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Performing Citizenship Down Under: Educating the Active Citizen*

In democracies such as Australia and New Zealand, education policy increasingly seeks to foster active citizens who are committed to social justice and change. Whilst many aspects of these initiatives are to be applauded for their commitment to empowering young people, in this paper we describe some of the ambiguities that attend young people's experiences of civic engagement and active citizenship. In doing so, we draw on Isin's (2008) reconceptualization of citizenship as something that is, above all, performed or enacted. Isin's focus is upon 'acts of citizenship' which he argues are best understood by examining their grounds, effects and consequences. Drawing on illustrations of young people's global and local citizenship actions in schools in Australia and New Zealand, we examine some of the contradictions and tensions that lie within the enactment of such 'performed' curricula. We conclude by reflecting on the opportunities that exist within school and community spaces for the active citizen to perform acts of citizenship.

Keywords:

citizenship education, acts of citizenship, youth, active citizens, participation

1 Introduction

The past two decades have seen an enormous upsurge of education policy interest in young people's civic engagement, with a trend towards more 'active' concepttions of citizenship education observed in many places (Kennedy, 2007; Kerr, 1999; Nelson & Kerr, 2006; Ross, 2008). As Ross (2012) writes, in recent years "the adjective 'active' has frequently been added to the term 'Citizenship Education'" (p 7). This implies that active citizens are more sought after than passive ones:

> while many politicians would settle for a passive citizen (the 'good citizen', who votes, subscribes to the state obeys the law), many others—including most progressive educators—would hope to empower young citizens, to critically engage with and seek to affect the course of social events (2012, p. 7).

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Despite this policy interest, there is little consensus about what active civic engagement looks like in practice, or the role of schooling in fostering it. At the simplest level, civic engagement implies formal participation in political processes and institutions as well as informal involvement in civic or civil organisations and activities. A growing body of critical literature is moving beyond such definitions, however, to consider what might constitute not only a more active, but a more *activist* civic engagement. Bennett and his colleagues, for example, distinguish between the 'dutiful' young citizen, who participates through traditional or conventional civic avenues, and the 'actualizing' citizen, who engages in forms of activism to promote social change in ways that reflect her personal values and beliefs (Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2008). Westheimer and Kahne propose a spectrum of citizenship that ranges from the 'personally responsible citizen', who abides by the laws of the nation and may engage in activities for the public good, to the 'justice-oriented citizen', who "question[s], debate[s], and change[s] established systems and structures that reproduce patterns of injustice over time" (2004, p. 240). In a similar way, Isin (2008; 2009) distinguishes between social actions which are already instituted for citizens to perform (such as voting, taxpaying and enlisting) and 'acts of citizenship' which break with routines, understandings and practices and serve to foster social justice and change, or to 'make a difference'. It is these latter actions that Isin characterises as those of an 'activist' citizen.

These emerging constructions of youth citizenship are important to note: they are part of a wider critical zeitgeist that challenges the restricted notions of youth citizenship that persist within education policy and practice and that points to the more transformative role that numerous young people are already playing both within and outside democratic institutions (e.g. Kallio &

Häkli, 2013; Harris et al., 2010; Martinez et al., 2012). As we explain later in this paper, however, such critical constructions bear little resemblance to the dominant prescriptions of education policy, which remain focused on what is better understood as an active rather an activist citizenship.

These prescriptions are increasingly pursued within the education policy of advanced democracies such as Australia and New Zealand as well as within the school initiatives that they authorise or support. Whilst many aspects of these initiatives are to be applauded for their commitment to empowering young people, in this paper we describe some of the ambiguities that attend young people's experiences of civic engagement and citizenship in the context of schooling. In doing so, we draw on Engin Isin's (2008) reconceptualization of citizenship as something that is, above all, performed. We begin by reviewing Isin's notion of 'performed' citizenship and consider how this could be used to analyse the increasingly 'active' citizenship components of curricula in Australia and New Zealand. We then examine two examples of how this curriculum has been implemented in schools at a local and global scale. We conclude by discussing some of the contradictions and tensions that lie within the enactment of such 'performed' curricula, and the questions this raises for opportunities for young people's to participate in 'acts of citizenship' which bring about social transformation and make a difference in society (Isin, 2009).

