Intercultural Capability: Unit plan, Level 9 and 10

How personal experiences shape intercultural beliefs and decisions



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The Intercultural Capability project

This unit is based on material developed with schools participating in the 2018 Intercultural Capability project. The project was conducted by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in partnership with the International Education Division at the Department of Education and Training. The units of work included formative assessment rubrics that the teachers designed to measure progression of student learning in the Victorian Curriculum: F-10 Intercultural Capability and provide guidance to students on how to make progress in their learning. The unit provides **one** example of how a school might plan for the explicit teaching of Intercultural Capability. It is not published as an exemplar.

Safety and wellbeing

Teachers must exercise their duty of care in ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained during the study of this Intercultural Capability unit. In addition to the usual pastoral care and health needs of students, teachers should bear in mind cultural sensitivities and the potential for disagreement or conflict over cultural/racial issues. Students should be given the opportunity to provide depersonalised responses or exempt themselves from activities of a potentially sensitive nature and should not be asked to speak on behalf of others. Harmful language or behaviour towards others on the basis of culture or race should not be tolerated. Where appropriate students should be counselled and/or debriefed. For further advice on navigating race and culture issues in the classroom, see the VCAA’s [Teacher Guide](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/viccurric/intcult/Teacher%20Guide%20Navigating%20Intercultural%20Issues.pdf).

About this unit

**Unit title:** How personal experiences shape intercultural beliefs and decisions

**Band:** Levels 9 and 10

**Total teaching hours:** 5 x 55 minute lessons

Context

This unit was developed by a school in a regional setting. The unit was developed in the context of a comparative study of the play *Twelve Angry Men* and the film *To Kill a Mockingbird* in a Year 10 English class. The unit of work drew on a range of resources to support the study of the two texts.

In relation to Intercultural Capability learning, this unit encourages students to:

* gain an understanding of how personal and external factors impact upon intercultural beliefs, behaviours and decisions
* use their understanding of diversity to act with respect, empathy and recognise the important role that understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity play in influencing beliefs, behaviours and decisions
* reflect on their own intercultural experiences.

Overview

The unit was created in association with a formative assessment rubric (see below) which was used to plan lessons to help students make progress in their learning. The lessons address the three actions in the rubric:

1. Analyses the impact of personal situation (e.g. personal characteristics, upbringing and cultural factors) on individual beliefs and decisions related to intercultural relationships/experiences
2. Analyses the influence of situational external factors (e.g. impact of environment and media) on intercultural beliefs and attitudes
3. Analyses how intercultural relationships/experiences affect attitudes/beliefs/behaviours.

In the sequence of lessons, students begin by making links between preconceptions and individual experience. They go on to consider:

* how external factors and personal experiences might contribute to the formation of assumptions and biases and how these affect intercultural beliefs and attitudes
* the relevance of the selected texts and personal experience and attitudes to the understanding of social and racial issues more generally.

The rubric and associated unit target the following part of the Victorian Curriculum: F-10 Intercultural Capability curriculum:

**Band:** Levels 9 and 10

**Strand:** Cultural Practices

**Content descriptions:** Analyse the ways in which intercultural relationships and experiences have contributed to the development of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, and how they are manifested in various contexts ([VCICCB018](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCICCB018))

Identify and analyse the challenges and benefits of living and working in an interconnected and culturally diverse world [(VCICCD019)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCICCD019)

**Achievement Standard:** By the end of Level 10, students ***critically analyse*** the complex and dynamic interrelationship between and within cultures and ***the challenges and benefits of living in an interconnected and culturally diverse world.******They evaluate how intercultural relationships and experiences influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in different contexts*.**

Students analyse the components of a cohesive society, and the challenges, benefits and consequences of maintaining or failing to maintain that cohesion.

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Formative assessment rubric

The formative assessment rubric below was used to help identify the steps in learning, to collect evidence of learning and as a basis for providing feedback. The lesson plans that follow specify which part of the rubric was targeted in each lesson.

