



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

SCHOOL-BASED INFLUENCES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIMARY HASS CURRICULUM

A Thesis submitted by

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Abstract

In recent years, education authorities across the world have responded to accountability concerns by incorporating standardised curriculum, uniform teaching practices, prescribed learning materials, and a regime of high stakes testing. Few Australian studies have examined the impact of policy reforms on school-based implementation of curriculum from a teacher's perspective. Humanities education in Australia has undergone several revisions in form and content, and is arguably the least researched school curriculum. This qualitative study aimed to examine school-based influences on the implementation of the Australian primary HASS curriculum by exploring two interconnected aspects of the process: the administrative decisions framing teachers' planning, pedagogical practices and assessment; and teachers' perceptions of their own capabilities and motivations towards the learning area. Utilising a multiple case study design, four state and two non-state schools were purposively selected to represent the variety of primary schools in one Queensland educational region. Data collected from semi-structured interviews, conducted with a curriculum leader and class teacher from each site, were thematically analysed to formulate six distinct portraits of school-based HASS implementation. A cross-case analysis was then conducted to explore commonalities and differences across each school's systemic approach, and to highlight implications for administrative authority, autonomy and teachers' agency in enacting HASS curriculum. New models were introduced to create a more nuanced understanding of the interrelated elements underpinning school-based curriculum implementation, and to shed light on how teachers' agency relates to educational authority and professional self. The findings highlighted the relevance of each school's specific context, the impact of leadership authority on teachers' curriculum autonomy, and the pragmatic role teachers play in making policy measures work for their students.

Keywords: School-based HASS implementation, curriculum leadership, teacher perspectives, evidence-based practices, teacher agency.

Certification of Thesis

I, Debra Ann Powell (Ethics Approval number: ETH2023-0900) declare that the Thesis entitled “School and Teacher Influences on the Implementation of Primary HASS Curriculum” is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, footnotes, references, and appendices. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The purpose of this opening chapter is to orient the reader to the study's context, aims and motivations of the researcher. Current educational ideology and practices are introduced to provide background and to situate the research within a specific Queensland context. A rationale is provided to outline the researcher's past experiences and motivations towards selecting the Australian Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) curriculum to examine the processes undertaken within school-level implementation of curriculum. The chapter identifies the central research question and sub-questions, briefly outlines the methodology and methods used, and proposes how the study may contribute to educational theory and practice. The chapter concludes by clarifying the central terms utilised throughout the thesis and by presenting an overview of each chapter's content.

Setting the Scene: The Research Problem

Accountability and Education

Over the past two decades, league tables from international tests of literacy and numeracy have focused attention on students' basic skills and potential competitiveness in education systems across the world (Hopmann, 2008). This increasing concern for accountability has seen many countries prioritise the teaching of English and Mathematics, adopt centrally controlled and standardised curriculum, prescriptive teaching materials, and incorporate a regime of high stakes testing (Bauml, 2016; Butt et al., 2017; Keddie, 2015; Sahlberg, 2008). Taubman and Savona (2009) argued that accountability responses such as these have impacted all aspects of education, leading to the "quantification of students' education experience" (p.12), with success or failure being determined by external assessment.

Another response to accountability concerns has been the rise in research dedicated to finding definitive solutions to improving student results, alluded to as *evidence-based*

practices, demonstrating *what works* (Biesta, 2007). Mills and McGregor (2016) contended that the question of *what works* is subject to much academic debate, and wryly observed that “we also live in an age of passing educational fads where the next ‘quick fix’ is only a mouse click away” (Mills & McGregor, 2016, p. 129). Dominant dialogue on *what works* may also simply privilege “that which is simple and easy to measure over the more complex and untidy dimensions of this very human enterprise” (Mockler, 2011, p. 518).

Accountability and Curriculum

In the Australian context, support for a national curriculum began in earnest from the late 1980s, when State Ministers of Education met in Hobart to ratify an agreement for greater Federal cooperation and to establish common goals. The “educational revolution” (Savage, 2018, p. 242) heralded by the Labor government of 2007 introduced a national curriculum board, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), an annual testing regime, National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the My School website for promoting transparency around school results. Finally, Australia’s first national curriculum, based on stipulated content and standards of achievement was released in draft form in 2010. With curriculum now under Federal control, each of the Australian states became responsible for ensuring schools and teachers were adequately supported for successful implementation.

In Queensland, the State Education Department invested heavily in the development of a comprehensive series of prescriptive teaching materials for each new learning area. Named *Curriculum into the Classroom* or C2C, these materials comprised detailed unit plans, lesson sequences, print and audio-visual resources, and assessment tasks with accompanying marking guides (Hardy, 2015). The materials were aimed at ensuring a “standardised and consistent approach to curriculum implementation across Queensland” (Biancotti, 2018, p. 119) but were often perceived by teachers as “rigid and inflexible” (Nicholls & Thorne, 2017,

p. 194). After pushback from the Queensland Teachers Union who declared that C2C “should not be imposed upon any teacher at the expense of his or her professional judgement” (Queensland Teachers Union, 2012, p. 1), the responsibility of adopting or adapting the materials was directed towards individual school principals. For non-government schools, teachers had the opportunity of accessing a limited range of C2C resources through the national educational website, Scootle (Simpson, 2014). By situating this study within a specific Queensland context, an opportunity arose to examine the impact of prescribed teaching materials in conjunction with other accountability measures.

Accountability and Teaching

According to Riek (2018), standardised curriculum “strips educators of their role as pedagogues and supports a panopticon approach to education ensuring that all educators are exhibiting a common and consistent practice” (p. 24). The employment of generic *evidence-based* professional learning in schools, perceived as “quality assurance” measures (Hardy, 2016, p. 525), is also a means of commodifying teachers’ practices and is aimed at redressing “perceptions of poor teaching quality” (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009, p. 528). How then, does this “one-size-fits-all phenomenon” (Mockler, 2011, p. 526) of standardised curriculum, pedagogy and prescribed teaching materials impact teachers’ ability to enact curriculum in the classroom? As Richardson (2019) asked, “have systemic demands tipped the balance from professionalism to managerialism? Has self-regulation been overshadowed by compliance?” (para. 12) These questions are significant given the point made by Barton et al. (2014) that “It is the job of teachers to make informed decisions about curriculum implementation” and that teachers “must be trusted to mediate the contextual conditions at their school and the expectations of the Australian Curriculum” (p. 175).

Rationale for Researching HASS Curriculum Implementation

Why Focus on HASS Curriculum?

The Australian Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) is a learning area that has undergone several revisions in recent years and is arguably the least researched primary school curriculum (Harvie, 2013; Loxton, 2018). Humanities curriculum aims to enable students to develop essential understandings of human culture and identity, and to acquire the skills necessary to negotiate an increasingly diverse and uncertain world (Eaude et al., 2017; Henderson, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2019). Further, Butt et al. (2017) argued that with the proliferation of internet and social media sources, an effective humanities program can provide the balance necessary for students to develop less biased conceptions around divisive global issues such as sustainability, climate change, racial inequality and extreme nationalism.

Nevertheless, research has uncovered the learning area's often marginalised and superficial treatment in schools due to national curriculum priorities in literacy and numeracy and the extra pressures brought on by standardised testing (Bauml, 2016; Edge et al., 2015). Consequently, humanities education is often viewed as “a dispensable subject that has not been clearly established as valuable among educational policy-making circles” (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010, p. 117). Increasingly, teachers face challenges in enacting “an authentic humanities program” (Harvie, 2013, p. 11) within a standardised and crowded curriculum that meets the particular needs of their students (Davey Chesters et al., 2013).

Dueling Philosophies of Humanities Curriculum

Priestley and Philippou (2018) asserted that the advent of “teacher-proof national curricula” (p. 151) has led to declining academic interest in curriculum theory, especially in regard to humanities education. Nevertheless, an examination of any official curriculum documents reveals an inherent “belief or philosophy about the nature and purpose of

education” (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014, p. 24). Ross (2006) acknowledged that in humanities, an “ideological battleground” (p. 2) has occurred over what knowledge and skills are considered essential, and how the learning area should be taught. Should the emphasis be on teacher-controlled coverage of content, or student-centred inquiry? By examining historical trends in Queensland’s humanities curriculum, it is possible to view several fluctuating perspectives on the purposes of humanities curriculum. During conservative periods, the transmission of culturally relevant knowledge and values has been prioritised, and in more progressive times, curriculum has emphasised greater advocacy for social transformation (Marsh, 2010). The current Australian HASS curriculum attempts to bridge the divide by providing a broad understanding of historical and contemporary knowledge, but also developing skills for active and informed citizenship (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Framework [ACARA], n.d.-d). How schools decide to plan, teach, and assess this learning area will reveal not only the balance of these two perspectives, but highlight a particular philosophy on the purpose of education.

Conceptualising Enactment of Curriculum

A second aspect of curriculum theory involves the conceptualisation of the processes involved in translating an official curriculum document into enacted classroom lessons. The use of graphic models offers opportunities to gain insights into the stages involved in moving from “macro to micro sites” (Dixon et al., 2015, p. 16) by shifting the focus from examining education systems as a whole, to highlighting the individual roles played by school leaders and classroom teachers.

Curriculum decisions made at a school level not only determine “*what* and *how* something is to be taught, but ... also influences and produces how learners’ experiences of education may be shaped and evaluated” (Rinehart, 2021, p. 3). This thesis features a new model of curriculum implementation which has been designed to both further understandings

of the implementation process, as well as address a specific Queensland context. The framework also acts as a guide for the data collection methods used in the study.

Aims of the Study

Understanding school-based implementation

This research aimed to build on existing knowledge of school-based implementation of curriculum by focusing directly on the actors involved: highlighting school leaders' authority in making organisational decisions for HASS curriculum, and exploring teachers' perceptions of their own capabilities and motivations in enacting the learning area. By examining these two halves of the process, the study sought to further understand implications of how standardised curriculum, centrally written learning materials and evidence-based pedagogies impact teachers' autonomy and agency in their classroom enactment of HASS.

Teacher Voice

Very few studies examining school-based humanities implementation have been presented from a teacher's point of view. This research places classroom enactment at the heart of the implementation process and views the teacher's role as a significant feature. As Ross (2006) stated, "The apparent indifference of educational research and bureaucratic decision making to the reality of classroom teaching creates unequal participation and power relations" (p. 4). By positioning classroom teachers as central protagonists in their own workplace narrative, this research aimed to provide some balance to scientific and generalist assumptions of *what works*. The researcher acknowledges that the construct, *teacher voice* has wider and sometimes conflicting connotations in academic literature, especially in regard to analyses of educational power (Gillett-Swan & Baroutsis, 2024). However, in the context of this thesis, the term is used broadly to mean the recognition and promotion of a teacher's point of view in curriculum discussions.

Examining the Status of Humanities Education

A third aim of the research was to ascertain the current status of Australian humanities curriculum; its importance in relation to other learning areas, the dominant ideologies promulgated, and implications for the manner in which it is taught and assessed. In doing so, the study's findings allow for comparisons with other education systems, especially where humanities curriculum has been deemed "trivial and irrelevant" (Fitchett & Heafner, 2017, p. 115). The study also positions the current approach to curriculum within the wider historical context of Queensland education.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study was:

How do schools and teachers influence the enactment of HASS in Queensland primary classrooms?

Four sub-questions, aimed at examining the role of two halves of the implementation process - school leaders and classroom teachers - have been designed to draw out the data necessary for addressing the overall question:

1. What specific organisational decisions frame the way HASS is implemented at a particular school?
2. What perceptions do teachers have on their own abilities to enact effective HASS curriculum?
3. How do school-based decisions on HASS implementation impact teachers' autonomy and agency in enacting HASS curriculum?
4. How does teachers' sense of their professional selves impact their agency and autonomy in enacting HASS curriculum?

Researcher's Background and Motivation for the Study

When I began my primary teaching career in 1980, the humanities curriculum, then known as *Social Studies*, was in the form of a syllabus document issued to each teacher. Utilising a theoretical perspective made famous by Hilda Taba, the curriculum required teachers to select appropriate content to serve the needs of stipulated concepts which were spirally arranged in increasing complexity (Queensland Department of Education, 1971). At this time, teachers were afforded a great degree of autonomy to make independent curricular decisions about the organisation of content, student learning activities and the form of assessment used to gauge students' understandings. The focus was on student-centred inquiry learning, integrated curriculum and connecting with students' experiences and local environment.

When I left the profession four decades later, the humanities learning area was in the form of a centrally controlled, standardised curriculum, outlining specific content to be covered and stated achievement standards to determine student success. As I was working within Queensland State Education, the government's curricular support materials, C2C were the means by which teachers were expected to deliver HASS curriculum. The focus was on explicit teaching of content, employing systemically approved pedagogical practices and utilising a pre-determined summative task and marking rubric as evidence of learning. Despite the huge shift in ideological thinking on curriculum, learning and assessment, and my diminishing curricular and pedagogical autonomy, humanities remained my favourite teaching area.

While collaboration with peers was always an important feature of school life, I observed that classroom teaching, in itself can be an isolating experience. The relatively few organised visits with other schools were always met with enthusiasm and curiosity, providing opportunities to absorb, reflect and compare curricular knowledge and understanding with

others. As one participant of this study observed, “*at the end of the day, we know what we know ... unless you broaden your horizons*” (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s).

That same curiosity to know beyond my own experiences drives the motivation for this research. I have wondered how other schools navigate a standardised HASS curriculum, with or without the employment of C2C materials. Do school leaders have different perspectives on the autonomy teachers should have in enacting HASS and how does that impact teachers’ work? How do teachers feel about the whole process? What are their perceptions, rationale, challenges and successes in teaching humanities? And finally, what does it all mean for educational theory and practice?

Brief Overview of the Research’s Methodology

To ascertain understandings of the holistic, detailed machinations involved in individual schools’ implementation of curriculum, and the varied experiences and perspectives of participants, the research is positioned within a social constructivist paradigm. A multiple case study design, based on the work of Stake (2005) was utilised to structure the research from research questions to data collection, analysis and final report. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a curriculum leader and class teacher from six local primary schools which differed in size, location, educational sector and demographic background. A flowchart was devised to highlight the steps taken to thematically analyse the data and to create six individual case study portraits of HASS implementation. A subsequent cross-case analysis synthesised the extensive data from across all schools into three broad themes, which are discussed with implications for leadership authority, teachers’ autonomy and the agency employed in enacting curriculum.

Significance of the Study to Theory, Practice and Methodology

Contribution to Theory

As well as building on existing models explaining the process of curriculum implementation, the research offered opportunities of developing deeper and more nuanced understandings of the interrelated nature of the elements underpinning enactment of curriculum: leadership authority, teachers' sense of professional self, autonomy and agency.

Contribution to Educational Policy and Practice

The research directly addressed the Queensland Department of Education's aim of building "a local evidence-base in relation to what works for whom, under what circumstances and why" (Queensland Department of Education, 2023c, p. 3). In particular, the study aligns with the Department's priority research theme: promoting educational leadership and teaching expertise (Queensland Department of Education, 2023c). The study addresses this priority by drawing attention to the importance of leaders' clearly defined and articulated curriculum direction and their support and encouragement of teachers' agency in classroom enactment. As such, the research builds on the small body of existing work investigating the Australian Humanities curriculum (see for example, Dixon et al., 2015; Biancotti, 2018; Loxton, 2018) and promotes HASS as a subject worthy of research attention.

As no studies have currently examined the impact of C2C materials on primary teachers' implementation of the HASS curriculum, the research offers specific feedback to Queensland stakeholders on the implications of applying centrally written materials to local contexts and in addressing the individual needs of students.

Contribution to Methodology

The methodological stance applied in this research attempts to provide some balance to the current dominance of quantitative, *evidence-based* educational theory in schools. Stake's (2005) version of multiple case study has particular relevance in providing in-depth

understandings of a particular phenomenon across a diverse range of schools. The utilisation of semi-structured interviews as a major source of data also provides opportunities of obtaining an insider's point of view and promoting teacher voice.

Clarification of Terms utilised in the Thesis

Learning Area

In Australian education, curriculum areas have been known as *subjects*, *key learning areas* and *learning areas*. To provide consistency and compatibility with the current Australian Curriculum, the term *learning area* is utilised throughout the study.

Humanities

In general, this learning area has incorporated loose couplings of the disciplines of geography, history, civics and economics. Historically, humanities curriculum has met with confusion over the content it encompasses, and whether it should be taught in an integrated or separate-discipline manner. Internationally, humanities education is known by a variety of titles, and in Australia, has been identified as *Social Studies*, *Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE)* and presently, *Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)*. When speaking in a general sense, the study utilises the term *humanities*, and *HASS* when referencing the current Australian Curriculum. Learning area titles (such as English and Mathematics) are capitalised throughout the thesis, while lower case is employed when referring to skills such as literacy and numeracy.

Implementation/Enactment

These two terms are central concepts and are applied throughout the thesis. The definition by Bediako (2019) is useful in broadly describing *implementation* as the “process of putting an agreed plan, decision, proposal, idea or policy into effect” (p.1). *Curriculum implementation* is therefore the organisation needed to translate an official designated course of study into a practical school-level plan for teachers to follow. *Curriculum enactment*

focuses on teachers' individual decisions, planning and interactions with students when implementing school-based curriculum (Remillard & Heck, 2014).

Primary/Secondary schools

In the Australian context, *primary schools* refer to education for students aged from five to twelve years, structured as Foundation (known as Preparatory or Prep in Queensland) to Year Six. *Secondary schools* cater for students in Years Seven to Twelve.

Year Levels

Currently, the term, *year level* is utilised to differentiate students' enrolled position in Australian schools, rather than *grade level*. The term *grade* refers to an allocated assessment standard used in reporting. When specific year levels are referred to (such as *Year Four*), they are capitalised.

School Sectors

In the Queensland context, primary school education is delivered by three main sectors: the Queensland Government, Catholic education, and Independent schools. Government schools are known as *state schools* while non-government schools are often referred to as *private schools*.