2 Performing citizenship

The requirement for young people to 'perform' their citizenship is part of a broader shift in education and public policy that expects citizens not simply to understand the ways in which civic society operates, but also to enact, embody and *perform* their understandings (Kohli, 1999). These changes have significantly affected the nature of citizenship education in schools. Nelson and Kerr (2006) attribute this to the impact of the relentless pace of change in the 21st century, which is compelling officials and educators to pose serious questions about the nature of the participation of citizens in civic society and the scale of their citizenship responsibilities. As a result, citizenship is increasingly defined not just in relation to *status*, but, crucially, in relation to "*citizenship as an active practice"* (Nelson & Kerr, 2006, p. 7 their emphasis).

In this paper we engage in particular with Isin's (2008; 2009) theorising of citizenship which articulates a vision of performed and enacted citizenship, one which constitutes citizenship as the "practices of claim-making citizens in and through various sites and scales" (2008, p. 16). As Isin notes, "critical studies of citizenship over the last two decades have taught us that what is important is not only that citizenship is a legal status but that it also involves practices of making citizens – social, political, cultural and symbolic" (2008, p. 17). He suggests that we need to expand our investigations to include 'acts of citizenship', or moments when, regardless of status and

substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens – or (drawing on Arendt, 1951), as those to whom the right to have rights is due (p 18). This requires a focus on acts that may not even be considered political and an examination of not just the subject, but on that subject's interactions with others—based on the dialogical principle that "citizenship always involves otherness" (Isin, 2008, p. 19).

A focus on acts of citizenship moves beyond the simple 'performance' of an act, to an examination of the grounds, effects or consequences of acts of citizenship. This has important implications for our research into the citizenship of young people because it allows for opportunities to draw attention to acts which may not be considered political and that are carried out by young people who do not fit the 'status' of citizen as a result of their age (typically, under-18 year olds do not have the right to vote and participate in the processes of democracy in the way that adults do). Moreover, it provides a framework for analysis of actions which "transgress dominant and local constructions of citizenship and childhood [thus] contesting the justice of existing balances of rights, responsibilities and status" (Larkins, 2014, p. 19).

Isin's work is part of a growing body of scholarship that is concerned with formulating "a new vocabulary of citizenship" (Isin, 2009, p. 368), one that is "geographically responsive" (Isin, 2009, p. 368). Significantly, as Isin argues, it draws attention to the *nature* of citizenship performance, enabling us to question the type of acts young people may perform within curriculum and policy contexts; the forms, modes and sites of their citizenship acts; and the effects of those acts:

> An enactment inevitably creates a scene where there are selves and others defined in relation to each other. These are not fixed identities but fluid subject positions in and out of which subjects move. (Isin, 2008, p. 18-19).

Recasting citizenship as enactment also enables greater attention to the acts that constitute individuals as citizens: "rather than asking 'who is the citizen?' the question becomes 'what makes the citizen?'" (Isin, 2009, p. 383). By the same token, it enables us to consider under what conditions the citizen may be 'unmade' (Nyers, 2006).

Using Isin's holistic vision of a performed and 'lived' citizenship, we want to draw into question the nature of citizenship 'performance' as it is prescribed by education policy. In particular, we want to consider the ways in which this performance is implemented within education settings and the implications this may have for young people. Prior research in this area alerts us to the fact that schools are difficult places for young people to participate as active citizens for a number of reasons. Three reasons for this which were of particular significance in the schools in which we were researching: these are outlined below.

