



ACTIVISM VIA EDUCATION:

7 WAYS THE NEW AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM WILL IMPACT YOUR KIDS



ADVANCE AUSTRALIA



**Institute of
Public Affairs**

TO THE CONCERNED AUSTRALIAN

There are no prizes for guessing how it all went wrong.

When the tightknit gang of bureaucrats and academics who control the Australian curriculum are left to their own devices, with no firm political oversight, they return to form.

That means radical identity politics, critical race theory, training for teen climate globalists, and the usual attacks on Western civilisation.

That means rubbing out any reference to Christianity in the curriculum and cancelling the teaching of freedoms that underpin Australian democracy, including freedom of speech, association, and religion.

That means Anzac Day and Australia Day become “contested” ideas, meaning children would be taught left-wing criticism of our national days of commemoration and celebration.

We have all this and more in the new curriculum proposed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

As Dr Bella d’Abrera, the Director of the Foundations of Western Civilisation Program at the IPA, put it: “Any endorsement of this radical new curriculum would be an endorsement of a fundamentally anti-Australian ideology by the Morrison Government.”

Alarmingly, as the curriculum will be compulsory for government and non-government schools, parents would be trapped. Every day we’d send our kids to school with no way to stop the teaching of this full-scale assault on mainstream Australians values in their classrooms.

So how can we take back control?

Start here, with this free resource from Advance Australia and the IPA. Use it to talk to your family and friends about what these faceless bureaucrats and university academics have up their sleeves. Share it. Spread the word.

That way, they can see the facts through the spin.

Like you, we are doing all we can to force the Federal Government to reject outright this over-the-top new curriculum, which would do nothing but accelerate the already rapidly declining standards of Australian students’ general knowledge, literacy and numeracy.

Stand with us so together we can put a stop to this nonsense.

COMMENTS

1. The curriculum is skewed to the political left, so that left-wing opinion is taught as fact
 2. Children are taught that the main features of Western Civilisation are imperialism, colonisation, and slavery
 3. The Curriculum is hostile to Christianity
 4. Children are taught to be ungrateful to men and women who died and fought for this country
 5. It embeds Critical Race Theory in children's education
 6. Children will be taught that it is wrong to question climate change
 7. The curriculum attempts to turn children into left-wing activists for globalist issues
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“The Australian Curriculum reflects our national aspirations for our students and future generations and this Review seeks to ensure we set high expectations for them and equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to be confident and creative individuals, lifelong learners, and active and informed members of their communities, including our national and global communities.”¹

BELINDA ROBINSON, ACARA CHAIR

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The plan to develop a national Australian Curriculum for Foundation-Year 10 (F-10) was agreed in 2008 by all Australian governments. The national curriculum forms the basis on which all state and territory curricula are developed.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) — a federal government body — reviews the national curriculum every six years. It was last reviewed in 2014. Once approved by the Education Council, the curriculum will be available for implementation in schools from 2022.

In this latest review, ACARA was tasked with addressing the problem of falling academic standards. They were to refine, update and declutter the curriculum across all eight learning areas (i.e. English, Maths, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Arts, Technologies, Health and Physical Education, Languages) in the hope of improving the performance of Australian schools against international (OECD) benchmarks.

Robinson explains the aims of the revised curriculum this way:

“Our students deserve our best efforts and these revisions come at a time when our students’ performance in recent international assessments demonstrates that we need to raise the bar and set challenging but achievable standards. In revising this curriculum, our focus has been our students and preparing them for the world they will inherit, for the jobs, challenges and opportunities of the future”.

ACARA ON A MISSION TO DUMB DOWN OUR KIDS

Those who look inside the package, however, will be disappointed to find that ACARA has delivered a curriculum that will make our children dumb, when we need them to be smart. Instead of promoting strong foundational skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) upon which children can build as they grow, ACARA has dished up an unpalatable menu of ideological propositions that will discourage critical thinking and reduce student engagement.

¹<https://acara.edu.au/news-and-media/news-details?section=202104281500#202104281500>

A curriculum that was already downplaying Australia's strengths and obliging children to approach every subject through the filters of indigenous, Asian and sustainability concerns has now added to this a significant dollop of national self-loathing that children are obliged to swallow during their school years.