Principal

In Queensland, the *principal* is the designated curriculum and administrative leader of primary schools. Depending on the size of the school, extra classified positions such as *deputy principal* and *head of curriculum* (HOC) may be employed.

Reference to Specific Pedagogies

The terms, *explicit teaching* and *explicit instruction* are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature. However, the term *Explicit Instruction* is mainly connected to the specific work of influential educationalists such as Hattie (2009) and Archer and Hughes (2011). *Explicit teaching* is often utilised in a wider sense to denote teacher-focused

practices in “showing students what to do and how to do it” (New South Wales Department of Education’s definition, n. d., para. 1). *Inquiry pedagogy* is an approach that focuses on student-centred investigations and problem-solving (Preston et al., 2015). This thesis adopts the practice of capitalising these terms when they are specific to an author’s work and using lower case when utilised in a generic sense.

Indigenous/First Nation Students

Both terms, *Indigenous* and *First Nation* have been utilised in research literature to refer to those who identify as Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders. The current advice from ACARA is that *First Nation* is the more appropriate and culturally sensitive term and will therefore be incorporated in this thesis (ACARA, 2021a).

Outline of the Thesis Chapters

Chapter One: Introduction

The aim of the first chapter of this thesis was to highlight current issues faced by educators in implementing a national, standardised curriculum during a period of intense scrutiny of academic performance. The rationale for choosing HASS curriculum as the object of the study included the importance of humanities in developing students’ social capabilities, its marginalised treatment in schools, and the general lack of academic interest in the learning area. The chapter also outlined the aims, methodology and significance of the study.

Chapter Two: Background to the Research

This chapter further positions the research within a specific Australian context by outlining the major changes in approach to Queensland’s humanities curriculum since 1860, explaining the structure of the current Australian HASS curriculum, and examining the impact of dominant theoretical discourse on teachers’ enactment of curriculum.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The literature review is presented in two sections. The first part explores theoretical interpretations of the concept *curriculum*, ideological perspectives on the purposes of education, and the differences between centralised and school-based approaches to curriculum development. The second section focuses on the small body of research conducted on humanities curriculum implementation and outlines gaps in the literature.

Chapter Four: Conceptual Framework

Chapter Four presents two conceptual frameworks aimed at furthering understandings of the implementation process and providing a means of guiding the research. The first model builds on existing conceptualisations to explain how the Australian HASS curriculum is translated into classroom enactment within the specific context of Queensland primary education. The second explores four interrelated theoretical constructs that underpin this study's examination of school-level implementation: authority, autonomy, professional self and agency.

Chapter Five: Methodology

This chapter clarifies the researcher's philosophical position and the rationale behind the decision to employ qualitative multiple-case study methodology to answer the study's research questions. This section also details the steps taken in selecting the cases, designing suitable instruments, and the collection and thematic analysis of the data.

Chapter Six: The Case Studies

This chapter comprises reports from the six single case studies and is aimed at exploring the "complex, situated, problematic relationships" (Stake, 2005, p. 10) evident in each school's implementation of HASS.

Chapter Seven: Cross-Case Findings

Chapter Seven outlines the findings derived from the cross-case analysis of data, collected from the six participant schools and these are presented in four separate sections: school-based planning for HASS, schools' approach to pedagogy, views around assessment and the role of the teacher.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to distil the extensive data collated across the six different primary schools into a synthesised, comprehensive and coherent narrative of HASS implementation in the Queensland context. The findings are grouped into three broad themes and are discussed with reference to participants' data and pertinent literature from the field.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter outlines the significance of the study in terms of its contribution to theory and practice, the new knowledge generated, and its relevance for stakeholders in education. The chapter concludes by suggesting a series of recommendations for future research, educational policy and teacher practice.

Chapter 2. Background to the Study

This study has a specific context: Australian HASS curriculum implemented in Queensland primary schools. As such, an examination of the background of these elements is considered necessary to establish clarity over the different names and discipline structure employed in humanities curriculum and to position the study within current circumstances. Three different aspects of Queensland's humanities curriculum implementation are therefore outlined:

1. The major changes in Queensland's approach to humanities education since 1860
2. The structure of the current Australian HASS curriculum and
3. The impact of dominant theoretical discourse on Queensland teachers' enactment of curriculum.

The first section identifies broad eras in Queensland's educational history to highlight the structural changes in how humanities curriculum has been taught in schools. In each time period, relevant societal, economic, and political events are also examined in terms of their influence on the structure and ideology behind Queensland's approach to humanities curriculum. The current Queensland Department of Education has gone by several names, including the Department of Public Instruction and Education Queensland, and these are reflected in the historical overview. In this section, mention is made of both *syllabus* and *curriculum* documents. The definitions adopted by Luke et al. (2013) are useful in delineating the two terms used by state and government agencies from these different periods. A *syllabus* is considered "a structured summary or outline of what should be taught and learned across the schooling years" (p. 10), whereas *curriculum* encompasses the "sum total of resources" (p. 10) including the underlying rationale, descriptions of content, approach to pedagogy and learning materials, pertaining to a learning area. It should be noted that while *curriculum* is utilised here to describe the documentation within the present national Australian curriculum,

the term itself has a wider and somewhat contested theoretical basis and this is explored in Chapter Three.

The second section explains the three-dimensional structure of the current Australian Curriculum (Version 9) – the learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. The Australian primary HASS curriculum is described in terms of its rationale, aims, content, achievement standards and key considerations.

The final section of this chapter outlines the work from a series of educators who have exerted influence over the pedagogical approach to curriculum enactment employed in Queensland schools over the past two decades.

Major Changes in Queensland Humanities Curriculum

1860-1930 Initial Years of Queensland Education: Separate Disciplines

After being declared a separate colony in December 1859, Queensland's newly formed Board of Education was tasked with overseeing schools, recruiting staff and establishing curriculum patterned on a non-denominational Irish National School system (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-b). The period represented a clash in ideologies with traditional aristocratic views of education mixing with the democratic ideals of a rising middle class. Nevertheless, for the main body of students, the curriculum remained largely focused on morality lessons and the acquisition of practical skills, useful for future employment (Lawry, 1967). As Queensland's gold rushes enriched government coffers, legislation was enacted in 1875, allowing public education to be free, secular and compulsory from age six to twelve (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-b). Humanities education at the time was in the form of separate History and Geography lessons centred around memorising facts on historical figures, European discoveries, and geographical locations and features (Biancotti & Halbert, 2016). This celebratory version of humanities education

relegated curriculum to be the “gatekeeper of conservative content and values” (Sharp, 2010, p. 139) promulgating a predominantly British view of Australian society.

The advent of Federation on the 1st of January 1901 brought about new considerations of Australian identity, values and qualities of citizenship and by 1904, Civics and Morals had been added to Queensland’s humanities curriculum (Campbell, 2018). A new syllabus was introduced a year later, which promoted practical experiences and greater relevance to students’ lives. The *Queensland School Readers* introduced in 1913, supported the syllabus, by incorporating moral values and historical content into student literature (Sharp, 2010). While these incremental educational reforms influenced the teaching of humanities, the predominant approach during this long period of Queensland education remained focused on teacher-controlled lessons, separated disciplines, and factual recall of content.

1930-1950 Social Change and the Move Towards Student-Focused Curriculum.

The period from 1930 to 1950 was epitomised by immense social, cultural, political and technological change, such as the advent of mass media, the Great Depression and the Second World War. Each of these events had a profound effect on how education systems across the world came to view children’s learning (Parry, 1998). With the establishment of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in 1930, several education conferences were held across Australia, where prominent educators from the United States questioned the capacity of traditional curriculum in dealing with the individuality of students. The work of John Dewey was particularly influential in promoting a more progressive and socially relevant reimagining of curriculum (Egan, 1980; Moss et al., 2019). Dewey focused on the principle that all teaching should begin with students’ lived experiences and that content should be structured in orderly and logical ways to build conceptual understandings. Dewey also argued that if students were to reach their individual potential, school curriculum should

incorporate active, inquiry-based and integrated learning experiences.

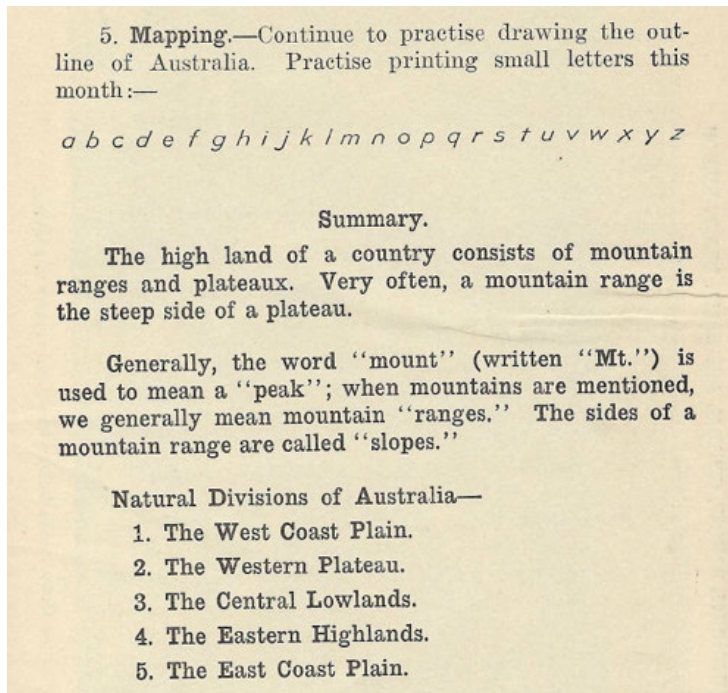
In 1930, the Queensland Education Department published *The Syllabus or Course of Instruction in Primary and Intermediate Schools*, a document that reflected this emerging philosophy. While hands-on student learning was a feature of the syllabus, humanities teaching remained focused on the memorisation of factual knowledge in separated disciplines. The teacher's pedagogical role can be ascertained by examining advice from the preface of a Geography textbook from this period:

Important geographical facts and places that should be known by all pupils are printed in italics in the text. ... Oral lessons should supplement the contents of the book. The pictures should be discussed, and any others readily available, used for illustrative purposes. Constant reference should be made either to the maps and sketches provided. (The Department of Public Instruction, 1950, p. iii)

An excerpt from this textbook provided in Figure 1 below illustrates some of the factual knowledge expected from Year Three students.

Figure 1

1950 Geography Factual Knowledge



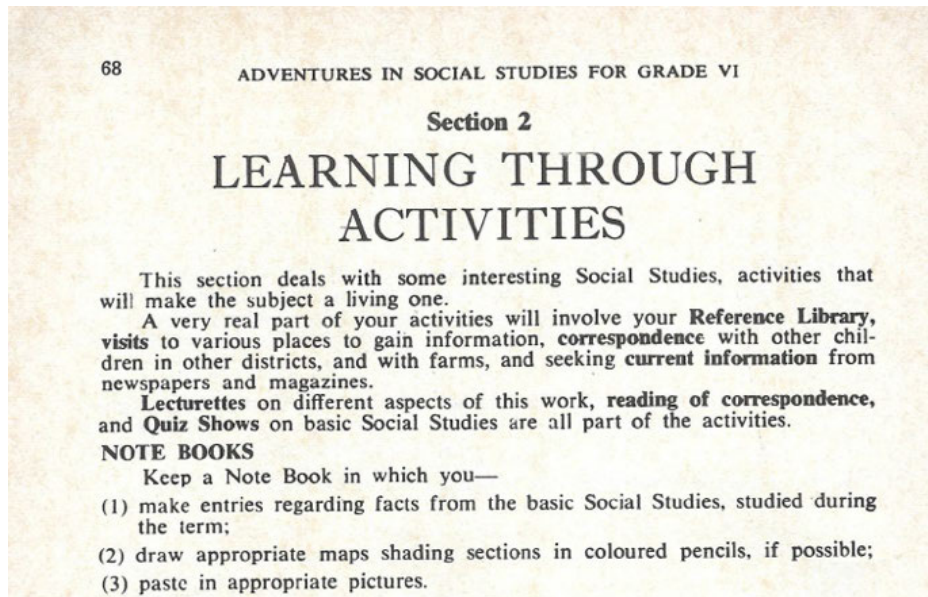
Note: From *Geography for Queensland schools grade III* (p. 9), by The Department of Public Instruction, 1950. Crown Copyright, 1950. Queensland Government Printer.

1952-1970: The Adoption of Social Studies

With the publication of the 1952 *Syllabus or Course of Instruction in Primary and Intermediate Schools*, Queensland educational authorities were ready to adopt the Deweyan principle that “the child rather than the subject is the first and constant concern of the teacher” (Queensland Department of Public Instruction, 1952, p. 3). This new approach aimed to “to prepare pupils for the practical problems of living in a rapidly changing democracy” (Parry, 1998, p. 80). Subject matter was considered a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Humanities education, now known as *Social Studies*, was focused on citizenship, democracy, and desirable social habits through a “fusion and correlation of academic disciplines” (Parry, 1998, p. 81). The content was in the form of child-centred

narratives and featured heroic deeds of selected historical figures such as Joan of Arc, William Tell and Florence Nightingale, noted Australian explorers, and geographical adventures through different landscapes and zones of the world. The suggested time allocation for Social Studies was four hours per week.

In the United States, the launch of the Soviet satellite, Sputnik in October 1957 was seen as an impetus for overhauling curriculum, by promoting intellectual rigour, problem solving and greater focus on disciplinary content. While Social Studies remained an integrated learning area, schools in the United States were encouraged to incorporate “large-scale, discipline-based curriculum projects that emphasised the structure of the social sciences and modes of inquiry adopted by social scientists” (Parry, 2000, p. 71). A revised Queensland Social Studies syllabus, published in 1964 continued the generalist approach, although by this time, critics were calling for increased academic rigour and greater attention to specific disciplinary content (Parry, 1998). An excerpt from a student textbook, based on the 1964 syllabus (seen below in Figure 2) gives a glimpse of the type of student learning activities employed during this period.

Figure 2*1964 Social Studies Text*

Note: From *Adventures in social studies for grade 6 in Queensland schools* (p. 68) by Queensland Education Department, 1964. Copyright, 1964. Premier Educational Publishers.

The textbook shows that Queensland's Social Studies curriculum subscribed to a Deweyan approach promoting student-centred inquiry activities such as creating and presenting research projects, and extending students' experiences through excursions to local museums, workplaces and geographical sites. Factual knowledge was still important, but it was up to students to decide which facts were relevant to their study (Queensland Education Department, 1964).

1970-1988 Reimagining Curriculum Design: The Spiralling Curriculum

Following the lead from the United States in the early 1970s, Queensland humanities curriculum began moving away from the curricular and pedagogical practices of the previous syllabus, "which had defined Social Studies as a loose correlation of Geography, History and Civics" (Parry, 2000, p. 71). The earlier curriculum was also criticised for its dominant focus on moral education and regurgitation of factual knowledge (Parry, 2000). Queensland

curriculum authorities in this period were particularly interested in adopting the work of Hilda Taba, an influential educator from the United States. Her theory incorporated a spiralling curriculum where students used facts, concepts and generalisations in increasingly complex and abstract ways to generate their own understandings (Parry, 2000). In December 1970, the Department of Education released the new Social Studies curriculum, published in three separate booklets: Years One-Two, Three-Five and Six-Seven. The degree of autonomy that teachers were now afforded in preparing for Social Studies curriculum can be seen in the advice given in these syllabus documents:

In each unit, the main ideas, concepts and outcomes of instruction are specified but the learning experiences to achieve the objectives are suggested only. Teachers are free to select alternative content to develop the concepts and generalisations listed. (Queensland Department of Education, 1971)

For teachers, this was a radical change to their previous pedagogical practice and an intensive program of professional development was conducted throughout Queensland to support their application of this new approach (Parry, 2000).

The Karmel Report, backed by the Whitlam government in 1973 highlighted several inequities in Australia's education system. It led to significant Federal funding for public primary and secondary schools, the establishment of a program for economically disadvantaged schools and the abolition of tertiary entrance fees (Bloor, 2018). Another progressive initiative adopted from the United States during this period was a primary level resource package, *Man: A Course of Study* (MACOS) introduced by the Queensland Department of Education in December 1973. The program consisted of a series of plays, stories, stimulus charts and audio-visual materials and was considered suitable for complementing the inquiry-focus of the new Social Studies curriculum. Nevertheless, an

intense pressure campaign conducted by a religious lobby group led to the Queensland Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen banning the materials and they were quickly withdrawn from primary schools in early 1978. The incident reinforces the political nature of humanities curriculum and the power of dominant dialogues on the nature of society and on how the learning area should be taught (Parry, 2000).

1988 – 1999: Globalism, Sustainability, and Studies of Society and the Environment

Two events held in 1988 - the Bicentennial Celebrations and World Expo, had particular significance in terms of Australians' perceptions of national identity and their place in the world (Brien, 2009). An optimistic political and economic tone was taken by Prime Minister, Bob Hawke who declared that 1988 would be “a year of national celebration ... in which we will demonstrate to the world we are a nation moving ahead with confidence” (Hawke, 1986, p. 771). The organisation tasked with overseeing Brisbane's six-month world exhibition recognised the “unprecedented education opportunities for children of all ages” (Brisbane Exposition and South Bank Redevelopment Authority, 1988, p. 1) and school principals across Australia were invited to participate in an array of school-based activities such as creating pen-pal relationships and promoting essay and art competitions for their students. The Expo Authority teamed with the Queensland Department of Education to develop a student booklet “to reinforce the many learning experiences offered in the World Expo 88 pavilions and on the site itself” (Brisbane Exposition and South Bank Redevelopment Authority, 1988, p. 2). This period was also marked by large-scale First Nation protests, challenging “the dominant society's hegemonic construction of Australia Day and what it represented” (Pose, 2009, p. para. 2). Hoepper and Quanchi (2000) argued that while students should still have opportunities to enjoy and participate in celebratory historical events, it was essential that curriculum incorporated skills of critical reflection and analysis, for teachers to “ask *what happened*, but also ask who owns the story, why was it

told this way and what conflicts of interest have shaped different versions of the story over time” (p. 3).