First, the utilitarian goals of schools, which are part of broader neoliberal agendas for young people, have a primary aim of producing self-regulating, economically autonomous and employable students (Harris, 2006; Pykett, 2009; Wolmuth, 2009). Thus, the requirement to 'perform' citizenship could potentially be reduced to narrow frameworks of citizenship action which are more closely aligned with employability and compliance rather than transformative and critical forms of citizenship action which aim to make a difference in society.

Second, there is also a likelihood that policy requirements for young people to perform citizenship could be derived from largely adult-centred notions of citizenship, thus overlooking how young people themselves view and understand and 'perform' their citizenship. The tendency to focus on performing formal citizenship acts such as voting, representation and signing petitions—what Norris (2007) calls 'mainstream' politics—also could obscure the very 'ordinary' ways that different young people live their citizenship (Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2010).

Third, we are concerned that the universalising characteristics of these policy requirements overlook the power constraints on young people within specific educational and community contexts which may limit their autonomy as citizens. This is especially pertinent within schools where high degrees of social control operate to regulate and monitor young people and their actions (Giroux, 2003).

Our discussion of our own research later in this paper illustrates the currency of these tensions within schools. This raises a number of questions. Will young people simply perform citizenship acts in order to achieve assessment credits and add to their curriculum vitae (Brooks, 2007), thus making schools the training grounds of the corporate workplace (Giroux, 2003)? Or will citizenship education offer opportunities to develop citizens who can also critique existing structures in society, and participate through their 'lived' experiences as active citizens in transforming aspects of society which matter to them? We begin our exploration of these questions with an examination of the policies for active citizenship that have been introduced in both Australia and New Zealand, and the sites that such policies define as spaces for young people's citizenship.

3 Educating the active citizen down under in Australia and New Zealand

In both Australia and New Zealand, education policy locates young people's active citizenship within global, national and local spheres. In Australia, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, which represents the current blueprint for Australian schooling, describes the imperative for schools to prepare young people to be both "global and local citizens" (MCEETYA, 2008, p.9). The new Australian Curriculum extends and amplifies this prescription, describing citizenship not only as "the condition of belonging to social, religious, political or community groups, locally, nationally and globally" (ACARA, 2012, p. 2), but as a condition that expects this feeling of belonging to be translated into practice and action. The Shaping Paper for Civics and Citizenship makes this emphasis explicit:

Over the past two decades in Australia and internationally, there has been a broadening of the concepts, processes, and practices in Civics and Citizenship education. In particular there has been an increased emphasis on the role of active citizenship, both as explicit content and as a key outcome of Civics and Citizenship education (ACARA, 2012, p. 3).

The expectation of such policy texts is that schools should enable this more active form of citizenship to take place. The Shaping Paper stresses that "students in schools are citizens but they need opportunities to build their knowledge and understanding and experience to become *active* adult citizens" (ACARA, 2012, p. 5, our emphasis). It describes the role of the school in enabling young people to be "active and empowered citizens" who "apply democratic principles, practise behaviours and […] actively engage in practical citizenship activities within schools, in the community and online" (ACARA, 2012, p. 5). This places the responsibility firmly on schools to provide these active citizenship-affirming opportunities.

Similar to Australia, New Zealand's latest curriculum also advocates for a more active conception of citizenship across the whole curriculum and specifically within the social sciences. This inclusion of citizenship as an active process "for all young people both through the curriculum, in the culture of the school and in the wider community beyond" (Nelson & Kerr, 2006, p. 9) has been noted internationally and locally (Electoral Commission (NZ), 2007; Nelson & Kerr, 2006). At the heart of this curriculum is a vision of young people who are active participants in their learning and in society – "confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners" (p 8). More active conceptions of citizenship through "participating and contributing" (p 12) are also supported in the new section on key competencies and most specifically in the learning area of the social sciences where students will "explore how societies work and how they themselves, can participate and *take action as critical, informed, and responsible citizens*" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 17, our emphasis). Taking this a step further, the social studies curriculum assessment for students in Years 11-13 (ages 15-18) now requires students to 'take personal social action' to gain credits for their National Certificate in Educational Achievement.