As Peta Credlin says in the Foreword to Kevin Donnelly's new book *Cancel Culture*:

*“Far from being proud of a country that attracts migrants from across the globe, is amongst the freest and fairest societies on Earth, and has achieved a fine balance between humans and nature, there's a dominant left-establishment view that Australia is essentially racist, exploitative, unfair and founded on an act of fundamental injustice.”*²

Regrettably, the national curriculum everywhere announces itself as the brain child of this left-wing establishment.

The potential for education systems to provide the machinery of ideological indoctrination for the next generation of citizens is clear and is clearly being exploited by ideologues, activists and social engineers who, however well-intentioned, have failed to see through the false promises of Marxism and now propose to present one-sided accounts of Australia to the next generation of voters.

As a statement of shared values, the national curriculum needs to deliver on its mandate to provide a strong basis for national unity, by instilling a high esteem for our freedoms, by accommodating pluralism, and by encouraging academic excellence in Australia's children.

If Australia wishes to remain a democracy into the future, it is necessary to ensure that schools are hospitable to and supportive of religious, cultural and political pluralism. As Abraham Lincoln said: “The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in the next”. Arguably, there is nothing so significant to the future of a nation as the formation of its children. How we teach children about our history, our national identity, and the principles of western liberal democracy by which we live is therefore the concern of all Australians.

²Peta Credlin, Foreword, Kevin Donnelly (ed), *Cancel Culture and the Left's Long March*, Melbourne, 2021, p.11.

1



THE CURRICULUM IS SKEWED TO THE POLITICAL LEFT, SO THAT LEFT-WING OPINION IS TAUGHT AS FACT

In her capacity as Chair of ACARA, Belinda Robinson recently wrote an Op Ed in which she promotes the benefits of the revised curriculum.³ She begins by quoting Nelson Mandela:

“An educated, enlightened and informed population is one of the surest ways of promoting the health of democracy.”

Robinson rightly asserts that “we need to ensure our education system strongly supports a commitment to, and respect for, knowledge, facts, truth and respect”. In the same breath, she points to “the events of 6 January in Washington” as an illustration of “just how fragile our democracy can be”.

Robinson might equally have pointed to the endless scenes of cities on fire, looting and mob violence that filled TV screens over the preceding US summer to illustrate “how fragile our democracy can be”. But, leaving that aside, her comments raise the far more important question of whether a person who is apparently blind to their own political bias can be trusted to ensure that ideologically-driven propositions are excluded from our classrooms.

The job of schools is to help children develop the critical thinking skills they need to identify contradictory narratives, to analyse and weigh evidence and to synthesise all this into reasoned opinions that they are equipped to communicate and defend. Australia cannot afford to have its schools become bootcamps for left-wing doctrine which systematically exclude or demonise conservative perspectives.

Democracy depends fundamentally upon the ability to dialogue across ideological lines, to distinguish between fact and opinion and to recognise the merits of alternative points of view. Public education in a democracy needs to be supportive of political pluralism and healthy debate which means that we rely on teachers, whatever their personal views, to hold themselves to high professional standards of impartiality in the classroom. If Robinson is representative of the cohort of bureaucrats charged with reshaping our national curriculum, we have good cause to fear for our democracy.

Unfortunately, a great deal of the content of the new curriculum is coloured by a Marxist pre-occupation with conflict along the lines

³Belinda Robinson Chair, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), “Curriculum review a chance to transform education”, The Age, 25 April 2021.

of group identity, which results in a one-sided consideration of the topics covered. To the extent that they promote uncritical acceptance of ideologically-driven propositions, schools contribute to the political polarisation that threatens the open dialogue necessary for a democracy, rather than providing a much-needed bulwark against it.