By the end of the 1980s, political concerns around accountability, sustainability and global competition led to the creation of several educational bodies committed to the development of a national curriculum framework (Marsh, 2010). In April 1989, State education ministers met in Hobart to ratify an agreement for greater curriculum and assessment alignment, and to establish common goals around citizenship, democracy, morality, ethics and social justice (Mills & McGregor, 2016). Two years later, the Australian Education Council outlined eight learning areas, known as *Key Learning Areas* (KLAs) that would form the basis of future curriculum direction. Humanities education was renamed *Studies of Society and the Environment* (SOSE), after much debate from "forceful personalities and contrary egos" (Marsh, 2010, p. 12) about what should be included and on how the learning area would be organised. This consequently became the model for each state to develop and implement their own SOSE curriculum documents.

A review of Queensland’s approach to curriculum, *Shaping the Future*, commissioned by the Queensland Government in 1994 (Wiltshire, 1994) set the tone for the state’s curriculum development over the next decade. The report established a Charter of Values that would underpin all curriculum; that each person is uniquely valuable, that people share the responsibility of contributing to society, stewardship of the earth and a need for knowledge and understanding. A major focus of the report was that curriculum should be integrated, future-oriented and promote lifelong learning. The Queensland SOSE syllabus went through several draft forms before becoming an official document in 2000. The interdisciplinary inquiry approach promoted by the syllabus was an attempt to incorporate a more proactive focus on citizenship and sustainability as well as addressing the issues of a crowded curriculum and developing greater rigour in assessment through addressing explicitly stated

outcomes (Fraser & Uusimaki, 2001; Marsh, 2010). This period also heralded a “new regime of accountability” (Wiltshire, 1994, p. 13) that saw the advent of school reviews, greater curriculum oversight by principals, more explicit statements of students’ demonstrated understandings, and the use of marking rubrics and moderation procedures to improve the objectivity of teachers’ judgements.

1999 – 2007 Contrasting Ideologies Regarding Teaching the Basics

The latter part of the 1990s and early 2000s were marked by growing public discontent with students’ academic standards and “conservative political backlash” (Mills & McGregor, 2016, p. 118) against progressive changes to curriculum, especially with the teaching of Australian history. In Queensland, the newly released SOSE syllabus came under intense public scrutiny after entire sections were printed in the Courier Mail, the state’s main newspaper (Sharp, 2010). A major point of conjecture centred around disparate views on the purpose of humanities education. Was it to transmit existing knowledge and values, or to equip students with the skills to analyse, question and transform society? (Marsh, 2010). A group of Queensland academics responded to the controversy by pointing out, “What some critics seem to have missed is the syllabus’s insistence that these values are not to be taught or inculcated, but rather are to be explored and discussed. ... What is important is that students of SOSE are encouraged to think” (Hoepper et al., 2000, p. 19).

Prime Minister, John Howard was particularly critical of the general approach utilised in SOSE. In his 2006 Australia Day address he argued:

Too often, it is taught without any sense of structured narrative, replaced by a fragmented stew of ‘themes’ and ‘issues’. And too often, History, along with the other subjects in the humanities, has succumbed to a postmodern culture of relativism where any objective record of achievement is questioned or repudiated. (Howard, 2006, para. 41)

The Queensland Department of Education aimed to address public concerns around academic standards as well as preparing students for 21st Century skills by commissioning a longitudinal study with the University of Queensland (Lingard & McGregor, 2014). The resultant *New Basics* program was a collaborative effort from academics and Queensland school staff, regarded by educationalists as a “bold integration of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment” (Mills & McGregor, 2016, p. 126). The trial program focused on integrated and problem-based group activities called *Rich Tasks* where teachers were given a large degree of autonomy in facilitating students’ ideas. The program was short lived however, as the Department chose to adopt greater school accountability measures (Lingard & McGregor, 2014). In 2007, the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (CARF) was introduced to provide schools with greater clarity around curriculum expectations. The outcomes model of achievement utilised in Queensland curriculum documents was replaced by *Essential Learnings*, “succinct statements of content that reflected discipline-based knowledge” (Tambyah, 2011, p. 21). After continued collaboration and commitment from State education ministers in Adelaide (1999) and Melbourne (2008), Australia was moving towards the development of a national standardised curriculum (Savage, 2018).

2007- 2015: The National Curriculum and Return to Separate Disciplines

With the election of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2007, the federal government began its new approach to accountability by launching an “educational revolution” (Savage, 2018, p. 242), centring on a wide set of national school reforms. These included the establishment of a national curriculum board, later titled *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority* (ACARA), an annual testing regime, *National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN) and the *My School* website for promoting transparency around school results.

A 2007 report from a Federal Education Steering Committee acknowledged the criticism directed towards SOSE curriculum, agreed that much of the key content was buried within an integrated approach and advocated that History, Geography, Civics, and Business be addressed as separate disciplines within the learning area, to be renamed *Humanities and Social Sciences* or HASS (Council for the Australian Federation, 2007). The move towards separation of the disciplines was considered “a rare opportunity to explore distinctive content and develop agency by investigating personal, local, national and international contexts” (Tambyah, 2015, p. 1).

ACARA’s development of the national curriculum involved four phases; shaping ideas to create a framework for each learning area (the term that replaced *key learning area*), developing the specific content and achievement standards for each year level, instigating a plan for staggered implementation, and in monitoring and reviewing the process. Each of the states were tasked with creating a timeline for the introduction of each curriculum and for developing support mechanisms for their teachers (National Curriculum Board, 2009a). In Queensland, it was decided that English, Mathematics and Science would be rolled out in 2012, followed by History in 2013, Geography in 2014 and the two other components of HASS, Civics and Citizenship and Business and Economics in 2015 (Mills & McGregor, 2016).

2012 – 2013: Queensland’s Support for Australian Curriculum: C2C Materials

In this first phase of curriculum roll out, the Queensland Department of Education determined the best way of assisting state school teachers in navigating the new curriculum would be to invest in developing a series of prescriptive and comprehensive resource materials for each new learning area. These materials, titled *Curriculum into the Classroom* or C2C were borrowed from existing Distance Education programs and included detailed unit plans, lesson sequences, print and audio-visual resources, and assessment tasks with

accompanying marking guides (Hardy, 2015). C2C offered an opportunity of not only supporting teachers, but creating a “standardised and consistent approach to curriculum implementation across Queensland”, with opportunities for administrative oversight and comparability within and across schools (Biancotti, 2018, p. 119).

The first two years of implementation were marked by confusion when state school teachers from some Queensland regions were directed to use C2C materials in their entirety, while others were allowed discretion in their application (Hardy, 2015). At the time, it was made known that the materials were strictly for state school employees, however by 2013, non-state school teachers could access limited copies of the resource from the Australian website, Scootle (Simpson, 2014). Many school principals eagerly advocated for C2C, appearing like “car sales people” (Barton et al., 2014, p. 12) in their efforts to persuade teachers that the new approach was an essential means of addressing the Australian Curriculum. By acknowledging that teachers’ workload would be decreased, school leaders also perceived that attention could subsequently be diverted to developing appropriate classroom pedagogy (Barton et al., 2014). While some teachers viewed C2C as a “potential saviour” (Ross, 2017, p. 33) after a period of rapid change and uncertainty, others were dismayed by their sudden loss of curriculum autonomy when enacting complex and rigid lesson plans (Nicholls & Thorne, 2017). This criticism aligned with Mills and McGregor (2016) who observed that excess detail contained within C2C materials “served to deskill teachers and made their approaches to differentiation of the curriculum less nuanced” (p. 120).

The Queensland Teachers’ Union sought to quell anxieties about the sudden changes to teachers’ work by emphasising that C2C “should not be imposed upon any teacher at the expense of his or her professional judgement on teaching any individual class or lesson” as well as declaring, “it is not, never has, and never will be a *teach by numbers* kit” (Queensland

Teachers Union, 2012, p. 1). This appeared similar to ACARA's own advice that the new curriculum should "provide flexibility and choice for teachers, ... include school and community contexts" and "avoid excessive prescription that would hamper experienced teachers from exercising their skills (National Curriculum Board, 2009b, pp. 12-15). The Department soon responded by issuing an official *adopt or adapt* policy regarding C2C materials, leaving principals to make the decisions about how they would be used in their schools (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-d).

2014 – Present: Curriculum Review and Reconfiguration of HASS Curriculum

After extensive consultation in 2014, the Government's first review of the Australian Curriculum concluded, "There is no doubt that the issue that has caused the greatest amount of angst is the amount of content teachers are required to teach" (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014, p. 3). It was clear that after implementing History, each addition of disciplinary-specific HASS content and associated achievement standards had caused the humanities curriculum to become unmanageable in the primary school. The decision was made that each of the four areas of the humanities curriculum, now to be known as *sub-strands* would be organised under the banner of HASS and introduced incrementally from Foundation (known as Prep in Queensland) to Year Six. This meant that in Prep to Year Two, HASS curriculum would comprise the sub-strands of History and Geography. Civics and Citizenship would be added in Year Three and Business and Economics in Year Five. Further efforts to refine this reorganised curriculum included revising content to remove ambiguity and replication, and to arrange the previously separate discipline-specific achievement standards into one extended statement (ACARA, 2021a). ACARA made it clear that despite appearing as an integrated curriculum, emphasis was still focused on separated disciplinary content:

This reorganisation allows primary school teachers to see the content of
History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Business and Economics

in F–6 HASS and supports the planning of learning within these disciplines; at the same time, it also allows connections to be made across the disciplines. (ACARA, 2021c, p. 1)

A 2021 review of the Australian Curriculum conducted by the University of Queensland, acknowledged teachers' appreciation of the move to refine and clarify HASS curriculum. Nevertheless, teachers identified several aspects that needed further consideration. These included further decluttering of content to enable greater opportunities of achieving breadth and depth in learning, the removal of discipline-specific inquiry questions and greater alignment with assessment expectations (ACARA, 2021c). As each revised version of the Australian Curriculum was released to schools, Queensland's C2C resources were also updated to reflect these changes (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-d).

Summary of Major Developments in Queensland's Humanities Curriculum

The historical overview presented below in Table 1 summarises the major developments in Queensland humanities curriculum since 1860, including the changes to its structure and title. To assist in visualising these changes, the table adopts two colours: yellow to denote the periods when humanities was taught as separate disciplines (such as History and Geography); and green to show an amalgamated approach (such as the present HASS curriculum).

Table 1

Overview of Humanities Curriculum

Time Period	Social, economic and political context	Humanities Structure	Notable Features of curriculum
1860-1929	- Queensland control of curriculum - Federation and national identity - WW1	Separate disciplines: History, Geography, Civics	- Focus on transmission of facts - European heroic figures - European explorers - Focus on mapping and geographical terms - Focus on civic education after Federation
1930-1951	- Great Depression, WW2 - Creation of ACER (national educational research) - Australian conferences based on Dewey's ideas	Separate disciplines: History, Geography, Civics	1930 Queensland Syllabus - Australian heroic features - Focus on Australian mapping
1952-1969	- Sputnik Satellite 1957 - Adoption of Deweyan principles student-centred curriculum	Integrated Curriculum: Social Studies	1952 Queensland Social Studies Syllabus - Focus on democracy and citizenship - Text in form of child-centred narratives - Excursions, projects and lecturettes
1970-1987	- Influence of Taba (spiralling curriculum) - Karmel Report 1973 - Federal funding - MACOS resource banned by Queensland government	Integrated Curriculum: Social Studies	1970 Queensland Social Studies syllabus - Based on facts, concepts and generalisations - Teacher autonomy to select content - Extensive professional development to support syllabus
1988-1998	- Australia's Bicentenary/Expo 88 - First Nation protests - Greater focus on sustainability - Hobart Declaration 1989 - Wiltshire Report 1994	Integrated Curriculum: Social Studies Draft SOSE	- National celebrations/introspection on colonialism - Focus on global and environmental issues - SOSE as Key Learning area - Outcomes approach - Focus on values, responsibilities and lifelong learning
1999-2006	- Adelaide Declaration 1999 - SOSE syllabus scrutiny - Public concerns for accountability - New Basics Program - Howard Government push for History and values	Integrated Curriculum: SOSE	- Queensland SOSE Syllabus 21st Century skills - Greater focus on critical thinking - Move towards more specific content - Outcomes replaced by Essential Learnings
2007-2013	- Melbourne Declaration 2008 - Federal control of curriculum - ACARA - NAPLAN/ My School	Separate Disciplines: History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Business and Economics	- National humanities curriculum - Plan for incremental roll-out: History 2013, Geography 2014, others in 2015 - C2C materials to support HASS in Queensland: History and Geography
2014-present	- Review of Australian Curriculum 2014 - Review of Australian Curriculum (UQ) 2021	Amalgamated Curriculum: P-6 HASS	- Reduced content - Integrated Inquiry questions - Integrated C2C HASS materials (History or Geography focus)

Legend:

Humanities taught as separate disciplines



Humanities taught as an amalgamated learning area

Structure of the Current Australian HASS Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum was developed as a web-based publication with embedded links to enable multiple views and access. The design of the curriculum features three intersecting dimensions, as represented in the graphic in Figure 3 below: the learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

Figure 3

Three Dimensions of the Australian Curriculum



Note: From “Using the three dimensions of the Australian Curriculum” by ACARA, n.d., (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/planning-for-student-diversity/using-the-three-dimensions-of-the-australian-curriculum/>), Copyright ACARA.

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The Learning Areas

The eight learning areas are considered the foundation of the Australian Curriculum and are focused on two basic elements:

- clear statements of curriculum content and
- achievement standards for each year level of the Australian schooling system (ACARA, 2013).

Curriculum Content

Each year level's curriculum content is presented as a series of statements, called *content descriptors*, which identify the specific knowledge, understandings and skills teachers are expected to teach and students to learn. They are accompanied by a series of optional *content elaborations*, devised as support material to provide context and to illustrate specific instances related to each content descriptor. While most learning areas, including HASS are organised around year level expectations of learning, The Arts, Technologies, and Languages are specified with two or three year level bands.

Achievement Standards

The achievement standards, listed for each learning area, describe the level of learning students are expected to demonstrate at the end of a particular year or band level. A series of annotated work samples is provided on the ACARA website to assist teachers in their ascertainment of students' demonstrated success against the standards.

F-6 HASS Learning Area

The Australian HASS curriculum begins with a rationale that defines the learning area as "the study of human behaviour and interaction in social, cultural, environmental, economic, business, legal and political contexts" (ACARA, n.d.-i, para. 3). The rationale also outlines the learning area's purpose in understanding and participating in society and in developing the skills to "question, think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, make decisions and adapt to change" (para. 5). The rationale is followed by six aims that outline optimal student dispositions both to the learning area and for effective participation in a future society. In the current iteration of the Australian Curriculum, (Version 9), ACARA

added two *Key Considerations* to support teachers in their application of the HASS curriculum. The first focuses on protocols for engaging First Nation Australians. These include sensitivities around procedures for recognising and respecting First Nation Australians, the use of approved resources, and using terms relevant to specific First Nation communities. The second consideration relates to meeting the needs of diverse learners by ensuring HASS lessons are “inclusive, and relevant to their experiences, abilities and talents” (ACARA, n.d.-i, para. 12). As with the other learning areas, HASS curriculum is divided into two distinct strands, *Knowledge and Understanding*, the specific content covered, and *Skills*, specific student competencies such as questioning, researching, interpreting, concluding and communicating.

General Capabilities

Cutting across each learning area, ACARA identified a series of *General Capabilities* designed to encompass the skills, behaviours and dispositions needed for students’ successful participation in the 21st Century (ACARA, n.d.-f). The seven capabilities are:

- Literacy,
- Numeracy,
- Information and Communication Technology,
- Critical and Creative Thinking,
- Personal and Social Capability,
- Ethical Understanding and
- Intercultural Understanding.

Cross-Curricular Priorities

Three cross-curriculum priorities are incorporated throughout the learning areas to connect learning, enrich content and to allow students to engage with, and better understand their world (ACARA, n.d.-f). They are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures,
- Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia and
- Sustainability

Current Influence of Educational Research in Australian Schools

The United States' *No Child Left Behind* legislation of 2001 heralded a move towards to a more empirical, research-based approach to improving student results (Luke, 2013). As an *evidence-based practice*, explicit instruction was soon identified as an “instructional design and delivery approach characterised as unambiguous, structured, and scaffolded” (Hughes et al., 2017, p. 140) that could effectively deliver targeted student improvement. Extending the scientific rationale, the Australian Education Research Organisation declared that Explicit Instruction helped “students learn because it suits how the brain processes, stores, and retrieves information” (Australian Education Research Organisation, n.d., p. para. 3).

The evidence-based practices promoted by educators in the following section were selected on the basis of their reference within various documents from the Queensland Department of Education, individual school improvement reports, and from this researcher's own classroom experiences 2000-2019. The educators' work is outlined in terms of its historical context, the main tenets presented and examples of influence in Queensland education. The listed research illustrates the gradual shift to a more intensive, uniform, and explicit pedagogical approach employed in Queensland schools, with greater focus on strong instructional leadership and teachers' directed practices (Hughes et al., 2017; Lingard & McGregor, 2014).

Marzano (1998, 2001, 2017)

In the 1990s, Marzano, an educational researcher from the United States, recognised that previous efforts to collate and synthesise understandings of effective classroom practices

had predominantly relied on narrative methods. His work, *A Theory-Based Meta-Analysis of Research on Instruction* (Marzano, 1998) was the result of synthesising thousands of studies on effective teaching by utilising statistical analysis. Marzano considered the “quantitative objectivity” provided by the meta-analysis “could be of great benefit to educators” (p. 1). In 2001, Marzano published *A Handbook for Classroom Instruction that Works*. The work highlighted a series of research-based instructional strategies such as goal setting and feedback, maintaining classroom rules and procedures, communicating high expectations for all students, and helping students engage with, and deepen new knowledge (Marzano, 2001).

