Module 1: Teaching for intercultural understanding

Module description
Module 1 is the core module within the Professional Learning Program (PLP). It outlines the Australian educational context and details research into intercultural learning and values education. Undertaking the module allows participants to develop a common values language for engaging with Side by Side and World of Values and fosters the development of pedagogies that are relevant to intercultural learning and values education. A whole-school approach is central in the development of classroom teaching and learning and school policies and programs, and for the engagement with the school community.

Explicit values focus
Each of the nine Values for Australian Schooling – Care and Compassion, Doing Your Best, Fair Go, Freedom, Honesty and Trustworthiness, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion – are central to the development of intercultural understanding.

Curriculum focus
The module is relevant to the following learning areas, as defined in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008):
- English
- Health and Physical Education
- Languages
- Humanities and Social Sciences (including History, Geography, Economics, Civics and Citizenship).

Key understandings
Participants will develop understandings of the:
- existing and emerging Australian education policy context
- best available research and good practice models, and what they tell us about intercultural learning and values education
- learning areas and pedagogies that are relevant to intercultural learning and values education
- role of teachers, school leaders and community members in developing intercultural understanding.

Essential items
- Handouts 1.1, 1.2, 1.3.
- The Values Education website (www.valueseducation.edu.au) which includes the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools (DEST 2005) and Supporting Student Wellbeing Through Values Education: A Resource Package (DEEWR 2009).
- Your school mission or vision statement.
- A relevant learning area curriculum document.
Getting started

While the National Framework may not specifically identify intercultural understanding as relevant to the values for Australian schooling, such an understanding implicitly underpins the key values, principles, elements and approaches that inform good practice. Participants need to connect the explicit and implicit values of the National Framework to what they already know about intercultural understanding – as it is much more than simply being aware of other cultures.

Reflection

Access a copy of the National Framework and reflect on what it has to say about developing student responsibility in local, national and global contexts. You may wish to begin a reflective learning journal, which can be added to as you engage with this and other modules.

Reflective journals are useful learning tools. You can use your journal to record, illustrate and/or challenge ideas both within the PLP and the two resources that it supports.

Australian education policy

Intercultural understanding allows students to reach an evolving understanding of their own culture/s and to appreciate cultural diversity on a local, national and global level. It also enables them to appreciate the common ground that all people share. Nationally agreed educational goals for young Australians identify a key role for schools in ‘promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation’s ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion’ (MCEETYA 2008, Melbourne Declaration, p 4).

The Melbourne Declaration asserts that these attributes are necessary due to a number of factors, including:

- appreciation of Australia’s social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity
- increased global integration and international mobility
- the emergence of India, China and other Asian nations (which requires Australians to be Asia literate)
- the impact of globalisation and technological change
- the emergence of complex environmental, social and economic pressures
- rapid and continuous advances in ICT.

Reflection

Refer to Handout 1.1, which includes extracts from The Melbourne Declaration. Reflect on their analysis of why young Australians need to develop and use intercultural understanding.

Social interaction

If you are undertaking a collegiate learning activity, consider developing a collaborative electronic presentation that can be used to promote the importance of intercultural understanding to other staff. Use the ideas contained in Module 1 and its handouts to develop content for your presentation.
In 2005, MCEETYA approved the *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008* (DECS 2005). While the statement focuses on languages education, the ideas relating to intercultural learning have whole-school relevance in that they address the importance of communicating, interacting and negotiating within and across languages and cultures.

### Making connections

The second part of Handout 1.1 includes extracts from the *National Statement for Languages Education*. Use a highlighter to identify parts relevant to intercultural understanding.

### Active construction

Compare the ideas about intercultural understanding contained in *The Melbourne Declaration* and the *National Statement for Languages Education*. In what ways do their ideas complement or differ from the ideas espoused in the *National Framework*? A Venn diagram might be used here.

A Venn diagram can help you make comparisons. Similarities are shown in the overlapping area and differences are shown in the areas that do not overlap.