EXAMPLES

- Analysing impact of invasion, colonisation and dispossession of lands by Europeans on the First Nations Peoples of Australia such as frontier warfare, genocide, removal from land, relocation to 'protectorates', reserves and missions (AC9HH9K02_E4)
- Investigating the colonisation of Australia, such as the destruction of cultural lifestyles, frontier wars, and genocide, and how the impacts of colonisation are viewed as invasion from the perspective of many First Nations Australians (AC9HH9K11_E4)
- Different historical interpretations and debates about the colonial and settler societies, such as contested terms, including 'colonisation', 'settlement' and 'invasion' (AC9HH9K19)
- Discussing terms in relation to Australian history such as invasion, colonisation, settlement and why these continue to be contested within society today (AC9HH9K19_E3)
- Exploring the perspectives and interpretations by First Nations Australians and their experiences relating to invasion, colonisation, and settlement (AC9HH9K19_E4)
- Examining the effects of colonisation, such as frontier conflict, and the massacres of First Nations Australians; the spread of European diseases and the destruction of cultural lifestyles (AC9HH9K15_E2)
- Investigating the forcible removal of children from First Nations Australia families in the late nineteenth century/ early twentieth century (leading to the Stolen Generations), such as the motivations for the removal of children, the practices and laws that were in place, and experiences of separation (AC9HH9K15_E4)
- The causes and effects of European contact and extension of settlement on the First Nations Peoples of Australia or Asian peoples (AC9HH9K15)



2



CHILDREN ARE TAUGHT THAT THE MAIN FEATURES OF WESTERN CIVILISATION ARE IMPERIALISM, COLONISATION, AND SLAVERY

Again, where a balanced view of history and culture is called for, the national curriculum proposes to pound home the one-sided message that everything in Australia, South America, India and Asia was simply idyllic before Europeans arrived on the scene. Year 4, who used to learn about at least one world navigator, will now study the significance of trade to First Nations Australians instead. ACARA clearly communicates the view that the world would be a better place today if only Captain Cook and Christopher Columbus had stayed home.

The approach to World History outlined in the new curriculum divides humanity into morally-polarised categories according to group identity: the oppressed and the oppressor; indigenous and invader; “noble savage” and decadent despoiler. The ideological filters provided by Marx and Rousseau leave no room for any appreciation that “the expansion of European power” brought anything other than “dispossession, disease, and destruction of traditional society and culture”.

Of course, the children routinely sacrificed to Tlaloc, the Aztec rain god, might have had quite a different perspective on the coming of Christianity to South America. Perhaps it is because tribal warfare, forced marriage

and cannibalism were so profoundly enjoyed by the Pacific Islanders that they embraced Christianity so fulsomely? Inconveniently, the Torres Strait Islanders still commemorate “the coming of the light” as a day of community significance and celebration. How can a narrative premised on “dispossession, disease and destruction” explain such an anomaly?

We could mention how other cultures treat women and children ... but instead, the national curriculum seems content to convey the impression that there is nothing good to be said for western civilisation. Our children are to be kept in ignorance of their rich cultural heritage: the literature, art, music, philosophy, the rule of law, the benefits of democracy and the egalitarianism that flows from Christianity. Knowledge and appreciation of all of this should be their birthright. Instead, the denigration of European culture is to be monotonously revisited year after year, until the take-home message that “the expansion of European power” brought nothing but unrelieved misery is thoroughly drilled into the impressionable brains of Australia’s children.

The truth is that western civilisation has produced freedom and prosperity for millions whereas Marxism (which now takes the

shape of identity politics) has killed people in historically unprecedented numbers wherever it gets a political grip. Rousseau (who popularised the false vision of “the noble savage” and denigrated European culture in contrast) was a significant inspiration for the atrocities of the French Revolution. It should concern us all that ACARA is glorifying reprehensible philosophies and using these to form young minds.

EXAMPLES

- Identifying and describing the effects of the movements of peoples on colonised peoples, such as dispossession, disease, and destruction of traditional society and culture (AC9HH9K02_E2)
- Analysing data on the movement of peoples in the time period, such as the number of slaves transported and the nations/places involved, such as Portugal, Britain, France, Spain, North America or the number of people forced to migrate from Ireland due to the potato famine, and the nations/places they emigrated to, such as the United States, Canada and Australia (AC9HH9K02_E3)
- Explaining the longer-term effects of conquest and colonisation on the indigenous populations of the Americas, such as the unequal distribution of land and wealth, slavery, political inequality, and supremacy of Spanish culture and language over conquered territories (AC9HH8K05_E45)
- The causes and effects of European imperial expansion and the movement of peoples in the period (colonisers, slaves, convicts, settlers and First Nations of the world such as the First Nations Australians), their responses and their different perspectives (AC9HH9K02)
- The different perspectives and experiences of slaves, convicts and free settlers upon departure, their journey abroad, their reactions on arrival and their changing way of life, including the Australian experience and their effects on First Nations Peoples of Australia (AC9HH9K11)
- Asia and the world comparing and contrasting different perspectives about the effect of European colonisation on Asian countries (for example, the views of people in various mainland provinces of China vs Hong Kong; the view of samurai on Meiji modernisation; views of British Raj families vs members of the independence movement in India; views of the Dutch colonials vs native Indonesians in Indonesia) (AC9HH9K18_E1)