In regard to Australia’s situation, Eacott (2017) noted that after the first NAPLAN results were released in 2008-2009, educators were keen to move away from instructional frameworks relying on self-reflection tools such as Productive Pedagogies (Mills et al., 2009) and to engage with new ideas based on research evidence. Marzano’s ideas on school leadership were particularly influential in drawing attention to the impact of school leaders on student results, “what works” (Eacott, 2017, p. 417). The success of Marzano’s theories led to their adoption in schools as definitive *high-yield strategies*. However, Marzano rejected the term and the premise that the employment of any single instructional strategy could guarantee success in the classroom. By deliberately utilising the phrase *Art and Science of Teaching*, Marzano (2017) aimed to communicate the point that:

research and theory will never validate the notion that teaching is simply a set of preprogrammed moves manifested as strategies. Rather, instructional strategies are linked to techniques an artist might develop and refine over years of practice. The artist then uses these techniques to create works that are not only unique and complex but elegantly focused. The more skills the artist exhibits with available techniques, the better his or her creations. (pp. 1-2)

Marzano's work continues to influence Australian education, an example being Queensland's adoption of his *New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Marzano & Kendall, 2007) in senior secondary curriculum (Johnson et al., 2020).

Wiggins and McTighe (2005)

The strategy, *backward design* or *backward mapping*, defined as an approach to curriculum design “where learning outcomes and achievement standards are established before teaching activities are planned” (Exley & Henderson, 2019, p. 38) is widely utilised in Australian schools. The practice is viewed as a means of aligning curriculum, providing continuity across year levels, creating clearly defined learning goals and making teaching more purposeful (ACER, n.d.; NSW Government Education, n.d.)

The practice emanates from the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2005), who argued that curriculum should be deliberate, focused and “logically inferred from the results sought”, rather than from the “methods, books, and activities with which we are most comfortable” (p. 14). They purported that “teaching is a means to an end” (p. 19) and that the most effective way of achieving results was to identify and establish clear end-goals. Their theory, *Understanding by Design* (UbD) consists of three stages. The first involves identifying and clarifying the desired knowledge and skills from specified curriculum documents. Decisions are then made about the type of assessments needed to provide clear evidence of student learning. Finally, teachers plan appropriate learning activities aimed at achieving the desired goals. The basic tenet of Wiggins and McTighe's theory – the importance of establishing clear learning intentions – also became a feature of other work in the field, such as Archer and Hughes (2011), Hattie (2009) and Sharratt (2019). As Sharratt (2019) stated, “Planning with the end in mind and knowing where each learner is and how to move him or her way beyond is both an expectation and an outcome of quality teaching” (p. 147).

Hattie (2009)

Hattie, an educational researcher and theorist from New Zealand and Australia, concluded like Marzano (1998) that a statistical meta-analysis of quantitative studies could create an “evidence-based package of effective learning strategies” for reforming teacher practice (McKnight & Whitburn, 2020, p. 32). His book, *Visible Learning* (2009) achieved considerable worldwide success and Hattie was considered “possibly the world’s most influential education academic” who had “the ear of governments everywhere.” (Evans, 2012, as cited in Nielsen & Klitmøller, 2021, p. 268). *Visible Learning* employed a series of graphic dials termed *barometers of influence* to illustrate the positive or negative effect size of an array of diverse educational influences including mentoring, homework, pre-term birth weight, teacher education, creativity and individualised instruction (Hattie, 2009).

A major conclusion from Hattie’s work centred around the idea that “what teachers *do* matters” (Hattie, 2009, p. 22) and that school leaders should raise teachers’ awareness of their impact on student learning. Hattie’s scientific approach was viewed by school administrators as bringing a degree of rigour and robustness to school reform efforts, especially in his claims of what works best (Eacott, 2017). Hattie’s follow up work, *Visible Learning for Teachers* (Hattie, 2012) further outlined the concept of an *expert teacher* as someone who possesses high levels of content and pedagogical knowledge, with skills to effectively monitor students’ progress, develop deep understandings and to provide defensible evidence of students’ learning (Hattie, 2012). Hattie’s impact on Australian education can be seen by his appointment as Chair of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), an organisation funded by the Federal government to oversee standards of expertise for the Australian teaching profession (AITSL, n.d.).

Critics of Hattie have pushed back on his overreliance on statistical data, focus on single causal relationships and dismissal of intervening variables (McKnight & Whitburn,

2020; Nielsen & Klitmøller, 2021). A major criticism is that “Hattie’s theoretical assumptions construct educational practice as a separate universe, with few connections to schools’ everyday practice” (Nielsen & Klitmøller, 2021, p. 280). In speaking of Hattie’s influence and the ubiquitous nature of *Visual Learning* principles in Australian schools, (Eacott, 2017) observed that the researcher was “canonised in initial teacher education, graduate programmes, and professional dialogue and debate” (p. 419) and argued that an uncritical acceptance of Hattie’s work as the definitive solution for what works in schooling, was troubling.

Archer and Hughes (2011)

Between 2013 and 2015, education regions across Queensland invested heavily in the promotion and development of explicit instruction as a signature pedagogy to build teachers’ capabilities in the classroom (Queensland Department of Education, 2022d). The Department had concluded that Archer and Hughes’ (2011) book, *Explicit Instruction* would form the basis of a program of extensive professional development for teachers. As part of a Queensland government action plan, *Great teachers = Great results*, 300 Master Teacher positions were made available to support teachers’ understandings of Archer and Hughes’ ideas and to provide coaching and feedback sessions to develop proficiency in their classroom application (Queensland Government, 2014).

Archer and Hughes are academics from the United States who achieved considerable success in promoting explicit instruction pedagogy, particularly in the field of special education. Both were strong proponents of utilising, “a structured, systematic, effective methodology for teaching academic skills” (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 1). The authors argued that by focusing on scaffolded lesson delivery and practice of skills, students’ capacity for extending their working memory could be maximised. From a range of cited research,

Archer and Hughes identified 16 elements that characterised an explicit approach to teaching, such as focusing on critical content and sequencing skills logically.

In responding to criticism that explicit instruction relied heavily on teacher-controlled lessons, Archer and Hughes argued that their approach placed students at the centre of teaching by incorporating “what we know about how students learn new material and about the skills they need in order to be successful” (p. 19). They also pushed back on arguments that a focus on drill and practice inhibited creativity, by suggesting that students’ higher order thinking could benefit from their acquisition and fluency of skills. Despite being intended for literacy acquisition of special needs students, Archer and Hughes’ ideas have achieved wider application in Queensland schools, especially as a pedagogical framework employed across all aspects of curriculum (Queensland Department of Education, 2022d).

Sharratt (2012, 2016, 2019)

As with Archer and Hughes (2011), Sharratt originally focused on strategies for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes. Nevertheless, her ideas have been widely embraced to support whole-school pedagogical frameworks and general curriculum application (Queensland Department of Education, 2019b). Sharratt is a Canadian teacher, researcher, author and presenter who achieved wide acclaim for her 2012 book, *Putting FACES on the Data: What Great Leaders Do!*, written in conjunction with Fullan (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). Largely, Sharratt extended the idea of employing *evidence-based practices* by focusing on the evidence of students’ own assessment data. Arguing that there was no program to “fix students”, Sharratt instead highlighted the importance of quality assessment in informing and differentiating instruction for students “in a never-ending cycle of inquiry to discover what works best” (Sharratt, 2019, p. 25).

In later publications, Sharratt continued to reinforce the importance of collective agency and efficacy within school systems to develop a cogent and unified plan for

improving individual student outcomes, especially with the use of data walls (Sharratt & Planche, 2016). Sharratt's *14 parameters* summarised her ideas around intentional collaboration, high standards, clarity of purpose, shared responsibility and instructional leadership (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). In *CLARITY: What Matters MOST in Learning, Teaching and Leading* (2019), Sharratt emphasised the role school leaders should play in the curriculum process, through establishing a clear and united vision, by ensuring adequate professional development for staff, and in conducting oversight of student classroom learning (Sharratt, 2018). Sharratt's influence on Queensland's curriculum and pedagogy can be seen in the relationship established with the Queensland Education Leadership Institute, an organisation set up by the Queensland Education Department to provide professional support for school leaders after the introduction of NAPLAN. This organisation's website declared the partnership with Sharratt allowed them to "introduce educators to her outstanding work and provide those who are already familiar with *Putting FACES on the Data* with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of this approach through targeted and highly practical forums" (Queensland Education Leadership Institute, 2018, para. 5).

Summary of Influential Educators in Queensland Primary Education

Table 2 presented below summaries the main ideas of the five educators detailed in this section, and highlights how their influential work has impacted Queensland teachers' approach to curriculum and pedagogy over the past two decades.

Table 2*Overview of Five Influential Educators*

Educator	Form of Research	Main Ideas	Influence on Curriculum/Pedagogy
Marzano (1998, 2001, 2017)	Meta-analysis of past studies on effective teaching	• Goal setting • Regular feedback • Classroom rules and procedures • High expectations • Engaging with students to deepen knowledge	• Focused on developing teachers' classroom skills • Saw teacher as <i>artist</i> and strategies as tools • Adopted as <i>high yield strategies</i> • Use of terms, <i>evidence-based</i> and <i>what works</i>
Wiggins & McTighe (2005)	Understanding by Design (UbD) Theory	• Backward design of curriculum: learning outcomes established before planning of teaching activities • Teaching: a means to an end • Learning activities and resources should not drive curriculum	• Widespread acceptance of backward mapping as a means of planning for curriculum • Alignment of Australian Curriculum achievement standards, assessment tasks, and marking rubrics • Purposeful and directed teaching
Hattie (2009)	Analysis of meta-analysis of various past studies on education	• Concept of <i>Visible Teaching</i> • Clarity of learning intentions, monitoring and feedback, strong relationships with students, evidence-based strategies • Focus on teacher's impact in classroom • Attributes of <i>expert teacher</i> • Collective efficacy	• Widespread use of <i>evidence-based</i> strategies • School vision • Collaborative planning • Influence on Professional Standards for teachers • Schools' formal Explicit Teaching Agenda
Archer & Hughes (2011)	Research in literacy for special-needs students	• 16 Elements of Explicit Instruction • Focus on teacher's delivery of lessons • Organised, logical and scaffolded lessons with clear intent • Drill and practice of skills	• Widespread implementation of ideas • Extensive professional development including on-site visits, purchase of text and Master Teacher coaching
Sharratt (2012, 2016, 2019)	Research in improving literacy and numeracy	• Focus on collective ownership of student data • 14 Parameters of driving school improvement • Importance of instructional leadership • Intentional collaboration, analysis of assessment data, goal setting • Learning Walks and Talks	• Prioritisation of Literacy • Creation of data walls • Case management approach to improving results • Widespread use of terminology: <i>clarity, learning intentions, success criteria</i> • Leadership oversight of student learning

Summary of Chapter Two: Background to Research

This chapter provided context for the study by examining the evolution of Queensland's humanities education, explaining the structure of the present Australian primary HASS curriculum and highlighting the educators who have risen to prominence over the past two decades and their influence on teachers' pedagogical approach to enacting and assessing curriculum. The historical overview illustrated the ideological shift from a discipline-specific humanities curriculum focused on acquisition of factual knowledge, to the adoption of student-centred inquiry in an integrated Social Studies/SOSE approach, then back to separated disciplines and teacher-controlled content. While the present humanities curriculum brings the different disciplines (now termed sub-strands) under the umbrella name of HASS, the content remains separated. This section also highlighted the major social, economic and political events that prompted changes to Queensland's humanities curriculum content and pedagogical approach.

The final section of this chapter, outlining the work of five sets of influential educators, further demonstrated the move to a more explicit and evidence-based approach to curriculum planning, assessment and pedagogy. While these efforts originally focused on the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills, explicit instruction has become a predominant feature across all aspects of Queensland's curriculum. The two-decade period covered in this section represents an era of increased accountability and rising prominence of summative assessment tasks and marking rubrics as evidence of student learning. This has subsequently led to a greater degree of administrative oversight, central collation of student data, observation of teachers' lessons and regular performance review

Chapter 3. Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of literature relevant to the study and is divided into two parts. The first section explores the concept *curriculum* as both a noun - an artefact, such as systemic policy documents, as well as a verb - the actions involved in translating policy into student lessons. A third definition sees *curriculum* as an alignment between leaders and teachers and is the link between policy and classroom enactment. Five different ideologies on the purpose of education are explored in terms of how they are reflected in curriculum documents and procedures. This is followed by an examination of the purpose and goal of humanities education, seen as a continuum, with transmission of existing culture and values on one end and the transformation of society on the other. Two divergent processes of curriculum dissemination are outlined: curriculum centrally controlled by educational authorities, a *top-down* approach; or emanating from schools themselves, *bottom-up* initiatives. Relevant examples of both approaches are discussed as well as the question of whether *bottom-up* agency can co-exist within a *top-down* standardised curriculum.

The second section of this review of literature examines the small pool of research on school-based humanities curriculum. Five studies on the Australian HASS curriculum are highlighted to show the juxtaposition of this researcher's Queensland study and how it will further understandings of HASS enactment in Australian primary schools. Findings from these studies and a small number of earlier research are grouped into three broad categories: the marginalised status of humanities curriculum; school-based initiatives in leadership, pedagogy and assessment; and teachers' individual influence on curriculum. This chapter concludes by reiterating gaps in the research base and the potential contribution of this researcher's study.

Defining Curriculum

With the emergence of “teacher-proof national curricula around the world” (Priestley & Philippou, 2018, p. 151), educationalists have noted a lack of interest and academic scholarship in curriculum theory over the past two decades (Harrison, 2022). In the previous chapter of this thesis, the term *curriculum* was utilised to refer to elements of the present national curriculum overseen by ACARA. However, definitions of the term’s wider theoretical construct are more complex and multidimensional, and have often been contested (Marsh, 2008). Such confusion seems to be at odds with a field that espouses structure, direction, predictability, and routine (Harrison, 2022). Marsh (2008) pointed out that the word itself, influenced by the classical period of education, derives from a Latin root, meaning *racecourse*. Over time, the term came to be commonly understood as *a course of study* (Ellis, 2013). The theorist Pinar (1995), described by Marsh (2008) as a driving force in curriculum ideology since the 1970s, utilised the Latin verb *currere*, meaning to run, to shift the view of curriculum from a static conceptualisation, to the lived experience of the learner. By adopting such an approach, the focus of curriculum research shifts to understanding elements impacting learners’ experiences in the classroom rather than examinations of school documents.

Ellis (2013) acknowledged that major interpretations of curriculum centre around perceiving the construct either as a noun or a verb. He labelled the first connotation as *prescriptive curriculum* which focuses on a plan, a “pre-existent artifact” (p. 5) written by experts in the field about how learning should be conducted. This can be in the form of policy directives, syllabus documents, textbooks, or teachers’ own lesson plans. Conversely, studies on *descriptive curriculum* “what happens when the planned curriculum is engaged” (p. 5) focuses on classroom interactions between teachers and learners. Ellis pointed out that a more holistic understanding of the curriculum process can be obtained when researchers combine

these two interpretations. This perspective is apparent in Marsh et al.'s (1990) use of the term *curriculum-making* to denote the practical aspects of the implementation process, and Blignaut's (2008), *sense-making* used to highlight the teacher's role in understanding and enacting curriculum policy. As Biddulph (2017) stated, "the curriculum will be what teachers and their students choose to make of it" (p. 139). A more political notion suggests that curriculum can be viewed as an agreement "among the various institutions and stakeholders, from both inside and outside the education system, on why, what, how, when and where to educate and learn" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018, p. 7)

To address the overall research question of how Queensland schools and teachers influence the implementation of the Australian HASS curriculum, this study adopts an approach that combines three definitions of *curriculum*:

1. the stated policy, prescribed content and achievement from the Australian Curriculum and direction from the Queensland Department of Education;
2. the tacit alignment occurring in staff perceptions of curriculum intent; and
3. teachers' descriptions of the enactment process, their *sense-making* of curriculum.

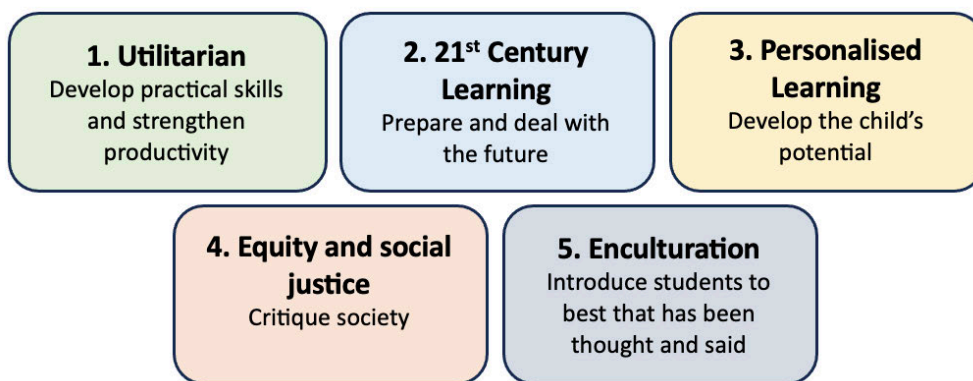
Curriculum and the Purpose of Education

The historical overview of Queensland's humanities curriculum outlined in Chapter Two illustrates how changing perceptions on education have impacted the nature and role of the official intended curriculum. As Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) stated, "No curriculum is ever value free and curriculum designers, whether they are aware of it or not, are building on or privileging a particular belief or philosophy about the nature and purpose of education" (p. 24). Rinehart (2021) argued that curriculum choices not only determine "*what and how* something is to be taught, but curriculum also influences and produces how learners' experiences of education may be shaped and evaluated" (p. 3). By outlining different

perspectives on the purposes of schooling, this section aims to shed light on the systemic policy direction that shapes school-based decisions on curriculum implementation. Five broad purposes of contemporary education have been identified by Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) and these are presented below in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Five Purposes of Education



Note. Adapted from *Review of the Australian curriculum - Final*, (p.24) edited by K.

