (Ted Hughes)• Ariel 1965 (Sylvia Plath)
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top Girls 1982 (Caryl Churchill)• Making History 1989 (Brian Friel)• Death and the King’s Horsemen 1975 (Wole Soyinka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top Girls 1982 (Caryl Churchill)• Making History 1989 (Brian Friel)• Death and the King’s Horsemen 1975 (Wole Soyinka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top Girls 1982 (Caryl Churchill)• A Streetcar named Desire 1947 (Tennessee Williams)• Translations 1980 (Brian Friel)• All My Sons 1947 (Arthur Miller)• Our Country’s Good 1990 (Timberlake Wertenbaker)• Cat on a Hot Tin Roof 1958 (Tennessee Williams)

Table 4. Struggle for Identity texts into timeframes

Group A (Pre-1900)	Group B (1900–2000)	Group C (2000– present)
	All my sons (1947)*	The Help (2009)*
	Streetcar named desire (1947)*	Skirrid hill (2005)
	Cat on a hot tin roof (1958)*	Vernon God Little (2003)
	Revolutionary road (1961)*	Feminine gospels (2002)
	One flew over the c. nest (1962)*	Spies (2002)
	Ariel (1965)*	Harrison selected poems (2013)
	Heaney sel. poems (1966-87)*	
	Death and King’s horseman (1975)	
	And still I rise (1978)	
	Translations (1980)*	
	Color purple (1982)	
	Top girls (1982)	
	Waterland (1983)*	
	Oranges not the only fruit (1985)*	
	Handmaid’s Tale (1985)	
	Beloved (1987)	
	Making history (1989)	
	Our country’s good (1990)*	
	Wise Children (1991)	
	Snow falling on cedars (1994)	
	Woman who walked doors (1996)	
	God of small things (1997)*	
	Hullabaloo in the Guava (1998)	
	Trumpet (1998)	
	Birthday letters (1998)*	

and ethnic groups. However, the module ‘Struggle for Identity’ does not include or reflect on many of the cultural and ethnic groups that are representative of contemporary England. In an interview for this research, an AQA English representative stated:

I suppose the fact that you’ve got on the wider reading list, you’ve got [texts] like ‘*The Color Purple*’, and that ... must be an attempt to [appeal to culturally diverse students] ... If I think about the way we have chosen texts for [Struggle for Identity unit] I can actually say that there has been no discussion about ensuring that we are addressing ideas of cultural diversity. (Interview, Guildford, September 2013)

Therefore AQA English does not place much emphasis, if any at all, on selecting texts that address contemporary issues for diverse groups of students. Rather the texts for this module (see Table 3) list more texts by American authors or texts discussing American themes than any other nationality. The then British Education Secretary, Michael Gove, announced in May 2014 that many of the well-known American texts that had been on the English curriculum for many years such as, *Of Mice and Men*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Crucible*, would now be replaced by English Literature, that is Literature by British authors (BBC News Education & Family, 2014). This representation of American-based authors and themes is an

apparent move away from teaching only English Literature written by the British. Although there are no current publications by the AQA to justify the selection of these American texts over other international texts, when questioned about these text choices the AQA representative clarified:

... the thing is [AQA] don't like to choose really modern texts too much and part of that is down to the fact that it's difficult for teachers. There are no resources out there ... You then look at the modern text and there is hardly any critical stuff out there and if you think at A-Level the students are needing to actually engage with critical material and I think that's part of the reason they don't go for the more modern texts ... apart from the American [ones]. (Interview, Guildford, September 2013)

There is no other explanation or rationale for why AQA English has selected a stronger presence of American texts on the prescribed reading list over other international literature. These modern American texts seem to present 'a peculiarly acute imperial cast, even though paradoxically its ferocious anti-colonialism directed at the Old World, is central to it' (Said, 1994, p. 74). Following on Said's statement it can be put forward that certain American classical texts (presently listed on the curriculum) share similarities to other well-known canonical British texts, in that these works of literature have been regurgitated and analysed over time, to the point that these texts become somewhat 'safe literature' that is socially acceptable and easily referred to when discussing contentious cultural issues related to race, social class and gender.