3



THE CURRICULUM IS HOSTILE TO CHRISTIANITY

The secret to the egalitarianism that characterises western liberal democracies is to be found in the Judeo-Christian belief in the innate value of each unique individual. This principle enables us to affirm the equality of all people despite differences in status, education, age, race, religion, wealth, ability, sex, etc. Remove this belief and you destroy the foundations of our freedoms, the rationale for the sovereignty of the people, and our whole way of life.

ACARA recognises that students already demonstrate a lack of appreciation for democracy and the conditions necessary to sustain it. According to Robinson:

*“Recent results in the triennial Civics and Citizenship assessment indicate that the level of knowledge and understanding of the profound value and significance of democracy is lacking. This should concern us all.”*⁴

Rather than addressing the problem, however, ACARA has delivered a curriculum that compounds it by further obscuring Judeo-Christian principles:

- Year 7 students who formerly learned “How Australia is a secular nation and a multi-faith society with a Christian

heritage (ACHCK051)” will now be told that “Australia is a culturally diverse, multi-faith, secular and pluralistic society with diverse communities, such as the distinct communities of First Nations Australians (AC9HC7K05).

- Year 8 students who used to be taught about “[t]he values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia, including Christianity (ACHCK065) will now study “how groups express their particular identities, including national identity, and how this influences active citizenship, belonging and perceptions of their citizenship, including First Nations People of Australia, religious, cultural and/or community groups (AC9HC8K06)”.

The new curriculum emphasises that non-Christians celebrate Christmas too, for non-religious reasons.

On the rare occasions when Christianity is mentioned, it is only with respect to “the power of the Church”. Of course, within the Marxist vocabulary, “power” is a very dirty word. So, Christianity is either ignored completely or cast in an invidious light.

In contradiction of all this, history – the history that children will no longer be

⁴ Belinda Robinson, “Curriculum review a chance to transform education” (Op Ed), as published in The Age, 25 April 2021. (Retrieved 28/05/21 from: https://acaraweb.blob.core.windows.net/acaraweb/docs/default-source/communications-documents/acara-chair-belinda-robinson-op-ed-april-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=e3444d07_4)

taught – clearly shows that Christianity is central to the culture that produced the institutions that have generated our peace, prosperity and liberty. Airbrushing out the Christian heritage upon which democracy is built leaves children in ignorance of a significant force that has shaped the modern nation. Such an omission weakens the social fabric, just when it needs to be strengthened.

EXAMPLES

- Examining the nature of illuminated manuscripts and how they were the product of a complex and frequently costly process that reflected the power of the Church (AC9HH8K05_E8)
- Describing the features of castles and churches of the period (for example, Warwick Castle in England and Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris) as examples of the Church's power in terms of its control of wealth and labour (AC9HH8K05_E9)
- Explaining the impact of the Crusades in challenging the Ottoman Empire and their responses to the challenge (AC9HH8K05_E14)
- Explaining the arrival of Spanish conquistadores in Mexico and Peru from 1510 AD/CE (Balboa) to 1531 (Pizarro), and their reasons (for example, seeking wealth, claiming land for their king, converting the local populations to Christianity, sense of adventure) (AC9HH8K05_E42)
- Analysing the significance of Alexander VI's papal decrees of 1493 in legalising Spanish territorial expansion and claims in the Americas (AC9HH8K05_E43)
- Outlining the effects of Spanish conquest on the Americas, such as spread of disease, introduction of crops to Europe (for example, maize, beans, tobacco, chocolate and potatoes), the Encomienda system and mining (AC9HH8K05_E44)
- Explaining the longer-term effects of conquest and colonisation on the indigenous populations of the Americas, such as the unequal distribution of land and wealth, slavery, political inequality, and supremacy of Spanish culture and language over conquered territories (AC9HH8K05_E45)



4



CHILDREN ARE TAUGHT TO BE UNGRATEFUL TO MEN AND WOMEN WHO DIED AND FOUGHT FOR THIS COUNTRY

The synopsis provided in the national review of how schools should approach Australia's military history clearly positions these lessons as yet another opportunity to eviscerate our national character and pour scorn on those who find anything honourable in our nation's past.

