1

Humanities and Social Sciences in the Australian Curriculum

The Humanities and Social Sciences encompass aspects of social, civics and citizenship education, originally subsumed under the term SOSE or HSIE (in New South Wales). However, in the latest iteration of the Australian Curriculum, the term Humanities and Social Sciences encompasses studies of History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business. In primary teaching the curriculum document is called HASS F–6/7 and allows for concepts of interdisciplinary and disciplinary thinking within HASS.

Research into Humanities and Social Sciences indicates that this area of study is a negotiation of the relative weight given to the encouragement of either social commitment or social comprehension, achieved through the aims of citizenship or scholarship (Johnston 1989).

Classroom approaches to the Humanities and Social Sciences promote inquiry approaches as the centre point of the area of study and there is an emphasis on real-world problem solving. It is often referred to as the citizenship area of the curriculum. There is also emphasis on developing national and global identity through the content areas, particularly through historical and geographical studies.

This chapter:
- establishes the area of study in the Australian Curriculum in its historical context
- describes the individual contributions of History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business and the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum and how they relate to active and informed citizenship.

What is this area in the Australian Curriculum?

The Australian Curriculum established a number of separate areas that under previous state curriculum documents were categorised as SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment) or HSIE (in New South Wales, standing for Human Society and Its Environment). The SOSE label originated from a national activity of 1991 that mapped what was being taught in areas of study in Environmental Education and Studies of Society across Australia. Across the world, this area of study has been referred to as social studies, studies of society or citizenship education. Typically, in Australia, it includes the study of disciplines such as history, geography, sociology and economics; cross-disciplinary areas such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, environmental studies, religious studies, peace studies, Asian studies; and some integrated studies such as civics and citizenship education, social studies and Australian studies.

The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA), which was established in 2008, has developed curriculum documents in History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business education, and for the primary section of schooling indicated the overriding interdisciplinary links between these. These disciplinary/interdisciplinary focuses strongly feature the incorporation of key traditional 'capabilities' in the SOSE/HSIE area of the curriculum, including intercultural understanding, ethical behaviour and personal and social competence. Additionally, cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Sustainability and Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia— all separate areas that have had a strong SOSE/HSIE focus in previous national and state curriculum documents—essentially make up the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) area of the curriculum.

Internationally, this area of the curriculum is variously referred to as studies of society and environment, human society and its environment, social science, social studies, new social studies, teaching about society, the study of society, and citizenship education and civics. Some see these areas of study as a collection of similar or related subjects such as history, geography, civics and economics, while others see them as elements of an integrated field of study. Primary and secondary areas of schooling often use different terminology. Definitions, however, have tended to focus on the intentions of the study rather than the discipline area from which it arose, at least in the primary school, and this makes it an excellent vehicle for authentic interdisciplinary study including study outside the HASS area.

There has always been difficulty in definitively establishing the purposes and parameters of the social studies area and, despite studies by researchers such as Engle (1960), Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) and Shaver (1982; 1987) in the United States, and Johnston (1989), Reynolds (1999) and Kennedy (2001) in Australia, it continues to elicit scrutiny. Divisions between the cultural traditions approach (passing on of important traditions from our past), including civics education, and the critical evaluation and decision-making approach (working to transform our society), which could be seen as an active citizenship approach, are still apparent in Australia. Johnston argued that the evolution of what he called the social studies area of study was the recurrent negotiation of the relative weight given to the encouragement of

3

either social commitment or social comprehension, achieved through the aims of citizenship or scholarship (Johnston 1989). There are, however, some fundamental knowledge, processes and values that underpin this area and have some long-standing validity.

Australian Curriculum aims and rationale for Humanities and Social Sciences

The *Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences F-6/7* (Version 8.3; ACARA 2017a) points out that the HASS learning area consists of two interrelated strands: knowledge and understanding; and inquiry and skills. The inquiry aspect of inquiry and skills is not necessarily clear, but it is argued that the skills are intertwined with inquiry and so this aspect can be seen as following an inquiry sequence of events (a long-standing approach in HASS education; see Chapter 2), plus also focusing on an inquiry approach no matter where in that sequence of activities you are situated. It is interesting to note that although the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Melbourne Declaration) argues that the Australian Curriculum should enable students to be committed to 'national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life' and 'responsible global and local citizens' (MCEETYA 2008, p. 9), the teaching of values is not explicit. This can be partly explained by the fact that the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum are expected to develop behaviour and dispositions and that the implementation of such behaviour and dispositions is the responsibility of the states. Thus by inference, values are the responsibility of state jurisdictions and so are not explicit in the Australian Curriculum. This text and the support material do provide support for values education because values and attitudes are very important to clarify and interrogate in HASS, and you are urged not to forget that in HASS.

The HASS F–6/7 curriculum has a rationale and a set of aims, and it is important that you investigate these on the ACARA website. In terms of rationale, most knowledge and understandings focus on learning about places, people, cultures and systems throughout the world, past and present. The overall inquiry process involves questioning, researching using reliable sources, analysing, evaluating and communicating. Dispositions mentioned are effective participation, critical and creative problem solving, informed decision making, being a responsible and active citizen, being financially enterprising and partaking in ethical reflection. The key aims are related to these themes, and these themes will be discussed in the following chapters.

Key Point

A key aim of HASS F–6/7 is to encourage a 'sense of wonder, curiosity and respect about places, people, cultures and systems throughout the world, past and present, and an interest in and enjoyment of the study' (ACARA 2017a).

The knowledge and understandings of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Humanities and Social Sciences involve studying our own society, and visions for future societies encourage educators to continually reconsider and adapt knowledge and understandings that students should gain in this learning area. In many cases, however, these new learnings are simply added to the existing learnings, leading curriculum developers to engage in endless debates as to which knowledge is of more worth. This is why we have curriculum debates as to whether we need to teach about particular Asian countries or particular Western schools of thought.

An alternative approach is where the curriculum is developed around key concepts or understandings, and there is some discretion given to teachers and students to use a variety of suitable pieces of knowledge or facts to explore these concepts. If, for example, syllabus writers established that social justice as a global issue should be investigated, then one example, among many possible issues, is the refugee issue in Australia. This approach assumes there are a variety of facts that are of equal value in exploring an issue and there is no need to mandate any particular set of them. Of course, the danger with the latter approach is that some students may cover similar content in subsequent years, even if they address a different concept or 'big idea'.

This then establishes the two ends of a continuum when deciding what knowledge and understandings are essential for the HASS area of the curriculum. At the one end of the continuum there are facts and groups of facts required to be learnt, and at the other end there are broad conceptions to be explored with potentially no particular facts more important than any other (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 The continuum of essential Humanities and Social Sciences knowledge and understandings

FACTS		CONCEPTS
Bits of knowledge too important to leave out of a student's education	⟷	General understandings supported by a variety of groups of facts chosen for their relevance and illustrative potential

REFLECTING ON HASS

What is Humanities and Social Sciences? Are there any areas that appear to be missing from this area of study? What concepts do you think should be included in primary Humanities and Social Sciences? Are there any facts that you think all school students should know in this area?

The skills of Humanities and Social Sciences

Humanities and Social Sciences learners are guided by futures thinking, in that to better understand and influence the society of the future it is crucial to understand the society of the present and past. Humanities and Social Sciences learners need to be self-directed. They need to be flexible and creative. They need to be collaborative. They need to have complex thinking skills and be reflective of their learning. They also need to have some vision of their role in the world and so be able to apply their skills to something meaningful for them and others (ACDE 2001; Bentley 1998; Hicks 1996; Kennedy 2001; Spender 2001; Townsend 2001).

The inquiry process, which is strongly identified with Humanities and Social Sciences, promotes all of these desired skills. There are explanations of the inquiry process in most social studies/social science textbooks and research texts (Buchanan 2013; Hoepper & Gilbert 2013; Levstik & Tyson 2008; Marsh & Hart 2011; Reynolds 2014; Taylor, Fahey, Kriewaldt & Boon 2012; Thornton & Barton 2010), with the essential tenets being that there is a sequence of activities to guide students through a meaningful social investigation. Although there are a number of different ways of classifying this sequence, it basically revolves around a progression of framing and focusing questions; locating, organising and analysing evidence; evaluating, synthesising and reporting conclusions; possibly taking action of some sort; and reconsidering consequences and outcomes of each of the above phases (Gordon 2000; Hamston & Murdoch 1996; Naylor 2000). As Naylor (2000) points out, the inquiry process depends upon a view that students are to be strongly involved in the learning process and they actively construct meaning, negotiate all aspects of learning, frame questions to be answered, learn in a social context and can be involved in taking some kind of action.

The Humanities and Social Sciences area requires skills of participation. Students have to be connected to their community if this area is to assist them in future learning (Arthur & Bailey 2000; Cumming & Carbines 1997). Holden and Clough (1998) point out that children are interested and concerned about issues such as environmental destruction, crime and violence and they would like to work towards effective changes to their society. There are also significant benefits for society in developing such competent citizens. Holden and Clough

Key Point

Worldwide basic inquiry process is:
- framing and focusing questions
- locating, organising and analysing evidence
- evaluating, synthesising and reporting conclusions
- taking action of some sort
- reconsidering consequences and outcomes of each of the above phases.

argue that active participation is dependent on the value that teachers place on this type of participation. It requires more than an 'in class' romp through a textbook. Competencies in participation must be developed if it is to be effective. Hart argues that children should work alongside adults in school and community projects and there is a hierarchy of participation skills that can be developed (Hart 1992).

The development of critical social understanding and an ability to put into action the findings of student investigation are also critical (Gilbert 2001; Hoepper 1999). Issues-based education has a long history in the social studies (Evans & Saxe 1996), but critical theorists argue for a critical perspective on all knowledge, arguing that economic interests have shaped the interests of many aspects of society, including education, and that active citizens need to question and redress this (Hursh & Ross 2000). Forms of action for school students can be congruent with societal views of appropriate societal action and need not be extremist.