The rubric was developed using the relevant Intercultural Capability achievement standard/s and the [Guide to Formative Assessment Rubrics](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/viccurriculum/formative_assessment.aspx). More information about the terminology and structure of the rubric can be found in the Guide.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | |  | *Intercultural Capability, Levels 9 and 10* | | | |
|  |  | |  | *Phase 1* | *Phase 2* | *Phase 3* | *Phase 4* |
|  |  | |  | *Students in this phase can identify examples of intercultural factors and experiences* | *Students in this phase can evaluate how intercultural relationships and experiences influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in different contexts* | *Students in this phase can identify similarities and differences between people from a range of cultures* | *Students in this phase can critically analyse the challenges and benefits of living in a culturally diverse world* |
|  | | | |  |  |  |  |
| *Organising Element/s* | | *Action* |  | *Quality Criteria* | | | |
| Cultural Practices and Cultural Diversity strands | | 1. Analyses the impact of personal situation (e.g. personal characteristics, upbringing and cultural factors) on individual beliefs and decisions related to intercultural relationships/experiences | *Insufficient evidence* | *1.1 Identifies an example of an individual’s personal background or situation influencing their intercultural beliefs/decisions in a specific situation* | *1.2 Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affects their intercultural beliefs/decisions* |  | *1.3 Describes how personal assumptions or prior experiences might create challenges for intercultural relationships in a culturally diverse world* |
| 2. Analyses the influence of situational external factors (e.g. impact of environment and media) on intercultural beliefs and attitudes | *Insufficient evidence* |  | *2.1 Links external factors to individual beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.2 Explains effect of external factors on beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.3 Describes how assumptions/biases due to external factors impact on intercultural beliefs and attitudes* |
| 3. Analyses how intercultural relationships/experiences affect attitudes/beliefs/behaviours | *Insufficient evidence* | *3.1 Gives examples of individuals/groups who have had an intercultural experience* | *3.2 Describes how an individual/group intercultural experience might impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours* | *3.3 Identifies similarities and differences across different cultures or situations* | *3.4 Generalises from individual to societal factors or impacts* |

Unit lesson plans

The following lessons were created to aid progress in student learning. Each lesson was linked to a particular action/s in the formative assessment rubric above and the associated quality criteria. Teachers should give students ongoing feedback on the next steps in their learning and provide opportunities to make progress in their understanding of the targeted area of the curriculum.

Note: The following lessons focus primarily on the Intercultural Capability curriculum. The integration with the study of the two selected English texts, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Twelve Angry Men*, is not shown. Please refer to the [English curriculum](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/english/curriculum/f-10#level=9) for advice on teaching texts.

Lesson 1 – Preconceived notions

*Rubric areas targeted:*

* Identifies an example of an individual’s personal background or situation influencing their intercultural beliefs/decisions in a specific situation
* Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affects their intercultural beliefs/decisions

*Introduction:*

Explain that the texts to be studied will raise questions about preconceived notions, dealing with difference and the extent to which people are judged fairly and equally.

Explain the concept of preconceived notions and provide examples.

*Body of lesson:*

Ask students to complete a questionnaire on the themes mentioned in the introduction (see example in Resources). Students do this individually and anonymously.

Share and discuss responses to the questionnaire. Encourage students to reflect on how their personal backgrounds or experiences might have affected what they agreed or disagreed with. (Responses should be voluntary.)

Discussion prompts:

* The influence of appearances on how people are viewed or judged
* The influence of fear of the unknown
* The importance of openness to difference
* The nature of fairness and justice.

*Reflection:*

If not already addressed in the class discussion, prompt students to reflect on how their personal experiences have influenced their intercultural beliefs and decisions. Provide feedback on the quality of explanations given.

