

Culture of Good Neighbourhood

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Building intercultural capability and a culture of inclusion in schooling

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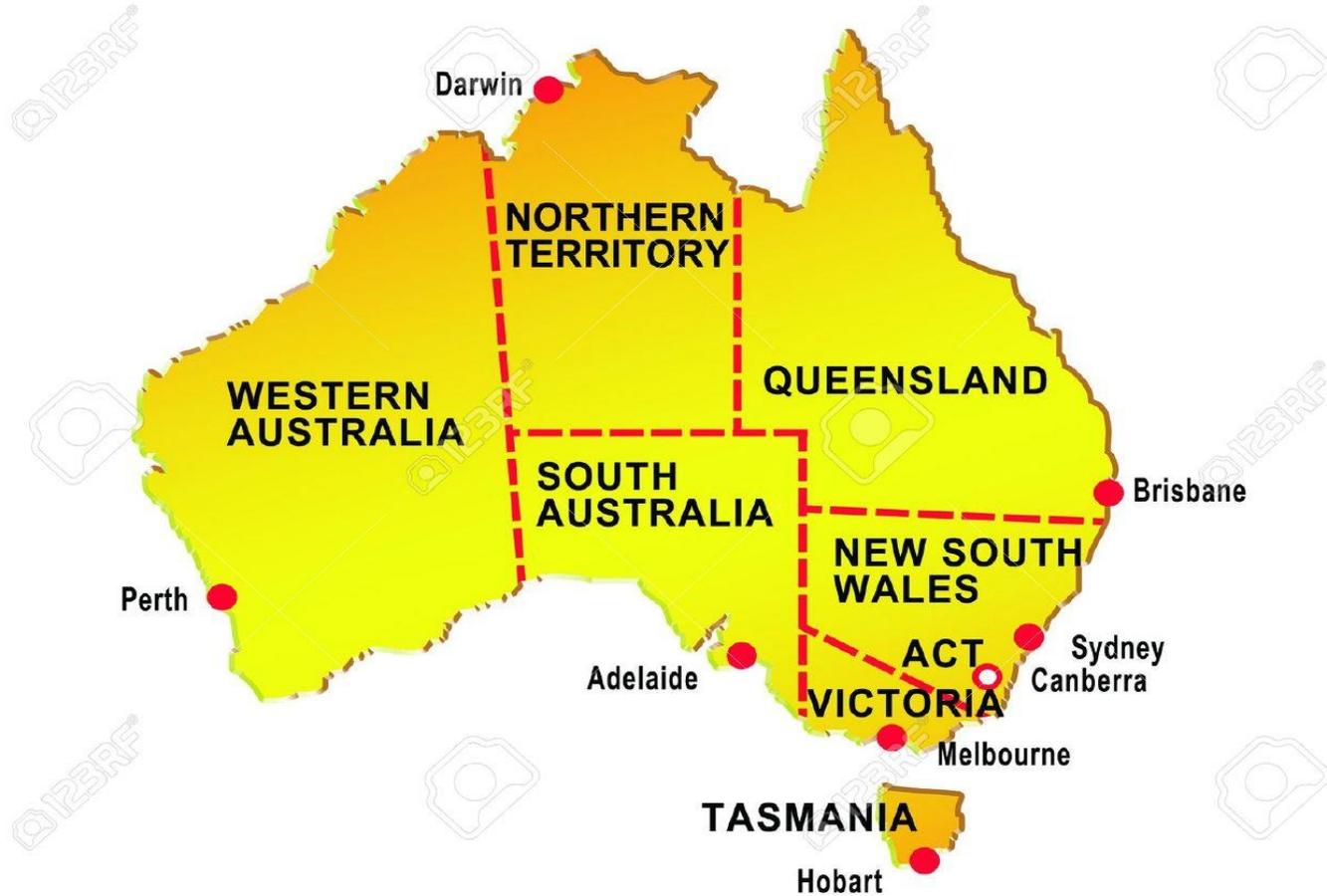
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Key messages from our experience

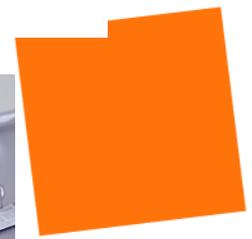
- Advocate that pre-service teacher education providers and post-service professional learning to address the development of intercultural capabilities and provide strategies for inclusion of all students regardless of their diverse backgrounds
- Develop student voice, agency and leadership in supporting cultures of inclusion in schooling and their communities
- Promote a global education focus through the curriculum, partnerships with local community organisations, sister school partnerships, international projects with other schools and international immersion experiences and exchanges.



Context – multicultural Australia



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Culture as a concept?

- Culture is understood to be a socially constructed concept produced by people. As such, culture is a dynamic process, and is subject to change and adaptation rather than a prescribed or static set of characteristics.
- The concept of culture can be tangled up with race, ethnicity or religion or diversity.
- Culture can be used as a process of inclusion and exclusion, promoting a belief superiority of some groups over others, moralistic judgements and the idea of foreigner other / 'othering' - bad or good.