Like the Australian curriculum, the scale of active citizenship in this curriculum includes an expectation that students will participate in local and national communities but also extends to participation in 'global communities'. This vision aspires to develop young people as "international citizens," "members of communities", active participants and "contributors to

the well-being of New Zealand—social, economic, and environmental" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). Promoting students as active, global citizens is a theme that is similarly endorsed in the named principles of this document which include citizenship as one of four significant future-focused issues (along with sustainability, enterprise and globalisation).[1]

Yet, in both nations, teachers were grappling with the nature and scale of these curriculum requirements and interpreting and implementing them in different ways (Black, 2011b; Wood, 2012a). For example, teachers in some New Zealand lower socio-economic schools focused on local issues and social action, while the higher socio-economic school communities had more of a global focus (Wood, 2012a; 2013). Teachers in some Australian lower socio-economic schools have similarly been found to emphasise the local community as a site for young people's citizenship performance (Black, 2010). This draws into question which forms of active citizenship are awarded the greatest symbolic 'distinction' (Bourdieu, 1984) in society, and whether neoliberal and economistic versions of citizenship will favour the agile global citizen-worker over the active citizen.

In light of these increasing requirements for active citizenship, we need to examine the nature of young people's citizenship acts within educational contexts. In particular, we need to find ways to support those acts that might constitute not only active but activist citizenship, acts that promote social transformation. In the following section, we draw from our experiences of research in schools in Australia and New Zealand where more active citizenship curricula were being implemented. Each study recruited a purposive sample of case study schools, two in Australia and four in New Zealand, which were implementing active citizenship curricula (see Black, 2011b; Wood, 2012b). Both studies applied an immersive, ethnographic methodology to the exploration and critical analysis of the implementation of these curricula, drawing on semi-structured interviews and field observation of school leaders, teachers and students as well as on school documentary and archival material in relation to the development and implementation of the curricula. Both studies analysed data within each case study and across case studies to develop what was unique and comparable across these sites. Such a comparison can highlight the "contextual sensitivity" (Silverman, 2006, p. 17) of interpretations of concepts such as 'participation' and 'citizenship', recognising that these concepts are likely to have a variety of meanings in different contexts (McLeod & Yates, 2006).

Whilst there were many 'success' stories emerging from these schools, in these illustrations from our respective studies we expose some aspects which were perhaps more troubling, highlighting some of the tensions surrounding the required performance of young people's citizenship. These illustrations focus on two different scales of citizenship. Bronwyn's research examines student participation in a 'global' project which

required fundraising in one of her New Zealand schools; Rosalyn's research explores how students performed their citizenship through local projects enacted within their immediate geographic community in Australia.

4 'You just can't go into a country like that and just change things': Performing citizenship globally

New Zealand young people from Bronwyn's research illustrated some of the tensions surrounding young people's education as 'active' citizens and how these are played out in the context of a classroom. The following illustration is drawn from one New Zealand high school which had a teacher with a strong commitment to social change which was embedded in her social studies programmes. The primary way that students in this school were encouraged to respond was through fund raising and collecting donations. This included, for example, selling friendship bracelets to raise money for Voluntary Services Abroad (VSA), collecting food for local food banks, holding an End Poverty conscious-raising school assembly, and writing submissions to the Council on local issues. The Head of Department had also initiated a field trip to a developing country for social studies students to gain international exposure and take social action by contributing to humanitarian work in this country. The students, staff and parents were very supportive of these initiatives, which were largely 'safe' forms of taking social action.

The students, who had been studying social studies for a number of years, had a strong sense that 'social action'[2] was an integral part of that subject. For example, the following students (17-18 years) described why they thought students should take social action as part of their social studies programmes:

ITMaster:[3] You've got to put into action what you've learned. You can't just *sit* there, learn and not do anything. It's kind of boring. I think that's why people leave school. They just *sit,* they *learn*, but they don't have any action. (18 years, male)

Bella: Also I think, if they start us off at this age doing things is a very structured school environment, then we can see how easy it is to do something. And then we can use that later on in life. (18 years, female)

Their discussion showed a commitment to both 'performative' notions of social action and of learning and showed a strong alignment with the curriculum documents which advocate for participatory and active citizenship. As Bella states, the logic that 'they start us off at this age' showed compliance with the government's desire for young people to practise for long term civic participation.