*Resources:*

[Example of questionnaire on preconceived notions](https://tkamunit.weebly.com/introductory-activity.html)

Lesson 2 – The effect of assumptions and biases on intercultural attitudes

[Complete after all students are familiar with *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Twelve Angry M*en.]

*Rubric area targeted:*

* 2.3 Describes how assumptions/biases due to external factors impact on intercultural beliefs and attitudes

*Introduction:*

Briefly review Lesson 1 and explain that the class will now examine how assumptions and biases can affect intercultural attitudes and behaviour.

*Body of lesson:*

Give students the following vocabulary list:

* Assumptions
* Attitudes
* Bias/unconscious bias
* Generalisations
* Hyperbole
* Non-inclusive language
* Othering
* Limited perspective
* Preconceptions
* Prejudice
* Stereotyping.

Ask students to define the terms using a dictionary. Then, in small groups, have them find examples of characters who demonstrate these characteristics/concepts in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Twelve Angry Men*. Ask students to identify the external factors shown in the texts that contributed to the formation of the character’s assumptions and biases.

Have students find out more about unconscious racial bias and cultural stereotyping (see Resources). As a class, discuss how biases and stereotypes can negatively affect certain cultural groups. Provide feedback to students on how well they can link external factors, assumptions/biases and intercultural beliefs and attitudes.

*Resources:*

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1960) and/or film of the same name directed by Robert Mulligan (1962)

*Twelve Angry Men*, teleplay by Reginald Rose (1954) and/or film of the same name directed by Sidney Lumet (1957)

[Suggested video clips on unconscious bias and cultural stereotypes](http://www.sbs.com.au/learn/faceuptoracism/howto) (See clips 2–5)

*Reflection:*

Discuss the following: How can cultural assumptions, biases and stereotypes be minimised in a culturally diverse world?

Lessons 3 and 4 – How personal experiences/attitudes may create intercultural challenges

*Rubric areas targeted:*

* 1.3 Describes how personal assumptions or prior experiences might create challenges for intercultural relationships in a culturally diverse world
* 3.2 Describes how an individual/group intercultural experience might impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours

*Introduction:*

Explain to students that they will now creatively explore how one’s own personal experiences and attitudes might affect one’s interactions with people of different cultural backgrounds.

*Body of lesson:*

Discuss examples from *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Twelve Angry Men* of personal intercultural experiences affecting attitudes and behaviours. Listen for gaps in the students’ understanding and provide prompts where necessary. Note down any relevant comments as evidence of learning/progression for the rubric.

Introduce the following writing task: *Describe how personal experiences may create challenges for intercultural relationships.*

Use the formative assessment rubric and a reflection on earlier lessons to help students draw on previous lessons in their writing. Offer possible sources for research on the topic (see Resources).

*Reflection:*

(See introduction to the next lesson.)

*Resources:*

Suggested starting points for researching the writing task:

* [‘The cycle of socialisation’](https://classism.org/about-class/what-about-race/)
* [The effects of socialisation’](http://www.truthinsideofyou.org/children-will-play-with-everyone-until-a-parent-tells-them-not-to/)

Lesson 5 – Intercultural issues raised by the texts

*Rubric area targeted:*

* 3.4 Generalises from individual to societal factors or impacts

*Introduction:*

Ask for volunteers to share their writing pieces from last lesson. Ask students to reflect on and discuss how exposure to positive cultural experiences and messages early in life might improve intercultural interactions. Provide feedback to students on their progress as they share their work and make their reflections.

*Body of lesson:*

Read about what *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Twelve Angry Men* have contributed to discussions of race and racial equality in society.

Discussion prompts:

* What relevance do the two texts have today, in Australia and beyond?
* What do the individual characters and their journeys say about broader social and racial issues?

*Reflection and conclusion:*

Revisit the responses students gave to the questionnaire on preconceived notions in Lesson 1. Ask if anyone would change their original responses and, if so, why.

