Welcome to this professional learning resource for implementing contemporary issues within the Victorian Curriculum for Civics and Citizenship. My name is Laura Newman from Social Education Victoria. In collaboration with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, we developed these resources to support teaching of contemporary issues in the Victorian Curriculum for Civics and Citizenship. This short video answers some key questions that you might have about how to use this professional learning resource.

So, who is this resource for and how do you use it?

This is a professional learning resource. It is designed with teachers and professional learning leaders to explore in learning area meetings or professional learning communities. We developed it with a Humanities learning area meeting in mind, so a combination of experienced teachers and teachers who might be quite new to teaching Civics and Citizenship.

Each module has an introduction that explains current research and best practices – this can be used as pre-reading for the professional learning activities. Every module has a few activities for teachers to participate in as a team. There are time indications for every professional learning activity to help you plan for this. We’ve used the professional learning activities as an opportunity for you and your colleagues to sample activities that students might do, which include collaborative conversations and consensus-building and democratic decision-making protocols. Each module suggests resources for further learning, in addition to the full reference list available from this webpage. We’ve included some notes for professional learning leaders on ‘How to use this resource’ to make it really easy for you to implement the strategies in these modules.

We’ve also created some planning tools to help you incorporate contemporary issues into your Civics and Citizenship learning program.

What is covered in each module?

There are six modules in this resource. The first module explores the reasons why you should teach contemporary issues and also describes some common challenges that teachers face.

The second module focuses on creating an open classroom environment by understanding your school community and reflecting on different teaching approaches to contemporary issues.

The third module provides a bank of strategies for civic discourse and decision-making in the classroom.

In the fourth module we explore how student voice and agency can be cultivated to teach contemporary issues that really engage students.

The fifth module provides practical steps for implementing the Victorian Curriculum for Civics and Citizenship using contemporary issues.

And the final topic gives teachers a chance to explore resources and approaches for building media literacy, a set of skills that is essential for students to be able to engage confidently with contemporary issues.

So, do you need to follow these modules sequentially?

The modules can be explored separately. The first two modules enable teams to develop a shared approach to teaching contemporary issues and ensure a safe and open learning environment, so it’s important not to miss them. Apart from that, choose activities and modules in line with the needs of your learning area or professional learning team.

Do you need to have prior knowledge?

This resource is focused on contemporary issues and assumes a knowledge of the Victorian Curriculum for Civics and Citizenship Levels 3–10. You will get a lot more out of this resource if your team has a working knowledge of the curriculum, so if you’re beginning your Civics and Citizenship journey, we encourage you to start by using some of the other great VCAA resources in this subject area. These include VicSRC student-led Civics and Citizenship resources and the Key Concepts in Civics and Citizenship developed by Monash University and the Australian Catholic University.

We hope this resource will give you confidence to incorporate contemporary issues that are engaging and relevant to your students into your teaching of Civics and Citizenship. We wish you all the best – you’re doing important work.

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