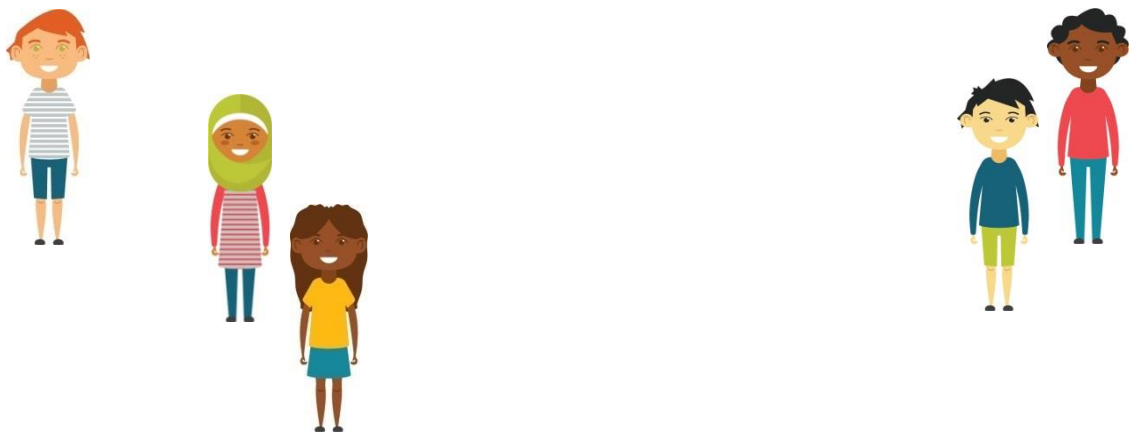


Navigating intercultural issues in the classroom



Teacher Guide



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Glossary

The following definitions support understanding of the terminology used in this guide. Note that some terms have contested definitions in academic literature. **See also** the Victorian Curriculum F–10 [Intercultural Capability Glossary](#) and [UNESCO Diversity of Cultural Expressions Glossary](#).

CALD

Culturally and linguistically diverse.

Cultural hybridity

Identification as a member of more than one cultural group.

Cultural practices

The way culture is expressed and attributes of cultural groups, which range from easily observed characteristics such as group membership, cultural celebrations, customs, traditions, language and everyday ways of doing things, to less readily observed attributes such as values, attitudes, obligations, roles, religious beliefs and ways of thinking.

Culture

A set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, encompassing all the ways of being in that society or social group, including art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Each culture is a sum of assumptions and practices shared by members of a group, distinguishing them from other groups.

Implicit bias

Attitudes or stereotypes affecting understanding, actions or decisions in an unconscious manner; they may involve favourable or unfavourable assessments. Implicit bias is often harder to counter than known bias.

Microaggression

A subtle, person-to-person, verbal or nonverbal insult, slight or indignity (intentional or unintentional) that communicates a hostile, derogatory or negative message.

Perspective-taking

Perceiving a situation or understanding a concept from an alternative point of view. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that one's positioning in the social and political order affects understanding; the combination of one's experiences creates a particular 'standpoint' or perspective through which one understands the world.¹ Perspective-taking can foster empathy and intercultural capability.

Prejudice

An opinion or leaning, usually negative, formed without grounds or knowledge.

Racism

Racism is broadly defined as behaviours, practices, beliefs and prejudices that underlie avoidable and unfair inequalities across groups in society based on race, ethnicity, culture or religion.²

Reflexivity

The ability to step outside one's own experiences in order to reflect consciously on them, considering what is happening, what it means and how to respond. Reflexivity is essential for intercultural understanding.

Stereotype

A widely held, generalised, fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person.

¹ Denzin and Lincoln 2005, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

² See Berman and Paradies 2010, in VicHealth ['Racism and its links to the health of children and young people' fact sheet](#).