The values of Humanities and Social Sciences

Values underpin all of what we do in Humanities and Social Sciences. They influence what we teach, how we teach and they are an object of discussion in our teaching. At the hub of schooling are the values that influence our intellectual, physical, social, moral and aesthetic development. Aspin (2002, p. 13) argues that individual judgments and activities are 'determined at the level of the culture of a community'. Community values give human beings their most fundamental conception of the meaning of life. Ghaye and Lillyman (2000) refer to action as 'values in use' encapsulating the holistic influence of values on our interactions with others. In other words, all our actions are influenced by our values.

Values are the estimation of worth, priority or significance of some object, feeling or idea (adapted from Hill 1994). Halstead and Taylor (2000, cited in DEST 2003, p. 2) define values as 'the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable'. Values are regarded as stable guides to our behaviour and decisions and are seen to be enduring, formed under the influence of parents and community, knowledge, experience and peers. Values are embedded and embodied in everything we think and every action we take (Aspin 2002). Attitudes and

---

REFLECTING ON HASS

Consider some of the schools you have visited. Do you sense a different values system operating in different schools or are they more or less the same? How do you explain the similarities and differences?

REFLECTING ON HASS

The Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' (Matthew 7:12).

This rule is enacted in many societies and cultures. Find out how it is expressed in a culture other than your own. Why would this be such an all-pervading rule? Establish some specific class rules based on the Golden Rule. Do you need other class rules or is this sufficient for a cohesive classroom?

behaviour are indicative of particular values, but are not necessarily good indicators of the fundamental values inherent when performing a particular action, because people are not necessarily consistent in linking all their actions to their own underlying values and it is not always clear just what values prompt certain behaviours (Cox & Alexander 2005).

Additionally, the literature in the area identifies a dichotomy between moral decisions and decisions that are based on societal conventions. There are instances when moral decisions are not necessarily conventional decisions, with a morally bad action being one that, even if there were no rule against it, would still be considered wrong. That is, moral laws are those that are unalterable, non-contingent, are generally acceptable and serious, whereas societal decisions are dependent on the society (Keefer 2006). However, the complexity that this dichotomy suggests can be even more convoluted, with many of our moral judgments dependent on community and relationship contexts. For example, Tan and Chew ask whether the five guiding values of the Singaporean Civics and Moral Education (CME) curriculum, of which one key value is that of *nation before community and society before self*, could be said to be morally contentious in some instances, creating inner tensions within the citizen as to which moral code should be adopted and in what circumstances (Tan & Chew 2004).

However, it is assumed that establishing socially acceptable values is a starting point for a functioning society and there can be some values that are crucial for both the individual and the state. For example, valuing honesty is a better start to establishing a cohesive community than valuing dishonesty, and so the question arises: how can we teach what our society and our community consider to be appropriate values?

REFLECTING ON HASS

Can you think of a societal rule that may be a contradiction to a moral law? For examples, consider laws and societal views on issues such as abortion and support for refugees.

As Gilbert and Hoepper (2001) pointed out, schools cannot avoid values, and pupils and parents believe schools have a responsibility to promote values even if they are unsure exactly what they should be. Values are not easily observed by researchers and the community, and formal education appears to emphasise cognitive processes, with outcomes-based assessment emphasising behavioural objectives achieved by using these cognitive processes. In most states in Australia, values are not assessed and they are not explicit in the Australian Curriculum. The plurality of Australian society leads to difficulties in deciding upon appropriate values and teaching strategies. In recent times, there has been an acknowledgment of the deficit of explicit values teaching in schools—or perhaps an acknowledgment of the values that are apparent although not recognised in our classrooms—and some discussion of what values might be important in schooling. A mixture of approaches has been suggested, approaches that vary between incorporating explicit teaching of values (what is called 'character education' in the United States) and focusing on moral reasoning including moral dilemmas, moral clarification and moral judgment (DEST 2003). In the Australian Curriculum, values emerge most prominently through the capabilities strands, particularly ethical behaviour, personal and social competence, and intercultural understanding.

There is more information on teaching values, controversial issues and global values available on the OUP text website and in the third edition of this book (Reynolds 2014, pp. 5–9 and 246–51).

Overview of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Australian Curriculum

HASS

The newly developed HASS F–6/7 section of the Humanities and Social Sciences allows for both disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches. The disciplinary concepts are those enshrined in the disciplinary areas listed below, and the interdisciplinary concepts are: significance; continuity and change; cause and effect; place and space; interconnections; roles, rights and responsibilities; and perspectives and action. The overall inquiry and skills section includes the areas of questioning, researching, analysing, evaluating and reflecting, and communicating. Although ACARA provides a number of different ways to link the disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, one approach demonstrated is to divide the disciplinary areas under the headings below, dependent on level of schooling, and incorporate the themes in this manner:

- My personal world.
- How my world is different from the past and can change in the future.
- Our past and present connections to people and places.
- Diverse communities and places and the contribution people make.

> ### Key Point
>
> There are five ways to approach HASS in the Australian Curriculum:
> 1 HASS F–6/7 (interdisciplinary)
> 2 Civics and Citizenship
> 3 Economics and Business
> 4 Geography
> 5 History.

- How people, places and environments interact, past and present.
- Australian communities—their past, present and possible futures.
- Australia in the past and present and its connections with a diverse world.
- Sustainable pasts, present, futures.

More detail on these themes will be provided in Chapter 8.

Civics and Citizenship

The *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship* was developed for Years 3–10, so for primary educators Years 3–6 are the principal focus. As with Economics and Business, it is difficult to envisage students not needing to know certain fundamentals of civics and citizenship earlier than Year 3. Most beginning school activities include learning the various rules associated with school and classroom citizenship. Some F–2 materials will be included in this text to add to Australian Curriculum themes.

The Civics and Citizenship knowledge and understanding strand Years 3–10 comprises three key focus areas or sub-strands at each year level:

1 government and democracy
2 laws and citizens
3 citizenship, diversity and identity.

The Civics and Citizenship skills strand Years 3–10 focuses on the four skills of:

1 questioning and research
2 analysis, synthesis and interpretation
3 problem solving and decision making
4 communication and reflection.

More detail will be provided in Chapter 4, along with how this area of the curriculum fits within the new HASS F–6/7 integrated approach (see Chapter 8).

Economics and Business

This curriculum area has only been developed for Years 5–10, so primary educators are principally interested in Years 5 and 6 and the focus will be on those years in this text. Nevertheless, previous iterations of social education in Australia have emphasised beginning Economics and Business understandings in early years, so we will also look at this in passing. It is hard to develop a sophisticated understanding of economics without a basic understanding of the differences between needs and wants, for example.

Economics and business were given separate definitions in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Economics and Business* (ACARA 2012c). First, economics:

> Economics has been defined as 'the study of the production, distribution and consumption of wealth in human society' (Bannock, Baxter and Davis, 2003), which focuses on how individuals, businesses and the government sector behave and interact, and how economies work. Economics explains how people interact within markets, how individuals and groups make decisions with limited resources to meet their unlimited needs and wants, and often reveals why people, businesses and governments behave in certain ways. (ACARA 2012c, p. 5)

Business, on the other hand:

> The study of Business, in tandem, broadly encompasses all activity by the producers and suppliers of goods and services, and the enterprising endeavours that our society undertakes to meet our needs and wants. (ACARA 2012c, p. 5)

The *Australian Curriculum: Economics and Business* argues that Economics and Business are interrelated with economics as the underlying discipline for the study of business in different contexts. The Shaping Paper points out that this curriculum area focuses on making choices, 'encouraging active and informed decision-making and enterprising behaviours; and developing consumer and financial literacy skills' (ACARA 2012c, p. 9).

The Economics and Business content (Years 5–10) involves two strands: Economics and Business knowledge and understanding; and Economics and Business skills. The Economics and Business knowledge and understanding strand has four subsections, these being:

1 resource allocation and making choices
2 the business environment
3 consumer and financial literacy
4 work and work futures.

The Economics and Business skills strand (Years 5–10) has four strands following the familiar Humanities and Social Sciences inquiry focus, these being skills of:

1 questioning and research
2 interpretation and analysis
3 economic reasoning, decision making and application
4 communication and reflection (ACARA 2014b).

More detail will be provided in Chapter 5, along with how this area of the curriculum fits within the new HASS F–6/7 integrated approach (see Chapter 8).

Geography

Geography is the investigation and understanding of the environmental and human characteristics of the places that make up our world. It is described as the 'why of where'. Geography answers our questions about why places are like they are, and how they are connected to other places. It explains how and why they are changing, and how and why their characteristics vary from place to place (ACARA 2010a, p. 4).

Geography (ACARA 2013b) is seen as the study of the concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change, with inquiry questions to guide each year level from F–10.

The geographic skills are seen as having five stages, with each stage representing one segment of a complete investigation. It is not intended that a complete investigation be undertaken for every theme or study, but over time, in each two-year stage, students will learn all the required skills. The stages of investigation for Years F–10 are:

1 observing, questioning and planning
2 collecting, recording, evaluating and representing
3 interpreting, analysing and concluding
4 communicating
5 reflecting and responding.

More detail will be provided in Chapter 6, along with how this area of the curriculum fits within the new HASS F–6/7 integrated approach (see Chapter 8).

History

> History is the study of the past. It provides knowledge, understanding and appreciation of previous events, people, practices and ideas. It orders them, renders them intelligible and discerns patterns of continuity and change. It provides the means whereby individual and collective identities are formed and sustained. It enriches the present and illuminates the future. (NCB 2009b, p. 4)

The Australian Curriculum establishes five set History knowledge and understandings for each year of schooling, explored through inquiry questions and History skills (Years F–10) that develop over time:

1 chronology, terms and concepts
2 historical questions and research
3 the analysis and use of sources
4 perspectives and interpretations
5 explanation and communication (ACARA 2013c).