Naturally, students of history must examine sources and facts and consider different points of view. No one is recommending undiluted jingoism should colour the way Australia's history is taught. According to the same logic, we should not be suggesting to children that those who served and/or died defending our country and our freedoms are adequately commemorated as part of a "contested debate" about "the Anzac legend". The new curriculum's emphasis clearly sets the stage for a one-sided misrepresentation.

The hunger of young Australians for something more uplifting than the steady diet of critical theory dished up by Australia's educational institutions is illustrated by the thousands that return every year to participate in ceremonies at Anzac Cove or who hike the Kokoda trail.

Anzac Day is not, as some suggest, a valorisation of war or a sentimental reimagining of ordinary men as the embodiment of heroic masculine perfection. Rather, Anzac Day and similar events allow us as a nation to celebrate the fact that mateship and courage can be found even in the midst of disaster; that the self-sacrifice of imperfect people is worthy of commemoration. These qualities – and the veneration of such qualities – have helped to forge our national character in the past and will be equally necessary for our nation's future.



EXAMPLES

- The commemoration of World War I, including different historical interpretations and contested debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend and the war (AC9HH9K25)
- Exploring contested debates in history such as colonisation and the Anzac legend, the Brisbane Line, reds under the bed and McCarthyism (AC9HH10S10_E4)
- The commemoration of World War II, including different historical interpretations and contested debates (AC9HH10K11)
- Analysing the contested debate over the Battle for Australia 1942 and its commemoration since 2008 (AC9HH10K11_E1) discussing the commemoration of Kokoda, such as the debate around hiking the Kokoda trail as a form of commemoration (AC9HH10K11_E2)



5



IT EMBEDS CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Aboriginal spokespeople have welcomed the new curriculum as “actually about justice and healing, and how we went to move forward together as a country”⁵. How these hopes might be reconciled with a presentation of Australia’s history as one of “invasion” is impossible to say. Hoping for “healing” while sewing and watering the seeds of division is simply illogical.

Here again, we see the influence of the political left. As Kevin Donnelly writes:

*“[I]nstead of being impartial and balanced and the curriculum being centred on the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom and truth, education is being used to indoctrinate students with politically correct language, ideology and group think”.*⁶

Clearly, it is not “truth telling” to represent those who settled in Australia as powerful conquerors or genocidal maniacs on the basis of their race. 200 years ago, many came here in chains – being a convict was hardly an empowered free choice. Since then, Australia has become home to immigrants and refugees from every part of the world; people who recognised the benefits of a free, egalitarian society and were prepared to work hard to build a better

life. Australia’s story is bigger than any one people group. It is the product of the same inexorable global forces that shaped the rest of the modern world. Apportioning blame for injustice on the basis of group identity is both unhelpful and inaccurate.

Certainly, the history of indigenous peoples is an important part of Australia’s story and how we tell that story will shape our national identity into the future. But teaching non-indigenous children that they inhabit “land that was never ceded”, that Australia’s true history is monocultural, that they are unwelcome invaders, deprives them of that sense of belonging which should be the rightful inheritance of every Australian:

- How can we expect children to commit their lives, energy and loyalty to building a country that treats them like “invaders” who have no right to be here?
- Why should they feel pride in a country they have been taught to despise as founded on injustice?
- How does it help indigenous students to teach them that, whatever their individual hopes or aspirations, they cannot escape life-long victimhood in an endemically racist society?

⁵<https://www.smh.com.au/education/more-first-nations-less-christian-heritage-in-curriculum-changes-20210429-p57nm4.html>

⁶Kevin Donnelly, “School Education”, in Kevin Donnelly (ed). *Cancel Culture and the Left’s Long March*, Melbourne, 2021, p. 34.