### Social interaction

If you are undertaking a collegiate learning activity, use a think-pair-share activity to discuss gaps in school-level policy that may need to be addressed. A think-pair-share learning strategy enables learners to ‘think’ first, then to ‘pair’ with another learner to exchange views. The pair then presents to the group, allowing diverse ideas to be collated and compared.

### Further research

Australian governments have approved a number of ‘statements’ about cultural inclusion and Indigenous education, gender equity, languages, rural and remote education and education about Asia. A number of these statements will have been distributed to your school. The statements can also be downloaded from the MCEECDYA website (www.mceecdyaa.mceecdya.edu.au).

### Research about intercultural learning

In a 2003 report to the Australian Government, researchers from the University of South Australia and Griffith University outlined different approaches to intercultural learning in language teaching. The *Report on Intercultural Language Learning* (Liddicoat, AJ, Papademetre, L, Scarino, A & Kohler, M 2003) includes findings applicable to intercultural teaching and learning generally. Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino and Kohler identify four broad groupings of approaches to teaching culture. These are summarised in Table 1.1.

### Table 1.1: Approaches to teaching culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High culture</th>
<th>Learning about culture through the study of cultural texts that fit within a canon (for example, literature, visual arts, classical and traditional music).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area studies</td>
<td>Learning about culture through the study of history, geography and institutions in order to develop a body of knowledge about a country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture as societal norms</td>
<td>Learning about culture through the study of cultural practices and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture as practice</td>
<td>Learning about culture/s through interacting with the target culture in informed ways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The authors argue that, while all four approaches are pedagogically sound, the first three may lead to a view of other cultures as a ‘closed, final and fixed phenomenon’ and [that] the teaching imparts no learning which can assist learners to understand and participate in cultures as they change in different times, places and contexts’ (Liddicoat, AJ et al, p 7).

Reflection
Before progressing further, reflect on how you teach, or your school teaches, students about one of the following: the contribution of migrants to Australia, indigenous Australians, and/or education about Asia. Where do your own approaches to teaching about culture fit?

The report proposes a useful working definition of culture learning derived from the research of Paige and Stringer (1999).

Culture learning is the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process that engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively.

Table 1.2 Paige & Stringer’s intercultural learning model

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning about the self as a cultural being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learning about culture and its impact on human language, behaviour and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Culture-general learning, focusing on universal intercultural phenomena including cultural adjustment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Culture-specific learning, with a focus on a particular language or culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learning how to learn about language and culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This model advocates that the learner should be involved in a process of self-realisation about the importance and relevance of culture as a major aspect of identity. The model is predicated on a belief that intercultural learning and understanding will improve one’s ability to communicate with others.

Making connections
Paige and Stringer’s model can be used to explore your pre-existing knowledge and conceptions about intercultural learning in Australian schools. Do you think that the elements represent a hierarchy of knowledge skills and values? At which levels of schooling are they applicable?

Social interaction
If you are undertaking a collegiate learning activity, you might like to use a graphic organiser such as a spider map to explore each element of the Paige and Stringer model. Each participant could develop, present and discuss one element of the model in creating a group response.

A spider map can be used as a planning or brainstorming tool. You place the central theme or idea in the middle circle and then list a main idea along one of the spider’s legs. This idea is then further teased out in the section at the end of the appropriate leg.

The first element of the Paige and Stringer model may in fact be the most problematic for enabling students to explore their own values and culture. Liddicoat et al (2003) contend that intercultural teaching:

… does not assume that students know their own culture. (I)n fact, because our cultural practices are largely invisible to us, we do not usually see them as cultural and constructed … (I)n order to learn about another culture we need to learn about our own culture at the same time by comparing our own culture with the target culture.