More detail will be provided in Chapter 7, along with how this area of the curriculum fits within the new HASS F–6/7 integrated approach (see Chapter 8).

Background to an Australian Curriculum

The Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA 2008) established two key goals for Australian schooling, one of which specifically asserted that active and informed citizenship is a key endeavour for such schooling. Although many areas of the curriculum can assist this goal, the Humanities and Social Sciences area has it as its foremost objective, and so it is active and informed citizenship that binds the area. Some background to Australian developments in this area are explained below.

Although Australia has a federal system of government and school education has always been a state responsibility, there has been a long history of interaction between state governments, and between state governments and the Commonwealth government, with regard to school education. In fact, when R. Freeman Butts of Columbia University visited Australia in 1954, he wrote of an education system that was excessively centralised, with fixed syllabuses, a hierarchy of subjects biased towards the academic and a lack of public involvement. Uniformity existed under the various state jurisdictions. He attested:

> Uniform policy seems to apply to buildings, facilities, to educational expenditure, to subjects in the curriculum, to teaching methods, to standards of achievement for students, to classification, appointment, promotion and salary schedules for teachers, and the preparation of teachers. (Butts 1955, p. 12)

Since that time there has been a swing against such strong uniformity and, instead, an increased devolvement of control to schools to allow schools to address the specific needs of their individual communities. However, and ironically at the same time, after the launch of Sputnik in 1957 education increasingly became a strategic national investment in the Cold War era, and was seen as a requirement and an important economic factor for nation building. Increasingly, it was seen as not good enough to leave education to the states or to state-mediated, school-based curriculum developers, but that education required national prioritisation. By the 1970s, a Commonwealth-inspired core curriculum—a basic framework—was on the agenda and the Commonwealth Curriculum Development Centre was instituted in 1976 by the federal Fraser government. In 1980, the director of the Centre (Malcolm Skilbeck) led the development of a national Core Curriculum with nine areas of knowledge and experience:

1 communication
2 scientific and technological ways of knowing and their social applications
3 mathematical skills and reasoning and their applications
4 moral reasoning and action
5 social cultural and civic studies
6 environmental studies

7   arts and crafts

8   health education

9   work leisure and lifestyle.

This reconceptualisation of traditional school areas did not make much impact on state curricula and the Curriculum Development Centre was later dissolved because there was not enough money to establish a national curriculum, and the goals of a national curriculum were elusive (Tripp & Watt 1984). Nevertheless, the idea lived on, if only in a residual form with federal government instrumentalities such as the Curriculum Corporation offering support to all states with regard to resources.

Although individual schools have increasingly been given their own budgets, since the 1980s curriculum has been once again seen as needing to be uniform across the states, and so moves to develop a national curriculum, or at least national goals, increased. Throughout the Hawke–Keating Labor governments (1983–96), schooling in Australia was subject to the federal government's quest for greater control. The establishment of the supra-Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) in 1987 highlighted the emphasis placed on education as a means to generate greater national productivity and international economic competitiveness. Education ministers in the Hawke government, Susan Ryan and then John Dawkins, also promoted the notion of a national curriculum (Piper 1997). The 1989 *Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia* (Hobart Declaration) led to a considerable degree of state and Commonwealth cooperation in curriculum areas (AEC 1989). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a national mapping exercise was undertaken and National Statements of Learning and Profiles in eight areas—English, Science, Mathematics, Languages Other than English, Technology, Studies of Society and Environment, The Arts, Health (Physical Education and Personal Development)—were developed by the Australian Education Council (AEC 1989). These learning areas were adopted differently by each of the states, but this collaboration was deemed to be quite successful and, in varying degrees, the states used these as guidelines in subsequent curriculum reforms that occurred all over the country in spite of years of debate and paranoia (Marsh 1994). In 1991 the curriculum area we now call Humanities and Social Sciences was called Studies of Society and Environment Education and then Studies of Society and Environment, and was mapped across all states of Australia with six strands of study emerging as representative of this area, with five being content strands and one being a process strand. The strands were time, continuity and change; place and space; culture; natural and social systems; resources; and investigation, communication and participation.

Although there have been changes in the various states since this time, these strands are still identifiable, demonstrating that there were some clear guidelines for SOSE and HSIE in schools from this period. Further to these curriculum initiatives, in April 1999 the state, territory and Commonwealth ministers of education met as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and endorsed the new *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (MCEETYA 1999), released as the Adelaide Declaration and overriding the Hobart Declaration, but

nevertheless arguing that, among other things, the attainment of the National Goals for Schooling would assist young people to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts and that young people would develop a disposition towards learning throughout their lives so that they could exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Australia.

The national mapping exercise and the Adelaide Declaration provided the rationale for the teaching of this area of study. The latest iteration of national goals was in 2008 and was called the Melbourne Declaration. The Melbourne Declaration was a statement endorsed by all state ministers of education and published by MCEETYA (2008). It established two key goals for Australian schooling, these being that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens (p. 7). Specific actions that the ministers saw as being critical to enable these goals to be achieved were:

> developing stronger partnerships, supporting quality teaching and school leadership, strengthening early childhood education, enhancing middle years development, supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions, promoting world-class curriculum and assessment, improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and strengthening accountability and transparency. (p. 10)

Of particular interest to preservice teachers in this area of the curriculum is the emphasis on good teaching and quality preservice teacher education and civics and citizenship education. The Melbourne Declaration provided the guidelines for the latest attempt to provide a nationally focused curriculum, the Australian Curriculum, first by providing Shaping Papers through the National Curriculum Board (NCB) and then through ACARA.

As is usual in these national curriculum exercises, there has been quite a lot of disaffection, particularly with regard to the process of development of the current curriculum. As Professor Alan Reid pointed out in the Boomer Address to the Australian Curriculum Studies Association National Conference on Australian curriculum developments in 2009, there were a number of problems associated with the new curriculum both in its conception and in its implementation (Reid 2009). Reid highlighted problems with its rationale, its conceptual clarity with respect to capabilities and perspectives (now called cross-curriculum priorities), and some lack of coherence between the curriculum goals (in particular those in the Melbourne Declaration) and the curriculum itself. In addition, Reid pointed to design issues associated with implementation, including problems linked to its varied connection with current state syllabuses, as well the lack of appreciation given to cross-disciplinary teaching, little understanding of equity issues, and inadequate timelines provided for consultation and implementation.

In October 2010 the Australian Curriculum Coalition presented a list of concerns about the Australian Curriculum to all Australian ministers of education. The Australian Curriculum Coalition is a forum of presidents, executive officers and executive directors of national education organisations representing teachers, principals, school leaders, academics

and education researchers. Its concerns included the short timelines and the lack of input from the professional associations as a result, including lack of time for ACARA to indicate to teachers how they have responded to the input provided. This coalition argued there was not sufficient rationale for the curriculum (for example, it does not relate clearly enough to the Melbourne Declaration), and this had led to a lack of coherency exacerbated by the fact that only four areas of the curriculum were initially developed. The lack of coherency does not assist the cross-curriculum integration that is seen as a crucial twenty-first-century skill. They also argued there was too much content, especially for primary students, and that primary teachers in particular would struggle to implement the wider breadth represented by the initial four curriculum documents. Related to this issue was the question of whether the Australian Curriculum represents a core curriculum or is the whole curriculum. Will teachers have flexibility to teach about issues relevant to their own communities?

Other concerns raised by the Australian Curriculum Coalition (2010) included the lack of clarity of some of the capabilities, the lack of attention to equity issues (how well does the curriculum cater for diverse populations?), the relationship between achievement standards and assessment and reporting (are the standards descriptions of typical achievement, or expectations for all students?), and implementation and resourcing of that implementation. From its perspective, the areas requiring most attention in terms of teacher professional development would be History—which would require substantial support at both primary and secondary levels—Indigenous aspects of the curriculum, incorporation of information and communications technology (ICT), Asia literacy and environmental sustainability. The debate and the concerns continue.

The Melbourne Declaration was to provide the fundamental philosophy and achievements expected from the new Australian Curriculum and, although there has been some shifting around on how to include both discipline study and interdisciplinary study in Humanities and Social Sciences, in the final form four curriculum documents were developed (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business). In terms of time to be spent teaching these areas, History and Geography dominate (Years F–10), followed by Civics and Citizenship (Years 3–10) and then Economics and Business (Years 5–10). History was developed as a curriculum area first along with English, Mathematics and Science and the other three areas followed (Geography initially, and then Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business). The gradual emergence of the field has caused a few difficulties as teachers have found themselves implementing part of an older, established SOSE curriculum along with the newly established History curriculum, and this confusing state of affairs continues as new curriculum documents appear.

In the Primary HASS curriculum area at time of publication the newly minted integrated approach, *Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences F-6/7*, Version 8.3 (ACARA 2017a), is conceptually different to the way teaching takes place in secondary schools. In December 2010 the Council of the State Ministers of Education, now called MCEECDYA (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs), endorsed the new curriculum but the Council statement pointed out that individual

states may implement it in different ways and that it is still a work in progress. The new curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History was substantially implemented in 2013 after teachers had a chance to provide feedback on the entire curriculum in light of these achievement standards (MCEECDYA 2010). However, with the change in federal government in 2013, the new Education Minister Christopher Pyne appointed Kevin Donnelly, an independent education consultant, and Professor Ken Wiltshire to review the Australian Curriculum in January 2014. The *Review of the Australian Curriculum* (Australian Government 2015) was handed down in August 2014 with some strong recommendations about the overcrowded curriculum at the primary level. In particular, advice provided by the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA 2014), which argued for the removal of Economic and Business Studies and Civics and Citizenship from the Primary curriculum and reduction of content in other areas, was influential in the final report. The final report pointed out 'lack of integration of the curriculum in the primary years—particularly in the humanities and social sciences' (p. 3) and a concern with apparent privileging of inquiry-based and student-centred teaching and learning (p. 5). It was argued that 'such an approach is often associated with constructivism and a focus on skills and capabilities at the expense of essential knowledge and the need for explicit teaching of which direct instruction is one example' (Australian Government 2015, p. 5).