If children thrive and do well when they are affirmed, included and inspired, then deriding the heritage of non-indigenous children and instilling a sense of shame for the sins of their ancestors (whether these are imagined or real) will predictably foster disengagement, further depressing our academic results, thereby achieving the opposite of what was intended for this particular national curriculum review.

As Emma McCaul, 2019 Thawley Essay Prize Winner, writes in her article “As history fades into history”⁷, the current generation of school children are born of parents who themselves have been robbed of their birthright by an education system which had already, by the 1970s, begun to be captured by the left.

“Indigenous Australians know that history and culture must be fought for and proudly expressed if it is to be preserved, and passed on to their children, but other Australians seem to have lost the will to take this path. Children of European descent must constantly hear their culture being denigrated... My parent’s boomer generation is possibly the last to receive their rightful instruction of a thorough, questioning, chronological history education.”

EXAMPLES

- Identifying the barriers that affected First Nations Australians from enlisting in WWII, such as the lack of trust in their loyalty by the Australian Government, renouncing their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status and the notion that there would be disharmony amongst First Nations and non-First Nations Australian men. (AC9HH10K09_E6)
- The background and causes, such as discriminatory legislation and policies, to the struggle of First Nations Peoples of Australia for rights and freedoms (AC9HH10K13)
- Outlining the political and societal impacts that contributed to the struggle of First Nations Australians and their response to rights and freedoms, such as legal status at the Commonwealth and various state levels, segregation and treatment on missions, the policy of assimilation adopted in 1937 by the Aboriginal Welfare Conference of Commonwealth and State Authorities (AC9HH10K13_E1)
- Investigating the colonisation of Australia, such as the destruction of cultural lifestyles, frontier wars, and genocide, and how the impacts of colonisation are viewed as invasion from the perspective of many First Nations Australians (AC9HH9K11_E4)
- Methods used by civil rights activists to challenge inequalities and discriminatory governmental practices against First Nations Peoples of Australia (AC9HH10K17)
- Investigating the role of Charles Perkins in the Freedom Ride of 1965 and the efficacy of television in bringing the struggle for rights and freedoms to national attention (AC9HH10K17_E1)
- Investigating the role of Vincent Lingiari in leading the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off and the significance of this event’s contribution to the land rights movement for First Nations Peoples of Australia (AC9HH10K17_E2)

⁷ <https://spectator.com.au/2020/10/as-history-fades-into-history-2019-thawley-essay-prize-winner/>

- Investigating the Mabo case and the significance of this event's contribution to the land rights movement for First Nations Peoples of Australia (AC9HH10K17_E3)
- The continuity and change in the continuing efforts to secure civil rights and freedoms in Australia, especially for First Nations Australians and First nations peoples of the world, such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) (AC9HH10K18)
- Identifying areas, such as education, health and employment, that are the focus for continued civil rights action for First Nations Peoples of Australia, and discuss why there continues to be a need for such action (AC9HH10K18_E1)
- Investigating the legacy of children's experiences in 'care' (their placement in orphanages, Children's Homes, foster care and other forms of out-of-home care), and the significance of this in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) (AC9HH10K18_E2)
- Explaining the ideas in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and discussing how it influences calls for change in the engagement with First Nations peoples in places such as Australia, Canada and the United States (AC9HH10K18_E3)
- Examining Australia's responsibilities as a signatory to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and how this continues the legacy of First Nations Australians rights and freedoms (AC9HH10K18_E4)



6



CHILDREN WILL BE TAUGHT THAT IT IS WRONG TO QUESTION CLIMATE CHANGE

Questioning assumptions and demanding proof used to be central to the scientific enterprise but when it comes to the subject of climate change students are predictably set up for a one-sided consideration of the issues at hand. Rather than questioning, the curriculum requires students to be content with “examining the scientific consensus supporting global warming”.

Students are invited to investigate the “indicators of climate change such as changes in ocean and atmospheric temperatures, sea levels, biodiversity, permafrost and sea ice”. Where this involves collection and analysis of empirical evidence, such an exercise is entirely consistent with science as we know it.

