

Making futures: Generational change, youth values and education

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

The research project

You are invited to participate in a study of young people's views and experiences in the final three years of secondary school and the first year after leaving school. It aims to find out what young people like you think about schooling experiences, social values, and future plans. We want to understand how young people identify and think about social issues and social differences and in particular what they think about gender roles and relations. We are also interested in changing patterns in how young people, in earlier times and now, think about these matters over time. Parents will be interviewed separately about these matters, and about their own educational memories, social values and hopes for their own future when they were at school, as well as their hopes now for their child's future. This will help in understanding how, whether or what values and attitudes have changed across the generations. This is a longitudinal study that will interview students and their parents once a year for four years: participants will come from three different areas and schools in Victoria.

This study is part of a large project looking at the history of young people and schooling in Australia since the 1950s. The research will be conducted by me, Julie McLeod. I am a Professor in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, at The University of Melbourne. The Australian Research Council has provided funding for this research. Approval to conduct the interviews has been given by the Human Research Ethics Committee at The University of Melbourne and by the Research Division of the Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Early Childhood Development. The principal of your school has agreed to information about the research project being given to students enrolled at your school.

What you are being asked to do?

I am inviting you to participate in an interview once a year for four years, beginning when you are in year 10 and then for three years after that, including after you leave school. I will conduct these four interviews and they will be about 45 to 60 minutes in length, and, with your permission, they will be audio-recorded. Students will be invited from three different schools and areas in Victoria to participate in this study. In the interviews, you will be asked to discuss your reflections on your educational experiences and learning, social viewpoints and hopes for the future and the things you do when you are not at school.

Most of the time, the interviews will be like a conversation with you responding to questions and issues that I raise. You will also have the option of not answering specific questions or of taking questions and comments in directions that especially interest you. The interviews are interested in memories and daydreams as well as definite plans and points of view about social issues. For some interviews, you will be asked to bring in an old school photo and talk about what you remember from that time, or a favourite photo and talk about why you chose it and what it means to you. In one interview, you will be asked to draw your own life history timeline, and in other interviews you will be asked for your views on a range of social issues, such as attitudes when younger and now to gender roles, social media, privacy, personal and public space, migration, family life in the future, religion, personal ethics, socio-economic differences and social issues that concern you. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. The aim is to find out more about young people's views and social values in the past and in the present, and to compare these ideas across generations. These interviews are an important part of a historical study of ideas about young people, and about how young people's own ideas, values and educational experiences have changed over the last 50-60 years.

What happens with the interviews?

The interview will be held at school or if you prefer or have left school, at a location convenient for you – for example at a local library, your home, or the university – and it will be held in a private room. After the interview is finished, the audio recording will be transcribed (typed out). At the end of the project, and the completion of your four interviews, you will be sent copies of your transcribed interviews. You will be asked to review them and to edit or correct anything if you wish. I will ask you to return these edited transcripts to me so that I can keep approved copies of your interviews.

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It is important to know that your participation in these interviews is completely voluntary and even if you agree to be part of them now, you are free to withdraw at any stage of the project: if this happens, I will not use any unprocessed data from your interviews. It is possible that the interview may cause you to think about unhappy times or events. If this happens and you are feeling upset, I will stop the interview immediately, if you wish. The interview will only resume when and if you are happy to do so and if you wish, you could talk to a teacher or friend at the school. If you would like to continue the interview at another time, a new date can be arranged. You are, however, free not to continue with the interview at all, and, if you wish, to have the recording of your interview destroyed and not used in the research project.

Confidentiality and anonymity

As part of the larger research project, I will be writing articles and books and talking at conferences about what I am finding. When I am writing or presenting papers based on the interviews, I will use a false name or pseudonym for you and your interview, unless you specifically request that your real name be used. If you request to use your real name to identify your interview, you will still be able to ask that certain comments you make are not quoted in publications or presentations. You may tell me this during the interview, or in comments on the transcript. The use of a pseudonym is to help protect your privacy and for your name and details to remain anonymous. I will respect this and the confidentiality of your comments. I will not report or discuss what you personally say in interviews with teachers or students at your school, with other participants or with your parents. Your name and contact details will be kept in a password-protected computer file and separate from any interview transcripts in which you will be identified by your pseudonym. The intention is to protect your anonymity and confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. However, it is possible, because of the relatively small numbers of people involved, and because your interview could contain details that reveal who you are or the school you attended that it might be possible to identify some comments as belonging to you.

Use and storage of interview material

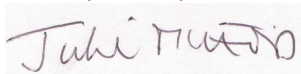
I will securely store your interviews for use by me and I will prepare brief summaries of some interviews and place them on a project website: you and others will be able to read these summaries. All of these summaries will be anonymous and use pseudonyms to protect your privacy. At the end of the project and after you have approved all your interview transcripts, I would like to place digital copies of these full transcripts in a special Archive Service (like a research library) so that other researchers can apply to read them in the future and draw on them as part of their own studies: I will only place your transcript in an Archive Service with your written permission. These digital transcripts would be made anonymous and you would be identified by your pseudonym, unless you specifically request that your real name is used. When material is lodged with the Archive Service, only the transcribed interview would be available to other researchers. However, if you agree, the audio recording of your interview could be made available to researchers 50 years after your final interview – in 2067. This audio recording would then become an historical record but it could have details on it that could identify you personally.

There is a consent form for participating in this project. You can indicate that you do not give consent for your interview transcript to be deposited at an Archives Service. You can give consent for your transcript to be deposited at the Archives Service but not give consent to having your audio recording made available in 50 years time. These options are available on the consent form, and you will be asked to review or confirm your decisions at the end of the project. Even if you consent to these decisions now, you can change your mind at any time in the course of doing the interviews. However, if you wish to withdraw your interviews from the Archive Service once they have been deposited there, it is possible that other researchers will have already read them and we cannot reverse that or stop them from using the interviews in their research. If you choose not to have your interview archived, I still need to keep all interview data securely at the University of Melbourne for at least five years after publication of material arising from your interview.

Agreeing to participate: If you decide that you do wish to be a participant in this project, you will be asked to sign a consent form to show that you understand what you will be asked to do. Your parents will also be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to your participation, because you are under the age of eighteen.

Further information: Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please contact Professor Julie McLeod: (03) 8344 3455; xxxx xxx xxx. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, by telephone: (03) 8344 2073, or by fax: (03) 9347 6739.

Thank you for your time.



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