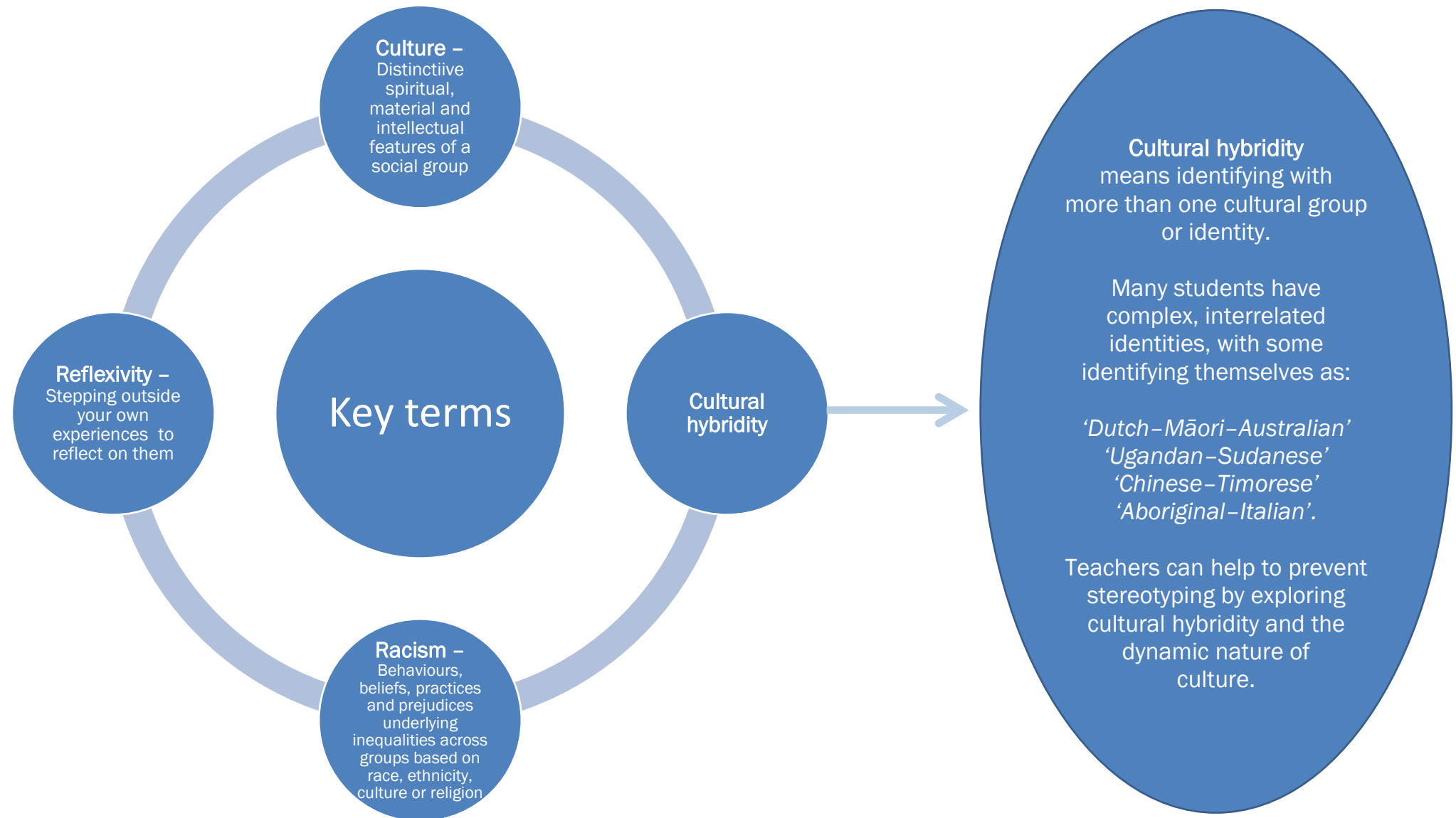
At a glance

Try to use ...

- A calm, respectful approach
- Established facts and definitions
- Clear and consistent ground rules
- A whole-school approach to fostering intercultural learning
- The skills and resources of diverse families in your school

Try to avoid ...

- Stereotypes and assumptions
- A surface-level look at the practices of cultural groups
- Asking students to state their attitudes early in the piece – they may feel obliged to stick to them
- The expectation that students will speak for their cultural group



Explore 'visible' and 'hidden' aspects of culture

Encourage students to examine both the readily observable aspects of culture (such as celebrating the new year in a certain way) and the deeper values and beliefs underlying cultural practices (such as a belief in renewal and making a fresh start in the new year). The 'cultural iceberg' is a useful metaphor for the values underlying visible cultural practices.

Introduction

This guide aims to provide teachers with background knowledge and practical ideas for navigating intercultural issues as part of the Victorian Curriculum: F–10 Intercultural Capability. It was developed in response to teacher requests for advice on teaching these issues sensitively and appropriately. While the Intercultural Capability curriculum, in itself, addresses many intercultural issues and attempts to foster cultural sensitivity through explicit teaching of its content, the guide aims to offer further support.

The ‘curriculum connections’ that appear throughout the guide offer links to relevant Content Descriptions in the Intercultural Capability curriculum. See also the [Content Descriptions and Achievement Standards for each level](#) and the [Intercultural Capability curriculum structure](#). For links to other connected curriculum areas, see [‘Links between Intercultural Capability and related learning areas’ \(spreadsheet\)](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

There are hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups across Australia. Encourage Indigenous students to identify their particular group or groups if they are willing. Avoid characterising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as uniform and, where possible, refer to local groups and practices. When discussing migration to Australia and Australian identity, acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia for approximately 60 000 years. For further information, read about [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols for Victorian schools](#).

Teacher reflections

This guide includes observations from primary and secondary teachers from all school sectors about their experiences of teaching Intercultural Capability. The reflections were collected from teachers participating in the 2018 Intercultural Capability Project, which drew on current teacher practice and expert cultural advice to develop teaching and learning and assessment resources.

Teacher preparation

Teaching about cultural and intercultural issues requires both factual knowledge and emotional intelligence. Classroom teachers need to model respect and sensitivity so that discussions are safe and worthwhile for students. Below are some guidelines for preparing yourself and your school community for intercultural conversations.

i) Learn key concepts and context

Use the Glossary to become familiar with the key terms and concepts surrounding culture. Some terms will be appropriate to introduce to students directly, while others will need to be scaffolded or modified according to the students' prior learning. Fact sheets such as the Australian Human Rights Commission's ['What is Racism?' fact sheet](#) are useful starting points for teacher research.

For Intercultural Capability it is also useful to have a basic familiarity with Australian colonisation and migration. For historical summaries, see [Australian Journey](#) and [Australia's Migration History](#), and for current statistics, see [Victorian census data](#), [How diverse is my suburb?](#) and [fact sheets](#) on immigrant communities.

ii) Learn about cultural hybridity

Many students in Australian schools have hybrid cultural identities. A census of multicultural youth in Australia in 2017–18 found that many young people identified as members of more than one group; the identities they mentioned included:

- 'Chinese–Timorese'
- 'Aboriginal/Italian'
- 'Dutch–Cook Islands–Māori–Australian'
- 'Arabic–Christian'
- 'Ugandan–Sudanese'.³

See [Appendix 1](#) for examples of hybrid cultural identities reported in the census.