Source: Liddicoat, AJ et al 2003, p 24

The link between intercultural learning and values education
Values education has also explored the interrelationship of values and intercultural learning. Andrew Furco from the University of Minnesota presented a paper at the Australian National Values Education Forum 2008, Exploring the Purposes, Complexities, and Future of Values Education. Furco contends that:

When we compare the particular values of one country’s initiatives to another, we see many overlaps, but we also see some differences. What is striking about the differences is that they reveal the fact that values are nuanced, that is, they are not a monolith that are interpreted or operationalised in the same exact way in every context. Even the so-called universal values, such as respect and love, are operationalised differently in different cultures … As we seek to instil in young people the core values considered important for the culture, we must consider whose values we espouse and how those values are defined and taught.


Furco recommends five ways of looking at values education that are equally applicable to intercultural and interfaith teaching and learning. Furco argues that “new research in the field … (suggests) that these issues are important to understanding how values development manifests in youth” (Furco 2008, p 4).
Table 1.3 Essential components of values education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values clarification</th>
<th>The same value may be interpreted and operationalised differently in different cultures.</th>
<th>An individual understands the different ways each value may be interpreted in different cultures, customs, and settings.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values discernment</td>
<td>All values are not equal; one value may be more important or a better choice over another in particular situations.</td>
<td>An individual is able to apply good judgement in selecting the most appropriate value in a particular situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values optimalisation</td>
<td>All values operate on a continuum; optimal points vary for individuals and situations.</td>
<td>In specific situations, an individual is able to adjust and appropriately apply the value at an optimal point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values incongruity</td>
<td>Values may be incompatible and in conflict.</td>
<td>An individual is able to reconcile a conflict in values through rationalisation and justification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values preference (or dominance)</td>
<td>Individuals have certain predispositions for particular values.</td>
<td>An individual understands and considers his/her values predisposition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Furco, A 2008, Exploring the Purposes, Complexities and Future of Values Education, pp 9–13

Each component of the Furco model of learning about values establishes a sociocultural context that can be used to deconstruct values. He recognises that a child or young person may bring to any discourse different sociocultural values that are based on their age, ethnicity, gender, history, dominant home culture, faith or sexual orientation.

Furco’s analysis of the components of values education is not just about developing appropriate knowledge and skills. It also takes account of the need to develop opportunities for students to ‘operationalise’ (that is, commit to and ‘live’) certain values.

**Active construction**

Scenarios can be used to explore and model how Furco’s components of values education relate to the development of intercultural understanding. Consider a situation such as the wearing of a head scarf to school by a Muslim girl. People bring a range of values predispositions to bear on discussions about the appropriateness of the hijab. Analyse such a scenario using Furco’s components of values education to test your own values.
Values education and good practice

The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (2005–2008) was developed to improve values education in Australian schools. Clusters of schools were funded to conduct action research around a variety of values education approaches and to gather evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of these interventions. These cluster projects demonstrate how values education can provide both the tools and the common ground for positively engaging with the different cultures, faiths, ethnicities, abilities, geographic and socioeconomic circumstances within schools and communities.

Clusters in each state and territory show that values education is uniquely placed to work across these different ‘divides’ and help foster social inclusion, social cohesion, intercultural and interfaith understanding and engagement for the disengaged. Some of the clusters’ findings are outlined below.

- Values education gives students a shared language for expressing feelings and reflecting on their relationship to themselves and others, and their responsibilities as global citizens.
- Values education and values clarification activities provide an entry point for addressing or examining issues of perceived cultural dissonance.
- Values clashes or conflict can provide a starting point for discussion in school communities about ‘whose values’ and lead to consensus-building exercises.
- Explicit teaching and modelling of values in intercultural contexts can cut through perceptions of difference and highlight areas of common understanding.
- Teachers need to investigate their own values and explore how they are expressed in their classroom practice before they teach values dispositions.
- Parents have a vital role in legitimising and supporting values education approaches across cultures.

Source: At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling, 2008 DEEWR.

Handout 1.2 summarises the clusters’ action research into developing intercultural understanding through values education.

Active construction

Examine Handout 1.2 in order to identify how clusters addressed issues relating to understanding, tolerance and inclusion. Which experiences might be relevant to your own school setting?