However, if you are over the age of 40, you may not be aware that the definition of “Science” has changed quite a lot since you were at school. It used to be about empirically observable facts, hypotheses that could be tested using an established method. But a curriculum that must be “decluttered” and “decolonised” and that must work Indigenous concerns into every subject, now recognises that Science too might be a cultural construct and that “there

is nothing preferable or superior about Western science.” As Donnelly explains:

*“In the science classroom throwing boomerangs is considered as great a breakthrough as open heart surgery, allowing planes to stay in the air and putting a man on the moon.”*⁸

How can students who are given no firm co-ordinates in an established discipline be expected to distinguish between scientific fact and politically-convenient fiction?

Will students be encouraged to discern between naturally occurring and man-made climate change, for example? Again, the syllabus seems biased the other way, directing classes to consider – not to question – “evidence-based debates about the role of human activity”.

Will students be encouraged to lionise Peter Ridd, as they are Greta Thunberg? From a straight reading of the syllabus, it appears not. Since the educational formation of younger teachers is unlikely to have equipped them with the will or the information needed to challenge the theory of anthropogenic climate change, the potential for a whole generation of students

⁸ Donnelly, op. cit., p.35

to pass through these units in ignorance of the fact that counter-arguments exist seems significant.

The detrimental effects of a biased approach is only compounded by the simultaneous encouragement of students to youth activism. Before students have been exposed to real-life experience that might temper their perspective, before they can understand the down-side to leftist policy, they are encouraged to get to work thinking about how to either “support or oppose a local action that may impact on global climate change”.

The emphasis on activism over the essential skills and disciplines needed to encourage high academic standards therefore bedevils many other subjects besides the humanities. Maths is another area of concern. Once a top-10 nation, Australia dropped to 29th in 2018 in the OECD rankings (below the OECD average). Instead of picking up standards, the new curriculum moves learning tables from Year 3 to Year 4; linear equations from

Year 7 to Year 8 and reading a clock from Year 1 to Year 2. It also de-emphasises problem-solving. John Sweller, Emeritus Professor at UNSW has roundly criticised the new curriculum saying “As soon as you start putting inquiry learning into the curriculum, you are inevitably dumbing it down...Kids will end up learning even less than they learn now. In that sense, it’s an astonishing document”.⁹

EXAMPLES

- Examine patterns of global climate change and identify causal factors (Year 10 science achievable standard)
- Investigate how scientific knowledge is validated, including the role of publication and peer review (AC9S10H01)
- Investigate how models of energy flow between the biosphere, geosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere describe patterns of global climate change and predict future changes (AC9S10U04)

⁹ Quoted in Baker, Chrysanthos, Visentin, op. cit.



- Investigating indicators of climate change such as changes in ocean and atmospheric temperatures, sea levels, biodiversity, permafrost and sea ice (AC9S10U04_E3)
- Identifying changes in global climate over time and using simulations to explore why energy balances have changed (AC9S10U04_E4)
- Engaging in evidence-based debates about the role of human activity in global climate change (AC9S10I07_E9)
- Using primary or secondary scientific evidence to support or oppose a local action that may impact on global climate change (AC9S10I07_E13)
- Examining the scientific consensus supporting global warming (AC9S10H01_E6)



7



THE CURRICULUM ATTEMPTS TO TURN CHILDREN INTO LEFT-WING ACTIVISTS FOR GLOBALIST ISSUES

In addition to a steady diet of critical race theory and Marxist narratives of oppression and injustice, children are also offered an extensive menu of topics intended to glorify left-wing causes. The Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) curriculum emphasises the importance of environmental activism and encourages children to become something called “a global citizen”.

Anything redolent of nationalism is, of course, denigrated. For example, when researching Australia’s political culture, the syllabus directs students to consider, as examples: “cultural dispossession of the rights of the First Nations People of Australia, White Australia, egalitarianism, conformism to benevolent government, both monarchism and republicanism, masculinism and secularism, and the idea of ‘Australian values’”.

At the same time that national allegiance is weakened, students are encouraged to consider what it means to be a good “global citizen” by “investigating how international organisations, such as Conservation International, Greenpeace, the Environmental Defense Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Ocean Conservancy, the World Resources Institute and the World Wildlife Fund,

advocate to change government policies around environmental threats, including deforestation and climate change”.