The census also found that young people are highly skilled at navigating hybrid cultural identities, such as knowing how to behave in which context, but it takes up a lot of their energy. Some also face further challenges because of the 'intersection' of their culture with gender, sexuality and socioeconomic issues.

Before you begin teaching Intercultural Capability, find out about the cultures and hybrid cultures of all students within your classroom (including among the 'Anglo-Australian' students) and ensure that you avoid assumptions about where students come from and the culture/s they identify with. Consider accessing school data on the cultural background of families at your school, as well as engaging with the students and families themselves.

³ See [Multicultural Youth Australia Census Status Report 2017/18](#).

Encourage students to identify their own and recognise other students' cultural hybridity to enrich conversations about culture. [Appendix 1](#) could be used a conversation starter and see also Section (iv) below.

Teacher reflections

'The Intercultural Capability curriculum is moving kids' understanding of culture beyond the default of "where you come from", "religion" or "language".'

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 5 and 6: Cultural practices / Analyse how aspects of their own and others lifestyle, behaviour, attitudes and beliefs can be culturally influenced (VCICCB009)

Levels 9 and 10: Cultural practices / Analyse the complex and dynamic interrelationships between and within cultures in a range of contexts and the impact of these interrelationships on their own and others cultural practices (VCICCB017)

iii) Examine your cultural biases

Most people think of themselves as bias free, but as humans we all have implicit biases. In terms of Intercultural Capability, implicit biases are culturally based assumptions or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions or decisions in an unconscious manner. Biases can lead a teacher to show preferential treatment of one group of students or unfavourable treatment of another group without realising it.

Taking the time to examine the presence of your own internal bias will assist in preparing for the equitable treatment of all students. Implicit biases are not fixed and can change if addressed intentionally.⁴

Similarly, it is useful to find out about perspective-taking (see [Glossary](#)) so that you are aware of providing well-rounded learning activities and discussion plans and are more conscious of the beliefs and assumptions underpinning your own perspectives as you work with students.

iv) Engage with families

Before beginning a unit of work, consider sending a letter home to parents/carers telling them about the unit and asking them to discuss their cultural background and practices with their child. See [Appendix 2](#) for a sample letter to parents/carers about culture and cultural practices. (Prepare an alternative research activity on their culture for any students whose parents/carers are not able to assist.) See the [Resources](#) section for more information on fostering family involvement.

Once the unit has begun, there are many opportunities to include families, such as inviting in a parent/carer to help prepare a meal from their culture, or to listen to student presentations and give descriptions of their own cultural practices.

⁴ See '[Understanding Implicit Bias](#)'.

Teacher reflections

'We collected data at school and discovered that we have more parents born in India than Australia. That helped to inform how we tackled Intercultural Capability.'

TIPS

Ask parents to share with their children what their culture/s means to them.

Invite parents to participate in intercultural activities with students.

v) Foster a whole-school approach

Research indicates that effective schools adopt a whole-school, research-based, strategic and reflexive approach to building intercultural capabilities that includes professional learning and collaboration with families and other schools.⁵

In the classroom you can foster intercultural learning and understanding in the school in a number of ways. For example:

- Display the **poster** 'How can we make our school culturally inclusive?' ([Appendix 3](#)) in the staffroom.
- Work with others to map the Intercultural Capability curriculum in the context of other units taught and/or appoint curriculum leaders at each level of schooling.
- Set up a culture committee to coordinate efforts across the school.
- Encourage the school to train its leaders in Intercultural Capability and/or to include it in the school's vision statement.
- Encourage the school to collect ongoing data and feedback (including from parents/carers) to inform improvement.
- Read about [internationalising schooling](#).

Teacher reflections

'Our school has a culture committee. Each year, the committee maps the curriculum and nominates a teacher at each level to find resources and activities for the units taught; the teacher places the resources in the library and shares the activities with others. It gives teachers a starting point for putting the curriculum into practice.'

'We shared our Intercultural Capability unit with the whole English faculty because it fits so well with existing units and increases students' engagement with comparative texts.'

⁵ Australian Research Council (ARC), [Doing Diversity: Intercultural Understanding in Primary and Secondary Schools](#), final report, 2015, 7.

In the classroom

After you have done the initial groundwork and made connections with families and colleagues, you can begin to explore intercultural issues in your classroom.

i) Start the conversation early

Research suggests that from as young as three years of age, children are establishing perceptions and beliefs about themselves and others based on race.⁶

Some teachers are reluctant to raise issues of ethnic and racial diversity and racism in the classroom for a number of reasons. The message often given in primary schools that ‘we are all friends’ is positive and inclusive, but it is rather vague for young children. Australian research indicates that both teachers and parents tend to discuss racism reactively rather than proactively, that is, in response to a specific episode of racism or media reporting. The extent to which racism is discussed in classroom settings often depends on teachers’ personal and professional capability.⁷

Teacher reflections

‘One of my Foundation students commented that the people in the class who speak a language other than English are not Australians. I clarified that Australia is made up of people who come from different places in the world and who speak different languages.’

The Intercultural Capability curriculum offers an opportunity for teachers (and by extension the school community) to be on the front foot in supporting children and young people to grapple with intercultural issues such as racism.

