Transcript: Teachers discuss Intercultural Capability in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

**Why is Intercultural Capability important?**

*Jacinta Browning, St Michael’s Primary School, Berwick:*

I think what we've learnt through doing this particular unit, so the intercultural lens has enabled us through our inquiry unit, through geography, to be able to make our students become active learners, but also to make them think deeper. And I think it's that deep thinking that we need to really work on. So, without the intercultural capability we wouldn't have probably applied that lens to the unit. We probably wouldn't have asked our students to be deep thinkers. And it's giving them opportunities that they wouldn't have had before.

*Carly Ioannidis and Iris Wong, Thomas Mitchell Primary School:*

(Iris) I think it's our responsibility as teachers to maintain a certain level of acceptance for all children of all cultures.

I think in very implicit ways how we treat the diversity of culture in our classroom is a very good platform for young children, who are really observant of valuing, and how their teacher values other cultures.

And that is one important example of how cultures can be valued and how it looks like in a practical way in the classroom.

*Chantelle Davies, St John the Baptist, Koo Wee Rup:*

For me as a teacher, it's really about preparing my students for the outside world. And school in general is a microcosm of our society, so lots of cultures and diversity. So, it's all about them learning the skills to be a global citizen. How to be accepting and respectful.

**What are the challenges of teaching Intercultural Capability?**

*Crista Davies, Leongatha Primary School:*

For us, we're in a rural setting and they're not naturally exposed to a lot of different cultures. And I think aside from what we can do with technology and our own personal stories, there's not a lot of real life, face-to-face contact or exposure to other cultures.

I think that's the biggest challenge.

But having said that, technology is really helping with that and making it all easier for them.

*Wendy Donaldson and Michele Chng, Kangaroo Flat Primary School:*

(Wendy) Well, I think often the challenge is to make it whole school.

So, I think through the school improvement team we've got people from all the teams across the school, and the principal. So, we actually have the power to make some decisions, particularly with the principal, that this is what we're going to start to do.

*Justin Dee, St Peter’s College, Cranbourne:*

I feel that the students certainly increased their understanding of culture.

Where I think we need to look at is developing their understanding for what it is to have an intercultural capability in terms of the skills that they would employ in their social relationships and things like that. I think that's an area that we probably didn't quite cover to the degree that we wanted to.

*Jude Clarisee, St Michael’s College, Berwick:*

So, in the unit I suppose the big thing that came out for me is that with the Intercultural Capability we were really challenging our children to think.To go beyond facts, to go beyond just knowledge. To really gain an understanding and appreciation of other people's viewpoints and a respect for their way of thinking and their way of doing things.

Which I think is actually quite difficult for children.

So, the challenge was to really deepen our children's thinking, and so there were challenges there for us as teachers because I think we thought it would be easier than what it ended up being.

And so I suppose it's actually made us think about how we're going to encourage our children to think across all areas of curriculum so that it becomes easier for them to deepen their understandings of learning.

*Jane McGrory, Portland Secondary College:*

Well, there's practical challenges and then there's more sort of conceptual challenges.

Of course the big practical challenge is finding the time to do it and looking at how I can, you know, comfortably sort of work it in and integrate it into the work that I'm doing in the classroom. Finding a good entry point for that.

So, the discussion this morning about sort of looking at achievement standards. And given it's a fairly new area of work, are you actually sort of coming in at an earlier entry point than, for example, you know, Year 7 should be at Year 7 level?

So, to sort of look at mapping that I think is a challenge.