The Education Council, comprising all Australian education ministers now encompassed under the broad umbrella of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), endorsed ACARA responses to the Donnelly–Wiltshire review in 2015 and led to the new, current Australian Curriculum (Version 8.3). Interestingly, some key content was noted for primary HASS, including the directive that Year 3 students learn about Anzac Day, Year 4 students learn about the First Fleet, and Year 5 students learn about Australia's early settlers (ACARA 2015). Additionally, the primary area of the HASS curriculum was developed as an integrated approach, although links to the overriding four areas of HASS were still acknowledged. This reinforced a disjunction in approach between primary and secondary HASS teaching. Inquiry approaches were still given prominence.

However, despite the variation in the terminology used, and the ongoing debates as to what should be included and excluded, there is some historical consistency in what is seen to be included in the Humanities and Social Sciences area of study. There is a large degree of consensus with the knowledge and understandings, the skills and strategies, and the values providing crucial underpinnings for informed and active citizenship that have always been part of this area. A key focus of this book is to assist primary teachers to see what they already do that fits with this new curriculum and to assist them with concepts and approaches they may not be as familiar with. Essentially, teachers being trained now will be teachers for a number of curriculum transitions, but this area of the curriculum has some key themes and ideas, ways of teaching and learning that will endure. This book should provide guidance for many years for all teachers in the area. Following is an overview of each component of the Humanities and Social Sciences area of the Australian Curriculum, and later chapters provide more details and examples.

REFLECTING ON HASS

Why is a curriculum a political matter? Why are politicians interested in curriculums? Conduct a media search of statements about curriculum or teaching in schools over the past two years. Look for the key themes in these statements. Try to clarify who the opposing players are and why they may take the stance they do.

The general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum

From the Melbourne Declaration (2008) there were some key attributes for Australian students, often seen as of more importance for twenty-first-century learners as opposed to twentieth-century learners, that needed to be developed across the curriculum and therefore specifically addressed in all the curriculum areas in the Australian Curriculum. Specifically, the Melbourne Declaration argued:

> Literacy and numeracy and knowledge of key disciplines remain the cornerstone of schooling for young Australians. Schooling should also support the development of skills in areas such as social interaction, cross disciplinary thinking and the use of digital media, which are essential in all 21st century occupations. As well as knowledge and skills, a school's legacy to young people should include national values of democracy, equity and justice, and personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others. (MCEETYA 2008, p. 5)

The NCB and then ACARA used the ideas from this statement to develop a list of general capabilities to be developed across all curriculum areas. Initially, ten capabilities were identified, and these were whittled down to seven (McGaw 2010). The 2013 ACARA statement, *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum*, argues that the capabilities required of all Australian school children are 'individuals who can manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, make informed decisions about their lives, become citizens who behave with ethical integrity, relate to and communicate across cultures, work for the common good and act with responsibility at local, regional and global levels' (ACARA 2013a, p. 2). As this list strongly aligns with Humanities and Social Sciences education, it is obvious that key principles and themes from the Humanities and Social Sciences area of the curriculum will need to be incorporated into all areas of the curriculum. This is not necessarily a problem for primary teachers, who integrate all the time, but it does add to our need to remain aware of possible connections between what we do in, for example, Geography, and how that can link via the capabilities and the perspectives to another area of the curriculum, for example, Mathematics.

These general capabilities comprise an 'integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions … that students develop and use … in their learning

Key Point

A general capability is an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that equip students to live in the 21st century (ACARA 2017).

across the curriculum, in co-curricular programs and in their lives outside school' (ACARA 2013a, p. 4). The fact that the learning area curriculum documents do not explicitly address behaviours and dispositions ensures that these general capabilities are essential for a futures-focused Australian Curriculum. It is vital that attitudes, values, dispositions and resultant behaviours of learning are indicated somewhere and can guide teacher choices. A 'value-less' curriculum is a poor guide for future citizens who will need to weigh up many value-laden decisions in their lives. The Humanities and Social Sciences area of the curriculum is particularly focused on these dispositions and behaviours. It is value-laden and acknowledges the varied capabilities learners bring to the area.

The seven capabilities are described below. The Australian Curriculum explanations of these capabilities are indicated along with perspectives of the author, informed by various iterations of curriculum statements and both national and international research. The symbols used by ACARA to designate where a general capability could be used are shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 General capabilities icons in Australian Curriculum

Literacy Numeracy Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability Critical and Creative Thinking

Personal and Social Capability Ethical Understanding Intercultural Understanding

Oxford University Press Sample Chapter

Literacy

Although the curriculum area of English will be a major focus for developing literacy skills, it is crucial that the skills learnt in studies of English will be applied to all areas of life and are taught and pursued in all areas of the curriculum. Literacy refers not only to reading and writing skills but also talking and listening and now, importantly, visual literacy in this era of mass visual media. ACARA (2013a, p. 13) defines a text as a means for communication, and points out that texts can be written, spoken, visual or multimodal, in print or digital/online forms, and that particular types of texts may be more indicative of a learning area than others. Thus, skills of literacy are not simply about being able to interpret and appraise information from many sources, but also involve producing texts in and across many modes that communicate the required meaning in as clear a manner as possible. For example, Grushka and Donnelly (2010) argue that visuality, the 'ability to communicate critical and multiple orientations to vision' (p. 97), is one of the new literacy learnings for the twenty-first century. In their study of the visuality skills of preservice teachers they find teachers lacked basic skills of balance, dominance, colour, focal point and the use of foreground, middle ground and background in their visual compositions compiled to represent their curriculum documents, as well as lacking cultural and historical understanding of images. With a whole range of modes for communication, literacy involves the ability to create multimodal texts, as well as understand them from the perspective of text user and text analyser. A wide range of literacy skills are required for twenty-first-century learners.

As the general capabilities document from ACARA puts it, language occurs in a social context and there are differences between 'spoken-like' and 'written-like' language in different learning areas and at different levels of developmental communication skills (ACARA 2013a). The literacy capability is addressed at six levels, with Levels 1–4 being of relevance to primary school teachers in particular, but as this is a developmental approach, Levels 5 and 6 may prove to be of relevance for students who are more highly literate. Level 1 is divided into five different sequential stages to provide support for teachers who will have students of varied prior literacy experiences when initially entering formal schooling. The literacy capability is addressed using a continuum of learning incorporating two overarching processes:

1 *comprehending texts* through listening, reading and viewing
2 *composing texts* through speaking, writing and creating.

Four knowledge approaches are addressed within each of these two processes: text knowledge, grammar knowledge, word knowledge and visual knowledge (ACARA 2013a, p. 13). To comprehend texts, students listen and respond to learning area texts, read and view learning area texts, and interpret and analyse learning area texts. To compose texts, students compose spoken, written, visual and multimodal learning area texts, use language to interact with others and deliver presentations (ACARA 2013a, p. 15).

Some educators have moved from seeing literacy as an expanding number of skill sets for communication to a view of literacy as encompassing a social justice and critical framing to society as a whole. The term 'multiliteracies' was coined by the New London Group in

1996 when it proposed a broadening of approaches to literacy to include multimodal textual practices—combining linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial modes—and literacies that were culturally inclusive (Mills 2009, p. 104). The multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group involves four related components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (New London Group 1996). This notion of multiliteracies fits well within a Humanities and Social Sciences framework because the underlying assumption is that literacy involves communication about authentic, important and community-based events and includes a view of communication that includes the traditions of high culture and subcultures. It is thus strongly linked to civics and citizenship education.

Numeracy

Although the curriculum area of Mathematics will be a major focus for developing numeracy skills, it is crucial that the skills learnt in studies of Mathematics are applied to all areas of life and are taught and pursued in all areas of the curriculum. The term 'numeracy' includes the ability to use mathematical skills to solve problems in real life—in lots of different contexts—and to have the ability to reflectively appraise the effectiveness of these mathematical applications. A capacity for critical numeracy implies that a person has sufficient skills in numeracy to take part in civic life and so, for example, can appraise promises made by politicians, compare financial plans and make decisions about things such as their pharmaceutical needs and environmental danger levels.

The *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum* document (ACARA 2013a) points out that cross-curricular numeracy requires teachers to:

- identify the specific numeracy demands of their learning area;
- provide learning experiences and opportunities that support the application of students' general mathematical knowledge and skills; and
- use the language of numeracy in their teaching as appropriate. (p. 34)

The numeracy capability is addressed at six levels, with Levels 1–4 being of relevance to primary school teachers in particular. As this is a developmental approach, Levels 5 and 6 may be of relevance for students who are more highly numerate. Level 1 is divided into two different sequential stages to provide support for teachers who will have students of varied prior numeracy experiences when initially entering formal schooling. The numeracy capability continuum is organised into six interrelated elements: estimating and calculating with whole numbers; recognising and using patterns and relationships; using fractions; decimals, percentages, ratios and rates; using spatial reasoning; interpreting statistical information; and using measurement (ACARA 2013a, p. 39).