Intercultural learning across the whole school

Earlier Values Education Project resources introduced Australian teachers to the whole school model of values education. Schools were advised that values education involves all the members of the community (students, staff, parents and carers, and other community members) and covers all areas of school life. The development of intercultural understanding is the same.

Poster available at www.valueseducation.edu.au
A local process needs to define the relevance of developing intercultural communication and understandings as part of a whole-school values education program that has local, national and global dimensions.

Classroom teaching and learning
Teaching and learning for intercultural understanding encompasses the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of the curriculum, including the values taught, discussed, modelled and practised.

Curriculum
Teaching for intercultural understanding is particularly relevant to four of the learning areas defined in *The Melbourne Declaration*: English, Health and Physical Education, Languages, and Humanities and Social Sciences (MCEETYA 2008, p 14). The resources supported by this PLP – *Side by Side* and *World of Values* – have been created to explore the development of intercultural understanding in these learning areas (within an overall values education program). The specific curriculum focus is identified for participants at the start of Modules 2–7.

English
Language, Literature and Literacy or their state and territory equivalents are central to the study of English in schools. The shape of the new national curriculum recognises this and includes elements that are applicable to the development of intercultural understanding and communication within a values education program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.4 English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Reflection
Select and use an English curriculum to identify outcomes, standards or essential learnings that define how intercultural understanding can be developed. You may like to focus on one particular stage of schooling. If you are using a reflective journal, record your findings.
Health and Physical Education
Health and Physical Education in the early years of schooling seeks to develop a range of skills and understandings in students, including a sense of their own worth and dignity, an understanding of and respect for the rights of others to hold different values and attitudes from their own, and a commitment to realising their full potential. Curriculums may also encourage students to act in culturally appropriate ways to enhance health and wellbeing and to promote structures that support their own and others’ health and wellbeing.

Reflection
Select and use a Health and Physical Education curriculum to identify outcomes, standards or essential learnings that define how intercultural understanding can be developed in the early years of schooling. If you are using a reflective journal, record your findings.

Languages
The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 (MCEETYA 2005) outlines the importance of languages for developing intercultural understanding. The importance of languages (particularly Asian languages) is reaffirmed in The Melbourne Declaration.

Reflection
Select and use a languages curriculum to identify outcomes, standards or essential learnings that describe how intercultural understanding can be developed in the early years of schooling. If you are using a reflective journal, record your findings.

Humanities and Social Sciences
The nationally agreed learning area of Humanities and Social Sciences includes History, Geography, Economics, and Civics and Citizenship. Aspects of each of these subjects will be relevant to the development of intercultural understanding within a values education program.

Table 1.5 Humanities and Social Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History</th>
<th>Students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gain knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past in order to better appreciate their own and other cultures, better understand the present and better contribute to debate about planning for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• learn about world history from the time of the earliest human communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• understand Australian history within a comparative framework that embraces Indigenous components</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognise geographic concepts of place, space, location, association, distribution, interrelationship and environmental sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognise how natural and built environments contribute to diverse cultural beliefs, practices and senses of identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognise the sociocultural dimensions of needs, wants, supply, production, distribution and power and decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• become aware that the economic decisions made by individuals, groups, businesses and governments impact on the wellbeing of individuals, families, communities, countries and regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civics and Citizenship

Students:
• understand the role of democracy in building a socially cohesive and civil society and examine laws in wider contexts, including the ways in which they prevent discrimination and promote equity
• understand Australia’s changing identity and the ways in which this has been influenced by Indigenous, multicultural, regional and global perspectives
• recognise that Australia is a culturally diverse nation and become more aware of its role and influence regionally and globally.

Pedagogy

Effective values education uses pedagogies that mirror the values being taught. Pedagogies should engage students in real-life learning, offer opportunity for real practice, provide safe structures for taking risks, and encourage personal reflection and action.