Donnelly and K. Wiltshire, 2014,

(<https://www.education.gov.au/australian-curriculum/resources/review-australian-curriculum-final-report-2014>), Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia, Australian Government.

Utilitarian Approach

A utilitarian perspective of education is concerned with productivity, emphasises students' acquisition of practical skills, and views curricula as “drivers of economic development and national competitiveness” (Priestley & Philippou, 2018, p. 2). This coincides with the view held by Ellis (2013's) that raising economic achievement is a major goal of education systems. While Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) suggested that this approach favours student-centred inquiry learning, Priestley and Philippou (2018) argued it was more likely to adopt language related to business and management, be based on pre-determined outcomes, the regulation of teachers' work, and to rely on a regime of standardised testing to

gauge levels of accountability. Jackson (2019) likened this model of education to factory production, with emphasis on optimum proficiency, utilising *what works*, framing teachers as technicians, and students as the “raw material on which these processes exert their efforts” (p. 4). Pushing back on this utilitarian perspective, Luke and Hunter (2000) warned that highly centralised curriculum ran the risk of driving away “the broader goals that we know are required both to address the equity problems and to engage with new communities and technologies” (p.134).

Futures-oriented Approach

Futures-oriented curriculum is geared towards lifelong learning and adaptive student-centred skills promoting creativity and innovation (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014). These competencies are grounded in “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and ethical dispositions that students are said to require to succeed in the twenty-first century” (Kunhi et al., 2021, p. 21). The Queensland New Basics program described in Chapter Two was an example of a curriculum directly supporting the view that education needs to prepare students for the future (Lingard & McGregor, 2014). In their review, Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) acknowledged that the Australian Curriculum’s Cross-Curriculum Capabilities were specifically devised as a means of developing 21st Century skills. However, the authors were sceptical that teachers had the capacity to implement these effectively or that future-oriented curriculum was even a priority. They reasoned:

if it is impossible to predict what will happen in years to come, then on what basis can we design a curriculum that will address the future? ...
Slogans and clichés like ‘lifelong learning’, ‘learning how to learn’ ...
while sounding forward looking and impressive, disguise the fact that
knowledge and an appreciation of the past is equally, if not more important,

than focusing on contemporary issues. (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014, pp. 28-29)

These comments not only illustrate the conservative views of the influential educators, but also highlight the struggle for curriculum “to prepare students for the world while simultaneously trying to inculcate a sense of nationhood and personhood” (Kunhi et al., 2021, p. 54).

Personalised Approach

The third perspective of schooling highlighted by Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014), determines that curriculum should be designed around the needs, interests and learning styles of students. This aligns with the Deweyan view that the learner *is* the curriculum and that students’ individual talents are developed “through self-direction, decision making, self-reflection, and self-assessment” (Ellis, 2013, p. 48). Referring to the current Queensland context, Riek (2018) considered that accountability measures such as the implementation of C2C units and explicit instruction in primary classes has meant that learner-centred approaches are largely limited to play-based curriculum in early childhood settings.

Equity and Social Justice Approach

A concern for equity and social justice has been embedded in Australian national education goals since the Adelaide Declaration in 1999. This document specifically stated that “Schooling should be socially just” (Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1999, p. 230) by ensuring education is free from discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion, or disability as well as differences in socio-economic background. The agreement also declared that efforts must be directed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equal access to quality schooling and that learning outcomes for educationally disadvantaged groups are improved over time. A continued commitment to promoting equity and excellence is apparent in the Queensland Department of

Education's current strategic plan which emphasises shared understandings, collective responsibility, and a belief that every student can achieve. Nevertheless, the plan's stated goal of promoting "responsive and diverse curriculum" (Queensland Department of Education, 2023a, p. 8) is at odds with the Department's centralised curriculum materials designed to provide consistency and uniformity across schools (Queensland Department of Education, 2022b). Further, the perception that disadvantaged students are considered "deficit learners who do not measure up to the requirements of a 21st century national curriculum" (Brennan et al., 2012, p. 1) can distort equity goals. Ellis (2013) argued that for schooling to truly promote *social justice*, an activist model of curriculum, concerned with real world problems should be incorporated, not one that relies on "sterile textbooks, empty exercises, and never-ending seat work" (p. 71). Groundwater-Smith (2015) agreed with this view, pointing out that active and informed citizenship is enshrined in the second goal of the Melbourne Declaration (a national agreement ratified by State Education Ministers in 2008), and that students are entitled to have an active role in their own education.

Enculturation Approach

The fifth view of schooling outlined by Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) is the argument that schools have a responsibility towards enculturation, where education is valued for its own sake and not because of any utilitarian purpose. This liberal approach derives from the perception that a well-educated person benefits from the wisdom inherited from traditional academic disciplines (Ellis, 2013). Without the input from knowledge experts in the field, Young (2013) argued that important curriculum decisions were more likely to be made by administrators or politicians responding to divergent interest groups. The Australian Curriculum was deliberately designed around a knowledge-based approach where discrete sets of content, based on the major disciplines was allocated to each year level (National Curriculum Board, 2009a). The belief that a greater focus on disciplinary content would

“significantly enrich the broader primary curriculum” (Tambyah, 2015, p. 4) was made apparent when humanities curriculum reappeared as separated disciplines in the early version of the Australian Curriculum. This contrasts with the position taken by Luke who oversaw the Queensland New Basics program in 2000. In an interview from that period, Luke pushed back against the prevailing neo-liberal, market-approach to schooling. He argued that “curriculum isn’t *the best that has been thought and said*, it’s not banking more and more positivist knowledges and skills – it should be a sustainable, flexible tool kit” (Luke & Hunter, 2000, p. 137).

Despite fierce and ongoing debates on the role of education, the responsibility of schools and what it means to be educated, Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) observed that Australia’s curriculum has often been driven by a combination of purposes at various stages in its history. They also pointed out that as children pass through the schooling system, views on education may vary in importance. Likewise, by their very nature, independent and religious schools may also emphasise a particular educational philosophy.

The Purpose of Humanities Education: Transmission or Transformation?

While there is consensus amongst educationalists that humanities curriculum is an important component of a student’s broad and balanced education, there appears to be an “ideological battleground” (Ross, 2006, p. 2) over what knowledge and skills should be included and in how the learning area should be taught (Butler et al., 2015; Hawe et al., 2010; Marsh, 2010). As Bloor (2018) stated, “the inclusion and exclusion of particular knowledge and content from school curriculum illustrates an ideological inclination as it invests value in one kind of knowledge but not others” (pp. 6-7). As such, the philosophical slant inherent in any humanities curriculum reflects dominant political power, influence from employee and other lobby groups as well as popular educational theorists (Bloor, 2018; Dolan, 2020).

Eaude (2017b) made the point that the shape of humanities curriculum “depends on traditions

of curriculum organisation and reflects a particular understanding of the nature and purpose of primary education” (p. 344).

Regardless of differing opinions, Henderson (2005) argued that world events such as the attack on the New York Twin Towers and the Fukushima disaster “remind us that Australians must be prepared for an increasingly uncertain world” (p. 306). Humanities education has a “key role in exploring the wider legacy of globalisation and the rapid changes which characterise modern life” (Barnes & Scoffham, 2017, p. 299). The learning area also supports students in understanding “themselves and other people in relation to place, time, belief, identity and culture and to become empathetic, thoughtful and critical citizens” (Eaude, 2017b, p. 343). These perspectives are apparent in the current rationale for the Australian HASS curriculum, which articulates that humanities education should engage students’ curiosity in the world, empower them to shape their own lives, develop their ability to make reflective informed decisions, support social values and to contribute productively to their communities (ACARA, n.d.-i).

In determining the central purpose of humanities education, Marsh (2010) presents a dichotomy of thought; should it be about the transmission of knowledge and skills essential for conserving traditional cultural values, or a means of supporting social transformation? Marsh recognised that throughout various periods in Australian history, these two perspectives have been apparent in humanities curriculum; in “conservative times, the pattern is towards traditional and discipline-based curricula whereas in liberal times the pattern is towards experimentation, child-centred and inquiry or issues-oriented curricula” (p. 11).

Humanities as Transmission of Knowledge and Values

Butler et al. (2015) considered the reasoning behind a transmission-driven humanities curriculum is “to build a more efficient society by applying standardised techniques from business and industry to schooling and teaching a functional curriculum to prepare students

for varying life roles” (p. 106). From this definition, it would appear that transmission-focused humanities curriculum aligns with a *utilitarian* view of education and involves specified knowledge to be taught and “uncritical instruction and values inculcation” (Henderson, 2005, p. 312). Ross (2006) considered that a transmission perspective was also a form of *enculturation*, reflecting the dominance of a politically conservative and traditional idea of society. In Australia, this was particularly evident in the Howard government’s call for greater patriotism and respect for Australia’s Judeo-Christian heritage in humanities curriculum (Bloor, 2018).

Critics of a transmission approach argue that humanities “should not be reduced to an exercise in implementing a set of activities predefined by policy makers, textbook authors, or a high-stakes test” (Ross, 2006, p. 5). Ross went on to assert that by reducing pre-determined knowledge into separated, teacher-controlled lessons, students’ abilities to interact with learning were restricted. Eaude (2017b) agreed with this position, stating “Expecting children just to learn facts about kings and queens, rivers and cities and different religions, at best limits, and at worst infantilises, them” (p. 348). In addition, Ross (2006) argued that a focus on means-end knowledge transmission also has implications for teacher’s autonomy to make independent curricular decisions relevant to students’ own lives and communities.

Humanities as Social Transformation

At the other end of the ideological spectrum, humanities curriculum aimed at social transformation adopts a *future-oriented* approach, equipping students with the skills they need to operate successfully in the 21st Century (Marsh, 2010). This ideology developed from the work of George Counts who sought a new conceptualisation of the American education system in the 1930s, based on the argument that the predominant market economy had caused huge social inequities and disparities of wealth (Stanley, 2005). In the Australian context, the election of the Whitlam government in 1972 heralded a period of progressive educational

reform including federal funding for state schools, investment in early childhood learning and the adoption of student-centred humanities curriculum by state education departments. After publication of the Karmel Report in 1973, which illuminated several issues in Australia's public system of education, the *Disadvantaged Schools* initiative was rolled out as a means of creating equality of economic opportunity (Bloor, 2018). The political nature of curriculum reform is evident in a statement by Donnelly (2007) who considered these progressive measures constituted a way "to transform capitalist society according to what the cultural-left defined as politically correct" (p. 26). A humanities curriculum that adopts a transformation perspective values diversity, social justice, and active citizenship (Marsh, 2010) and involves students engaging in real life events, interdisciplinary inquiry, group projects and critical thinking (Henderson, 2005).

Humanities to Maintain Democracy

A third perspective that promotes civics-centred curriculum lies between transmission and transformation ideals. Stanley (2005) considered it unrealistic to imagine that a nation's social order can be transformed simply through school curriculum. Instead, in drawing on Dewey's philosophy, he contended that the maintenance of democracy should be the goal of an effective humanities program. Butler et al. (2015) explained that such a focus required students to "use and apply their critical thinking skills in making sense of the world outside of the classrooms, which will eventually help students become democratic citizens" (p. 105). In the Australian context, educators observed that the Civics component of the HASS curriculum has been neglected over the past decade (Henebery, 2019; Peterson & Bentley, 2017). Henebery (2019) noted that a national assessment for Civics Education conducted triennially showed that students have gaps in their understandings of Australia's system of government, laws, and responsibilities. A government program, *Discovering Democracy* aimed at reinforcing students' civic understandings and responsibilities was disseminated to

schools throughout Australia in the early 2000s (Henderson & Tudball, 2017). However, an evaluation of the program showed that many teachers were either unaware of the resource or lacked the time or training for its implementation (Henebery, 2019). Henderson and Tudball (2017) contended that if the Civics and Citizenship sub-strand of the Australian Curriculum is to be adequately implemented, a multi-dimensional approach must be employed in schools. This entails teaching content knowledge, incorporating the General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum Priorities, and involving students in real-life learning experiences.

In reflecting on the teacher's role in enacting curriculum, Stanley (2005) argued that "Every teacher, whether consciously or not, is working in some relation to the dominant social order" (p. 286). This position was refuted by Butler et al. (2015) who insisted that the most significant factor impacting the content and methods utilised in teachers' enactment of curriculum was their own personal beliefs on the value and goal of humanities education.

Who Controls Curriculum? Centralised versus School-Based Curriculum

The question of who should control the curriculum is another contentious issue that has been subject to a range of philosophical and political influences (Ross, 2006; Skilbeck, 1990). Should curriculum-making be left to experts in the field whose work is conducted outside of the classroom? Do teachers have the professional capacity to develop curriculum, especially in a climate of increasing scrutiny over improving literacy and numeracy skills? (Marsh et al., 1990). As Ross (2006) stated, "the primary tension in curriculum reform efforts, today and historically, is between centralised and grassroots decision making" (p. 29).

Centralised Curriculum

Hopmann (2008) reflected that the global move towards accountability and a more centrally controlled curriculum arose out of public concern with academic standards following publication of international assessment ratings from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Program for International Student

Assessment (PISA). In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 led to large-scale standards-based educational reform, including upgrading teachers' professional qualifications, a regime of externally developed standardised tests and creating minimum standards of student achievement (Hopmann, 2008). These government-determined curriculum standards can be defined as “authoritative statements about the knowledge, attitudes, and competencies seen as appropriate to populations of students” (Sparapani & Callejo Perez, 2015, p. 82).

In the lead up to Australia's first national curriculum, Reid (2005) welcomed the move, considering this was an opportunity “to meet the challenges of a contemporary world” (p. 7). Reid considered a centralised national curriculum would provide a common language, consistency of educational approach, equal student access and a means of developing accountability by establishing standards of student achievement. Nevertheless, he warned that taking a means-end approach to curriculum could relegate students to “passive consumers of knowledge-content, rather than as active consumers of meaning” (p. 49). Centrally controlled curriculum, referred to as a *top-down* approach (Poulton, 2020) also had the potential of limiting the teacher's capacity to interpret curriculum intent and develop their own ideas. “In this approach, teachers become implementers of a syllabus, technicians whose role it is to deliver a commodity” (Reid, 2005, p. 49).

In weighing the benefits and disadvantages of standardised curriculum, Krishna (2018) posited that this approach promotes clearer expectations of curriculum intent, has the potential of lifting national standards, as well as improving teachers' productivity. However, by applying a uniform approach to pedagogy and assessment, centralised curriculum fails to account for individual student differences in ability, learning styles and socio-economic background. In addition, a predominant focus on improving literacy and numeracy results can

impact students' engagement, creativity, and innovation. Sparapani and Callejo Perez (2015) commented on this discrepancy:

there is the assumption in standardised curricula that with this one lesson and these specific examples, using something commonly referred to as best practice, each student in each classroom can be reached and educated about the topic of the lesson. The conceit of this assumption is astonishing, especially since each person is completely unique, from their brain down to their DNA. (p. 83)

School-Based Curriculum Development

Described as “the polar opposite of centralised education” (Marsh et al., 1990, p. ix), school-based curriculum development implies a *bottom-up* approach, enabling schools and individual teachers to act as innovators in their own work environment (Poulton, 2020). This approach involves the allocation of greater autonomy to school leaders to make independent decisions on the organisation of curriculum content, pedagogies, and assessment (Skilbeck, 2005). As such, the school becomes a partner and collaborator in the implementation process, a “living organism which needs to organise and manage its affairs in such a way that its primary purpose, the education of children and youth, can be achieved in the best possible way” (Skilbeck, 1990, p. 14). The argument here is that individual schools are considered “a more stable and enduring institution for curriculum development than regional and national bodies” (Marsh et al., 1990, p. 43).

It is ironic that during the period when the United States, Australia and Great Britain were moving towards a national standardised approach to curriculum, other countries were abandoning their traditional highly centralised system of education to embrace school-based curriculum development (Blignaut, 2008; Li, 2006; Wang et al., 2019). Prior to Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, education authorities began to gradually introduce

greater autonomy for schools on the “assumption that teachers’ involvement in curriculum development would enhance their level of professionalism and result in more relevant and workable curriculum innovations” (Li, 2006, p. 223). The introduction of the South African curriculum in 2005 represented a paradigm shift in educational thought at a time of great political and social change relating to the dissolution of apartheid policies (Blignaut, 2008). The view that curriculum should be teacher-controlled and content-specific gave way to a greater focus on students’ acquisition of skills, teachers’ independent interpretation of curriculum intent, and a de-emphasis on summative assessment. It was recognised that classrooms are “the ultimate focus of the schooling system, the terrain where the purpose of schooling – teaching and learning – reaches fruition” (Blignaut, 2008, p. 105). More recently, the Singaporean Prime Minister announced the *Teach Less and Learn More* initiative, focused on “transforming teaching practices by mobilising the school community to tackle the uncertainties and challenges of implementing an innovative curriculum” (Wang et al., 2019, p. 352). The aim was to reduce rote learning, create greater student engagement and develop flexible student-centred lessons that emphasised creativity and innovation (Loo, 2018).

