‘Just Do It’
Victorian Secondary Teachers’ perceptions of teaching “Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures”

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I acknowledge the Peoples of the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners of the Land whereon this research was conducted, and the Jagera and Turrbal Peoples whose land we meet on today. I pay my respects to their Elders past and present, and to any First Nations persons present here today.
Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

- 2010: Australian Curriculum published
- 2014: Australian Curriculum implemented
- 2015: Victorian Curriculum published
- 2017: Victorian Curriculum implemented
- 2018: This study undertaken

Percentage of secondary teachers teaching Indigenous content (Luke et al., 2013)

- None: 49.7%
- Any: 50.3%

Average number of minutes spent on Indigenous content by secondary teachers (Luke et al., 2013)

3:71
SCHOOL SECTOR
61% Government
13% Independent
24% Catholic

SCHOOL LOCATION
40% Metropolitan
44% Regional
16% Rural

AGE & EXPERIENCE
Average age: 37
Average years of teaching experience: 10
AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

ACARA recognises the need for the Australian Curriculum to provide every opportunity possible to ‘close the gap’.

(Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016)

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM

The uniqueness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the wisdom and knowledge embedded in them are things to be highly valued by all Victorians.

(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2017)
Teachers’ attitudes towards the cross-curriculum priority

Including more Indigenous content will result in more equal educational outcomes for all students

“Basics of maths, basic English grammar, healthy diet and exercise. Stop peddling the PC bs.”

“How important is it for schools to teach Indigenous content?

“Aspects of the history, culture and language of the original land story and its people of where we are now in our area should be a priority in all subjects.”
Distribution of the cross-curriculum priority by subject area

### HALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject area</th>
<th>Mentions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
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<td>English</td>
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### STEM+HPE

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<th>Subject area</th>
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<td>Science</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and PE</td>
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</tbody>
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(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2017)
Survey participants by subject area
Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Including more Indigenous content will result in more equal educational outcomes for all students

Importance of teaching Indigenous content

0 (Very Unimportant) 10 (Very Important)
Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Does it matter how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are taught?

Ways to teach Indigenous content in high schools

Improvements for pre-service teacher education
Deterrents to teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Are your colleagues satisfied with the quantity of Indigenous content they teach?

**Top 3 deterrents:**

1. Other curriculum requirements needing more attention
2. Limited research and preparation time
3. Limited professional development opportunities
In the classroom I can:
- Teach quality, localised content in all subject areas
- Know my students’ needs and perform targeted interventions
- Teach values and skills like empathy and critical thinking
- Explore multiple perspectives

I can:
- Build relationships
- Educate myself
- Be genuine

But I also need...

“Don’t make it a thing and just do it.”
Survey participant

In the school I can:
- Regularly and meaningfully celebrate culture
- Organise incursions and excursions

Resources
- High-quality
- Easy-to-teach
- Subject-specific
- Localised
- Practical

Professional Development
- Appropriate, authentic and sensitive
- Subject-specific
- More!

Curriculum
- Integrated into all subjects
- Strategies, guidelines and resources

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

SCHOOL LEADERS

UNIVERSITIES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Limited Bibliography


