Professional learning activity: Knowing your school context

**Activity suggested duration:** 50 minutes

**Activity description:**

This activity asks participants to think deeply about the qualities required for an open, positive classroom environment and to examine how the school context supports this. The goal is to consider how teaching potentially contentious issues might affect different members of the school community.

**Learning leader preparation:**

* Select school-level documentation that relates to school values, student voice and inclusion. This may include:
* school values
* DET Teaching and Learning Resources — Selecting Appropriate Materials policy
* schoolwide positive behaviours matrix (DET schools)
* staff values
* behaviour management protocols
* anti-discrimination and inclusion documents
* school approaches to student voice, agency and leadership (such as *Amplify*)
* social and emotional learning documentation (such as Respectful Relationships resources)
* statements by student leaders or school leaders in regard to the above.
* Read 2.1.

**Participant preparation:**

* Read 2.1

Activity steps

1. Whole-group brainstorm: (10 minutes)

* What are the characteristics of our school community?
* What are our school values?

1. Participants work in pairs to read through and discuss the school-level documentation that relates to a safe and open classroom environment. (10 minutes)
2. Think, pair, share: How can these policies support the safety, effectiveness, student learning and achievement, and robust conversations in Civics and Citizenship? Participants are encouraged to reflect on situations where there might be flare-ups and to explore this question from vulnerable students’ perspectives. (10 minutes)
3. Think, pair, write down, share: (10 minutes)

* What skills, knowledge and experience do students have right now that prepare them to participate in an open classroom environment where they can freely ask questions, are treated with respect, and can share their thinking about issues?
* How is this different at Levels 3 and 4 and Levels 5 and 6, or between Levels 5 and 6 and Levels 7 and 8, or between Levels 7 and 8 and Levels 9 and 10?

1. Participants brainstorm and identify actions or strategies identified in policies to prioritise within their humanities classes to create a more open classroom environment. (10 minutes)