Introduce the concepts underpinning the curriculum in a gradual and thoughtful way; for example, when being taught the concept of culture, younger students can begin with ideas such as visible and hidden culture, while students at higher levels on the continuum can work with the idea that the features of cultures are interconnected and dynamic.

Teacher reflections

‘Often the initial reaction of the Australian-born children is to say, “I don’t have any culture.” But once you go through the elements of culture with them, they say, “well, we do this in a certain way and we do that in a certain way.” As a teacher you can get the ball rolling by asking questions like, “Who takes their shoes off inside the house?”, “Who celebrates birthdays?”, “Who eats dinner at the table with their family?” Gradually they start to recognise that they do have a range of practices they weren’t aware of.’

Once everyone understands the terminology, conversations around culture become possible and people can begin to use their knowledge and skills to explore responses to intercultural issues.

⁶ See for example Priest et al., [‘You are not born being racist, are you? Discussing racism with primary aged-children’](#) and [Kids on Race: The Hidden Picture.](#)

⁷ See Priest, [‘You are not born being racist, are you?’](#)

Talking about cultural identity with children throughout their schooling reduces prejudiced thinking and promotes equity, tolerance and justice. The essential message for students is to develop a positive sense of individual self but not at the expense of another group.

ii) Set ground rules for discussion

Establish a set of ground rules for talking about culture in the classroom within the context of a zero-tolerance approach to racism. See the [poster 'How do we talk about culture in the classroom?'](#).

The sharing of personal experiences relating to culture in the classroom should be voluntary, so plan for back-up activities if students are reluctant to share.

In class discussions, model a curious and reflexive approach with phrases such as:

- 'This is what I heard you say ...'
- 'Tell us more about ...'
- 'How do you know that? Have you got some evidence or an example?'
- 'My cultural experiences have led me to observe that ...'
- 'What other perspectives might there be among people not represented in this room?'

Allow time for reflection on new or different viewpoints. Where applicable, find media articles/clips, opinion pieces, novels and films that show different perspectives.

Should the conversation get heated, provide a 'breathing space' for yourself and the students with a few minutes of individual writing. Consider revisiting the topic later.

TIPS

If a student uses racist or inflammatory language, refer them to the ground rules for discussion (see above) and reinforce what the appropriate language is. Consider the following:

Is there an opportunity to speak to the student in a more private or calm setting?

How might amends be made for any hurt or offence caused (to an individual or the class)?

What was the likely purpose of the statement? For example, was the student looking for attention or did they genuinely believe what they said?

Does the student have a history of similar comments? If so, why might this be the case?

Teacher reflections

'The discussions were really rich and went on much longer than we had planned.'

'The students often started with laughter, but once we talked about people's feelings, they showed respect instead. Their horizons were bigger as they started learning "why" people did things differently.'

'The students were incredibly insightful in seeing through media spin and structural racism. One Year 10 girl got so involved with the issue that she apologised to some students in the class for the continual negative reporting about their culture in the media.'

iii) Invite students to speak for themselves

While students should not be required to comment on any racism or cultural issues they have experienced, they should be offered the opportunity to do so.

Some schools appoint students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to be mentors to other CALD students in how to speak for themselves, or invite them to help train teachers on cultural sensitivities as part of professional learning. These programs have been extremely successful and have been replicated in other schools.⁸

TIPS

Invite CALD students to be mentors to other students, and/or to help train teachers about culture.

iv) Create an anti-bias environment

It is imperative that school is a safe space for students. When teachers have a reflexive attitude towards bias in themselves and others they can help to create an 'anti-bias' environment.

Teachers are encouraged to:

- have a zero-tolerance approach to racism
- ask students to consider multiple perspectives
- remind students that injustice hurts
- display key terms in the classroom (see [Glossary](#))
- ask probing questions
- encourage students to think critically about their cultural, ethnic and racial biases
- look at the broader context of racism and inequality
- develop a way for students to speak up if they witness injustice.

⁸ See for example ['Mentorship of African boys boosts school's year 12 graduate numbers.'](#)

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 5 and 6: Cultural diversity / Examine and discuss the variety of ways in which people understand and appreciate differing cultural values and perspectives, and the things which promote or inhibit effective engagement with diverse cultural groups (VCICCD012)

v) Use objects and experiences to spark conversations

To further promote Intercultural Capability, teachers can use objects of significance to individuals and shared experiences to forge intercultural connections in the classroom. These methods can help to make intercultural issues more personal and concrete.

A visit to a cultural institution such as the [Immigration Museum](#) in Melbourne provides an opportunity to introduce students to a wide range of objects and experiences – the museum offers many exhibits and hands-on programs for school-aged children.

Preparing and eating cultural foods together is another way to bring a range of cultural practices and perspectives into the classroom. This kind of activity:

- provides an ‘intercultural experience’ that can be used as a curriculum requirement
- offers the opportunity to involve family members/carers in school life
- highlights cultural/religious rituals and practices
- strengthens social cohesion
- opens the way for deeper conversations about culture. (See the [‘cultural iceberg’ section](#).)

Family members/carers can be invited to contribute to intercultural learning by helping their child choose a special object to take to school to discuss its cultural significance. The teachers’ personal experiences, including travel, can also be drawn upon.⁹

Teacher reflections

*‘It’s important that when schools celebrate multiculturalism they highlight **why** they want different cultures to get along – it’s ultimately about social cohesion.’*

Literature is also an excellent way to introduce students to diverse ways of thinking and living. See [Resources](#) for suggested readings.

