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IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION: INTEGRATING UKRAINIAN CONTEXT INTO THE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Australia is a highly multicultural society, shaped by long histories of First Nations cultures, successive waves of migration, and diverse communities. In such a context, history education plays a crucial role in helping young people understand the complexity of Australia's past, make sense of contemporary cultural identities, and develop informed, inclusive perspectives on the world around them. Australia's classrooms are characterised by growing cultural and linguistic diversity, with almost one quarter of students speaking a language other than English at home [1, 2022]. A well-designed history curriculum enables students to recognise multiple narratives, appreciate cultural diversity, and build the analytical skills necessary to engage with global issues in thoughtful and empathetic ways. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for developing the national curriculum to meet these aims [2]. The curriculum seeks to provide greater consistency in what all Australian students learn, particularly in areas such as history, civics and citizenship, and cultural understanding [6, p. 133]. The current design adopts a more critical, inquiry-based approach that encourages students to examine evidence, evaluate differing interpretations, and connect historical knowledge to contemporary social realities. It also recognises the importance of reframing the HASS curriculum, teaching, and learning around 'big ideas', themes, and inquiry questions as an alternative to a strictly subject-based model [8, p. 41].

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) are comprising the subjects of Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business, Geography and History [3] and in the Victorian Curriculum F–10, the Humanities includes Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business, Geography and History [9]. Both Humanities curricula

provide a framework for students to examine the human systems and processes that have shaped the world. Through the Humanities, students investigate people's interconnections with society, groups and other individuals and with built and natural environments. In the Victorian Curriculum, students learn about and come to understand themselves and their communities by engaging with the rich and enduring histories and cultures of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples;
- ancient and pre-modern societies;
- societies of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific region;
- global themes;
- colonisation of the Australian continent and Australia's development as a nation [10].

Many contemporary issues can be understood through the multiple lenses that HASS subjects provide. Tudball (2023) highlights that 'war and conflicts that are flashed across the media daily are ongoing in many parts of the world including in Ukraine, Iran, Afghanistan, Myanmar and elsewhere' [6, p.47].

Pre-service and in-service teachers require both content knowledge and pedagogical capability to confidently teach global cultural perspectives in ways that are accurate, culturally sensitive, and aligned with curriculum standards [4]. Integrating a Ukrainian cultural, historical, and linguistic context into the Australian school curriculum and in Victorian curriculum has significant implications for teacher education in context of teaching students global perspective and competences. This includes developing an understanding of Ukrainian history, migration patterns, language and folklore, as well as the contemporary geopolitical situation affecting Ukrainian communities globally and locally.

Teacher education programs therefore should prepare educators to work with culturally diverse learners, navigate cross-cultural narratives respectfully, and use culturally sustaining pedagogies that encourage inclusion, empathy, and global citizenship. Embedding Ukrainian context in the curriculum also requires teachers to

build skills in evaluating multicultural resources, addressing trauma-informed content (e.g., war, displacement) [5], and engaging with community partners such as local Ukrainian associations, archives, and diaspora groups [7].

Integrating Ukrainian perspectives reinforces the need for a teacher education system that equips educators to respond to increasing cultural diversity, internationalise the curriculum, and promote intercultural understanding among students. At the same time, pre-service teachers need to develop ethical and inclusive teaching practices that enable them to avoid stereotyping, present diverse and multidimensional representations of Ukrainian identities rather than focusing solely on war-related narratives, and create welcoming and culturally responsive learning environments for students with Ukrainian heritage. Table 1 presents examples of how Ukrainian themes can be mapped to key areas of the Australian Curriculum.

Table 1.

Ukrainian Theme	Australian Curriculum Area	Key Links
Migration and Diaspora	HASS, History, Civics	Migration stories, multiculturalism Ukrainian migration waves to Australia (post-WWII, post-1991, post-2014, post-2022)
Cultural Heritage and Archives	History, English, Digital Technology	primary sources, cultural identity, Ukrainian community organisations (AUV, churches, Saturday schools)
Democracy and Citizenship	Civics and Citizenship	role of democratic institutions, Ukraine's democratic movements (Independence 1991, Orange Revolution, Maidan)

Conflict and Peace	Geography, Civics	global citizenship, humanitarian issues, the Russia–Ukraine war and its humanitarian impacts, refugee experiences and global responses, role of UNESCO and international humanitarian organisations
Language and Literature	English, Languages	language, literature, poetry, folktales
Environment and Place	Geography, HASS	people–environment interactions
National Identity	HASS, English	cultural symbols, national narratives

In conclusion, embedding Ukrainian perspectives within the Australian curriculum underscores the need for teacher education to foster advanced intercultural understanding, critical pedagogical skill, and ethical engagement with cultural diversity. This curricular integration highlights teacher education’s central role in preparing educators to work confidently within pluralistic classrooms and to facilitate learning experiences that are inclusive, historically informed, and globally oriented.

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