Post-colonial approach for selecting texts

This article proposes adopting a post-colonial approach for selecting prescribed literary texts for secondary education. Literary and cultural critic Rooney defines a post-colonial approach as, 'attempts to engage with questions of national self-determination through attending to the cultural forms in which a nation expresses itself, reflects and critiques itself' (Rooney, 2011, p. 373). A post-colonial approach would enable texts to be selected considering a broad range of global and contemporary issues that can be reflected and discussed by individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, in a time of proliferating globalisation. A post-colonial approach does not mean only selecting literary texts that represent post-colonial themes or issues. Many existing themes in texts can be read through a post-colonial lens, as the movement of people around the world makes culture a very complex issue to address, since it now encompasses a series of places, experiences and stories. In other words, 'culture is transnational because such spatial histories of displacement—now accompanied by territorial ambitions of 'global' media technologies—make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by *culture*, a rather complex issue' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 247).

As culture is becoming increasingly richer in narrative and forms of expression, in terms of how culture signifies or what is signified by culture, this makes a stronger argument for a wider range of texts to be read at secondary schools. This

argument is built on other academic publications in this area (Johnston, 2003; Johnston & Mangat, 2012; Kanu, 2006; Subedi, 2013; Tikly, 1999). Cumulatively, their work argues for a post-colonial approach to be applied to education since, 'post-colonial theory provides a necessary basis for developing a less Eurocentric and more comprehensive account of the effects of globalisation on education' (Tikly, 1999, p. 609). It can be argued there are other schools of literary analysis and reading techniques that can be used to engage students in discussions of cultural differences, such as traditional, new criticism, mythological and archetypal, the formalist, feminist, post-modernism or reader-response techniques (Waugh, 2006). However, post-colonial criticism as mentioned by Tikly (above) is perhaps the only theory that specifically seeks to encounter and interpret Eurocentric biases. A post-colonial approach to education can represent a wide range of diverse voices and narratives as represented through texts, by creating a much-needed balance between the older well-known texts and new and contemporary resources.

The benefit of using a post-colonial approach to select texts is that contemporary texts present new perspectives of culture, which question colonial sentiments that are often echoed in older texts. The advantages of incorporating culturally diverse texts into an education curriculum is to, 'challenge the dominant ideologies, affirm the values and experiences of historically under-represented cultures, foster acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity, develop sensitivity to social inequalities, and encourage transformation of the self and society' (Cai & Ebscohost, 2002, p. 134). Presently the well-known texts on the curriculum, including those by non-white authors, represent and discuss colonial themes written for Western audiences. Most of the older texts currently taught in both curricula, were written by Western writers who 'wrote with an exclusively Western audience in mind, even when they wrote of characters, places or situations that referred to, made use of, overseas territories held by Europeans' (Said, 1994, p. 78). These older texts are conduits for passing on colonial themes written for Western audiences, to a generation of contemporary readers. A post-colonial approach for selecting texts will easily encourage discussions between older, colonial themes alongside newer or contemporary cultural issues. However, there are also several layers of complexity associated with selecting texts that is representative of diverse cultural groups.

The absence of other cultural voices from reading lists can result in sustaining cultural stereotypes, as was considered the case in Australia before the 1970s as Bradford argues, 'Indigenous authors began to publish works for children, and non-Indigenous authors and illustrators increasingly turned to the colonial past in order to address ideologies of race in contemporary Australia' (Bradford, 2012, p. 193). Therefore it seems the presence of a range of cultural voices in the form of texts will enrich the perspectives or impressions students are exposed to about cultural differences in society. However, within this range there will be many other texts that portray colonial encounters, views and experience with Indigenous Australians. Based on debates concerning how literature about other cultures is presented to the Western world, arguments can be made for broadening the range of cultural texts on the British school curriculum. Sadana argues that despite the wave of prize

winning literature from South Asian writers, these English texts seem to lose cultural meaning when they are prepared for Western audiences. She argues that:

Post-colonial criticism has emphasized the relationship of colonizer and colonized, [yet] transnational literary markets seem to be focused on how western readerships might understand the political and social conditions of the so-called Third World. What these two models of reading and framing Indian English Literature have in common is their promotion of a literary axis that posits knowledge of and from India flowing to western metropolises. (Sadana, 2009, p. 4)

One of the challenges of using a post-colonial approach to select a wider range of cultural texts is that no single text can claim with certainty to be an accurate representation of any given cultural group. This being said, to engage students in conversations about the extent to which cultural issues presented in texts are true representations of their background, religion, values and beliefs might entice more students studying English to contribute to discussions about cultural differences in society.

A post-colonial approach for selecting a wider range of culturally diverse texts for the senior English curriculum will also act as a means of informing and empowering students as this will enhance their knowledge to comment on contemporary issues particularly related to race, social class and gender in society. According to Mohammadzadeh a wider range of texts will help in deconstructing Orientalist stereotypes that exist in literature and then, ‘... students can come to see how literary representations of the Other have offered Western writers with opportunities to misrepresent the majority of the world’s population as deceitful, dangerous and inhuman’ (Mohammadzadeh, 2009, p. 25). Although it must be stated that not all cultural texts will offer examples of Western writers misrepresenting Orientals. In many ways examples of engagement with different cultures as presented in fiction will only help broaden the range and depth of discussion that subsequently occurs in classrooms about differences in society. According to Said the reading of culture within texts is not a given truth but rather a representation of culture at a given time. He argues ‘... in any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a *re-presence*, or a representation’ (Said, 1979, p. 21). Therefore a wider range of culturally diverse texts is essential for students to better engage in discussions of how culture has changed and further to this, how cultural beliefs and practices have been (or not been) received and accepted in contemporary societies. A wider range of cultural texts will enable students to decipher a range of meanings and methods for interpreting and analysing both cultural discussions included in texts as well as those with peers.

Conclusion

This article explores the current disconnect that exists between the curriculum aims and prescribed texts selected to be in secondary English curricula of Australia and England. Aims in both curricula are for students to read texts,

learn and extract meanings about their identity and those of cultural others. Although culture is transmitted through texts, there is concern that well-known texts will mostly reinscribe past and dominant narratives of global knowledge (Subedi, 2013), rather than engage students in contemporary discussions of how culture has changed. The sections of the English curriculum examined in this paper show that a higher percentage of texts currently listed as prescribed texts are recycled and dated (80% of texts in Australia and 75% of texts in England) and there is reluctance from curriculum boards to increase the number of new or contemporary texts on the prescribed reading list. In both countries curriculum boards stated that new texts are difficult to teach because of the lack of critical material available on these texts, as well as higher risks associated with these texts raising contentious themes, which some teachers find difficult to manage and discuss in classrooms.

For these reasons this article proposes a post-colonial approach be considered when selecting texts to be on the prescribed reading list in both countries. The overall argument is not for well-known or canonical texts to be removed from the prescribed list, but for a wider range of diverse texts to be added to the reading lists. A wider variety of choice gives teachers additional resources that contemporary students might find more engaging and relevant for discussing cultural differences in modern society. This paper does not provide estimates for the structural or administrative efforts that might be involved in order to apply a post-colonial approach to text selection. However, it frames a theoretical argument for why there is a need for a better approach, based on the current requirements of English curricula and the limitations of these well-known texts when educating culturally diverse populations. More contemporary text options on prescribed reading lists will enable students from diverse backgrounds to engage in discussions of cultural identities in a world of increasing globalisation. Well-known or canonical texts should retain their priority and historical importance as part of the literary canon, but it might be time to brighten these *pale and stale* options by adding more variety, which in turn might entice young learners to read more widely.