Ask students to reflect on what they have learnt about how personal experiences influence intercultural attitudes. Provide students with the opportunity to redraft their writing pieces to show evidence of progress in learning.

*Resources:*

Suggested starting points for researching the influence of the novel:

* ‘[The enduring message of To Kill a Mockingbird’](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/02/19/we-never-really-did-learn-the-lesson-of-harper-lees-to-kill-a-mockingbird/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7be0899e73ed)
* [‘Is *To Kill a Mockingbird* a racist book?’](http://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2015/oct/20/is-to-kill-a-mockingbird-a-racist-book-tanya-landman)
* [‘*Twelve Angry Men*: Anachronistic yet relevant’](http://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/twelve-angry-men-anachronistic-yet-relevant/)
* [‘Twelve Angry Men: A Portrait of the 1950s’](http://andthatsthewayitwasinamericanhistory.blogspot.com/2013/04/12-angry-men-portrait-of-1950s.html)

Work samples

Samples have not been corrected for expression or accuracy.

Sample 1

Extract from writing task: *Describe how personal experiences may create challenges for intercultural relationships.*

***The sample demonstrated the following actions in the rubric:***

Being brought up in a western country with religious and cultural parents is not easy. When these children grow up they are not westernised enough for the people who live around them and not cultured enough for the people back home. They are not able to completely express their emotions or feelings with friends around them despite trying very hard. Parents of these children on the other hand want them to befriend people of their culture back home but they do not understand that growing up around current trends has caused their children to be impacted by [other] opinions of those people. Being raised with such strong cultural values and morals is not easy, particularly when the country you are originally from is labelled a terrorist state.

Throughout childhood years people have been forced to hide their cultural lunches in their bag and stay hungry at lunch despite their mothers waking up early in the morning to make a healthy meal for them. They were forced to be embarrassed by the accents that their parents had because apparently they sounded uneducated. Throughout their childhood, these children forgot about the immense amount of sacrifices their parents made to come to a country in order to give their kids more opportunities. … These experiences cause these children to have challenging relationships with so many cultures it’s difficult simply to grow up.

3.1 Gives examples of individuals/groups who have had an intercultural experience.

3.4 Generalises from individual to societal factors or impacts.

1.2 Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affects their intercultural beliefs/decisions.

2.2 Explains effect of external factors on beliefs/decisions for specific situation.  
3.3 Identifies similarities and differences across different cultures or situations.

***Progression:*** The next step for the student would be to note other specific societal factors such as the media that affect intercultural relationships.

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|  |  | *Sample 1* | *Intercultural Capability, Levels 9 and 10* | | | |
|  |  |  | *Phase 1* | *Phase 2* | *Phase 3* | *Phase 4* |
|  |  |  | *Students in this phase can identify examples of intercultural factors and experiences* | *Students in this phase can evaluate how intercultural relationships and experiences influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in different contexts* | *Students in this phase can identify similarities and differences between people from a range of cultures* | *Students in this phase can analyse the challenges and benefits of living in a culturally diverse world* |
|  | | |  |  |  |  |
| *Organising Element/s* | *Action* |  | *Quality Criteria* | | | |
| Cultural Practices and Cultural Diversity strands | 1. Analyses the impact of personal situation (e.g. personal characteristics, upbringing and cultural factors) on individual beliefs and decisions related to intercultural relationships/experiences | *Insufficient evidence* | *1.1 Identifies an example of an individual’s personal background or situation influencing their intercultural beliefs/decisions in a specific situation* | *1.2 Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affects their intercultural beliefs/decisions* |  | *1. 3 Describes how* *personal assumptions or prior experiences might create challenges for intercultural relationships in a culturally diverse world* |
| 2. Analyses the influence of situational external factors (e.g. impact of environment and media) on intercultural beliefs and attitudes | *Insufficient evidence* |  | *2.1 Links external factors to individual beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.2 Explains effect of external factors on beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.3 Describes how assumptions/biases due to external factors affect intercultural beliefs and attitudes* |
| 3. Analyses how intercultural relationships/experiences affect attitudes/beliefs/behaviours | *Insufficient evidence* | *3.1 Gives examples of individuals/groups who have had an intercultural experience* | *3.2 Describes how an individual/group intercultural experience might impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours* | *3.3 Identifies similarities and differences across different cultures or situations* | *3.4 Generalises from individual to societal factors or impacts* |