Information and communications technology (ICT)

Information and communications technology (ICT) is the hardware and software that enables data to be digitally processed, stored and communicated. (VCAA 2006)

To effectively use information and communications technology, students must be able to 'access, process, manage and present information' (VCAA 2006) involving the need to evaluate reliability, accuracy and validity of information. This capability 'involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment' (ACARA 2013a, p. 56). The capability must be responsive to ongoing technological developments, which may enable different types of interactions in learning, and so developing dispositions to explore change is essential.

The ICT capability in the Australian Curriculum is organised into five interrelated elements and provides a continuum of learning: applying social and ethical protocols and practices when using ICT; investigating with ICT; creating with ICT; communicating with ICT; and managing and operating ICT (ACARA 2013a, p. 60). The ICT capability is addressed at six levels, with Levels 1–4 being of relevance to primary school teachers in particular. As this is a developmental approach, Levels 5 and 6 may be of relevance for students who are more highly literate in ICT.

The implications of the ethical and social responsibilities of the use of ICT are associated with this capability, but it is also the case that how ICT is used in schools is a debate about 'benefit and power, equality and empowerment, structure and agency and social justice' (Selwyn 2010, p. 35). Some educators see classrooms being replaced by ICT communities, where students drive their own learning. Others see ICT as needing to be strongly mediated in order to achieve set goals. This is an ongoing field of contestation, which is also definitely a twenty-first-century learning arena.

Critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking skills are those skills associated with ascertaining the quality of material presented and the use of new ideas in meaningful ways. There has been an increase of interest in teaching critical and creative thinking skills, as the skills needed are seen to be transferable, contributing to lifelong learning across the curriculum, with Baumfield (2006) arguing that teachers who implement a thinking skills approach often create a more positive learning environment in their classrooms. Thinking skills are core intellectual activities that include solving problems, making decisions, developing an argument and using evidence in support of that argument, and applying that argument to new situations. Creative thinking is a particular form of thinking.

> [It] enables the development of new ideas and their application in specific contexts. It includes generating an idea which is new to the individual, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations, seeing links, and finding new ways to apply ideas to generate a positive outcome. (NCB 2009a, p. 12)

The *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum* document (ACARA 2013a, p. 78) stresses the dispositions of critical and creative thinking and specifically mentions inquisitiveness, reasonableness, intellectual flexibility, open and fair-mindedness, a readiness

to try new ways of doing things and consider alternatives, and persistence. The skills of productive, purposeful and intentional thinking can only be achieved by focusing on these dispositions to develop more confident and autonomous problem solvers and thinkers. This capability also focuses on the need for reflective thinking to assist students to learn about their own thinking and manage it successfully.

The critical and creative thinking capability is addressed at six levels, with Levels 1–4 being of relevance to primary school teachers in particular. As this is a developmental approach, Levels 5 and 6 may be of relevance for students who are more highly critical and creative thinkers. It is organised into four groups of thinking: inquiring—identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas; generating ideas, possibilities and actions; reflecting on thinking and processes; and analysing, synthesising and evaluating reasoning and procedures.

Personal and social capability

Personal and social competence includes aspects of what was previously seen in the NCB Shaping Papers (2009a) as the capabilities of self-management, social competence and teamwork. Teamwork could certainly be seen as one aspect of social competence, including the capacity to work as a team, but also the capacity to challenge team norms and procedures if necessary. Personal and social competence includes taking personal responsibility for managing, monitoring and reflecting on and evaluating one's own learning against personal as well as institutional goals. It also includes learning how to establish teams, work harmoniously as a member of a team, how to move in and out of team working groups, and how to work with those who may have different strengths and weaknesses to oneself.

Social competence also includes learning aspects of authentic functional living in society. It is about learning how to live in a society where personal desires and wishes and even needs may need to be transformed or revised, if only in the short term, for social purposes, whether friendship groups, local community groups or global community groups. It thus includes self-awareness and the ability to enhance relationships, as well as conflict resolution and leadership skills. It includes 'recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships' (ACARA 2013a, p. 97). As noted in *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum*, this personal and social capability addresses the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA 2008, p. 5) when it states that 'a school's legacy to young people should include national values of democracy, equity and justice, and personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others' (p. 99). It is thus evident that personal and social capacity is value-laden.

The personal and social capability sequence of learning is organised into four elements: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; and social management (ACARA 2013a, p. 102). It is addressed at six levels, with Levels 1–4 being of relevance to primary school teachers in particular. As this is a developmental approach, Levels 5 and 6 may be of relevance for students who are more highly personally and socially competent. Level 1 has two separate sub-levels.

Ethical understanding

This capability involves

> understanding and acting in accordance with moral and ethical principles. Ethical behaviour includes the willingness, determination and capacity to think, make judgments and behave independently. It includes identifying right and wrong and having the willingness, determination and capacity to argue the case for change; understanding the place of ethics and values in human life; acting with moral and ethical integrity; acting with regard for others; and having a desire and capacity to work for the common good. (NCB 2009a)

The St James Ethics Centre (n.d.) uses Socrates' definition of ethics, which is that ethics is the manner in which we approach the question: What ought one to do? The answer to this question will never be simple and will have a cultural and social dimension to it informed by some moral guidance. As the centre points out, an ethical stance means that a person makes decisions about their behaviour based on some guidelines and personal rules as opposed to someone who simply does what everyone else does—'unthinking custom and practice'. *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum* points out that,

> although the basis of justification of what is right or good for the individual and for others is contentious, it is misleading to confuse disagreements in ethics with there being no right or wrong answer. There may be different positions, each with their strengths and weaknesses, and often there is the need to make a judgment in the face of competing claims. At the same time there is need for an open-minded, ongoing endeavour to create an ethical life. (ACARA 2013a, p. 125)

Thus, having an ethical capacity is not a matter of personal decision making but a complex process usually governed by social moral guidelines.

General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum noted also that

> ethical understanding involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others … Complex issues require responses that take account of ethical considerations such as human rights and responsibilities, animal rights, environmental issues and global justice. Building ethical understanding throughout all stages of schooling will assist students to engage with the more complex issues that they are likely to encounter in the future, and to navigate a world of competing values, rights, interests and norms. (ACARA 2013a, p. 121)

Students need to be exposed to controversial issues that have no simple answers so they can investigate different views and explore reasons that people may take such perspectives, using processes such as giving reasons, being consistent, finding meanings and causes, and providing proof and evidence. The Humanities and Social Sciences include many areas of value for exploring ethical issues.

The ethical understanding capability area is organised into three interrelated organising elements: understanding ethical concepts and issues; reasoning in decision making and actions; and exploring values, rights and responsibilities. It is addressed at six levels, with Levels 1–4 being

of relevance to primary school teachers in particular. As this is a developmental approach, Levels 5 and 6 may be of relevance for students who have more highly developed ethical competencies.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding is the ability to respectfully work with, and successfully communicate with, those from similar as well as different cultures and backgrounds, thus demonstrating an appreciation of one's own culture as well as different cultures (NCB 2009a). It enables people to appreciate and interact with diversity in a productive manner and enhances values of tolerance, understanding and inclusion, respect and giving others a fair go. In the curriculum context, intercultural understanding should allow the student to engage in a widened view of cultural experience while still allowing their own personal experiences to be acknowledged (Fisher 2010, p. 1).

Rathje (2007) argues that definitions of intercultural competence are quite varied and that when defining a person who has intercultural competence, there appear to be lists of characteristics such as integrity, stability, extroversion, socialisation, special intuitive capacities, stress-resistance and empathy. There are also definitions based on structural models such as those that incorporate affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions. Rathje points out that in the German-speaking world there is much controversy around the area of what she calls 'intercultural competence', and she addresses the issues by considering the goals, scope, application and foundation of intercultural competence. Her final definition addresses these four areas:

> Given that … culture is understood as existing within human groups, characterised by cohesion that is due to familiarity with inherent differences between them then … intercultural competence can be defined as a culture-generic skill which is … required in interactions between individuals from different human groups who are experiencing foreignness as a consequence of their mutual ignorance of the spectra of differences between them with a view to … producing culture by creating familiarity and thus cohesion amongst the individuals involved, allowing them to pursue their interactional goals. (Rathje 2007, p. 264)

Rathje argues that this definition does not depend on the goal of intercultural understanding being for a particular economic or political gain, acknowledges this form of social competence as exceptionally difficult, allows the participants in the interaction to define the interaction as intercultural, and allows for a definition of culture that takes into account its different internal forms but also cannot ignore its apparent cohesion. It is a crucial concept in education. Some understanding of the political, historical, economic and cultural background to contemporary situations is vital for global citizenship. As Coulby argues, 'human history is increasingly a race between intercultural education and disaster' (2006, p. 245).

In 2008 AusAID, the Global Education Project, the Curriculum Corporation and the Asia Education Foundation worked together to develop a statement for Australian schools (Curriculum Corporation 2008) that provided some guidelines for global education. This

statement adds to our understanding of what intercultural understanding could encompass. The five emphases (interdependence and globalisation; identity and cultural diversity; social justice and human rights; peace building and conflict resolution; and sustainable futures) all support intercultural understanding. Further reference to this statement and related resources will be made throughout the text. ACARA has made the following comment about intercultural understanding:

> Intercultural understanding encourages students to make connections between their own worlds and the worlds of others, to build on shared interests and commonalities, and to negotiate or mediate difference. It develops students' abilities to communicate and empathise with others and to analyse intercultural experiences critically. It offers opportunities for them to consider their own beliefs and attitudes in a new light, and so gain insight into themselves and others. (ACARA 2013a, p. 133)

In the Australian context, intercultural understanding is of vital importance when interacting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and also with our near neighbours in Asia. Values and dispositions such as curiosity, care, empathy, reciprocity, respect and responsibility, open-mindedness and critical awareness are stimulated by, and in turn stimulate, intercultural competencies.