However, there were also glimpses of some tensions between the largely acceptable forms of social action and students' own critique of these citizenship actions that emerged during the classroom observations and interviews. Their teacher had introduced a charity led by

Craig Kielburger, *Free the Children*, which he had started when he was 12 years old as she hoped to inspire her students with the thought that they too could make a difference at a young age. The focus of Kielburger's charity is on child labour and actions included lobbying governments in Pakistan and India for stricter punishments for child labour and Kielburger himself has even raided child labour factories to rescue them. The students initially had discussed Craig Keilburger in their interviews with me, using him as an example of someone who took social action:

Claire: [Social action is] like taking action about something either has affected you or something you believe strongly. (18 years, female)

Leaf: Just like that video Keilburger guy (Craig) – he took social action. (18 years, female)

Wonder woman: [Social action is] getting other people aware and trying to help them, the problem. (18 years, female)

Yet alongside this affirmation of his citizenship actions, students were also critical of his interventionist actions. The following 'everyday' conversation (out of ear-shot of the teacher, recorded on an audio device during their café-style discussions) showed how they were grappling with contested and complex understandings of citizenship within dialogical contexts:

Wonderwoman: When we were watching that video yesterday [referring to Craig Kielburger and raids on child labour camps] and he was saying something about going in and starting a war to sort everything out.

Leaf: You just can't go into a country like that and just change things. Cos you gotta think about the way, for how many years that they've done that for...

Wonderwoman: Yeah, it's part of their culture.

Claire: Cos of the way things have been done, it becomes part of their culture.

Leaf: So you have to assess the situation and think about what you're doing. It may not be done overnight, but it may take multiple generations before a society is changed. Because you've got to slowly integrate it in and teach it.

This discussion shows a somewhat unsettled response to his 'social action' which they felt was lacking in respect for local cultures and rather heavy-handed. This dialogue serves to 'rupture' (Isin, 2008) the tidy image of Kielburger as a living example of social action which they provided earlier as these young people begin to write the script of how they view citizenship acts. Isin (2009) states

that creative acts which break or rupture the given order, practice of habitus are examples of 'acts of citizenship' which reveal the 'activist' citizen, rather than the more predictable active citizen. Such discussions collectively constitute sites for citizenship formation as they are moments in which young people recognise their political consciousness and negotiate difference, identity and power (Elwood & Mitchell, 2012; Wood, 2013).

Yet, within the context of an educational experience that exhorts Kielburger as an exemplary citizen, their dialogue undermined the expected patterns of the 'active' citizen—which in this case would be to collect money to promote his cause against child labour and to advocate for *Free the Children* as a lobby group. The fact they didn't share this view with their teacher indicates that they may not have felt it was a 'safe' discussion to hold in this classroom. Their discussions also highlighted much more 'everyday' understanding of citizenship than their teachers expressed (Wood, 2012a). These were often tentative, ambiguous and questioning of adult-defined conceptions of citizenship showing how their citizenship understandings were dynamic and under formation, forged through debates and discussions with peers. Moreover, despite the positive examples of a young citizen (Kielburger), the students felt restricted in the abilities to take action as young citizens. This stemmed from perceptions in their regional town that young people were 'trouble' and also the very real structural and perceptual limitations they felt as a result of their youthfulness and lack of power, as Bella describes:

I think, not so much the limitations, but the limitations that you think you have. Like, you think in your mind 'Oh, but I'm young. There is only a certain amount of influence that I can actually have. I can't change government policy or something like that."