Multicultural policy in Australia

- ‘White Australia Policy’ from 1901 until 1949
- Indigenous Australians not formally regarded as citizens until 1948, allowed to vote in federal elections until 1962 or fully counted in the census until the census of 1971
- Multiculturalism became a priority through the 1960’s based on the need for migrant workers to build the economy. Waves of European migrants arrived post World War two and further waves of migrants and refugees in the 1970s, 80s and 90s particularly from conflict zones such as Vietnam, Lebanon, the Balkans, Somalia, Sudan and more recently Syria
- Multicultural Policy has primarily served two social needs – integration and a desire for social cohesion



Multiculturalism in Australia today

- This is the idea that multiculturalism carries with it the political aspirations of minority groups coupled with assumptions of inclusion, civic integration and equal rights.
- In the Victorian Curriculum, the concept of multiculturalism, 'refers to the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society, as a state or nation' (VCAA, 2018, p 45)
- Multicultural education has been employed in schools since the 1970's but has been accused of raising students' awareness and understanding of the 'exotic other' or emphasising assimilation of newly arrived migrants or refugees that is, culture is about the other and not about us.



Intercultural education

- Intercultural education is described more in terms of equality regardless of a person's cultural or ethnic background or religion and where an understanding of cultural diversity includes one's own cultural and ethnic identity.
- Intercultural education entails developing sustained and integrated approaches, perspectives and activities so that the engagement of the diverse cultural or ethnical backgrounds does not look artificial or forced. Interculturality therefore involves sensitivity to the encounter, whether positive or negative, superficial or deep, between and among people



Intercultural capability in the curriculum

Three organising elements

- Recognising culture and developing respect
- Interacting with others and reflecting on intercultural experiences and
- taking responsibility.

The process of developing intercultural capability can involve learning about the process of interaction and dialogue and skills for self-reflection and learning to interpret and mediate cultural inequalities within their own and other societies. Fundamentally they learn to take responsibility for their interactions with others, to act on what they have learnt.



What does this look like in practice?

It includes activities and lessons that:

- promote reflection, openness to diversity, compassion (empathy) for others and a recognition that there are other legitimate ways to see the world that are different
- Encourage conviviality i.e. the ability to get along with people who do not share the same cultural commitments and the capacity to build partially shared worlds – of work, politics, leisure and information
- Promote a willingness to review one's cultural horizons, to engage in creative adaptation and anticipation i.e. having a creative impetus for reviewing existing cultural understanding / perspectives



Encouraging Conviviality



Doing Diversity - What did principals and teachers believe facilitates and impedes building students' intercultural capabilities?

At the beginning of the project Year 1

- **High levels of uncertainty** about what intercultural education was and how it differed from multicultural education
- Principals and teachers viewed impediments to interculturality as issues that **they had little capacity or personal responsibility** to manage e.g. lack of professional learning, overcrowded curriculum, time constraints and negative parental attitudes towards cultural diversity (external to them).
- Principals cited **negative portrayals of refugees, asylum seekers** etc. in the media, parental opposition to celebrations of Australia's ethnic diversity by the school, and ethnic intolerance among parents and in the community as impediments (external).
- Teachers tended to position the **impediments as the responsibility of others** including their own lack of knowledge and expertise (external).



What did principals and teachers believe facilitates and impedes building students' intercultural capabilities?

At the end of the project – Year 2

Facilitators

- **School values** that welcomed cultural diversity
- **Parents and community** involved in school life and activities
- The **presence of an Intercultural Capabilities Coordinator** and Multicultural Aids
- **Teachers' experience with cultural diversity** and knowledge of the intercultural capabilities
- **Professional learning** focused on intercultural knowledge and curriculum strategies
- **Networks that shared** knowledge, skills and expertise of staff and different schools
- **Research evidence**
- **Access to expert advice** and guidance
- **Enacting interculturality through the curriculum**
- **Anti-bullying** policies to reduce incidents of racism in school