Curriculum connections (example)

Foundation to Level 2: Cultural practices / Describe their experiences of intercultural encounters in which they have been involved (VCICCB002)

Levels 3 and 4: Cultural practices / Compare their own and others cultural practices, showing how these may influence the ways people relate to each other (VCICCB005); Cultural diversity / Explain the role of cultural traditions in the development of personal, group and national identities (VCICCD007)

⁹ Christine Halse, ed., *Asia Literate Schooling in the Asian Century*. London: Routledge, 2015.

TIPS

Use physical activity and varied methods to engage students with different learning styles.

vi) Encourage intercultural relationships

Having friends from different backgrounds can encourage students to acquire social skills such as empathy and perspective-taking, and has been found to correlate with strong intercultural capabilities.¹⁰ The controlled environment of the classroom provides a good opportunity to place students into mixed groups and to give a range of students positions of responsibility and leadership.

TIPS

Provide a range of intercultural experiences for students; for example, encourage them to explain and share cultural phrases such as 'Eid Mubarak' ('happy Eid' in Arabic) and 'xīn nián kuài lè' (pron. *shin-nyen kwhy-ler*) ('happy new year' in Mandarin).

vii) The 'cultural iceberg'

The Intercultural Capability curriculum encourages students to delve into the complexities of culture, not just its outward manifestations.

The 'cultural iceberg' model can be a good way to distinguish between the 'visible' characteristics and practices of culture and the less-obvious or 'hidden' characteristics of culture, such as values and beliefs. See a [summary of this approach](#).

Teacher reflections

'In retrospect, with our Level 1/2 class we needed to delve more deeply into the significance of different cultures around food, not just the characteristics.'

Curriculum connections (example)

Foundation to Level 2: Cultural practices / Identify what is familiar and what is different in the ways culturally diverse individuals and families live (VCICCB001)

Levels 3 and 4: Cultural practices / Compare their own and others cultural practices, showing how these may influence the ways people relate to each other (VCICCB005)

¹⁰ ARC, [Doing Diversity](#), 37.

Classroom activities

In addition to using the ideas discussed in the previous pages, design activities to foster intercultural skills through the explicit teaching of the Intercultural Capability curriculum itself. The following are examples of learning activities that could be used; before use, adapt the activities according to the prior learning of your students. **More activities** can be found in the [Intercultural Capability units of work](#) published in support of the Victorian Curriculum.

Activity 1 – Say hello!

People from around the world speak many different languages, but we all need to communicate with each other. What are some different ways of saying ‘hello’ in our diverse culture?

Instructions

1. As a group, read the book *Say Hello!* by Rachel Isadora.
2. Learn one of the following songs as a class: [‘Hello’](#) or [‘Hello to All the Children of the World’](#). See also a [word cloud](#) of ways to say ‘hello’ around the world. Invite students to identify the language/s spoken by their family.
3. Arrange the class in a circle and introduce a ball for students to throw to each other. When a child catches the ball, they should say ‘hello’ in a language other than English. Repeat until everyone has had at least one turn.
4. On a world map or globe, identify where the different languages that the students have identified are commonly spoken. Ask students to label each relevant country with word/words for ‘hello’ used in that country.
5. Have students discuss or respond to the following:
 - Why do people speak different languages?
 - Why do people from the same country sometimes speak different languages?
 - What languages are spoken by people within our class or school? (Students might conduct a survey.)
 - Why do you think Australia has many diverse languages? In what way might this be good for Australia?

Curriculum connections (example)

Foundation to Level 2: Cultural diversity / Identify and discuss cultural diversity in the school and/or community (VICCCD003)

Activity 2 – What’s for dinner?

People often say, ‘You are what you eat.’ What does the food we eat say about us, and our cultures?

Instructions

1. Find out about the origins and cultural significance of a range of dishes around the world in [‘Soul Food’](#).
2. Ask students to choose a dish from another culture and to compare it with one from their own culture/s. Guiding questions include:
 - How are the two dishes made?
 - How are the dishes similar and different?
 - What is the history of each dish?
 - Why are the dishes important to people?
3. Invite relatives in to school to help students prepare a dish from their culture and discuss its significance to them.

Curriculum connections (example)

Foundation to Level 2: Cultural practices / Identify what is familiar and what is different in the ways culturally diverse individuals and families live (VCICCB001)

Levels 3 and 4: Cultural practices / Compare their own and others cultural practices, showing how these may influence the ways people relate to each other (VCICCB005)

Activity 3 – Cultural inclusion

Schools are small versions of the wider community. How can we make sure everyone is included in our school community?

Instructions – see [Appendix 4](#).

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 3 and 4: Cultural diversity / Identify how understandings between culturally diverse groups can be encouraged and achieved (VICCCD008)

Levels 5 and 6: Cultural diversity / Identify barriers to and means of reaching understandings within and between culturally diverse groups (VICCCD011)

Activity 4 – Looking for clues

We live in a diverse and multicultural country. We all have similarities and differences. What happens if we have preconceptions and assumptions about someone else's cultural identity or practices?