Previous values education resources have outlined principles and practice in values education. These have emerged from school-based experience as well as national and international research. They include:
• using a student-centred, inquiry-based learning model
• providing a safe environment
• providing opportunities to practise and live the values
• educating the whole child
• attending to the total teaching and learning experience
• being explicit about the values
• developing a shared language about values
• being congruent and consistent
• engaging with parents and the whole school community.

Source: DEEWR 2009, Supporting Student Wellbeing Through Values Education, p 6

Each of the principles and practice in values education is described in greater detail in Supporting Student Wellbeing through Values Education.

Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino and Kohler (2003) argue that intercultural learning necessitates a pedagogical approach that involves:
• understanding and building upon who learners are as individuals … (that is, people) with their own multiple identities, their own needs, interests, personalities, motivations, prior learning experiences and aspirations
• selecting intercultural … learning tasks which are rich in scope for developing and reflecting upon self and others
• drawing out … the implicit conceptions and the explanatory systems of learners that shape how they interpret what they learn, and how they see themselves

Reflection

Select and use a Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum to identify elements (for example, descriptions, outcomes) that describe how intercultural understanding can be developed. You may like to focus on one particular stage of schooling (that is, lower primary, middle primary, upper primary, lower secondary, middle secondary, upper secondary). If you are using a reflective journal, record your findings.

Social interaction

If you are undertaking a collegiate professional learning activity, consider dividing, examining and reporting back to the larger group about a number, or all, of these curriculums. This activity could focus on a particular stage of schooling (for example, the middle years) or be across a number of stages of schooling (for example, secondary schooling).
• drawing upon resources that provide a window on interculturality
• attending to the longitudinal progress of learners, constantly building, extending, elaborating on concepts and processes in relation to intercultural learning
• creating a culture of inquiry and reflection in the classroom
• developing intercultural sensitivity.

Source: Liddicoat, AJ et al 2003, p 64

These approaches can be incorporated under headings used in the learning design within the PLP (that is, Active construction, Making connections, Reflection, and Responsibility).

Reflection
If you are interested in reading in detail about pedagogy and intercultural learning, refer to Handout 1.3.

Social interaction
If you are engaged in a collegiate professional learning activity, divide up the ‘principles’ (see Handout 1.3, Column 1) for more detailed analysis. Examine, discuss and report back to the larger group about how these pedagogies can support the development of intercultural understanding.

Making connections
Compare the ‘Principles and practices of values education’ and the ‘Pedagogy for intercultural learning’. What similarities and differences can you identify? How might they complement each other?

School policies and programs
Individual teachers will always create exemplary values education programs at specific levels or within particular learning areas that develop intercultural understanding. Such programs, however, have restricted value if the experiences of students are not reinforced or validated in other learning areas or at other levels. School policies and programs need to develop a whole-school approach to values education that reflects student needs and aspirations.

Two resources from the Values for Australian Schooling materials support schools in developing this whole-school approach to values education. The Values for Australian Schooling Kit (DEST 2005) provides posters, templates and activities on the approach with a focus on such things as the school vision, audits of curriculum and school governance. More recently the website, Values-centred Schools – A Guide (DEEWR 2009), presents more comprehensive practical advice, accounts from school experiences, resources and tools to support school leaders in fostering the development of values-centred school culture. The resource provides guidance on engaging the school community and then implementing and monitoring the progress towards embedding values at the centre of the school ethos and all elements of school life. Values-centred Schools – A Guide draws extensively on the work of the schools involved in the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (2005–2008).
Action research in Australian schools about values education has identified the benefits of whole-school and inter-school approaches to the development of intercultural understanding. Schools and school clusters have developed strategies suited to schools where there are diverse ethnic or sociocultural groups (for example, Indigenous students, different faith groups) or where students are drawn from a narrow sociocultural group that needs to learn about cultural diversity locally, nationally and globally.

School-based action research about values education has identified how school policies and programs that explicitly focus on values education can lead to improved understanding, tolerance and inclusion. Lessons in good practice for engaging the community include the following points.