Notes

1. Key findings of PISA 2012: (i) UK performs around the average in reading compared with the 34 OECD countries; (ii) The UK has a higher GDP and spends more on education than the average in OECD countries, however these comparative advantages do not have a clear relationship with educational outcomes; (iii) Socio-economically disadvantaged students in the UK are less likely to succeed at school than their more advantaged peers and (iv) PISA 2012 results when compared to PISA 2006 and PISA 2009 show there has been no change in performance in any of the subjects tested (Jenny Bradshaw, 2012).
2. In the current modular system the A-Level is divided into two stages: first the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and then the Advanced 2 (A2). AS + A2 = A-Level.

Notes on contributor

Melissa Reshma Jogie (BA Hons, MA Hons, Grad Dip Edu) is an Australian-Trinidadian who migrated to Australia in 2007 to pursue a Master of Arts in English Literature at the Australian National University. She also undertook a Graduate Diploma in Education at the University of New South Wales, specialising in Teaching Secondary School Senior English and English as a Second Language. Previously, in Trinidad and Tobago, she did a BA in Literatures in English at the University of the West Indies. Her PhD is based on interdisciplinary cross-cultural research drawing from the fields of English Literature and Education. Her research investigates how texts are selected to teach students from culturally diverse backgrounds in secondary school in both Australia and the UK. She is an award-winning PhD student, having received two international conference awards for 'Outstanding Presentation' at the Annual International Conference of College of Arts and Social Sciences (Hong Kong University, 2013) and European Centre Graduate Research Conference (RMIT University Melbourne, 2014).

References

- Applebee, A. N. (1994). Toward thoughtful curriculum: Fostering discipline-based conversation. *The English Journal*, 83, 45–52. doi:10.2307/820926
- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA). (2014). AQA welcomes Ofqual report on marking. Retrieved from <http://www.aqa.org.uk/news-and-policy/news/aqa-welcomes-report-on-marking>
- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. (2014a). Most frequently asked questions GCSE and A-Level English Subjects (January 2014) (pp. 1–22). Great Britain: Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA).
- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. (2014b). *GCE AS and A Level specification English Literature A for exams from June 2014 onwards, For certification from June 2014 onwards* (pp. 1–39). Great Britain: Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2012–2013). Reflecting a nation: Stories from the 2011 census. Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2071.0main+features902012-2013>
- Barcan, A. (2003). More means worse, again: What the Year 12 exams reveal. *Quadrant Magazine*, 47, 63–71.
- BBC News Education & Family. (2014, 25 May). Exam board 'drops' Mockingbird and Steinbeck after Gove reforms. *BBC News Education & Family*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/education-27563466>
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Blake, B. E. (1998). 'Critical' reader response in an urban classroom: Creating cultural texts to engage diverse readers. *Theory into Practice*, 37, 238–243. doi:10.2307/1477526
- Board of Studies New South Wales. (2007). *English stage 6 prescriptions: Area of study, electives and texts Higher School Certificate 2009–2014*. Sydney: Board of Studies NSW.
- Board of Studies New South Wales. (2013). *English stage 6 prescriptions: Area of study, electives and texts Higher School Certificate 2015–20*. Sydney: Board of Studies NSW.
- Bradford, C. (2012). Instilling post-colonial nostalgias: Ned Kelly narratives for children. *Journal of Australian Studies*, 36, 191–206. doi:10.1080/14443058.2012.674545