Instructions

1. Prepare a package of objects, documents and/or photographs relating to someone the students don't know. The person could be known to you personally or it could be someone you can readily find out about; they should not be famous and they should have a hybrid cultural identity. De-identify the materials as much as possible.
2. Ask students to write down as many clues about the person as they can from what they see and read in the package and then write a brief story or account of what they imagine the person's cultural identity to be. Have students swap their story with other students and ask for volunteers to read some stories aloud.
3. Discuss the following questions together:
 - What clues could you find about the person's cultural background?
 - What assumptions did you make about the person?
 - What further information would you need to be able to give an accurate account of the person's cultural identity?
 - On what occasions have you drawn conclusions about someone from a different cultural group based on little knowledge or evidence? What problems can arise from doing this?
 - What other barriers are there to reaching understanding between culturally diverse groups?
4. Tell students how accurate their stories were, based on your knowledge of the person. Acknowledge instances of students showing thoroughness, curiosity, open-mindedness or self-awareness about the limits of their knowledge.
5. Prompt students to think about how they could improve their intercultural capability by avoiding assumptions and learning more about other cultural groups and cultural hybridity.

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 5 and 6: Cultural diversity / Identify barriers to and means of reaching understandings within and between culturally diverse groups (VCICCD011)

Activity 5 – Dynamic practices

What are the appropriate behaviours and practices in different settings and how do we learn the ‘rules’?

Instructions

Before the lesson:

1. Print two copies of the following list:

CONTEXT: A cultural celebration
CONTEXT: A school assembly
CONTEXT: A place of worship
CONTEXT: A game of sport
CONTEXT: A wedding
CONTEXT: A funeral
CONTEXT: A new year
CONTEXT: A children’s party

2. Cut up the first list so that each context appears on its own slip of paper. Repeat for the second list, so that you have 16 slips of paper. (Vary quantities according to the size of your class.)

In the lesson:

1. Write on the board: *What practices would you perform in these contexts?*
2. Place students into small groups and give each group a few different contexts to discuss in relation to the question. Model a response for the class, giving examples of how you would personally behave in one of the contexts; identify both physical and personal/social practices, for example, what would ‘respectful behaviour’ look like, sound like and feel like in that context?
3. Give the groups time to discuss their allocated contexts, and then ask a range of students to share their responses on the board.

4. Ask each small group to discuss the following:
 - Compare and contrast a few chosen practices from the board (not necessarily the ones you came up with).
 - Which practices on the board are the same for everyone and which are specific to certain cultural groups?
 - For those practices that are culturally based, how are they reinforced over time and for what purpose?
5. Conclude by sharing responses as a class. Prompt students to recognise and reflect on the dynamic nature of their own and others' cultural practices.

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 7 and 8: Cultural practices / Analyse the dynamic nature of own and others' cultural practices in a range of contexts (VCICCB013)

Activity 6 – Cultural representations

There are many ways in which cultural groups are represented, such as in novels, films and news articles. But what about the ads that surround us every day – how do they shape our understanding of culture?

Instructions

1. Ask students to examine a print or electronic advertisement that represents people from one or more cultural groups.
2. Have two students compare their chosen advertisements in regard to the representation of cultural groups. How are different groups represented, and how might this affect the audience?
3. Ask students to discuss an article such as 'Does Australian advertising reflect our changing multicultural nation?'. Discuss the extent to which they agree with the view that 'mainstream brands are increasingly updating their advertising to reflect our diverse society', as stated by an advertising CEO in the article.
4. Have students do a simple sketch of a storyboard for a culturally inclusive advertisement of their choice. Ask students to give each other feedback, particularly about the possible effects of the ad on different cultural groups.

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 7 and 8: Cultural practices / Examine how various cultural groups are represented, by whom they are represented, and comment on the purpose and effect of these representations (VCICCB014)

Activity 7 – Microaggressions

Microaggressions are verbal or nonverbal insults, slights or indignities (often unintentional) that communicate a negative or patronising message. People from CALD backgrounds often experience microaggressions, such as being complimented on their English when they were born in Australia, or having people avoid sitting next to them on public transport. How do people communicate subtle messages about culture and difference, and how can we become more aware of these messages?

Note: Advise students that sharing their personal experiences is voluntary.

Instructions

1. Have students find out more about microaggressions in daily life, such as by reading [‘How to deal with microaggressions’](#).
2. In mixed groups, ask students to use butcher’s paper and markers to list the microaggressions they have witnessed or are aware of. Discuss with other groups.
3. Discuss the following:
 - How might humour be used in a microaggressive way?
 - What effects could microaggressions have on people?
 - Are there any ‘macro’ consequences of microaggressions (e.g. in society as a whole)? How might microaggressions affect social cohesion?
 - What can we do to prevent microaggressions at school and to support students on the receiving end?

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 9 and 10: Cultural diversity / Analyse the components of a cohesive society, and the challenges, benefits and consequences of maintaining or failing to maintain that cohesion (VCICCD020)

Activity 8 – Who lives here?

Demography is the statistical study of human populations. How do demographers find out the proportions of different types of people living in a certain area?

1. Place students into small groups.
2. Ask each group to predict the cultural make-up of their suburb, town or state. For example, what proportion of people were born in Australia? For those not born here, what proportions were from the Asia–Pacific, Africa, Europe and so on? Which religions are represented?

3. Have students find answers to the above questions by examining [Victorian census data](#), [How diverse is my suburb?](#) and/or [fact sheets](#) on different ethnic communities.
4. Ask each group to present their findings in a format of their choice, and compare their findings with other groups.
5. Discuss with students:
 - How did your findings compare with your prediction? What, if anything, surprised you?
 - To what extent have your perceptions of your suburb/town/state changed and why?
 - What are some challenges posed by a culturally diverse population (e.g. for education, health, amenity, social cohesion)?
 - What are some of the benefits of a culturally diverse population?