The intercultural understanding capability learning sequence is organised into three organising elements: recognising culture and developing respect; interacting and empathising with others; and reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility. The Intercultural understanding capability is addressed at six levels, with Levels 1–4 being of relevance to primary school teachers in particular. As this is a developmental approach, Levels 5 and 6 may be of relevance for students who have a more highly developed intercultural capacity.

Cross-curriculum priorities

The national curriculum Shaping Papers established three cross-curriculum priorities to be explicitly evident in all curriculum documents. These are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures (originally known as Indigenous perspectives): This priority is intended to ensure that all young Australians have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and respect the culture of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Key Point

Cross-curriculum priorities

These are an area of study that needs to be addressed for the benefit of individuals and Australia as a whole. There are three cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum.

- Sustainability: This priority is intended to reflect a commitment to all curriculum areas reflecting directions to maintain sustainable patterns of living.
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia: This priority is intended to develop, for all Australian students, skills, knowledge and understandings related to Asia (NCB 2009a).

More information on each of these priorities is presented below and ideas and suggestions will be presented in all chapters.

The *Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences F-6/7* (ACARA 2017a) uses these symbols to represent the three cross-curriculum priorities.

👋 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

🌱 Sustainability

ᐱᐱ Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' outcomes remains unacceptably wide 'in the key areas of enrolment, attendance, participation, literacy, numeracy, retention and completion' (MCEETYA 2008). This gap demands that we review our teaching practices, particularly in literacy, to empower Indigenous students in their learning about Humanities and Social Sciences. Eades (1995) states that language and culture cannot be separated, so teachers require understanding of the linguistic, cultural and social factors that have continued to maintain this inequitable gap in outcomes (Eades 1995; see Hanlen 2002).

In New Zealand there is one Indigenous people, the Māori. However, in Australia there are many different Indigenous peoples, making impossible a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching Indigenous students. It is absolutely foundational for teachers who have even one Indigenous student in the class to introduce themselves to, and become familiar with, the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community organisations in the local area in which they teach. In New South Wales, the main organisation concerning education is the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG). There are equivalent community organisations in the other states and territories and they work in partnership with the departments of education.

A key area of confusion for teachers emerges from spoken language. It may be quite difficult for teachers to discretely identify the phonological, grammatical, semantic and pragmatic features of the Indigenous students in their class, as Aboriginal English (AE) has

appeared in the past to teachers as a substandard form of English. There can be differences in vowel sounds like *baird* (AE) and *bird* (SAE—Standard Australian English; Eades 1995); word segmentation differences like *catpulu* (AE) and *caterpillar* (SAE; Eades 1995); grammatical differences like *'ebig girl* (AE) and *she is a big girl* (SAE; Eades 1995); and lexico-semantic differences like *deadly* (AE) and *good* (SAE). These differences have an impact on Indigenous students' phonemic awareness development, which can contribute to poor literacy outcomes and consequently unsuccessful learning outcomes in areas like Humanities and Social Sciences. Teachers can make note of the linguistic and cultural/protocol differences of individual students or collectively of groups of students that they perceive are not in line with SAE or the cultural protocols of the classroom. If we get the teaching right then we can have the same high expectations of Indigenous students as we do for all students (Literacy & Numeracy Task Force 2010; Sarra 2007). The 2014 Reconciliation Australia submission to the Donnelly–Wiltshire Review of the Australian Curriculum argued that it was important to continue to keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as part of the key content as well as a key curriculum priority. The submission pointed to the Australian Reconciliation Barometer, which indicated that only 31 per cent of all Australians reported having a high level of knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories, although 82 per cent of Australians agreed on its importance (Australian Government 2015, p. 5).

Historical overview

The history behind the gap in outcomes is concerned with Indigenous Australian communities having faced many inequitable events that changed forever the continuity of life as they had known it before the British invasion of 1788. The consequent development of Anglo-Australian legal, education and parliamentary systems was based on Western cultural beliefs, values and SAE. In the very early days of the colony, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania were dramatically affected when the British took land and water sources for farming. In northern and other parts of Australia, including the Torres Strait Islands, the impact of colonisation came a little later, and a creolisation process developed between Aboriginal languages and English. Today Kriol (Aboriginal) and Creole (Torres Strait Islands) is spoken as a first language by many Indigenous Australians and as a second language by others. Students who speak these languages need to learn English as another language. In New South Wales, where the impact of colonisation was sudden and brutal, creolisation did not take place and English became the first language (see Donaldson 1985). Indigenous Australians, generally speaking, learnt their English orally and their Englishes were strongly influenced by the linguistic features of their traditional languages (Eades 1995).

Although many Indigenous students in New South Wales, Victoria and other parts of Australia may never have heard their traditional language spoken, the Englishes they speak have been Aboriginalised in their phonology (sound system), syntax (grammar system), semantics (meaning systems) and pragmatics (the way language is used) (Eades 1995), as mentioned above. It is the area of how English is used that can present some of the most

> ## Key Point
>
> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures:
> * knowledge of Country/Place
> * people
> * culture.

difficult issues for both teachers and students, as both may recognise the words that are used by each other but these may be interpreted very differently and can be the basis for common communication breakdowns both linguistically and culturally (Eades 1995). The change from traditional languages to English generally took place over a period of around four generations from the turn of the last century, similar to the New South Wales Ngyiampaa people's situation recorded by Donaldson (1985). The first generation spoke only their traditional language with English as a pidgin, the second generation spoke both traditional language and a little English, the third generation spoke English but could understand the traditional language, and the fourth generation spoke and understood English only (Donaldson 1985). These understandings must focus the teaching for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in classrooms as well as ensuring that non–Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students understand these issues. It is a crucial issue for the wellbeing of Australian society and culture.

General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2013a) points out that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sense of identity in living communities acts as a vehicle to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in the Australian Curriculum. There are three elements of this priority, these being knowledge of Country/Place, people and culture.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Australia's commitment and interest in engaging with Asia has been a concern of business interests and educators for one hundred years. Australia's first centre of Oriental studies was established at the University of Sydney in 1918 but the student numbers were small. In the 1960s a steady stream of resources was developed to enhance Asian literacy, including magazines such as *Hemisphere*. In 1970 the nationally sponsored Auchmuty Report found that teaching about Asia in schools was much more widespread than teaching Asian languages, but that more than half of the Australian population could go through school without any systematic study of Asian affairs. From 1972 to 1977 the Commonwealth provided more than $1.5 million to develop resources in this area. Materials produced included the Qantas culture kit, with filmstrip kits on family life in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, the Philippines

🖐 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Good pedagogy is dependent on the acknowledgment that there can be many cultural differences between Indigenous cultures and the cultural context of the classroom, which is generally based on Western cultural beliefs and values. The differences between Indigenous and Western discourse styles that involve protocols can be so different that they may result in significant communication breakdown between teachers and students based on misinterpreted and misunderstood intentions (Hanlen 2009). Teachers trained in Australian universities often measure the discourse and language against SAE from an Anglo-Australian beliefs and values system. In the past many teachers innocently believed that a student could be described as indifferent, rude, uncooperative or a liar due to almost polemic differences in what constitutes good manners and behaviour. Everyone interprets what is happening around them through their own cultural worldview. This can lead to teachers forming opinions about the character of individual Indigenous students based on the teachers' own cultural protocols, beliefs and values and this has the potential for teachers to continue future interaction with those students as if the students had behavioural issues when in fact there may only be cultural differences.

Some classroom ideas…

Teachers need to be aware of those differences and the linguistic differences to be able to discern the difference between linguistic difference and learning difficulties and cultural difference and behavioural issues (Hanlen 2000). Teachers can contact local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational support people to help both the teacher and student appreciate such differences.

and Iran, and the Indonesia project, which provided material about Indonesian culture as well as language. In New South Wales an Asian Social Studies syllabus was developed and similar initiatives took place in other states.

However, all these efforts did not appear to have achieved their aims and the *Review of Studies of Asia in Australian Schools* noted that 'about a quarter of schools do not teach about Asia at all, and at least the same number do so in only superficial ways' (Wyatt, Mansfield, Carbines & Robb 2002, p. 129). This report indicated that although the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) program (MCEETYA 1994) had achieved quite a lot in terms of producing resource material, many teachers did not know about it or how to incorporate it into their classrooms, did not perceive that it should have a high priority, and lacked the motivation and enthusiasm to embrace studies of Asia. Many schools felt that by providing multicultural days or cultural food festivals, they were doing all that could be expected. The review recommended, among other things, a greater focus

on integrating these nationally produced resources into state syllabus documents, working to build deeper understandings of Asian themes, more teacher professional development to be provided around these new resources and including greater links between languages and Asian studies.

The Asia Education Foundation (AEF), established in 1992, is a joint activity of Asialink at the University of Melbourne and Education Services Australia and is thus both privately and government sponsored. Its aim is to provide 'systematic, school-wide inclusion of studies of Asia and Australia within the mainstream curriculum', and it has provided material and professional development to strengthen the engagement with Asia for teachers across a number of learning areas (AEF n.d.). In 2002 NALSAS sponsored research into Australian students' knowledge and attitudes towards Asia, including an assessment of how well the AEF-sponsored Access Asia material had been taken up in schools. Over 7000 students in Year 5 and Year 8 were surveyed and it was found that those schools that had made use of multiple forms of learning, including formal structured classroom teaching, had students with a more accurate and deeper knowledge of Asia than those whose students had mainly been educated through informal activities such as excursions or festivals (Griffin, Woods, Dulhunty & Coates 2002). The distribution of attitudes was very different from that of knowledge and understanding, indicating that growth and development in attitudes was *not* related to exposure to an Asia-related curriculum or to learning. This suggests that two levels of curriculum interventions are required—one at the level of attitudes and values and one at the level of knowledge and awareness (Griffin et al. 2002).