This example highlights the tension of creating the active citizen within classroom spaces – just how much freedom do young people have to enact their citizenship within school and community spaces? It also highlights the criticality of these students, and their way they were constructing their citizenship identities and subjectivities.

5 'It makes us believe that we're like bigger than we actually are': Performing citizenship locally

In Rosalyn's research, young people were interviewed at two Australian schools that had implemented active citizenship which encouraged students to design and implement social action projects that 'make a difference' within their own local communities, communities that are characterised by socioeconomic exclusion. As in New Zealand, these Australian programmes reflected the policy expectation that young people begin their civic participation early, as one male student describes:

[The programme] showed us that age isn't a restriction to like... changing stuff. It's not all left to adults. [Teacher] brought that up, he's like 'it doesn't

have to start when you're like 40, when you've actually got a seat of power, it can actually start from when you're really young', so it gives you the feeling that you've actually got a bit of power and a voice.

This feeling was shared by many of his peers. At each school, the students' belief that they had enacted or enabled needed change within their communities was one that brought them a deep personal satisfaction:

And you walk into the community, and you see something that's been changed because it's something that you did in a small classroom, you feel good about it because 'hey look, I started that, we made it grow' and you feel confident that you can go out and say 'that's what we were doing'.

Their performed local citizenship enabled these young people to construct a sense of themselves as individuals whose voices were not only heard but, to mix sensory metaphors, seen to be heard. In so doing, it provided them with important resources for recognition (Fraser, 2000). It also enabled them to achieve greater recognition within their schools as "competent beings who exercise agency in their own lives and in their communities" (Hoffmann-Ekstein et al., 2008, p. 1). Yet, at the same time, these school-based experiences directly contrasted with their experiences of being citizens in the specific communities in which they live and in which they are more frequently associated with 'trouble' and 'risk' than with autonomous and transformative citizenship. The following exchange elaborates on these young people's normative experience of suspicion and distrust within their community:

Student: It happens in lots of places. I just walked into a shop, saw nothing that I liked, turned around and walked out and had some lady chase me half way down the shopping centre to check my bag.
[...]

Student: Like, if one person in [town] does something wrong, it reflects on everyone our age.

Student: And people judge people for just being a teenager, they judge you and they think all teenagers are the same, but we're not, we're all different.

Similar youth experiences are familiar from other studies (e.g. Davies et al. 2012; Warwick et al. 2012; Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002), which report that adults in low socioeconomic communities are slow to believe that young people are willing or able to contribute to the task of building those communities. The discursive promise of both programmes was that these young people's performance of citizenship within the community will change this belief: "They won't think you're just another kid, you've actually done something to say that you do care about this world" (student). Such statements illustrate just some of the tensions that surround the construction of young people's citizenship within education policy and school practice and its enactment, or performance, within the complex socio-geographic nature of the places in which young people live, especially where those places are further complicated by socioeconomic disadvantage (Black, 2011a). They are also illustrative of the power constraints that may be experienced by young people within the everyday setting of the local community.

This community was the site of complex and contradictory experiences for the young people at both schools. On the one hand, their citizenship performance was constructed as a means by which they could contribute to the community through the curriculum and gain both a greater sense of belonging and greater recognition from its members. On the other, it was constructed as a means by which these same young people could transcend the constraints that were seen to attend that same community, constraints that are seen to be both psychological and physical. It was also constructed as a means by which they could achieve a degree of social mobility that the local community, with its "everyday geographies" (Dickinson et al., 2008, p. 101) of high youth employment, was not seen to offer its young people. It was seen as a means by which, as one school principal explained, these young people could learn to become "well informed citizens who've got a job that they're happy with". In both cases, it was the curriculum, and the students' experience of citizenship within that curriculum, that was to be the means of achieving these various transformations:

… they've kind of learnt to think outside, you know, and to be bigger than they are, that they're not just going to be stuck in [town name] for the rest of their lives. (Teacher)

Other tensions arose from within the school itself. At both schools, the students' experience of active citizenship was seen as a means of endowing them with some of the opportunities that they were perceived to lack by virtue of their socio-geographic circumstances, as one teacher explained:

… their world is what experiences they have had and I suppose for many of them it's not very much, particularly in this area that's a bit remote and some of them don't have the family backgrounds to be able to do a lot of, you know, haven't travelled very far. We get kids every year that we take to the Year Nine camp that have never been to the city.