Curriculum connections (example)

Levels 9 and 10: Cultural diversity / Identify and analyse the challenges and benefits of living and working in an interconnected and culturally diverse world (VCICCD019)

Resources

GENERAL TEACHER REFERENCE

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi, [The Danger of a Single Story](#) (TED talk).

Australian Human Rights Commission, [‘What is Racism?’](#) (fact sheet).

Cable Network News (CNN), [Kids on Race: The Hidden Picture](#) (documentary).

Darebin City Council, [Say NO to Racism: Voices from the Community](#) (documentary).

Department of Education and Training, [Bully Stoppers](#) (advice and resources).

Government Communications & Public Engagement, British Columbia, [Cultural Iceberg](#) (video).

[Immigration Museum](#), Melbourne (educational programs and exhibits).

[Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre](#), Department of Education and Training (specialised library for teachers in areas including Intercultural Capability, located in Carlton).

League of Rights and Liberties, Quebec (Ligue des droits et libertes), [Systemic Racism... Let’s Talk about it!](#) (guide).

Priest, Naomi et al, [‘You are not born being racist, are you? Discussing racism with primary aged-children’](#) (research article).

Priest, Naomi, [The impact of racism on Indigenous child health](#) (video interview).

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), [Cultural Atlas](#) (interactive website on source countries of Australian immigrants).

Stanford University, [‘Understanding Implicit Bias’](#) (summary).

Wyn, J., Khan, R., and Dadvand, B., [Multicultural Youth Australia Census Status Report 2017/18](#), Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne (report).

GUIDES FOR SCHOOLS

Australian Human Rights Commission, [Building Belonging: A toolkit for early childhood educators on cultural diversity and responding to prejudice](#).

Australian Research Council, [Doing Diversity: Intercultural Understanding in Primary and Secondary Schools](#) and [related resources](#).

Centre for Multicultural Youth, [Opening the School Gates: Engaging Multicultural Families in Schools](#).

Department of Education and Training, [Amplify: Empowering students through voice, agency and leadership.](#)

Department of Education and Training, [Interpreting and Translation Services Policy and Using an interpreter or translator.](#)

Foundation House, [Schools and Families in Partnership: A Desktop Guide to Engaging Families from Refugee Backgrounds in their Children's Learning.](#)

USING LITERATURE TO TEACH ABOUT DIVERSITY

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writing and storytelling.](#)

Chiaet, Julianne, '[Novel Finding: Reading literary fiction improves empathy](#)'.

Kwaymullina, Ambelin, '[Telling the Real Story: Diversity in young adult literature](#)'.

Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre – see above.

[Reading lists of diverse literature.](#)

Appendices 1–4

See the following pages.

Appendix 1

Hybrid identities among Australian youth



Source: Wyn, J., Khan, R., & Dadvand, B. [Multicultural Youth Australia Census Status Report 2017/18](#). Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 2019, 6. Reproduced with permission.

Appendix 2

Sample letter to parents/carers

Dear parents/carers,

Our class is currently studying culture as part of the Victorian Curriculum: F-10 Intercultural Capability. We will be talking to students about where their families come from in the world, and what cultural practices they traditionally observe.

Could you please do the following to assist your child in their learning:

1. Read about culture and cultural practices below. This explains concepts being taught as part of this unit.
2. Share with your child the following information so that they can bring this back to class:
 - The country/countries where your family came from. If you were born in Australia and are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, state the country/countries your ancestors came from. If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, share where in Australia your people come from.
 - The country/countries of origin the family identifies with (e.g. Australian, Indian and Australian, Chinese, Korean and British, Somali).
 - Some cultural practices the family observes (e.g. celebrating a religious holiday, wearing certain clothing, cooking or avoiding certain food) and why these practices are special or significant to you.

Culture and cultural practices

Culture is made up of 'cultural practices' that relate to the ways a group of people live. Some cultural practices often involve material objects such as clothing or musical instruments but also non-material things such as language, customs and social roles.

Different cultural groups can have different practices, such as the food they eat and how it is made, the language they speak, the clothes they wear, the music and arts they create and the religious traditions they observe.

Cultural practices become traditional when they are regularly passed down to different members of the family and community through experiences and stories.

Cultural practices are guided by cultural values. For example, in Australia it is a common view that everyone should have a 'fair go', meaning that all people should have similar opportunities. Cultural groups often share similar values – such as fairness, politeness or respect for elders – even if they dress, worship or celebrate in different ways.

How can we make our school culturally inclusive?