Combining Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Curriculum

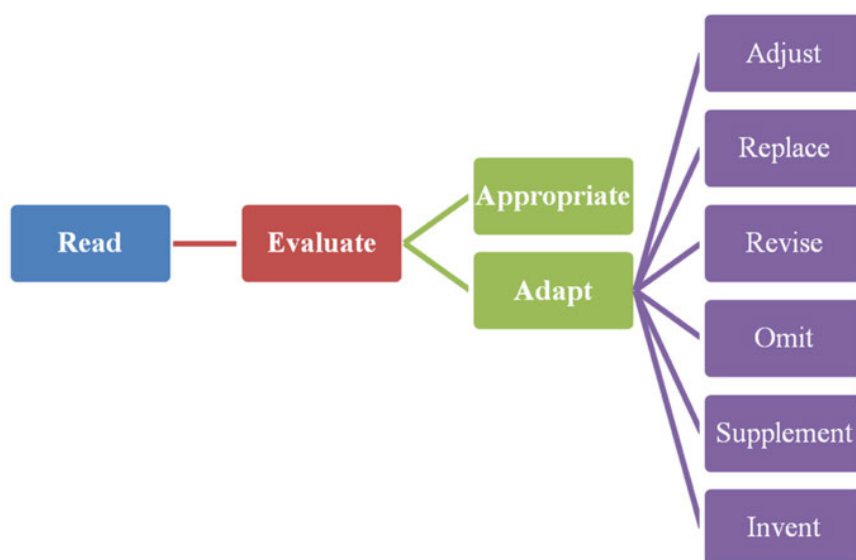
The question to consider is whether the two versions of curriculum development can co-exist within one education system. Biddulph (2017) insisted that regardless of the restrictions imposed by a national curriculum, teachers have a role to play as curriculum-makers because “any prescription still has to be interpreted and implemented by teachers and subsequently taught to students” (p. 135). Consequently, teachers have a professional and moral responsibility to bring meaning and critical insight to their students’ learning. Without the teacher’s input, curriculum content remains inert and irrelevant (Biddulph, 2017).

According to Priestley et al. (2014), Scotland’s *Curriculum for Excellence* (introduced in

2004) combined the best features of a top-down and bottom-up approach to curriculum planning and development. While the curriculum was centred around specific content and skill development, schools and teachers were allowed flexibility in adapting curriculum materials to address the specific needs of their students. Li and Harfitt (2017) agreed that a bottom-up approach is possible in education systems employing centralised curriculum. The diagram depicted below in Figure 5 is a “decision-making map” (p. 409), illustrating the teacher’s role in making sense of curriculum directives and the options available when adapting prescriptive materials.

Figure 5

Teachers’ Options in using Centralised Curriculum Materials



Note: From "An examination of language teachers’ enactment of curriculum materials in the context of a centralised curriculum" by Z. Li and G. J. Harfit, 2017, *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 25(3), p. 410, ([https://doi.org/ 10.1080/14681366.2016.1270987](https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2016.1270987)). Copyright 2017 by Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. Open Access.

When given the autonomy to make curricular decisions, teachers have the capacity to either use the materials as designed or to adapt them by adjusting, replacing, omitting, or

supplementing them. They also have the opportunity of creating their own resources to directly meet the particular needs of their students (Li & Harfitt, 2017). An examination of how *bottom-up* initiatives can work within a centralised *top-down* curriculum has particular relevance for this researcher's study, considering the major role the Queensland Department of Education's C2C materials play in teachers' enactment of HASS curriculum.

Studies of Humanities Curriculum Implementation

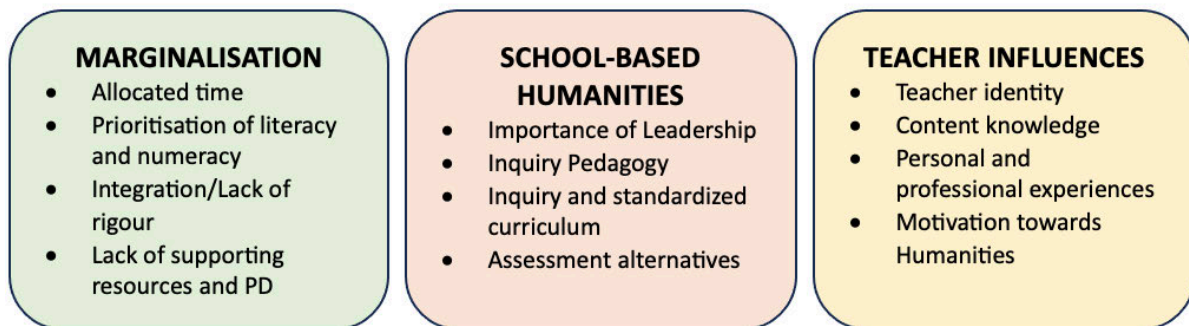
Fitchett and Heafner (2017) noted a paradigm shift in the mode of research used to explore school-based humanities curriculum over the past two decades. Quantitative studies conducted prior to this period had predominantly gained generalised insights at a state or national level, however, they offered "limited exploration of the more complex sociocultural phenomenon embedded in education" (Fitchett & Heafner, 2017, p. 69). Conversely, qualitative studies had the potential "to improve the work of teaching and learning, to address policy concerns, and to further understanding of both marginalised and dominant narratives of experiences of social studies education" (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017, p. 121). While Dinkelman and Cuenca (2017) considered the "porous and often contested boundaries" (p. 103) of humanities education provided researchers with a diverse range of inquiry, they conceded that very few studies had been conducted and these were generally attached to pre-service teacher institutions. This dearth of research in the field was confirmed by Butt et al. (2017) who were concerned with the "startling lack of information and research" into humanities education, "specifically about how and how well they were taught, and by whom, in primary schools" (p. 295). This opinion was similar to Leming et al. (2006) who cautioned that without an effective research base, influential stakeholders often resorted to sources such as test scores, text books and academic opinions to support debates on the role and parameters of humanities curriculum.

Categories of Research into Humanities Education

Research findings from the small range of studies focusing on the implementation of primary humanities curriculum fall into three broad categories: the marginalised status of humanities, school-based initiatives in enacting humanities curriculum and individual teacher influences. These three groupings and the issues they raise are summarised below in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Three Broad Grouping of School-Based Humanities Education Research



The Marginalised Status of Humanities Curriculum

A large proportion of international humanities research has centred around the diminished status of the learning area in relation to a student's broad and balanced curriculum (Bauml, 2016; Butt et al., 2017; Pratt & Atkinson, 2020). In the United States, Fitchett and Heafner (2017) argued that humanities curriculum was often perceived by educators as "trivial and irrelevant" (p. 115) and noted the learning area's declining importance was a consequence of accountability initiatives following the No Child Left Behind legislation. Good et al. (2010) agreed with this assumption and argued that a preoccupation with improving literacy and numeracy test scores had contributed to this marginalised view of humanities education. An examination of national statistical data in the United States confirmed that the time devoted to teaching humanities in primary schools had been steadily declining since the 1980s and that curriculum standardisation had "created a rippling and crippling effect on social studies instruction" (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010, p. 127). A later study

by Heafner (2018) concluded that teachers were more likely to teach humanities when the learning area was subject to mandatory standardised testing. This prioritisation of assessment was particularly concerning to researchers who warned that “testing in effect, can *become* the curriculum” (Pratt & Atkinson, 2020, p. 358) and that “education is not just about what can be tested” (Eaude, 2017a, p. 393).

In England, the designation of English, Mathematics and Science as *core* learning areas while others were considered *non-core*, created a sense of frustration for teachers determined to provide a balanced curriculum for their students (Pratt & Atkinson, 2020). In general, teachers accepted their responsibilities in improving students’ literacy and numeracy capabilities as “a necessary evil” (Pratt & Atkinson, 2020, p. 361). However, concern has been raised that these targeted efforts unfairly label students as successful or failing learners from an early age (Eaude, 2017a). To compensate for the diminished time to cover humanities curriculum, several publishers in the United States have begun incorporating humanities content into reading textbooks (Crocco & Livingston, 2017). However, McGuire (2007) contended that “simply reading about topics in the social studies for comprehension and skill development does not address social studies goals or the civic mission of schools” (p. 621).

Providing an alternate view, Barnes and Scoffham (2017) proposed that humanities education had the potential of catering for a wide range of abilities without constraining literacy demands, especially when students were involved in creative and innovative learning experiences. Further, Good et al. (2010) concluded that when teachers valued the learning area, they were more willing to find alternative ways of covering humanities content. Integrating humanities with other learning areas was viewed by teachers as one means of solving limited time allocations (Brittingham, 2016). However, Fitchett and Heafner (2010) observed that integration efforts often trivialised humanities curriculum, causing it to be

considered “a dispensable subject that has not been clearly established as valuable among educational policy-making circles” (p. 117). Several researchers expressed concern for teachers’ lack of humanities content and pedagogical knowledge (Barnes & Scoffham, 2017; Butt et al., 2017). Without adequate training for teachers, Barnes and Scoffham (2017) perceived that “the scope of the curriculum is threatened” (p. 301). This perspective was reiterated by Bauml (2016), who argued that “Preparing new elementary teachers to teach social studies at all in public schools - let alone for deep, meaningful learning that leads to young children’s preparation for active citizenship - is a critical issue” (p. 55).

In the Australian context, Harvie (2013) agreed that an integrated humanities curriculum had advantages in addressing limited time allocations and in motivating students, however school priorities, and a lack of targeted professional development were seen as impediments for schools aiming to provide “an authentic humanities program” (p.11). A study conducted by Davey Chesters et al. (2013) prior to the roll out of Australia’s national curriculum, highlighted a similar situation in Queensland primary schools, where teachers often struggled to fulfil humanities obligations in an increasingly overcrowded curriculum. While some Australian studies have referenced accountability issues (Edge et al., 2015; Fairbanks & Andrew, 2020), there appears to be a gap in current Australian research directly examining the status of humanities as a learning area, especially in regard to a standardised Australian Curriculum, national testing regime and prioritisation of literacy and numeracy skills. This research offers an opportunity to shed light on the current Queensland situation and to provide an avenue for comparing research findings with earlier Australian studies and those from the United States and United Kingdom.

School-based Initiatives in Implementing Humanities Curriculum

This second group of research has examined the implementation of humanities curriculum by focusing on a micro rather than systemic level. These studies sought to

understand the procedural aspects of school-based implementation: the role of school leadership in supporting curriculum direction, and the assessment tools needed to determine students' success in this learning area.

School Leadership. Several studies have identified school leadership as key to successful school-based humanities curriculum implementation (Catling, 2017; Fairbanks & Andrew, 2020; Loxton, 2018). Effective curriculum leadership involves a committed and facilitative approach, a collaborative vision on the value and purpose of humanities, the development of a workable plan, and the ability to disseminate these ideals and expectations to all staff (Catling, 2017). In a study by Loxton (2018), examining how schools transitioned to the 2016 amalgamated HASS curriculum, this type of leadership was classified as *transformational*. Conversely, a school leader who adopted a *laissez-faire* approach was supportive of staff, but was more likely to leave teachers to develop their own understandings of curriculum reforms (Loxton, 2018). In exploring interpersonal power relationships within school systems, Dao and Cranston (2018) found that when principals adopt a *facilitative* stance, authority is dispersed amongst designated staff, and teachers are afforded a degree of autonomy to make curricular decisions related to their work. Regardless of leadership style, successful humanities curriculum implementation requires school leaders to dedicate the funding necessary to support teachers' developing content and pedagogical knowledge (Dixon et al., 2015).

Assessment of Humanities. Preston et al. (2015) pointed out that inquiry pedagogy is a major feature of the Australian HASS curriculum. However, studies on the role of inquiry have largely been in relation to Mathematics and Science curriculum (Fairbanks & Andrew, 2020) with "little research into, and few exemplars of inquiry approaches in the primary humanities context" (Preston et al., 2015, p. 73). Data collected from school inspectors across the United Kingdom indicated that optimal humanities learning required hands-on, inquiry

projects where students were “encouraged to construct, interrogate, analyse, communicate and evaluate their investigations, which requires them to be systematic, thoughtful, creative and reflective in their work” (Catling, 2017, p. 361). This observation coincided with the early report on Australia’s History curriculum, where Dixon et al. (2015) concluded that “Those schools that have employed inquiry as a curriculum approach across all areas are the most successful in implementing History” (p. 39). Catling (2017) further argued that for an inquiry approach to be successful, schools needed to adopt a rigorous, but flexible approach, allowing teachers the autonomy to create lessons with deep coverage, to develop larger concepts and to make connections with students’ own lives.

In the Turkish education system, humanities curriculum is considered “one of the essential aspects of children’s development and education” (Ucus, 2018, p. 111). The learning area has both a student-centred and social purpose and is presented as a holistic, integrated and inquiry-based course, with the rationale being that “Participative, active citizens of all political persuasions will need the ability to solve problems and consider creative solutions in society” (Ucus, 2018, p. 112). In Singapore, where a similar focus on inquiry learning has been embraced by education authorities, Costes-Onishi et al. (2020) described a disconnect where teachers often struggled to employ a creative, integrated and student-led approach while at the same time complying with the expectations of a standardised national curriculum. As such, classroom realities meant that inquiry projects conducted in humanities lessons tended to be teacher-centred, focused on content coverage and the transmission of skills, and emphasised “correct answers so students will perform well on exams” (p. 554). In addressing the Australian context, Edge et al. (2015) agreed with this observation and utilised the phrase “Classroom Pedagogical Alignment” (p. 211) to describe the link between accountability initiatives aimed at maximising student results and teachers’ pedagogical approach to humanities. They argued:

It may all seem so efficient but it creates mediocrity. It removes independent teacher ability to allow students to learn in other ways and on other topics. It reduces learning to a fixed set of facts and skills. Classroom Pedagogical Alignment is a defensive, minimalist teaching strategy. (pp. 211-212)

Eaude (2017a) had a similar view, noting that the current emphasis on testing was “based on the questionable assumption that all types of learning can be measured, or graded, with enough validity and reliability to make such tests worthwhile or meaningful” (Eaude, 2017, p. 218). In describing humanities curriculum as “what it means to be human” (p. 218), Eaude argued that it was better not to assess humanities at all rather than incorporate means-end testing. As an alternative, Eaude advocated for portfolios of students’ work, which could include written work, concept maps, drawings, photographs, and video footage, collated throughout humanities units to provide evidence of students’ learning. Fairbanks and Andrew (2020) agreed that the incorporation of inquiry in HASS required a flexible approach to assessment that could demonstrate students’ strengths and weaknesses. However, they acknowledged that teachers who employed an inquiry approach often faced difficulty in objectively differentiating and grading student work when complying with ACARA reporting expectations.

Teacher Influences on Humanities Curriculum Enactment.

The third, but much smaller group of research on school-level humanities education is concerned with the individual role played by teachers in curriculum enactment. Reynolds (2014) argued that teachers play a crucial role in creating a successful humanities curriculum regardless of the competing political and systemic imperatives that surround it. In pushing back on the idea that prescribed curriculum materials can be considered *teacher-proof*, Sherin and Drake (2009) contended that teachers’ independent knowledge and beliefs about student

learning impact their interpretation and adaption of these materials. This was similar to Johnston's (1992) comment that classroom decisions "emanate from a teacher's values and attitudes" (p. 310). Yet an examination of the literature finds that most research into teachers' enactment of curriculum is generalised rather than focused on specific curricula, and insights into classroom practices rarely emanate from the teachers themselves (Bradfield & Exley, 2020; Priestley et al., 2014).

Many school-level studies on teachers' humanities practices have been conducted through teacher education institutions where access to primary schools can be facilitated by the relationships forged in student-teacher practicum placements. One example from the United States involved pre-service teachers comparing their observations of classroom practice with an earlier questionnaire and interview, discussing teachers' perceptions of humanities curriculum (Good et al., 2010). However, as the study's intent was mostly concerned with gauging schools' commitment to the learning area, little focus was placed on teachers' reflective practices. This was evident in the study's conclusion that "teachers must have a strong grounding in the importance of social studies, or they will surrender to these external pressures and omit social studies from their instruction" (Good et al., 2010, p. 13). An Australian study by Reitano and Green (2012), conducted in the period prior to the national curriculum, sought to uncover how pre-service teachers continued to develop humanities content and pedagogical knowledge as they began teaching in schools. One of the study's findings was that participants benefited from utilising a series of concept maps to reflectively track their personal growth in humanities knowledge and understandings.

There appears to be a dichotomy in the way researchers have approached teachers' classroom enactment of humanities curriculum; one being from a systemic standpoint determining the attributes of a successful humanities teacher and the other from inside the system where teachers are given a voice to express perspectives on their role and the realities

of classroom practice. Catling's (2017) study, based on observations from school inspectors across the United Kingdom was a means of collating examples of quality practice in humanities teaching. These qualities included being knowledgeable about humanities content, confident in applying a variety of strategies, establishing clarity of curriculum intent, maintaining positive relationships, and demanding high expectations of student learning. Further, humanities curriculum was enhanced when teachers' "positive attitude and approach engenders children's curiosity and interest and fires children's imagination, stimulating their learning" (Catling, 2017, p. 358). On reflection, Catling conceded that these attributes were not necessarily confined to the teaching of humanities but could apply to all high-quality teaching.

A Singaporean quantitative study by Wilson and Tan (2004) aimed to explore the self-efficacy beliefs of primary humanities teachers and to correlate the data across a range of demographic variables. The authors found no relationship between teachers' high self-efficacy beliefs and variables of gender, age, years of teaching or particular humanities taught, but did find that individual experiences were considered statistically significant. This finding is similar to Johnston's (1992) assessment that "past experiences, of both a personal and professional nature, have a key role in forming the images that guide a teacher's actions" (p. 310). As with Catling (2017), Wilson and Tan (2004) created a profile of an effective humanities educator, using generalised statements that included someone who was open to new ways of teaching, welcomed students' questions, attended to individual differences, acknowledged parent feedback and was "exerting that extra little effort" (p. 218).

