

## Teaching the *Cultures* strand of the *HSIE K–6 syllabus*

Supporting student learning about identities and diversity fosters greater understanding of how, as Australians, we deal with difference and identity.

In a discussion about teaching cultural understanding, it is useful to keep in mind the aim of the *HSIE syllabus* to

*develop in students the values and attitudes, skills, and knowledge and understanding that: enhance their sense of personal, community, national and global identity and enables them to participate effectively in maintaining and improving the quality of their society and environment.*

*HSIE K–6 syllabus p. 8*

In a recent international project undertaken jointly between NSW DET and the Pacific Circle Consortium (2003), *Cultural understanding: an international perspective*, cultural understanding was defined as:

*... the capacity to apply understanding of the diversity and commonality within and between groups, organisations and societies toward the achievement of common goals. It involves the abilities to: demonstrate knowledge of cultural cohesion and diversity, respect the rights and responsibilities of others and work with others to achieve common goals which reflect equity and social justice.*

In the *HSIE K–6 syllabus* the **Cultures** strand is divided into two sub strands (personal and Australian) *Identities* and *Cultural diversity*. In schools, culture is often taught in a multicultural context with a focus on cultural differences related to cultural diversity. The concept that there is a unique identity within families and communities that contributes to the larger concept of being Australian, needs to be included in teaching about culture.

The makeup of individual classes is going to be different, and developing cultural understanding in line with the aim of *HSIE* should address social cohesion and cultural diversity. In monocultural classes there could well be an emphasis on cultural diversity to foster cultural understanding, and in classes that are multicultural, an emphasis on Australian identity could foster cultural cohesion. Expanding students' knowledge about their own identity as an Australian and developing tolerance and understanding of the other identities and cultural diversity, has always been an integral part of understanding of the wider Australian community.

Some teaching suggestions for Stage 3, related to identity and culture diversity are outlined below. Student learning about identity and cultural diversity begins in Stage 1. The material supporting teaching in the **Cultures** strand in Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be published in the Term 3 edition of *Curriculum Support Primary*.

### Early Stage 1

In Early Stage 1, students learn about the common characteristics that people share, and differences between people through shared, social experiences that draw upon the culture of students' own family and community.

### Stage 3

In Stage 3, students develop their learning from Stage 2. The emphasis in Stage 3 is on learning about Australian identities through the use of more complex symbols of Australian culture and the influence individuals and groups have on developing Australian identities. The influence of other cultures on Australian communities is incorporated into a study of another culture or country that is a near neighbour to Australia.

## Teaching and learning about culture in Stage 3

Review the syllabus subject matter for **Cultures, HSIE K–6 syllabus** p. 61.

Outcome	<b>Identities CUS3.3</b> <b>Describes different cultural influences and their contributions to Australian identities.</b>	<b>Cultural diversity CUS3.4</b> <b>Examines how cultures change through interactions with other cultures and the environment.</b>
Teaching ideas can include	<p>Australian identities (inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities)</p> <p>A student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>researches the origins of dedicated and commemorated days or weeks</li> <li>researches and explains some significant customs, practices and traditions of Aboriginal people with reference to a particular group or community</li> <li>articulates an understanding of the complexities of Aboriginal culture</li> <li>researches nationally remembered days or weeks</li> <li>identifies some factors that have contributed to an Australian cultural identity and how these are represented as national symbols</li> <li>describes ways in which Australians express their identity</li> <li>researches Australian values, characteristics, features and symbols recognised nationally and internationally</li> <li>understands different viewpoints about what is an Australian identity and gives their own viewpoint</li> <li>gathers and collates information on the origins and diversity of Australian communities</li> <li>compares data and decides if their own community reflects or is different to the diversity of other Australian communities</li> <li>describes ways in which Australians express their diversity</li> <li>examines the contribution of significant Australians, including those born overseas, to Australian society</li> <li>discusses how multiculturalism has influenced and changed Australian society</li> <li>researches different eras of own family migration to Australia</li> <li>illustrates own understanding of the complexities of Australian identities.</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural interaction and change</p> <p>A student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigates the purpose of people expressing their culture through different stories</li> <li>examines first hand recounts of migrant experiences</li> <li>researches different cultural influences on Australian society</li> <li>reflects of the role of Dreaming in conveying society rules, behaviours, environments and relationships</li> <li>identifies the role of Dreaming in the spiritual life of Aboriginal people</li> <li>enhances background knowledge of world religions and their contribution to Australian society</li> <li>identifies the impact and influence of each of the world's major religions on Australian society</li> <li>researches the religious practices of another country</li> <li>locates and records cultural information of another country in comparison to Australia e.g. food, clothing, type of housing, type of schooling, levels of education, income, family traditions, work and leisure</li> <li>identifies how people from other countries have influenced Australian culture</li> <li>explores dilemmas associated with prejudice and discrimination</li> <li>recognises examples of racism and its impact on individuals or groups</li> <li>develops an awareness of their own level of acceptance of different racial, ethnic, national and religious groups</li> <li>identifies cultural diversity in Australia</li> <li>examines beliefs and practices celebrated by various cultural groups in Australia</li> <li>recognises that people's viewpoints are influenced by their beliefs, values and attitudes</li> <li>recognises their own acceptance of different racial, ethnic, national and religious groups.</li> </ul>

Supporting cultural understanding helps to breakdown racism, sexism and other stereotypes improving the social wellbeing of our communities, and enhancing the common wealth of all Australians.

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