Sample 2

Extract from writing task: *Describe how personal experiences may create challenges for intercultural relationships.*

Personal experiences can cause problems and issues when it comes to intercultural relationships, as personal experiences are what define a person. When a person meets someone of a different race for the first time, the experience, good or bad, shapes that person’s beliefs of that race. …

A teenager met a girl of a particular race for the first time. The girls became friends. … However, she met another girl of the same culture who was very rude. The girl wondered whether she knew what people of that race were really like. She decided that she can’t assume anything about anyone of that race and only judge them after actually getting to know them. However, the girl was so hurt [by the cruel things the rude girl had done] that she could never trust anyone of any race again, coming off cold and detached. … The girl did not even realise she had withdrawn from everyone. Subconsciously, her mind decided these things based on her memories. It was only when a friend realised and told her that she finally understood. Despite all her efforts, she is not able to be non-judgemental as her personal experience is what is controlling her.

***The sample demonstrated the following actions in the rubric:***

3.2 Describes how an individual/group intercultural experience might impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours.

3.1 Gives examples of individuals/groups who have had an intercultural experience.

1.1 Identifies an example of an individual’s personal background or situation influencing their intercultural beliefs/decisions in a specific situation.

1.2 Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affects their intercultural beliefs/decisions.

***Progression:*** The next step for the student would be to comment on broader societal factors as well as personal experiences.

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|  |  | *Sample 2* | *Intercultural Capability, Levels 9 and 10* | | | |
|  |  |  | *Phase 1* | *Phase 2* | *Phase 3* | *Phase 4* |
|  |  |  | *Students in this phase can identify examples of intercultural factors and experiences* | *Students in this phase can evaluate how intercultural relationships and experiences influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in different contexts* | *Students in this phase can identify similarities and differences between people from a range of cultures* | *Students in this phase can analyse the challenges and benefits of living in a culturally diverse world* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Organising Element/s* | *Action* |  | *Quality Criteria* | | | |
| Cultural Practices and Cultural Diversity strands | 1. Analyses the impact of personal situation (e.g. personal characteristics, upbringing and cultural factors) on individual beliefs and decisions related to intercultural relationships/experiences | *Insufficient evidence* | *1.1 Identifies an example of an individual’s personal background or situation influencing their intercultural beliefs/decisions in a specific situation* | *1.2 Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affects their intercultural beliefs/decisions* |  | *1. 3 Describes how* *personal assumptions or prior experiences might create challenges for intercultural relationships in a culturally diverse world* |
| 2. Analyses the influence of situational external factors (e.g. impact of environment and media) on intercultural beliefs and attitudes | *Insufficient evidence* |  | *2.1 Links external factors to individual beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.2 Explains effect of external factors on beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.3 Describes how assumptions/biases due to external factors affect intercultural beliefs and attitudes* |
| 3. Analyses how intercultural relationships/experiences affect attitudes/beliefs/behaviours | *Insufficient evidence* | *3.1 Gives examples of individuals/groups who have had an intercultural experience* | *3.2 Describes how an individual/group intercultural experience might impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours* | *3.3 Identifies similarities and differences across different cultures or situations* | *3.4 Generalises from individual to societal factors or impacts* |

Sample 3

Extract from writing task: *Describe how personal experiences may create challenges for intercultural relationships.*

Personally, as an Iraqi–Australian, many personal experiences created a cultural challenge for me. My family and I came to Australia in 2008; when I was about 5 I remember the hardest challenge for me was integrating into Prep; I didn’t understand the English language and I would sit in class, staring at those foreign people blabbing in a weird unknown language. The big shock in culture and language differences was the main cause of me not wanting to attend school. … As time passed, communication became easier and those weird random kids became my friends.