Impediments

- The absence of key facilitators
- Crowded curriculum and lack of time

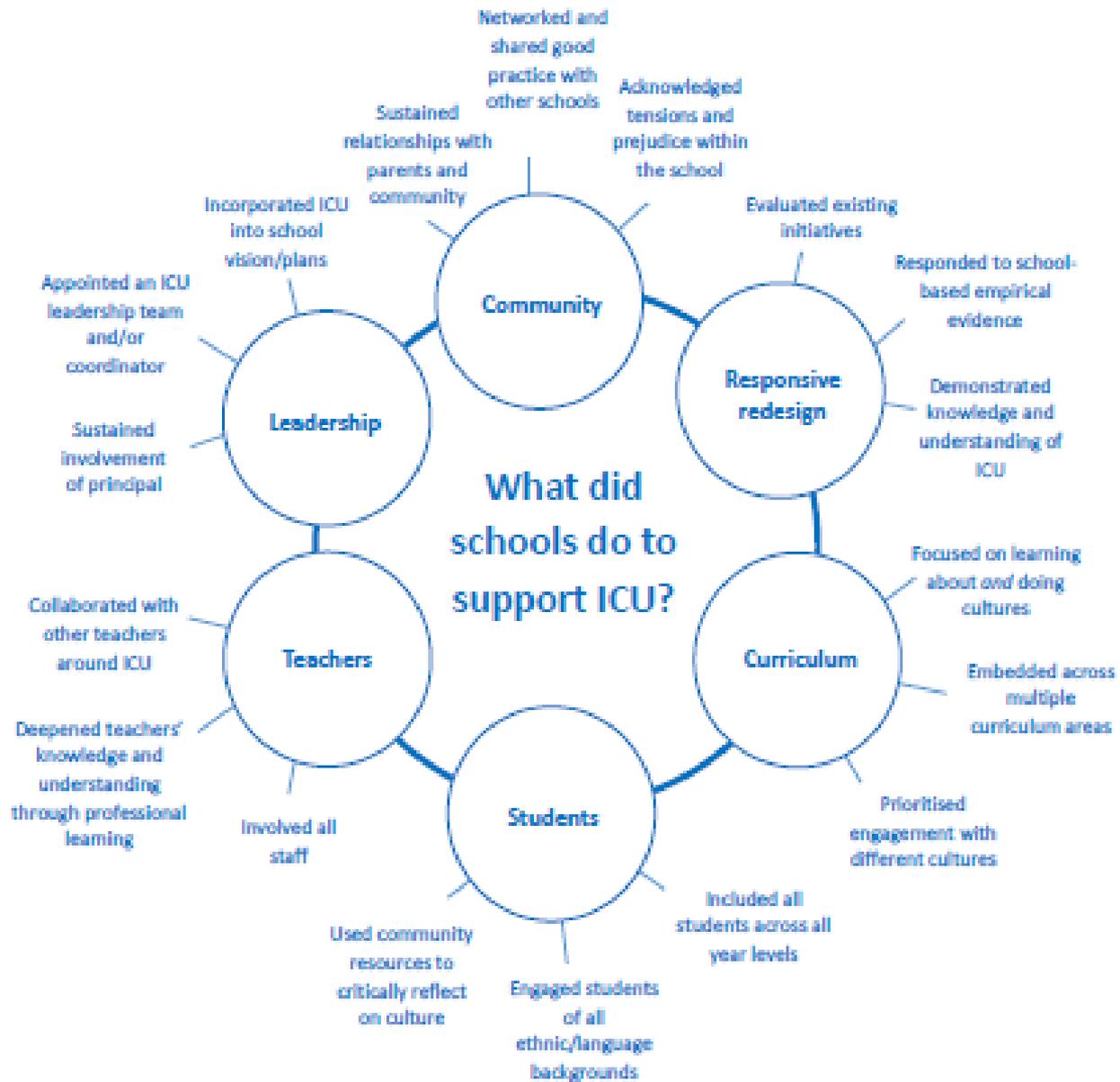
Between the start and end of the study there was a dramatic change in principals' and teachers' beliefs about those factors had control of i.e. external to internal locus of control



Research findings

- A curriculum focus on **learning to be** intercultural rather than **learning about** ethnic and cultural diversity is critical. Some principals and teachers found the new focus challenging, requiring curriculum innovations to ensure authentic, intercultural learning experiences for students. The Intercultural Capabilities in the Victorian / Australian curriculum are a valuable framework for school practice.
- Principals' and teachers' beliefs impact on enhancing intercultural learning in schools. Those with experience with ethnic diversity and intercultural situations inside and outside of school were more aware and proactively engaged in building the intercultural capabilities
- Targeted professional learning built staff and school knowledge and capacity.





Eight key principles for building interculturally capable schools

1. *Principals make a difference.*
2. *Research-based decision-making improves outcomes*
3. *Strategic use of finances can make a difference.*
4. *Teacher professional learning makes a difference.*
5. *Build teachers' intercultural experiences.*
6. *Intercultural capabilities are fostered in schools with reflexive learning environments*
7. *The value of a whole school integrated approach.*
8. *Curriculum innovation is essential.*



Victoria - the Education State

Education State Targets

- **Learning for Life.**
- **Happy, Healthy and Resilient Kids**
- **Breaking the Link** - Ensuring more students stay in school and breaking the link between disadvantage and outcomes for students.
- **Pride and Confidence in our Schools** - Making sure every community has access to excellence, in every government school and classroom.

Educational policy and commitment to:

- Students at the centre – learning outcomes, voice and agency
- Intercultural education and language education
- Intercultural capability - in the curriculum, in research and in practice
- Emphasis on global Learning and engagement



Anti-bullying initiatives

Bully-stoppers - resources for teachers, principals, students and parents, to ensure that bullying is taken seriously and not ignored

E-Smart- program to build a responsible culture in which students embrace the benefits of communications technology, while also being aware of potential risks and pitfalls

School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support - a framework to help school professionals address and prevent poor behaviour in our schools

Safe Schools - a program that fosters an inclusive and safe environment for schools community, including for LGBTI students, families and teachers

Respectful Relationships - initiative that promotes and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours, and teach children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence



Contact

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Department of Education and Training

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Doing Diversity

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