- Brauer, L., & Clark, C. T. (2008). The trouble is English: Reframing English studies in secondary schools. *English Education*, 40, 293–313. doi:[10.2307/40173289](https://doi.org/10.2307/40173289)
- Cai, M., & Ebscohost. (2002). *Multicultural literature for children and young adults: Reflections on critical issues* (Vol. 116). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Dimitriadis, G., & McCarthy, C. (2001). *Reading and teaching the post-colonial: From Baldwin to Basquiat and beyond*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dong, Y. R. (2005). Taking a cultural-response approach to teaching multicultural literature. *The English Journal*, 94, 55–60. doi:[10.2307/30046420](https://doi.org/10.2307/30046420)
- Frieze, E. E. G., Alvermann, D. E., Parkes, A., & Rezak, A. T. (2008). Selecting texts for English Language Arts classrooms: When assessment is not enough. *English Teaching-Practice and Critique*, 7, 74–99.
- Gay, G. (2013). Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43, 48–70. doi:[10.2307/23524357](https://doi.org/10.2307/23524357)
- Hickling-Hudson, A. (2010). Curriculum in post-colonial contexts. In P. P. B. McGaw (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed.). (pp. 299–306). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Jenny Bradshaw. (2012). *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Results from PISA 2012 United Kingdom: Key Findings* (pp. 1–8). Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Johnston, I. (2003). *Re-mapping literary worlds: Postcolonial pedagogy in practice*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Johnston, I., & Mangat, J. (2012). *Reading practices, post-colonial literature, and cultural mediation in the classroom*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Kanu, Y. (Ed.). (2006). *Curriculum as cultural practice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Kelly, A. (2013). Monopolising the examining board system in England: A theoretical perspective in support of reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 29, 44–57. doi:[10.1080/02680939.2013.790078](https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.790078)
- Lindblom, K. (2005). Teaching English in the world: The post-9/11 English teacher. *The English Journal*, 94, 106–109. doi:[10.2307/30046470](https://doi.org/10.2307/30046470)
- Michaels, W., & Gold, E. (2006). ‘As time goes by’ or read it again, Sam. *Metaphor*, 1, 90–99.
- Mohammadzadeh, B. (2009). Incorporating multicultural literature in English language teaching curriculum. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1, 23–27. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2009.01.008>
- Moni, K. (2012). Keep your eyes on the horizon and your feet on the ground: Some reflections on implementing the Australian curriculum: English. *English in Australia*, 47, 13–19.
- Morrell, E. (2005). Critical English education. *English Education*, 37, 312–321. doi:[10.2307/40173205](https://doi.org/10.2307/40173205)
- New South Wales Board of Studies. (2010). *Higher School Certificate course descriptions*. Sydney: Board of Studies NSW.
- New South Wales Board of Studies. (2012). *English: Stage 6 syllabus: English (standard), English (Advanced), English as a second language (ESL), English (Extension), Fundamentals of English / Board of Studies, New South Wales*. Sydney: Board of Studies NSW.
- New South Wales Government. (27 August 2012). Board of Studies New South Wales. Retrieved from www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1998). Cultivating humanity. *Liberal Education*, 84, 38.
- Quayson, A. (2000). *Post-colonialism: Theory, practice, or process?* Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Reay, D. (2006). The zombie stalking English schools: Social class and educational inequality. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54, 288–307. doi:[10.2307/4122422](https://doi.org/10.2307/4122422)
- Rooney, C. (2011). Egyptian literary culture and Egyptian modernity: Introduction. *Journal of Post-colonial Writing*, 47, 369–376. doi:[10.1080/17449855.2011.590308](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2011.590308)
- Sadana, R. (2009). *Two tales of a city. Interventions*, 11, 1–15. doi:[10.1080/13698010902752673](https://doi.org/10.1080/13698010902752673)
- Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Random House.

- Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Subedi, B. (2013). Decolonizing the curriculum for global perspectives. *Educational Theory*, 63, 621–638.
- Thomas, P. L. (2012). Adventures with text and beyond. *English Journal*, 101, 90.
- Tikly, L. (1999). Postcolonial and comparative education. *International Review of Education*, 45, 603–621.
- United Kingdom Statistics Authority. (2012). UK National Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-january-to-march-2012-2>
- Waugh, P. (2006). *Literary theory and criticism: An Oxford guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.