Grade 3 was when I moved schools. It was the most horrifying year of my life. I was bullied, pushed, laughed at, teased for my culture and differences. … My parents would go to the school, complain that I was getting negatively affected by staying at the school. Thankfully, my experience didn’t cause me to generalise or be prejudiced against the various races that horrified my life, instead I treated them as individuals who needed mental help. … However, I still can’t forgive them for what they did to me.

***The sample demonstrated the following actions in the rubric:***

1.1 Identifies an example of an individual’s personal background or situation influencing their intercultural beliefs/decisions in a specific situation.

1.2 Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affects their intercultural beliefs/decisions.

3.2 Describes how an individual/group intercultural experience might impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours.

2.2 Explains effect of external factors on beliefs/decisions for specific situation.

***Progression:*** The next step for the student would be to examine how a range of cultures might experience similar challenges, and how this might present challenges for living in a culturally diverse world.

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|  |  | *Sample 3* | *Intercultural Capability, Levels 9 and 10* | | | |
|  |  |  | *Phase 1* | *Phase 2* | *Phase 3* | *Phase 4* |
|  |  |  | *Students in this phase can identify examples of intercultural factors and experiences* | *Students in this phase can evaluate how intercultural relationships and experiences influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in different contexts* | *Students in this phase can identify similarities and differences between people from a range of cultures* | *Students in this phase can analyse the challenges and benefits of living in a culturally diverse world* |
|  | | |  |  |  |  |
| *Organising Element/s* | *Action* |  | *Quality Criteria* | | | |
| Cultural Practices and Cultural Diversity sub strands | 1. Analyses the impact of personal situation (e.g. personal characteristics, upbringing and cultural factors) on individual beliefs and decisions related to intercultural relationships/experiences | *Insufficient evidence* | *1.1 Identifies an example of an individual’s personal background or situation influencing their intercultural beliefs/decisions in a specific situation* | *1.2 Explains how an individual’s personal background or situation affected their intercultural beliefs/decisions* |  | *1.3 Describes how personal assumptions or prior experiences might create challenges for intercultural relationships in a culturally diverse world* |
| 2. Analyses the influence of situational external factors (e.g. impact of environment and media) on individual beliefs and decisions related to intercultural relationships/experiences | *Insufficient evidence* |  | *2.1 Links external factors to individual beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.2 Explains effect of external factors on beliefs/decisions for specific situation* | *2.3 Describes how assumptions/biases due to external factors impact on intercultural relationships/experiences* |
| 3. Analyses how intercultural relationships/experiences impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours | *Insufficient evidence* | *3.1 Gives examples of individuals/groups who have had an intercultural experience* | *3.2 Describes how an individual/group intercultural experience might impact on attitudes/beliefs/behaviours* | *3.3 Identifies similarities and differences across different cultures or situations* | *3.4 Generalises from individual to societal factors or impacts* |

Teacher reflections

Teachers involved in the Intercultural Capability Project were invited to reflect on their curriculum planning and teaching experience.

The teachers of this unit stated:

*This project fitted in nicely with the school curriculum as the comparative study of To Kill a Mockingbird and Twelve Angry Men allowed students to explore common thematic concerns, such as the impact of racism and prejudice and how these can influence behaviours and attitudes (in the case of the two texts, verdicts in court cases). One of the teachers drew on her psychology background to teach students about the impact of social conditioning and personal experiences on future decision making, while the other shared her own anecdotal experiences as a prompt to getting students to share theirs with the class. We ran out of time to run all sessions as planned.*

*Students enjoyed self-reflection on their own biases and came to understand how bias/preconceived notions and background play a major role in beliefs and future behaviours in a range of situations.*