Only a few studies have attempted to explore the enactment process in humanities curriculum from a teacher's point of view. The Australian studies by Loxton (2018), Biancotti (2018) and Bloor (2018) were all conducted at school sites and promoted teachers' perspectives, however limited insights were gained on teachers' personal contributions to

humanities enactment. Biancotti (2018) reported that teachers' reflexivity, especially in building content knowledge, was considered an essential aspect of personal growth. Loxton (2018) found that teachers felt empowered when collaborating with their peers to share ideas, review strategies and reflect on procedures. A conclusion from Bloor's (2018) study was that "teachers and schools deserved a higher level of contribution to the actual formation of the curriculum" (p. 263).

A Turkish longitudinal case study (Atktan, 2016) conducted in a multiple year level village school has particular significance for this researcher's Queensland study, in that it provided fine-grain holistic detail about the enactment of humanities curriculum within a specific context. The researcher explored the single participant's opinions on the nature and structure of her humanities curriculum, the pedagogies she employed and how resources such as textbooks were utilised. The research also has relevance in highlighting the teacher's role in interpreting curriculum and overcoming contextual challenges such as teaching multiple year levels and working in a remote rural setting.

Australian Studies on HASS Implementation

To date, four in-depth studies have investigated school-level implementation of the Australian HASS curriculum, and these have direct relevance for this research. While the study by Dixon et al. (2015) was funded by the Australian Research Council and conducted by a collaborative team associated with several universities, the research of Bloor (2018), Biancotti (2018) and Loxton (2018) were independent thesis dissertations. All four studies addressed the major changes in recent humanities curriculum: either the return to separate disciplines in the initial roll out of the Australian Curriculum, or in Loxton's case, the amalgamation of the separated disciplines back into a single learning area. Each study reflected the view that "curriculum change is a messy and complex process that is ubiquitous in nature" (Biancotti, 2018, p. 8). Regardless of the common context, the studies differed in

year level focus, location, sector and intended purpose. The studies by Bloor (2018) and Biancotti (2018) pertained to secondary schools while Loxton (2018) and Dixon et al. (2015) focused on primary settings. The government-sponsored study by Dixon et al. (2015) was conducted across three Australian states (Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria) and sought to obtain a macro understanding of how education authorities facilitated the implementation process of the new History curriculum. Biancotti's (2018) study focused on the roles, interrelationships, and agency of individuals within one school network, while Bloor was interested in ascertaining stakeholders' opinions on the political nature of the new History curriculum. Loxton's (2018) work documented and compared the experiences, perspectives, and challenges of early childhood teachers in two independent schools as they transitioned to the new HASS curriculum. A more recent smaller study by Fairbanks and Andrew (2020) adds to the knowledge base on HASS curriculum by examining teachers' employment of inquiry pedagogy and is significant in that it was conducted in a Queensland independent school.

It is anticipated that an examination of school and teacher influences on the Australian HASS curriculum across a range of Queensland primary schools will complement the research findings from these prior studies by adding depth to understandings on school leaders' specific curricular decisions and the perceptions and motivations of teachers charged with enacting this learning area.

Summary of Chapter Three and Acknowledged Gap in the Research

The aim of this chapter was to reveal literature pertinent to the aims and research questions of this study examining how schools and teachers influence the enactment of the Australian HASS curriculum in a Queensland context. For this study's purpose, *curriculum* was defined in terms of three elements: the official HASS policy documents outlining the aims, content, and standards of achievement; the alignment between school leaders' decisions

and teachers' interpretations; and the actions involved in enacting humanities into classroom lessons. This chapter explored how curriculum reflects a range of ideologies on the purpose of education and these can be perceived in different epochs of Australia's educational history. Five different purposes of education were outlined; a utilitarian view focused on productivity and preparation for employment; lifelong skills to support 21st century learning; personalised education aimed at maximising each child's potential; education promoting equity and justice; and enculturating students with accumulated world knowledge. This chapter further examined divergent views on the role of humanities education: Should the aim be to conserve, maintain, or transform society? The differences between centralised curriculum, defined as a *top-down* approach, and school-based curriculum initiatives, as *bottom-up* measures were explained to provide context for the current Queensland situation where prescribed C2C teaching materials are a significant feature.

The second section of this chapter revealed research particular to the implementation of humanities curriculum. Findings from a small number of Australian and international studies were collated into three groups; the marginalised status of humanities education, school-based humanities initiatives and individual teachers' influences on curriculum enactment. Relevant Australian studies were highlighted to show the juxtaposition of this researchers' Queensland study and its potential for extending understandings of school-level implementation of the Australian HASS curriculum.

Currently, no research has examined how Queensland primary schools have implemented the Australian HASS curriculum, especially in relation to the use of C2C materials. This study seeks to bridge the gap in the literature of humanities implementation by examining the school-teacher dynamic across both state and non-state schools, with specific attention to the autonomy afforded by school leaders, and the agency teachers employ in making independent decisions in their work.

Chapter 4. Conceptual Framework

A major aim of this study was to further understand school-based implementation of curriculum by examining the process from two perspectives: the administrative policy decisions that frame teachers' work; and exploring individual teachers' perceptions of their own influences on enactment. This chapter begins by critiquing a variety of existing curriculum models to determine their potential relevance for the study. A new model of curriculum implementation is presented to describe and explain how the Australian HASS curriculum is translated into classroom enactment within the specific context of Queensland primary education. This model differentiates *official* curriculum, as the policy documents created by ACARA, and the *operational*, the processes involved in interpreting, guiding and enacting curriculum. At the school level, operational curriculum splits into two distinctive areas: the decisions made by leaders in planning and overseeing HASS implementation, and individual teacher influences on curriculum: their knowledge, experiences and motivation towards the learning area.

A second conceptual model highlights four interrelated theoretical constructs that underpin this study's examination of school-level implementation: authority, autonomy, professional self, and agency. The work of prominent theorists is utilised to define and develop understandings of each construct, with specific reference to educational settings.

Models of Curriculum Enactment

The utilisation of models to understand the process of curriculum implementation from "macro to micro sites" (Dixon et al., 2015, p. 16) is useful in developing a more sophisticated understanding about how curriculum is enacted in diverse settings (Priestley & Philippou, 2018). The following models of curriculum implementation are included to

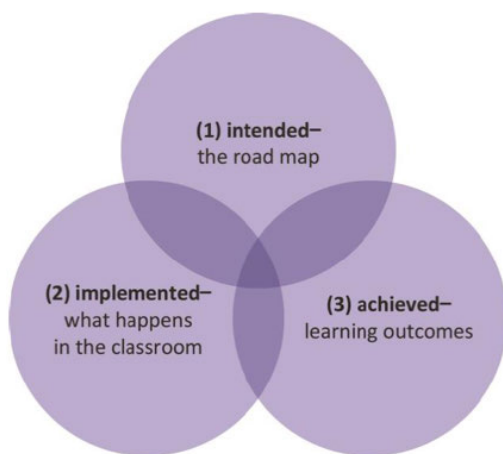
examine different attempts to conceptualise the process, with particular focus on implications for teachers in individual school settings.

Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014)

In reviewing the Australian Curriculum, Donnelly and Wiltshire (2014) envisioned the curriculum process as a series of intersecting circles, as depicted below in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Three Elements of Curriculum



Note. From *Review of the Australian curriculum - Final, 2014*, (p.24) edited by K. Donnelly and K. Wiltshire, 2014,

(<https://www.education.gov.au/australian-curriculum/resources/review-australian-curriculum-final-report-2014>), Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia, Australian Government.

The model is comprised of three elements: the *intended curriculum*, detailing what should be taught and how, the *implemented curriculum* referring to what happens in the classroom, and *achieved curriculum*, student outcomes from the learning. However, the use of intersecting circles to denote the interrelationship between the three elements is both confusing and lacking in logic. Why is such a small portion of the *intended* curriculum *implemented*? And how is it that a majority of the *achieved* outcomes sit outside of the *intended* and *implemented* curriculum? Regardless of the limitations of the model, Donnelly and Wiltshire recognised

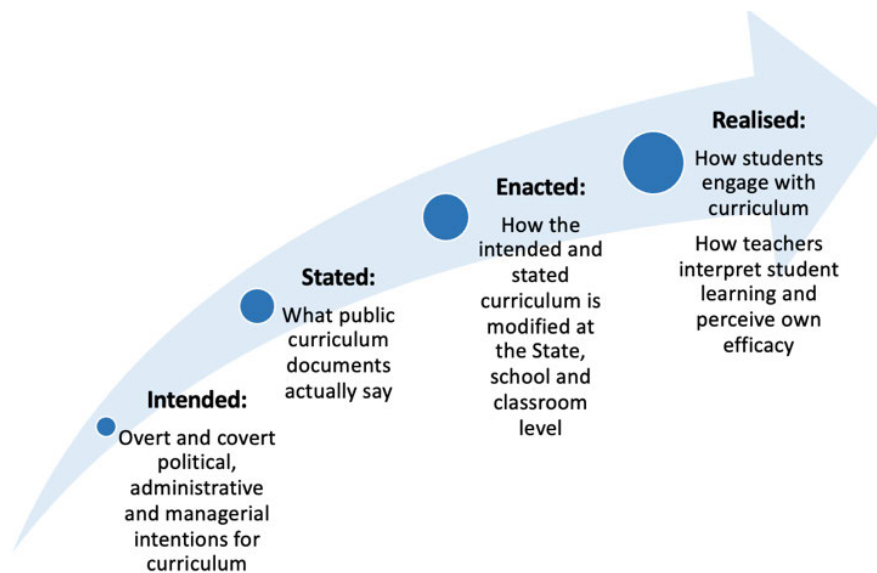
that the curriculum process is influenced by a wide range of factors including teacher training, availability of resources, students' abilities and socio-economic background, parent involvement, as well as "wider societal and global forces, including scientific and technological advances and how cultures evolve and change" (p. 14).

Dixon et al. (2015)

The model developed by Dixon et al. (2015) was utilised as an analysis framework for understanding the stages involved in the introduction of the Australian History curriculum. This was achieved by examining the discourse positions of participants, and the power, rights, responsibilities and obligations assigned to them. The model depicted below in Figure 8 represents four stages of the implementation process as curriculum moves from macro to micro settings.

Figure 8

History Curriculum Implementation Analysis Framework



Note. Adapted from diagram in "Moments in time: Investigating the Australian history curriculum in primary classrooms: Final report", (p.16), by M. Dixon, N. Green, P. Reitano, K. Senior, T. Taylor, S. Winter and R. Sahr, 2015.

(<https://research.usq.edu.au/item/q4xv2/moments-in-time-investigating-the-australian-history-curriculum-in-primary-classrooms-final-report-2015>), Open Access.

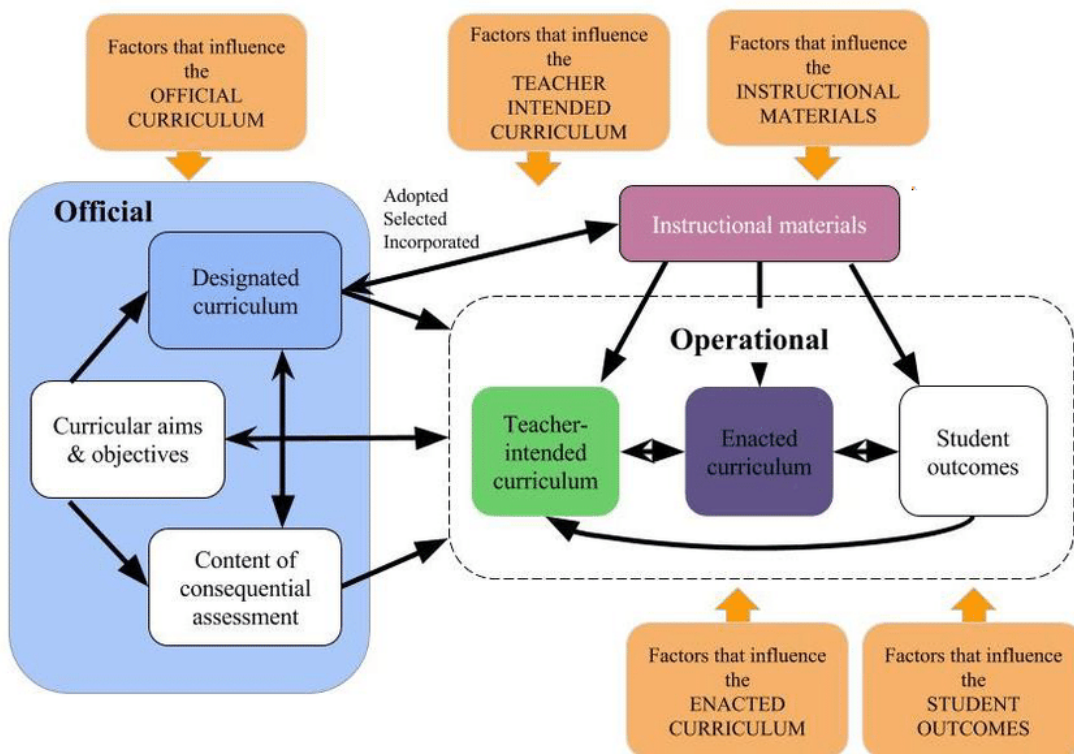
While their model appeared as a lineal representation, the authors acknowledged that implementation is a multi-directional process involving several external factors. The intent was more about distinguishing the significant junctures in the process than providing a holistic interpretation of curriculum-making. In comparison to Donnelly and Wiltshire's (2014) model, Dixon et al. (2015) separated political and administrative influences (*the intended*) from actual curriculum documents (*stated curriculum*). The additional *enacted* stage provides a bridge between the official stated curriculum and the school, and is relevant to this researcher's own study in that it examines school-based interactions as an integral component of the implementation process. The final *realised* curriculum (how students and teachers interact in the classroom) corresponds with Donnelly and Wiltshire's (2014) second stage, the *implemented* curriculum.

Remillard and Heck (2014)

In recognising a need to conceptualise the curriculum process for application across a range of learning areas and international contexts, Remillard and Heck (2014) created a model (depicted in Figure 9 below) highlighting a web of interrelationships impacting two distinct stages of implementation.

Figure 9

Model Depicting the Process of Curriculum Enactment



Note: From "Conceptualizing the curriculum enactment process in mathematics education"

by J. T. Remillard and D. J. Heck, 2014, *ZDM Mathematics Education* 46, p. 10.

(<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-014-0600-4>), Copyright 2014 FIZ Karlsruhe.

The *official* curriculum is comprised of the designated documents authorised by government authorities, and the *operational* is concerned with the decisions, policies and planning required to unpack the official curriculum for school and classroom use. At the heart of the operational process is the *enacted* curriculum: students' learning experiences. The model has relevance in that it coincides with this researcher's purpose in examining the operational component of HASS curriculum enactment at a school level and includes influences on the official curriculum such as teacher factors and the impact of instructional materials.

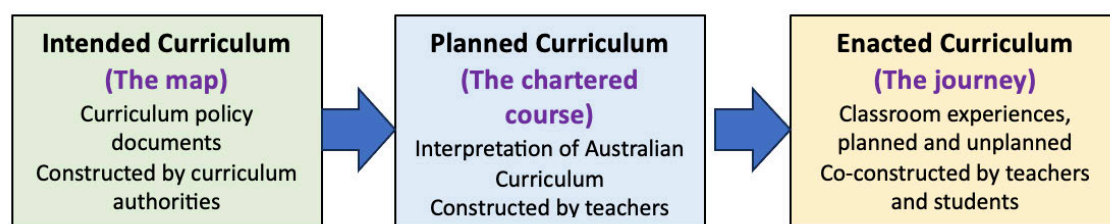
While Priestley and Philippou (2018) agreed that the curriculum-making process should be perceived as a web of interrelated factors, they also considered that the complex social interplay amongst stakeholders in different school contexts was a major contributing factor influencing enactment. The authors particularly rejected educational focus on lineal *alignment* of curriculum and the idea that the teacher's role is to *deliver* prescribed content. They insisted that more attention should be placed on how teachers interpret and filter intended curriculum through their professional knowledge, values and beliefs (Priestley & Philippou, 2018).

Ross (2017)

Ross' (2017) study, examining implementation of the Australian Mathematics curriculum explicitly focused on the teacher's role in interpreting content by developing a model incorporating an intervening stage between the *intended* and *enacted* curriculum (as depicted in Figure 10 below), identified as teachers' *planned* curriculum.

Figure 10

Curriculum Implementation as a Journey



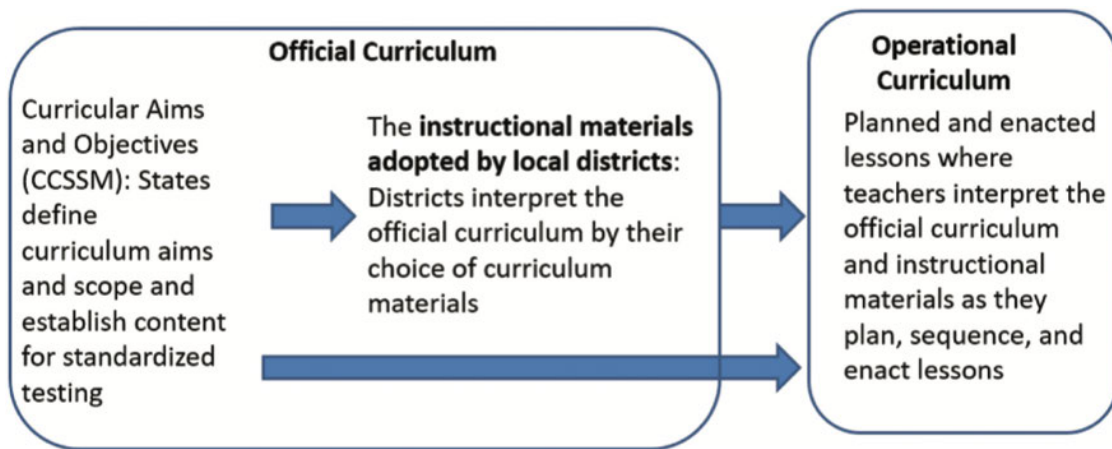
Note. Adapted from "An Investigation of Teachers' Curriculum Interpretation and Implementation in A Queensland School" by E. Ross, 2017. Doctoral Dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, p.85. (<https://eprints.qut.edu.au/107049/>).