- Values education can provide a common objective ground for discussions about intracultural and intercultural issues.
- When a critical mass of students are given responsibility and supported by all staff to participate in school policy planning and decision-making processes, they demonstrate increased levels of maturity, critical thinking, engagement and pro-social involvement in the life of the school.
- Special-purpose community advisory groups comprising representatives from many of the cultural groups in the community can contribute to, and review, a school’s values platform.
- Safe and inclusive school environments can create pride in multiple cultures where parents and students feel a sense of belonging and participate more fully in the life of the school.

School community

An understanding of the school’s values is vital for the constituent groups that make up the school community. There are also benefits for schools in engaging diverse individuals and groups within the school’s programs to support the development of values and intercultural understanding. These may include: a greater understanding of the values of diverse sociocultural groups within the community, increased engagement of students from these groups in learning, and access to human and physical resources that can augment programs.

School-based action research about values education has identified how community understanding and engagement can lead to improved understanding, tolerance and inclusion. Lessons in good practice for engaging the community include the following points.

- Values education approaches provide a common ground for diverse communities to negotiate what they have in common through a lens of democracy, dialogue and shared action.
- A collaborative values education approach can bring disparate communities together in community-building activities.
- Parents play a vital role in legitimising and supporting values education approaches across cultures. Where students see bonds of friendship developing between adults, the power of this active role modelling encourages them to move beyond ethnic and cultural stereotypes and towards greater intercultural understandings.

Active construction

If your school has already adopted a vision, goals and strategies that encompass values education and/or intercultural learning, analyse the implications of these principles for one of the following: classroom teaching principles and practice (that is, pedagogy), formal and informal learning programs, and student leadership.
Reflection
Are there ethnically and socioeconomically diverse groups in your school community? To what extent are these groups already actively engaged? Consider ways in which particular groups’ involvement and interaction with others could be improved. Use Handout 1.2 to explore how some good practice school clusters have approached this issue.

Responsibility
Do parents and/or the community understand the importance of intercultural understanding for students? Consider developing a parent or community presentation (for example, a slide show; a newsletter) about intercultural understanding, using the information and resources that you have explored in this module.

Ideas in practice
In this module you have had opportunities to explore how the development of intercultural understanding is relevant to values education. School-based exemplars and national and international research provide opportunities for you to understand the link between needs, theory and practice at a school and classroom level.

It is intended that you build on these ideas through improved teaching practice or through the development of policy and whole-school programs. Modules 2 to 7 have been created to provide you with exemplary print and digital resources that can be used at specific levels of schooling.

Reflection
Active construction
Responsibility
Use a reflective journal or develop a portfolio that can be used to document your engagement with this and subsequent modules. A portfolio might include observations about student learning and what students create when engaging with Side by Side and the digital resources selected for World of Values. Share your observations with others.

Further research
Your school may already be engaging with intercultural learning through another national priority area such as Engaging Young Australians with Asia, Civics and Citizenship, or Global Education.

Reflection
Reflect on how one or more of these initiatives can be integrated into a values education approach to support the development of intercultural understanding in your school.
Handout 1.1 Australian education policy

The Melbourne Declaration
The following text is extracted from The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008). The complete Melbourne Declaration can be downloaded from the MCEECDYA website (www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya).

Preamble

… The Melbourne Declaration acknowledges major changes in the world are placing new demands on Australian education.

- Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.

- India, China and other Asian nations are growing and their influence on the world is increasing. Australians need to become ‘Asia literate’, engaging and building strong relationships with Asia.