Care for everyone equally



Openly engage with cultural diversity



Map out a culturally inclusive program



Be aware of your standpoint



Unite classrooms through dialogue



Avoid cultural stereotypes



Invite culturally diverse perspectives



Teach culture in a range of contexts



Promote cohesion through inclusion

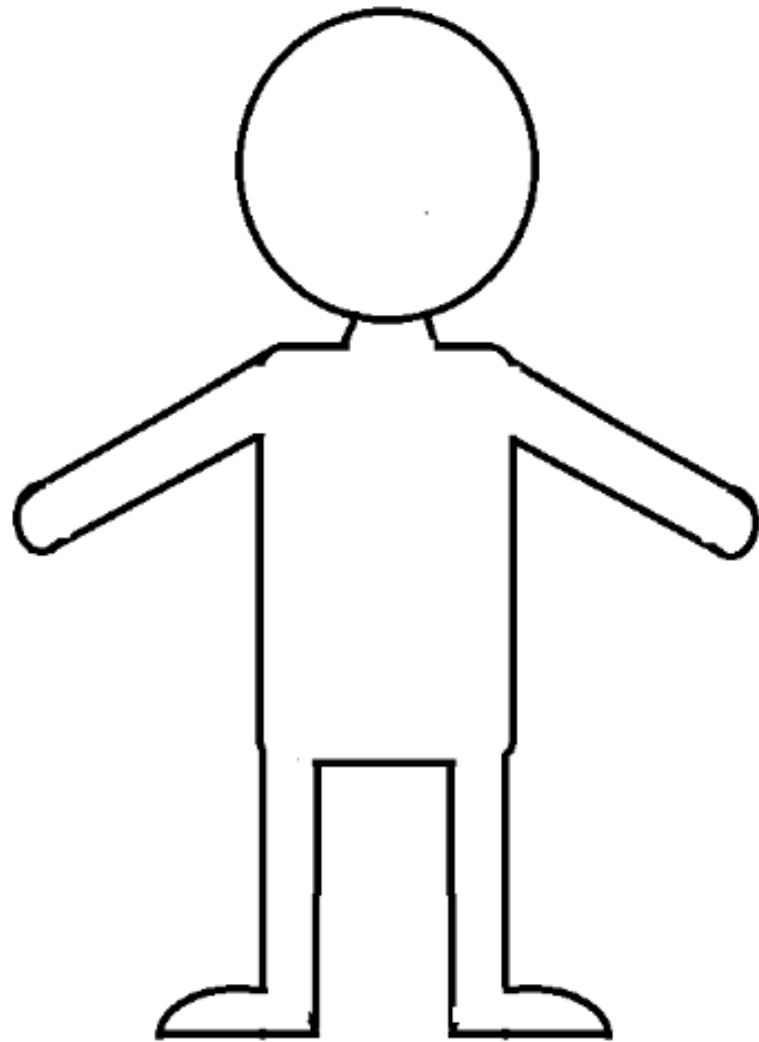
Activity 4 – Part 1: What is cultural inclusion?

1. Photocopy these statements and cut them up so that you have 12 cards.

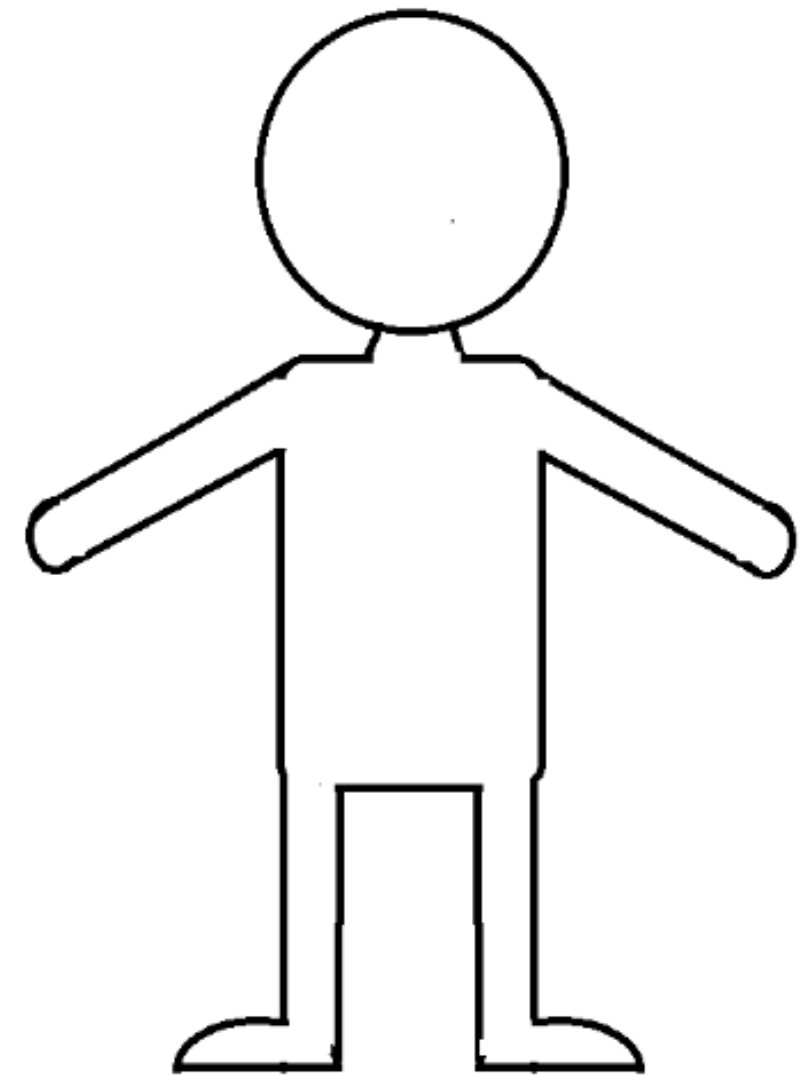
Making fun of someone's appearance, food or accent	Saying one country is better than another	Showing interest in people and places you don't know about
Getting to know someone from a different background to you	Excluding someone because they are from a different culture	Learning a new language
Learning how to make a foreign meal	Treating people the way you would like to be treated	Saying people who weren't born in Australia should go back to where they came from
Saying one cultural group is better than another	Thinking all people from a cultural group are the same	Accepting difference

2. Place each yellow card from the previous page onto the appropriate figure.

Culturally inclusive



Culturally non-inclusive



Activity 4 – Part 2: Culturally inclusive language

Write down some phrases or questions that you think are culturally inclusive.