Such aims are well-intentioned, but they also have other and more utilitarian dimensions. We note earlier that active citizenship as an educational intervention has been charged with producing self-regulating neoliberal subjects as much as enabling transformative acts of citizenship. In schools where socioeconomic disad-

vantage is an issue, the pedagogies of active citizenship may also be designed to engage, or reengage, students in schooling. This is most often directed towards middle years students, a cohort which has been described as having a "5D relationship to school", one within which they are "dissatisfied, disengaged, disaffected, disrespectful, and disruptive" (Kenway & Bullen, 2007, p. 31).

The experience of active citizenship has been shown to give young people a stronger sense of membership in the school and a stronger sense of themselves as learners (Atweh, Bland, Carrington, & Cavanagh, 2007; McInerney, 2009). It has also been shown to improve the educational engagement of young people who are believed to be most likely to become disengaged from school (Stokes & Turnbull, 2008). At the same time, its use as a strategy to ensure this engagement reflects the 'blurring' of the objectives of citizenship action within the curriculum. At both schools, the introduction of an active citizenship programme was partly motivated by the need to promote pedagogical approaches that improved student engagement. In the words of one teacher, "we had to design something that's going to re-engage and re-enthuse". The school leader at the same school was equally frank about this aspect of the programme:

The biggest thing that I've been pushing and I know others have been pushing is engagement. Because the kids here, and when I say this it's not all of them, but there's a fair percentage of kids who just aren't interested in education, and not only that, their parents aren't.

Such curricula may well meet their purposes: indeed, the consistent view of educators at both schools was that the introduction of an active citizenship curriculum had significantly enhanced student engagement. At the same time, however, they add to the tensions that already attend young people's education for citizenship because they risk reducing young people's acts of citizenship to little more than means to an educational end. Even while they are employed to enable genuine transformative change for these young people and their communities, they are also used to create more active, well-behaved learners who are more socially mobile and employable. In the following discussion, we examine these tensions in greater depth.

6 Discussion
Performing citizenship, as Isin conceptualises it, has great potential to embrace a more embodied notion of citizenship. Our research supports this: both studies offer many examples of how both teachers and students found authentic opportunities for young people to make a difference in their communities and at wider scales. Such actions were perceived as important by students – "you've actually got a bit of power and a voice" – because they contrasted with many of their normative experiences as young people in schools and in communities.

However, our research also suggests that there are a number of aspects that relate to the schooling and classroom context which constrain these same opportunities. These include narrow definitions and minimal interpretations of citizenship actions. Bronwyn's research demonstrated how the teacher's presentation of an 'active' citizen was one that the students found difficult to respect and relate to. Yet their criticism of this model citizen was made quietly and to each other rather than to the teacher, suggesting that they feared that this type of critique was discouraged in class. Pykett (2009) suggests that political critique needs to focus on differrences or asymmetries in social enablement and constraint which delimit possible social action; specifically on relations of domination. In the context of school settings, the asymmetries of power are apparent: students are obliged to follow the directives of the teacher or consequences are forthcoming. 'Active' citizenship pedagogies therefore are embedded within this highly stratified context and need specific consideration for how they can be potentially coercive, manipulative or limiting on student freedom.

For this same reason, when student *do* act out in ways that are perhaps unexpected or defiant, these need to be read and understood within the context of such spaces. While the students' critique in Bronwyn's illustration may be seen as insignificant, it nonetheless constituted an 'act of citizenship' as, through these dialogical actions, young people challenged the existing relations they had with citizenship and looked to redefine what citizenship meant to them (Larkins, 2014). In Isin's (2008) words, their acts of citizenship showed that they *already* were performing 'ways of becoming political' (p 39) through their actions and ways of reacting with others.