- Globalisation and technological change are placing greater demands on education and skill development in Australia and the nature of jobs available to young Australians is changing faster than ever. Skilled jobs now dominate jobs growth and people with university or vocational education and training qualifications fare much better in the employment market than early school leavers …

- Complex environmental, social and economic pressures such as climate change that extend beyond national borders pose unprecedented challenges, requiring countries to work together in new ways …

- Rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) are changing the ways people share, use, develop and process information and technology. In this digital age, young people need to be highly skilled in the use of ICT. While schools already employ these technologies in learning, there is a need to increase their effectiveness significantly over the next decade.
The Educational Goals for Young Australians

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence
All Australian governments and schools must:

• provide all students with access to high-quality schooling that is free from discrimination based on gender, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy, culture, ethnicity, religion, health or disability, socioeconomic background or geographic location
• ensure that schools build on local cultural knowledge and experience of Indigenous students as a foundation for learning, and work in partnership with local communities on all aspects of the schooling process
• ensure that schooling contributes to a socially cohesive society that respects and appreciates cultural diversity.

Goal 2: All young Australians become: successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens
All Australian governments and schools must (develop active citizens who):

• appreciate Australia’s social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity
• understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
• are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures of Asia.

National Statement for Languages Education
The following text is extracted from the National Statement for Languages Education. The complete National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005–2008 can be downloaded from the MCEECDYA website (www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya).

Education in a global community brings with it an increasing need to focus on developing intercultural understanding. This involves the integration of language, culture and learning. Intercultural language learning helps learners to know and understand the world around them, and to understand commonality and difference, global connections and patterns. Learners will view the world, not from a single perspective of their own first language and culture, but from the multiple perspectives gained through the study of second and subsequent languages and cultures. For learners who study their background or heritage language, it provides a strengthened sense of identity. Intercultural language learning contributes to the overall education of learners, developing in them the capabilities to:

• communicate, interact and negotiate within and across languages and cultures
• understand their own and others’ languages, thus extending their range of literacy skills, including skills in English literacy
• understand themselves and others, and to understand and use diverse ways of knowing, being and doing
• further develop their cognitive skills through thinking critically and analytically, solving problems, and making connections in their learning.
Handout 1.2 Values education good practice

Using values education to address ethnic diversity and socioeconomic disadvantage

Cluster A

Cluster A within the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2 included four primary schools and one secondary school on the edge of a capital city. The student population of the cluster comprised 56 different cultural groups and had a yearly student mobility rate of about 30 per cent. Cluster A schools focused on improving the engagement and commitment of diverse groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disabilities, through a values-based approach to curriculum and school ethos.

The cluster consulted with various communities about the strengths and weaknesses of current school policies and practices that influenced student engagement and attendance. A survey was used to ascertain the degree of respect and inclusion that different cultural groups felt they enjoyed within the school. Indigenous and Pacific Islander role models provided staff development about key issues in the lives of different cultural groups. Some teachers also analysed how the cluster schools cater for these groups.

In addition to a range of targeted curriculum projects, schools in the cluster reviewed opportunities for students to take leadership roles and found that these were sometimes unintentionally exclusive to different student sociocultural groups. The cluster coordinator found that:

Student-focused cluster activities expand students’ perceptions of the world outside their homogenous (sometimes) parochial environment, develop self-confidence, provide different avenues for self-expression, widen their life experiences, provide leadership opportunities, and provide exposure to, and opportunity to demonstrate, the full range of values in the National Framework.

Source: At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling, 2008 DEEWR, p 56
Cluster B

Cluster B included four primary, two secondary and one specific-purpose school in regional Australia. The local community was comprised of more than 40 cultural groups. While this enriched individual school cultures, it also led to challenges for schools.

Each school in the cluster tailored activities to suit local community needs. Staff teams in the secondary school designed and delivered specific values lessons in the middle school, reviewed the school’s core values platforms to identify how they might become more prominent, and investigated ways in which the school could help develop community harmony.

Four key messages were derived from the project.

- A collaborative values education approach can bring disparate communities together in community-building activities.
- Values clashes or conflicts provide a starting point for school community discussions about ‘whose values’ in consensus-building exercises.
- Values education can provide a common objective ground for discussions about intracultural and intercultural issues.
- Explicit teaching and modelling of values in intercultural contexts can cut through perceptions of difference and highlight areas of common understanding.