The study's recommendations also included the need for more resources and teacher professional development, a whole-school level of commitment to studies of Asia, and a need in primary schools for studies of Asia to be included across the curriculum. As a result, the Curriculum Corporation (2006) published a scope and sequence for studies of Asia within the SOSE learning area. This was designed to align with the *Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship Education* (MCEETYA 2006a) and argued for the following to be included in any study that purports to engage with Asia:

- the diversity of landscapes, systems and cultures in Asia
- the contribution of the people of Asia to Australian life now and in the past
- the interconnections between people, cultures and systems in the Asian region
- an understanding of key events, issues, ideas and beliefs and values of Asian countries that have had an effect on other cultures
- critical analysis of representations of Asian peoples and nations
- an understanding of critical episodes in the history of the Asian region
- an involvement in and, where possible, an experience of Asian cultures
- analysis of events or issues in Asia that have current interest or relevance and exploration of different perspectives on the reporting of these issues
- an understanding of individual and collective responsibilities associated with global citizenship

- the use of ICT to develop deeper understandings about Asia
- the development of shared understandings and the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice. (p. 8)

The emphasis was not only on understanding and developing intercultural sensitivity with regard to peoples in Asia, but also people of Asian background living in Australia.

Key issues associated with such a perspective on Asia are the exact definition of Asia and the place of the study of the Pacific region in this cross-curriculum priority. The AEF acknowledges both of these issues, pointing out on its website that the term 'Asia' is often seen as referring to the continent of Asia, which includes Russia and the countries also often called the Middle East. In fact, the Australian Bureau of Statistics includes the Middle East in its definition of Asia, whereas Russia is referred to as Eastern Europe. However, the AEF sees the definition in terms of cultural, religious, historical and linguistic boundaries or commonalities, rather than in geographical terms, and as such sees Australian schools as focusing on the subregions of:

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

In practice, these are the areas on which Australian schools traditionally focus. However, these subregions do not include the Pacific region, and yet Australia has some quite substantial commitments in the Pacific region that are apparently not to receive the same degree of emphasis in this priority. New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, despite being areas with which Australians identify strongly, do not feature in this perspective, although the AEF helped produce recent cross-curriculum teaching resources for secondary schools (e.g. *Pacific Neighbours: Understanding the Pacific Islands*). Having an Asian perspective does not preclude studies of other areas of interest to Australians, but in a crowded curriculum it is less likely to be studied unless materials and resources are also made available to understand these regions of the world. Studying our Pacific neighbours does feature in the Geography curriculum.

The reason for such an important perspective in Australian students' studies is that there is a need for Australians to be competent in engaging in their very significant corner of the globe for political and economic reasons as well as cultural ones. The *National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools* (DEST 2006b) argued for four main reasons that Australian students should engage with Asia. These are:

1 because we need to be good neighbours and responsible global citizens
2 to create a harmonious Australian society that has a significant Asian community
3 to learn from Asian culture in order to enhance our Australian creative community
4 to ensure future Australian economic prosperity.

Key Point

In Australia, the Asian curriculum focus is:

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

This statement, which was intended as a cross-curriculum focus, argues that as a result of an Asia-focused education program students should be able to understand Asia, develop informed attitudes and values associated with peoples, cultures, societies and organisations of Asia, know about contemporary and traditional Asia, connect Australia and Asia in a variety of ways, and communicate with good intercultural skills plus also some Asian language skills.

The 2012 white paper, *Australia in the Asian Century* (Australian Government 2012), provided further incentive in terms of education when it argued for the need to develop all Australians' skills and capabilities including job-specific skills, scientific and technical excellence, adaptability and resilience, creativity and design-based thinking to solve complex problems. A key feature of Australian education was seen as the need to broaden and deepen our understanding of Asian cultures and languages, become more Asia literate and build connections, relationships and partnerships across the region. The New Colombo Plan, initiated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in 2014, supports these aims with a wide-ranging group of scholarships available to graduates, including teachers and preservice teachers, to study and undertake internships in Asia and the Pacific.

Asia, Europe and the Americas are seen as the key trading centres in the world at this time and China and Japan are Australia's major trading partners. Australia must find a way to sit more comfortably in its local 'neighbourhood'. Australian children would seem to be confused about their attitudes to Asia and the Pacific region (e.g. they simultaneously like and dislike parts of Japanese and Chinese culture and beliefs and are concerned about the language difficulties associated with these countries; see Reynolds & Vinterek 2010; 2013), and there is thus an imperative to continue education programs to enhance both awareness, values and attitudes.

> An understanding of Asia underpins the capacity of Australian students to be active and informed citizens working together to build harmonious local, regional and global communities, and build Australia's social, intellectual and creative capital. It also builds understanding of the diversity of cultures and peoples living in Australia, fosters social inclusion and cohesion and is vital to the prosperity of Australia. (ACARA 2013a, p. 152)

ᴧᴧ Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

A study of 1500 Australian teachers found they believed that being 'Asia literate' was about knowing about Asia, but that it was also about becoming Asia capable and interculturally competent:

> Almost three quarters (73%) of teacher respondents believed that a key feature of the 'Asia literate teacher' was effectiveness in building intercultural understanding, not only through their teaching practices, but also through their character, disposition and behaviour. These include being 'accepting', 'open–minded', 'compassionate', 'flexible', 'adaptable', 'forward thinking', 'outward looking', 'culturally inquisitive', 'non–judgemental' and having 'a strong sense of justice'. (Halse et al. 2013, p. 81).

Some classroom ideas…

The AEF pamphlet on teaching intercultural understanding in English and history (AEF 2013) suggests that many strategies can be used to enhance Asia literacy, including cultures study and improved Asian language skills and knowledge of history. However, it was found to be important to move beyond simple additive and contributive approaches to incorporate more transformative and social action approaches (Banks 1999) if more sophisticated cultural perspectives are to be achieved. Thus activities such as reading Asian folk stories and Asian historical fiction; meeting people of various Asian ancestry to find out about their life as an Asian Australian could vary from other cultural 'hybrid' groups; engaging with Asian art and music experiences; and considering issues around race relations are helpful. An interesting unit of work, 'Broome pearls: a multicultural history', is available on the Western Australian Department of Education site: <http://det.wa.edu.au/curriculumsupport/asialiteracy/detcms/navigation/teaching-resources/broome>.

The three learning emphases in the Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia perspective are Achievements and contributions of the peoples of Asia; Asia and its diversity; and Asia–Australia engagement.

Sustainability

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promoted the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) from 2005 to 2014. UNESCO defines sustainable development as:

> Sustainable development is seeking to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations. We have to learn our way out of current social and environmental problems and learn to live sustainably.

> Sustainable development is a vision of development that encompasses populations, animal and plant species, ecosystems, natural resources and that integrates concerns such as the fight against poverty, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health, human security, intercultural dialogue, etc. (UNESCO n.d., (a) n.p.)

Thus education for sustainable development enables people to:

> develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions. (UNESCO n.d., (a) n.p.)

This definition indicates that maintaining sustainable living is not sufficient, and there needs to be a concerted effort to redress current problems with the sustainability of life in our world. It implies a strong vision of global interdependence, which has resonance in this curriculum area.

In Australia in 2010, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) developed the *Sustainability Curriculum Framework* to provide guidance in curriculum for sustainability in schools from kindergarten to Year 10. It argued that sustainability is about reducing our ecological footprint—that is, our negative impact on the environment—while improving the quality of life of our society. It claimed that education for sustainability is about learning to design and implement actions for the present, in the knowledge that the impact of these actions will be experienced in the future (DEWHA 2010, p. 4). This notion of sustainability includes a focus on the environment, the economy and the importance of a just and fair society. Such a framework for schools relies on students' participation so that they are skilled, confident and able to take the responsibility to be active about issues they perceive to be important. In the processes recommended to implement this vision of sustainability, taking a worldview is recommended, and it addressed much more than environmental issues.

The *Sustainability Curriculum Framework* argued that a sustainability program should include knowledge of systems, both human systems and ecological systems, and repertoires of practice (world viewing, systems thinking and futures and design thinking). These are to be brought together in an inquiry-like sustainability action process (making a case for change; defining the scope for action; developing a proposal for action; implementing the proposal; and evaluating and reflecting). This framework has some excellent ideas under themes such as water; social systems and subsystems; methods of assessing ecological sustainability; processes of historical change; civics and citizenship; ownership and property rights; economic systems and costs; materials and production; built environment; transport; and agriculture and food. It is definitely of great value in the Humanities and Social Sciences area as a way of approaching teaching in all areas for a sustainable future.

UNESCO likewise promotes interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching for sustainable futures. Specifically, the UNESCO website argues for:

- interdisciplinary and holistic learning rather than subject-based learning
- values-based learning
- critical thinking rather than memorising

- multi-method approaches: word, art, drama, debate, etc.
- participatory decision making
- locally relevant information, rather than national (UNESCO n.d. (b)).

Skamp (2009a) pointed out that contemporary notions of sustainability, particularly ideas from Sterling (2001), incorporate a broad view that it is not simply teaching *about* sustainability (content and knowledge) or *for* sustainability (values, capabilities, skills, critical and reflective thinking), but is teaching *as* sustainability (process and participation). Teaching as sustainability has a transforming purpose that cannot be simply another 'add on' to the overcrowded curriculum. As cited in Skamp, Sterling argued that ownership of learning was the essential factor in building the capacity to contribute to a civil society: learning needed to be 'meaningful, engaging and participative, rather than functional, passive and prescriptive' (Skamp 2009a, pp. 26–7).