Again, the syllabus encourages youth activism. High school students have the opportunity to research examples of “young people who are acting as global citizens, such as Greta Thunberg, Australia’s Amelia Telford or Bassam Maaliki, or UNICEF Australia’s Young Ambassadors”. Where it would be entirely rational to argue that these people are merely pawns in a propaganda war – rather than precocious visionaries and social justice heroes – it is equally rational to anticipate that the expression of such views will be met with disapprobation in the classroom. The Year 8 student who embarks upon this task enters a politically-loaded minefield and would be well-advised to step carefully.

Of course, there are still teachers who might guide students safely through even such a loaded syllabus as the one ACARA has dished up. But they are likely to be few in number compared with those eager to exploit the opportunities the national curriculum presents to push an activist agenda in the classroom. In his essay “School Education”, Donnelly explains the cultural left’s conscious

efforts to capture teacher training courses as the means of forming teachers in their own image and thus reforming a society they despise. One popular teacher training book from the 1980s explained the necessity for capturing our educational institutions this way:

*“In a society disfigured by class exploitation, sexual and racial oppression and in chronic danger of war and environmental destruction, the only education worthy the name is one that forms people capable of taking part in their own liberation”.*¹⁰

Thus, growing activists for the coming revolution has become the business of many educators whom we trusted to be impartial. For one wild moment, imagine the Greens Party was allowed to write the national curriculum. Then ask yourself if it would look substantively different to what ACARA has delivered? If the Greens Party had paid for their product to be sympathetically placed, they could not have fared better. The political agenda to foster particular political opinions – even to suggest voting preferences – to students who will be voting only a few short years from now is overt. The national curriculum needs to be sent back to the drawing board so that ACARA can try again.


EXAMPLES

- Outlining the key events and campaigns that contributed to popular awareness of environmental issues, such as the publication of the ‘Big Blue Marble’ photo taken from Apollo 8 (1968), the establishment of Greenpeace to protest against nuclear testing in Alaska (1971), the protests against the Franklin Dam (1982) and the full campaign to prevent the damming of the Gordon River, the sinking of Greenpeace’s Rainbow Warrior (1985), the Chernobyl nuclear plant meltdown (1986), the Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill (1989), and the Jabiluka mine controversy (1998) (AC9HH10K20_E7)
- Investigating the impact of early texts that warned about environmental change, for example, Silent Spring by Rachel Carson (1962), Don’t It Make You Want To Go Home by Joe South (1970), Mother Earth News magazine in 1970, Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology) lyrics by Marvin Gaye (1971) (AC9HH10K20_E8)
- Using perspectives to explain why environmental movements and the Australian Greens party gained increasing public voice (AC9HH10K22_E9)

¹⁰ Donnelly, op. cit., p. 39-40.



- Evaluating the Australian government's response to environmental threats including deforestation and climate change (AC9HH10K23_E5)
- Discussing what influence the rise of the Australian Greens party has had on shaping Australian government policies on environmental threats, including deforestation and climate change (AC9HH10K23_E6)
- Investigating how international organisations, such as Conservation International, Greenpeace, the Environmental Defense Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Ocean Conservancy, the World Resources Institute and the World Wildlife Fund, advocate to change government policies around environmental threats, including deforestation and climate change (AC9HH10K23_E7)
- Discussing the impact of the United Nations on responding to environmental threats, including climate change, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), the Kyoto Protocol (1997), the Copenhagen Accord (2009), the Paris Agreement (2016) (AC9HH10K23_E8)
- How Australian citizens can participate in democracy, including voting in elections, contact with their elected representatives, joining political parties and standing as an independent, use of lobby groups, and direct action (AC9HC8K01)
- Different experiences, perspectives and debates about Australia's national identity, citizenship, and recognition of diversity particularly First Nations Australians' identities as owners of their respective nations (AC9HC8K07)
- Evaluating some current debates about Australia's identity, such as the date of Australia Day, the design of the flag, the Uluru Statement, Reconciliation and truth-telling, the call for a treaty between First Nations People of Australia and the Australian Government, an Australian way of life and Australian values (AC9HC8K07_E3)
- Making decisions about the most effective way to persuade a specific audience on a contemporary issue or about a need for action (for example, to argue the case for a constitutional change or an advertisement promoting participation in Australia's democracy) (AC9HC8S07_E5)



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