Source: At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling, 2008 DEEWR, pp 57–59

Cluster C

Cluster C included one K–12 school, three primary schools and two secondary schools in the suburbs of a capital city. Faith-based and government schools were involved in a project that attempted to build relationships between groups in the cluster’s community to improve respect for individual identities and respect for other cultures.

Cluster activities were undertaken to build cultural bridges. An activity was held at the beach where students from local schools met students from faith-based schools located in a different municipality. The beach provided an iconic Australian common space through which values could be mediated. The activity allowed students to see how much they had in common and develop both self-awareness and awareness of others. A collaborative virtual space also encouraged students to challenge stereotypes being presented in the media, allowing them to connect with their lived experiences rather than with the more disconnected reports they were seeing in the media. A forum provided insights into how students, parents, teachers and members of the community felt about and related to particular values. Focus questions included ‘What makes you Australian?’ and ‘What does it mean to be Australian?’ Focus groups enabled participants to share their views.

Two key messages were derived from the project.

- The internet provides a space where stereotypes and myths about cultures can be challenged through peer-to-peer communication.
- Parents play a vital role in legitimising and supporting values education approaches across cultures. Where students see bonds of friendship developing between adults, the power of this active role modelling encourages them to move beyond ethnic and cultural stereotypes towards greater intercultural understandings.

Source: At the Heart of What We Do: Values Education at the Centre of Schooling, 2008 DEEWR, pp 66–68
Handout 1.3 Pedagogy for intercultural learning

The following pedagogy for intercultural learning is adapted from the *Report on Intercultural Language Learning*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
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| Active construction  | Pedagogy:  
• is task oriented, focused on learners interpreting, noticing, recognising, analysing, comparing  
• is oriented towards highlighting particular linguistic and sociocultural considerations  
• includes interactive, referential questioning to support noticing and connecting  
• refers back to previous learning experiences and foreshadows future learning experiences  
• includes input enhancement as required for individual learners  
• incorporates graphics and other visuals as images or conceptual maps to demonstrate relationships. |
| Making connections   | Pedagogy:  
• is designed in line with learners’ longitudinal development  
• builds on previous knowledge  
• combines learning of language and culture with learning across the curriculum  
• builds connections across texts and contexts  
• encourages learners to explain, integrate and inquire. |
| Social interaction   | Pedagogy:  
• incorporates tasks to facilitate interaction (peer to peer/s and learner/s to teacher) that promote intercultural communication and new, productive connections between their own ideas and those of others  
• includes interactive talk as an essential part of all tasks (and integral to catering for individual learner differences)  
• includes scaffolding to extend the intercultural connections individual learners are making (for example, form-meaning relationships or language-culture mappings)  
• draws on multiple examples from different contexts, exploring more than one culture, conceptual systems, sets of values, recognising mutual responsibilities  
• involves listening to learners and incorporating their responses into the conversation  
• invites contributions to discussion, rather than telling, to demonstrate co-construction  
• shows how to build bridges for comparison  
• includes making comparisons across a range of languages and cultures  
• builds accuracy, fluency, and complexity  
• focuses on the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal learning  
• encourages a gradual shift from the descriptive to the conceptual when making observations. |
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<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Pedagogy:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• includes reflecting critically on one’s own attitudes, beliefs, and values</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• involves conceptualising the interface of language and culture between all language-and-culture systems</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• creates multiple pathways for bridging linguistic and sociocultural learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• mediates the processes of developing one’s own multiple perspectives on language and culture in all societies and acting in non-judgemental ways</td>
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<td>• compares, analyses and synthesises aspects of language and culture from a universally human perspective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Pedagogy:</td>
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<td>• involves setting personal goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• fosters engagement with difference</td>
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<td>• includes awareness of multiple perspectives</td>
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<td>• includes self-monitoring</td>
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<td>• incorporates a reflective stance</td>
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<td>• involves developing awareness of the ethical uses of knowledge.</td>
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