In Rosalyn's research, the boundaries between the young person as active citizen and the young person as student (or citizen-learner) had become blurred, with the citizenship curriculum being simultaneously used to address issues of student disengagement and poor behaviour even while it appealed to the rhetoric of active citizenship and provided the means for young people to experience or enact that citizenship. This blurred citizenship curriculum undermined opportunities for more transformative social change as the programme attempted to meet conflicting aims (Wolmuth, 2009). Such blurring suggests that even while young people are being encouraged to see themselves as actors who can 'make a difference', they themselves are the subjects of educational interventions that seek to make a difference to their own behaviours and to encourage to meet the terms of a more normative identity: that of the good student, the young person whose actions are defined and measured by others (Smyth, 2011).

This tendency to assimilate active citizenship within broader instrumentalist agendas remains an ongoing concern, especially as schools in both Australia and New Zealand are increasingly subject to policy scrutiny and

measurement in regards to their ability to ensure competitive levels of student engagement, attainment and achievement (for evidence from Australia, see Lingard, 2010). In recent years, this scrutiny has also become a public activity. There is concern that this escalation of measurement and testing regimes is beginning to be associated with increases in the degree of stress, anxiety, pressure and fear experienced by young people. There is also evidence that this is having a negative effect on schools' capacity to deliver quality teaching and learning opportunities which can lead to the closing down of spaces within the school curriculum for more participatory or democratic forms of education (Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2012).

In concluding we return to Isin's (2008) distinction between activist citizens who "engage in writing scripts and creating the scene", in contrast with active citizens who "follow scripts and participate in scenes that are already created" (p 38). Our concern with current educational and curriculum policies which promote 'per-formed' citizenship in school centre upon this distinction: the model of citizenship which is permitted and enacted within school is likely to follow pre-organised scripts that are tightly structured along timelines to meet assess-ment deadlines and pre-established outcomes—an *active* citizen model. When young people did critique this model (Bronwyn's examples), or struggle to meet the more maximal - interpretations of citizenship, or move beyond spatially inscribed characteristics of youth (Rosalyn's examples), our research shows that there was very little room for teachers or students to engage with critical dialogue, or seek creative responses beyond the planned curriculum, thus constraining the space for the *activist* citizen to exist. This was exacerbated further by the contrasting messages young people were getting through citizenship curricula which told them they could 'make a difference' and their own communities which told them they were 'risky' and 'trouble-makers'. Such mixed messages can lead to disillusionment rather than empowerment.

To conclude, focusing on performed citizenship enables a recasting of young people's citizenship as a situated, relational and conditional practice, one that is both spatially and temporally precarious and subject to change depending on the context in which the individual finds him or herself. This attends to Isin's argument for more "geographically responsive" (Isin, 2009, p. 368) vocabulary of citizenship, which takes far greater consideration of context, place and power. We surmise that unless the spaces for performing acts of citizenship within school programmes and community settings themselves are called into question, there will be very few opportunities for both teachers and young people to participate in acts of citizenship which break routines, understandings and practices (Isin, 2009). This highlights the need to specifically address the aspects undermine the capacity of young people as citizens to 'make a difference' through the programmes they are offered in schools and communities. This is a challenging task for civic educators as it requires recognising the complex ecologies of young people's lives as well as facilitating active, reflective and reflexive civic opportunities (Warwick et al., 2012). Yet it is one that deserves attention if the goal of implementing active citizenship policies which require young people to 'perform' their citizenship is to be taken seriously.

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Endnotes

[1] Citizenship education is defined in the New Zealand Curriculum within these future focused themes as "exploring what it means to be a citizen and to contribute to the development and well-being of society" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 39).

[2] The term social action has been used specifically in New Zealand social studies curricula to convey actions taken to participate in the life of the community.

[3] Students self-selected their pseudonyms for the project.