Associated with this theme of building a sustainable community is the imperative of human rights education. The Australian Human Rights Commission has as its human rights education aims the following outcomes:

- an understanding of what human rights are and an understanding of the origins of modern human rights
- an appreciation of the meaning and significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments
- an understanding of how human rights instruments are applied in Australian law and society
- an understanding of the role of the Australian Human Rights Commission and its complaints process
- an ability to apply the concepts of human rights to their daily lives
- research and fact-sourcing, and an ability to think creatively and to communicate information to others
- decision-making skills, within an individual, group and class context
- literacy skills, including critical literacy, code breaking and comprehension skills, through reading and responding to a variety of texts, both orally and through writing
- skills in describing, reflecting, interpreting, analysing, evaluating and higher order thinking. (Australian Human Rights Commission n.d.)

Thus a sustainable community is one where there is a notion of fairness and this is learnt about, practised and valued. Wooltorton (2009) provided an example of ways to do this when she argued that one way to teach *as* sustainability is to develop schools as hubs for change in the suburbs where these schools were already centres for sustainability learning and engagement—a pedagogy of community. She contended that there were an increasing number of schools with eco-centres on their grounds focusing on learning projects such as a vegetable garden, biodiversity enhancement or energy reduction that are organised and nurtured collaboratively by teachers, children and parents. The use of place as a means of integrating education provides a cultural base for sustainability. It requires 'time, patience,

considerable dialogue and substantial commitment by all parties … [and] … conflict over processes and goals is common' (Wooltorton 2009, p. 7). These projects are time-consuming and complex because they demonstrate practically what being an active and informed citizen entails—time, personal risk taking, engagement, collaboration, dialogue, a critical approach and a requirement for change. A study of primary school teachers in the United Kingdom found they embraced sustainability as a key civics and citizenship focus, viewing it as an opportunity to make it empowering for themselves and the students, to acknowledge it as a potentially controversial area, as an area of the curriculum about which they would have to learn, and mostly saw it as a teaching focus that would enable them to work on local themes while extending these to global themes (Summers, Corney & Childs 2003). There was a sense of excitement and importance attached to the area by these teachers, who obviously felt motivated: no 'scripted lessons' here.

The Australian Education for Sustainability Alliance (AESA) (2014) report on progress in teaching for sustainability through the Australian Curriculum, elicited by a survey of 5000 teachers, principals and curriculum coordinators, found that 80 per cent of active teachers did not know what sustainability was and did not know how to teach it. Recommendations included start-up packages to help teachers and the establishment of more professional development networks, particularly whole-school approaches to sustainability. There are a large number of online resources available for teachers in this area, although linking the idea of sustainability to broad societal concerns and then to different discipline areas can be challenging. Nevertheless the challenge is exciting and important. The recent publication of the PISA global competence framework (OECD 2018a) establishes 'Take action for collective well-being and sustainable development' as one of the four key dimensions for global competency, and the international PISA tests will incorporate these global competencies as part of their regular international comparisons of education systems (p. 11).

Teacher education is seen as a key area to enhance skills in working for sustainable development, and in the Humanities and Social Sciences the area of sustainable futures is a strong focus because it enhances active and informed citizenship and has as its foundation values-laden, visionary and meaningful activities. This perspective will feature strongly in this text as a key component of the discipline of Geography. It also features strongly in all other curriculum areas because, in our twenty-first-century world, working for a sustainable future is what active and informed citizens strive for. It will feature as both a knowledge area and a skill area.

> Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence. (ACARA 2013a, p. 154)

The three organising streams in the sustainability cross-curriculum priority are systems; world views; and futures.

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY

🌱 Sustainability

Because inquiry-learning approaches are not about finding the one right answer, but are about how to find the answer that will fit best with the context in which they find themselves, they work well with approaches that focus on problem solving and futures thinking that enhance and promote sustainability. Inquiry approaches also fit well with learning how to clarify and be engaged with controversial issues where values guide our decision making and there will never be one correct answer. Issues of sustainability are not necessarily controversial, but they can be.

Some classroom ideas …

Celebrate the International Year of … The UN website lists some past years, with good resources available (see www.timeanddate.com/year/2011); 2011 was the Year of Forests (see www.timeanddate.com/year/2011/forests.html; 2014 was the Year of Family Farming (see www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en)—this can be another way of looking at sustainability. The year 2018 was given no particular year title by the UN, breaking with common practice, but 2019 is to be the International Year of Indigenous Languages, which can provide lots of inspiration for considering how to make communities more sustainable (see www.timeanddate.com/year/2019).

Primary planning in Humanities and Social Sciences

In many cases, the latest version of the Australian Curriculum will not represent much change at all to primary teachers' planning. At least in the short term, schools and school systems will most likely follow well-worn procedures and in a number of states SOSE will possibly endure. In others, there will be an attempt to program and teach History and Geography as a separate strand, with Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business as extra cross-curriculum priorities. This will involve primary teachers having a good understanding of some key historical and geographical skills and perspectives, as well as good knowledge of some historical and geographical content, thus possibly requiring some professional development in those areas. Additionally, primary teachers will need to clarify how much time is to be devoted to this. If History and Geography are to be taught separately, then how much time will be provided to teach civics, resources and cultural studies? And with History and Geography removed from their study, how will they be taught? These are difficult questions for the primary teacher and it is to be hoped that school systems will assist with the answers. Essentially, primary teachers will do as they have always done and find ways in which they can

best integrate all the topics and ideas they have to teach. The indicative time allocated to this area will be a guide to how much is expected of teachers. At the very maximum, in Years 5 and 6 of the primary school, 12 per cent of students' total school time will be dedicated to studies of Humanities and Social Sciences. At the Foundation level, ACARA has indicated that 4 per cent of school time be devoted to History (2 per cent) and Geography (2 per cent). Studies in these areas double to 4 per cent in each in Year 3 (ACARA 2012a, p. 9). The newest iteration of HASS F–6/7 has added a new dimension to the planning of primary teaching as discussed above, and Chapter 3 will provide some guidance here. Integrated studies across learning areas with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy skills would seem to be an excellent way to provide more time to the study in this area and also use some of the unallocated time provided for non-Australian Curriculum–directed studies.

Another issue for primary teachers is to consider how to seamlessly implement the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) in the context of the Australian Curriculum. The EYLF was developed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in 2009 to provide guidance for education from birth to five years of age and is based also on the Melbourne Declaration (2008). The Framework was developed around the themes of being, belonging and becoming and has a series of principles, outcomes and practices. It has a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development. The Framework has been designed for use by early childhood educators working in partnership with families, who are children's first and most influential educators (DEEWR 2009, p. 5). An extension of this Framework called *My Time Our Place: A Framework of School Aged Care* (before and after school care and vacation care) is also under development and has a similar structure to the birth-to-five years framework.

The principles for teaching established in these frameworks are secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; partnerships; high expectations and equity; respect for diversity; and ongoing learning and reflective practice. To attain these principles, a wide number of pedagogical practices are recommended, including:

- adopting holistic approaches
- being responsive to children
- planning and implementing learning through play
- intentional teaching
- creating physical and social learning environments that have a positive impact on children's learning
- valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families
- providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transition
- assessing and monitoring children's learning to inform provision and support children in achieving learning outcomes.

As a result of these pedagogical practices supporting the principles, five learning outcomes for children were designed. The outcomes were:

- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

It is a pity that these two frameworks have been developed seemingly independently of the Australian Curriculum because these same students are being educated under two different approaches. Thus, before attending school and in before and after school care, educators are focusing on outcomes such as developing a strong sense of identity in all aspects of curriculum; whereas this does not feature as strongly in the complex content descriptions and achievement standards of the various discipline areas in the Australian Curriculum. The new curriculum exacerbates the division between preschool and school as well as education before school and education after school. In the example given (a strong sense of identity) links could be made to the capability of intercultural understanding, personal and social competence, and Indigenous and Asian perspectives. Primary teachers should be aware of the existence of these early years frameworks in order to assist developing continuity of education and a secure learning environment for the students in their care. The Early Years Learning Framework emphasises the importance of such transitions and primary teachers can better assist these transitions by referring to this document.

Conclusion

We teach in turbulent times and so the professionalism of the teacher is crucial. There are many competing views of what should be happening in primary classrooms, but it is critical that teachers, carers and schools work together to ensure that schooling is not a political football. Students are entitled to a pleasant learning environment that allows them some control and participation while catering to their capabilities, providing them with skills and knowledge of value to their futures. In the Humanities and Social Sciences area of the curriculum, the focus should be on learning to be informed and active citizens. This involves learning values, skills and knowledge in a safe environment, one that allows students to disagree, take time, be valued for their contributions and learn in a secure social context. The next chapter explores the key pedagogies of Humanities and Social Sciences more thoroughly.

Major references ▶▶

Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2013a). *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum*. Sydney: ACARA. Retrieved from www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) (2009). *Belonging, Being & Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (2008). *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. Canberra: MCEETYA.

Piper, K. (1997). *Riders in the Chariot: Curriculum reform and the national interest 1965–1995*. Camberwell: ACER.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Choose one of the general capabilities from the Australian Curriculum.
- What does this capability mean to you?
- How do you think it should be best taught? Is there an area of the curriculum where you could see it fitting more appropriately than any other?
- Are there capabilities that are not included that you could see need to be included in a national curriculum?

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- In your particular state or region, how much difference will the existence of the Australian Curriculum make to the way you teach?
- How much global, national and local content should there be in such a curriculum?

WHY DON'T YOU ...?

As a whole class, brainstorm reasons for and against an Australian curriculum. In groups, rank these reasons to ascertain the major reasons why or why not a national curriculum is important. Put two or three groups together and construct a chart to indicate the consensus of ranking you attributed to these reasons, for example:

Reasons	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
a	1	3	4	8
b	2	2	1	5
c	3	1	3	7
d	4	4	2	10

- What does this tell you about consistency of views around a national curriculum?
- What are the issues associated with using a ranking graph like this to judge perspectives?