Ross utilised the metaphor of an excursion to visualise enactment as the "route that was intended to be taken, but it also accommodates the detours, the unplanned encounters that make up the experience" (p. 85). The terms Ross utilised in the model reinforce her

chosen metaphor: curriculum documents were referred to as *the map*, teachers' interpretations and planning for lessons were *the chartered course* and experiences within the classroom were identified as *the journey*. While examination of teachers' planning documents are not a component of this researcher's study, the model is still useful in highlighting the importance of teachers' interactions with, and personal interpretation of the Australian HASS Curriculum.

Choppin et al. (2022)

Choppin et al. (2022) observed that teachers do not always engage with official curriculum documents when enacting curriculum. When instructional learning materials have been sanctioned for use by local authorities, teachers' interpretations of curriculum intent may be heavily influenced by these materials which can "serve as proxy standards" (p. 126). To reflect this situation, Choppin et al. (2022) built on Remillard and Heck's (2014) earlier conceptualisation of official and operational curriculum to position instructional materials as a potential conduit between these two stages of enactment. The model depicted below in Figure 11 illustrates the two possibilities whereby the curricular aims, content and assessment of the official curriculum are translated into planned lessons within the operational curriculum: either through the lens of sanctioned materials, or interpreted directly by the teachers themselves.

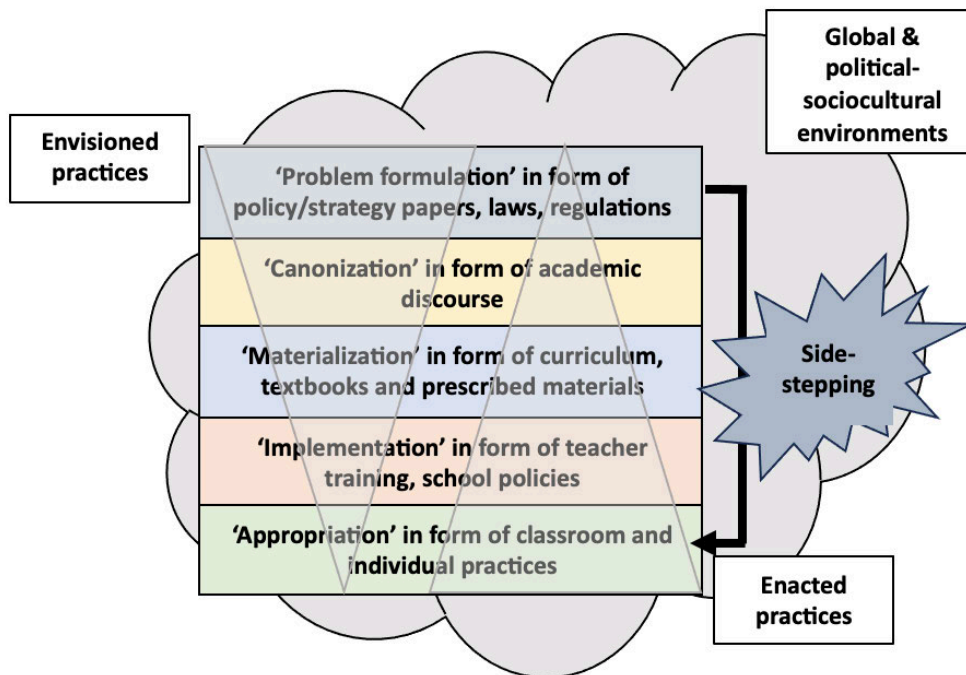
Figure 11*Instructional Materials in Curriculum Policy Implementation*

Note. From "The role of instructional materials in the relationship between the official curriculum and the enacted curriculum" by J. Choppin, A. Roth McDuffie, C. Drake, and J. Davis, 2022. *Mathematical Thinking and Learning*, 24/2 p.126.

(<https://doi.org/10.1080/10986065.2020.1855376>), Copyright 2020 The Authors. Taylor & Francis Group.

Schulte (2018)

The final model in this section is from the work of Schulte (2018), who was interested in examining the discrepancy between educational policy at a macro level and teaching practices enacted within the classroom. As with Priestley and Philippou (2018), Schulte considered teachers as central to the enactment process, particularly in realising political initiatives in curriculum reform. She argued that teachers “need to translate policy goals, programs, and ideas into words and action that make sense within their own cultural and institutional network” (Schulte, 2018, p. 629). The adapted model depicted in Figure 12 below illustrates policy initiatives as *envisioned practices* at the top and the adoption of these as *enacted practices* at the bottom.

Figure 12*Relationship Between Envisioned and Enacted Practices*

Note. Adapted from “*Envisioned and enacted practices: educational policies and the ‘politics of use’ in schools*” by B. Schulte 2018. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 50/5 p. 627, (<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2018.1502812>), Copyright 2018 The Author. Taylor & Francis.

The model also incorporates the influence of dominant academic discourse, prescribed learning materials, administrative policies and professional learning. The large triangles within the model are used to show the two-way process of implementation: top-down administrative measures; and teachers’ application of agency as bottom-up empowerment. The use of the *side-stepping* arrow indicates, as with Choppin et al. (2022), that teachers may interpret curriculum independently from intervening variables such as prescribed materials or school-sanctioned pedagogical approaches. With C2C learning materials being a dominant component of the Queensland Education Department’s approach

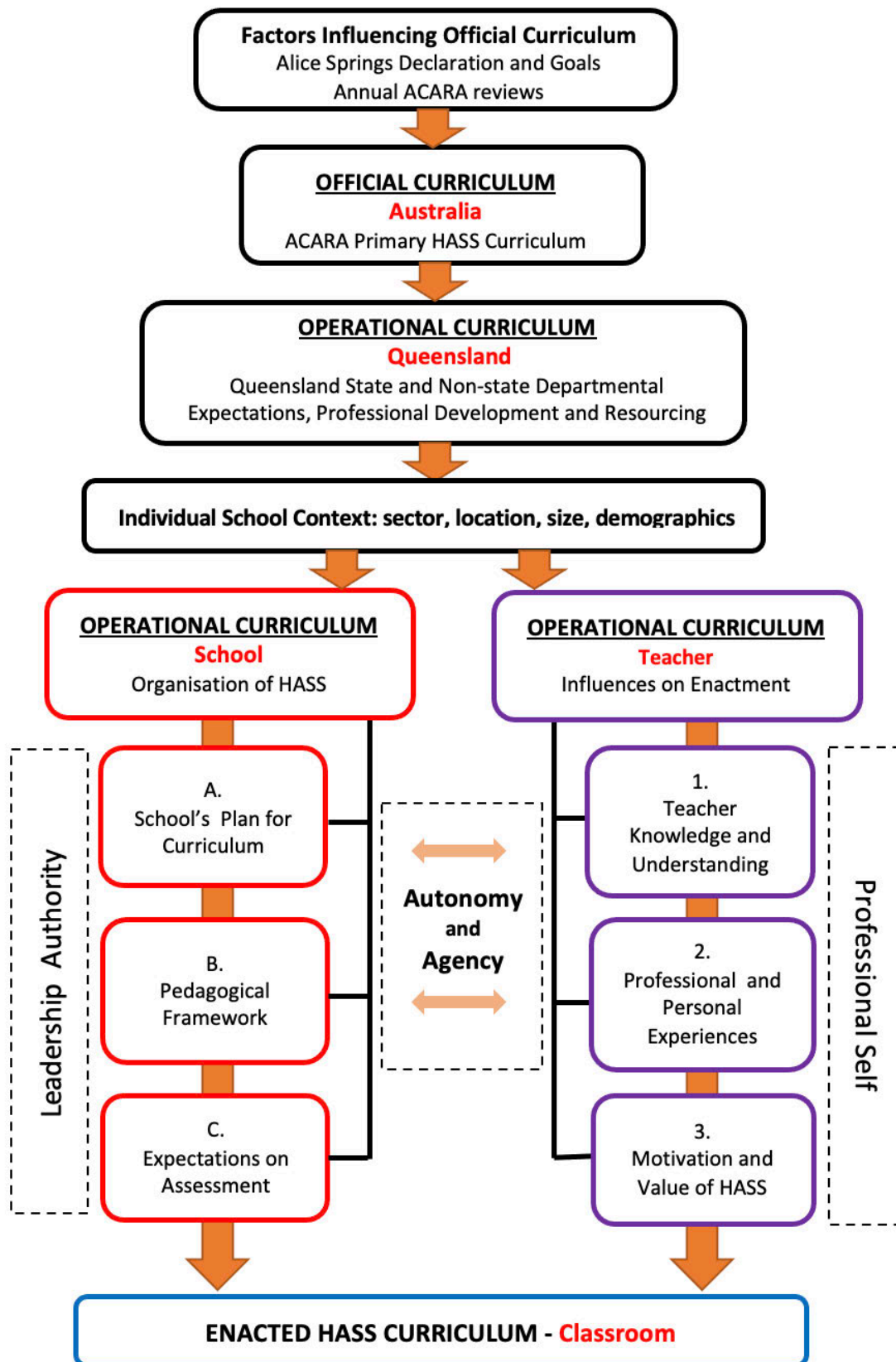
to supporting teachers' implementation of curriculum, the models from Choppin et al. (2022) and Schulte (2018) both have direct application to this researcher's study.

A New Model for Curriculum Implementation: Queensland Context

A new conceptual model has been created by the researcher to explain the implementation process for the Australian HASS curriculum within a specific Queensland context and this is presented below in Figure 13.

Figure 13

Powell Conceptual Model of HASS Implementation in a Queensland Context



In differentiating three separate levels of curriculum implementation, the model adopts the terminology identified in Remillard and Heck's (2014) study: the *official* Australian HASS Curriculum; the *operational* procedures at both state and school level; and *enacted* lessons conducted within the classroom.

Factors Influencing the Official Curriculum

It is acknowledged that intended official curriculum develops out of a series of political, social and managerial influences (Dixon et al., 2015). In Australia's situation, the development of a national curriculum was guided by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians in 2008 and later ratified in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration in 2018. These two agreements, endorsed by state and territory Ministers of Education affirmed Australia's commitment to improving educational outcomes through the development of a national curriculum, based on the principles of equity and excellence. The Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) is the statutory authority responsible for collating, maintaining and disseminating the national curriculum for Australian educators. Since the inauguration of the national curriculum, ACARA has continued a consultative review process to ensure rigorous quality control and assurance measures are met (ACARA, n.d.-a).

The Official Curriculum: ACARA HASS

The Australian primary HASS curriculum in its restructured form, amalgamates the previously separate sub-strands of History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Business and Economics into a single learning area. The curriculum is structured around two interrelated strands; knowledge and understanding, and skills. Detailed descriptions of content, key inquiry questions and achievement standards established for each year level set the standard for students' success in this learning area (ACARA, n.d.-i).

Operational Curriculum: State Level

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) is a statutory body acting as an intermediary between the Australian Curriculum and Queensland schools and is responsible for providing curriculum (including HASS) support for educators across the state and as such, becomes the first stage of operational curriculum. A seven-member board of representatives from the State, Catholic and Independent Education systems provides consistency across the sectors, and supports Queensland's goal of providing "high-quality curriculum, assessment and reporting services that enable equity, excellence, public confidence, and lifelong learning" (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority [QCAA], n.d, p. 1). The Queensland Department of Education, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, and Independent Schools Queensland are the three educational bodies responsible for developing, resourcing, and overseeing curriculum implementation in their respective school sectors. Since 2012, the Queensland Department of Education's C2C materials, which include prescriptive unit outlines, lesson plans, student worksheets and assessment tasks have been the major means of supporting teachers' implementation of the Australian curriculum (Ross 2017).

Remillard and Heck (2014) considered designated learning materials "a key step in the implementation process" (p. 710) with direct influence on teachers' intentions, enacted lessons, and student outcomes. The Department's official *adopt or adapt* policy has meant that decisions regarding how closely the materials are followed and the degree of autonomy and flexibility afforded to teachers has been left to individual schools. Teachers in non-state schools generally devise their own units of work, but also have the opportunity to access a selection of C2C resources through a national website (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-d).

Operational Curriculum: School level

In conceptualising the curriculum process as a generalised system, Remillard and Heck (2014) acknowledged that external factors impacting teachers' enactment were "likely to differ in their strength and their potential for influence across different national contexts" (p. 708). Consequently, the impact of individual schools was not highlighted in their model. In this research, it is asserted that specific characteristics of individual schools, including their size, location, demographic background, personnel, and leadership practices are significant contextual considerations and are worthy of inclusion when examining curriculum processes (Hallinger, 2018; Masci et al., 2018). The operational level outlined in this research's conceptual model focuses on two distinct components of school-level implementation:

Curriculum Leader Decisions. Effective leadership decisions are critical in supporting the implementation of curriculum at a school level (Hallinger, 2018; Loxton, 2018). In the Queensland context, these decisions include expectations on planning, preferred pedagogical practices and how HASS will be assessed. School leaders are also tasked with specific decisions on how standardised materials such as C2C programs will be utilised, what professional development may be needed and in determining the degree of autonomy afforded to teachers to enact and assess the learning area. Each of these decisions are predicated on the curriculum leaders' clear vision, authority within the school, and their relationship with teachers (Zimmerman, 2006).

Personal considerations of individual teachers. Johnston's (1992) argument that "Curriculum decisions are inextricably interwoven with the personal makeup of the teacher" (p. 310) and Ewing's (2012) point that teachers' conceptual understandings of curriculum directly impact their enactment of it, support the positioning of teachers as central to the enactment process (Hawe et al., 2010; Hung, 2020). Components of teachers' professional

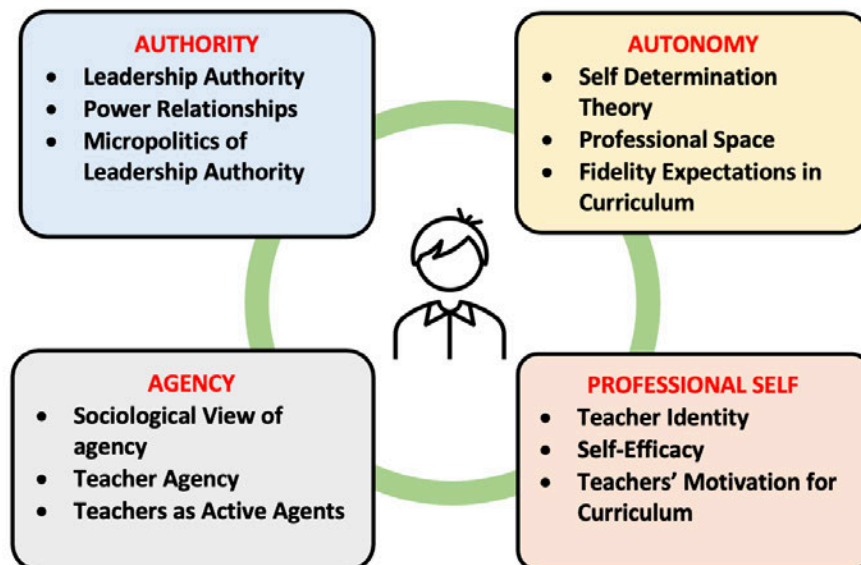
selves that are pertinent for this study include their knowledge and understanding of HASS content and associated pedagogies, professional and personal experiences, and teachers' motivations towards teaching this learning area.

Four Interrelated Theoretical Constructs

The assertion that teachers develop professional identities based not only on perceptions of their own accountability, but also on enabling and constraining school-based influences (Lennert da Silva & Mølstad, 2020), points to the interplay between administrative authority and teachers' actions. A second conceptual framework is therefore needed to provide a theoretical basis for the four separate, but interrelated constructs considered central to the implementation process: authority, autonomy, professional self, and agency. Each of these constructs are explored in the next section and a diagram summarising their major components is represented in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14

Four Interrelated Theoretical Constructs



Authority

Leadership Authority. Over the past two decades, the role of school principals has become increasingly more complex as education systems respond to global pressures by

implementing high stakes testing regimes and standardised curriculum (Glatthorn et al., 2016; Hopmann, 2008). This invariably has resulted in principals maintaining a greater degree of authority over their school's administration, implementation of curriculum, and teachers' work (Pak et al., 2020). As Dolan (2020) observed, "For better or for worse, principals generally exert more power and control than others in the school over processes of resource management, direction setting and planning, marketing and promotion, decision-making and resolution of personnel issues" (p. 2).

In basic terms, the concept *authority* can be defined as "the exercise of control that rests on the willing compliance of subordinates with the directives of superiors" (Blau & Scott, 1962, p. 143). School leaders' authority can be viewed in a formal sense as the power vested from a recognised and classified position within the school, as well as through informal means where the personality and behaviour of principals influence values such as respect and loyalty, and ultimately teachers' acceptance of that authority (Isherwood, 1973). As Dinham (2007) pointed out, "Educational leadership, like teaching and life generally, is heavily dependent upon relationships" (p. 33).

Power Relationships. According to Freie and Eppley (2014), research into school systems offer opportunities to "better understand the ways power operates and is exercised within social structures and relationships" (p. 653). Danaher and Danaher (2000) acknowledged this power as a negotiated construct, a "force circulating throughout the social body and shaping people's understanding of themselves and their relations to the world in which they act" (p. 312). As such, power is not necessarily a coercive product of vested authority but is dependent on relationships and personal perceptions of that authority. Individuals do not *have* power, instead they *exercise* it to bring about particular outcomes (Freie & Eppley, 2014). Niesche (2011) further argued that principals are often placed in positions where they are both "objects and instruments" (p. 16) of disciplinary power when

they are tasked by educational authorities to implement and oversee systemic directives within their schools.

Micropolitics of Leadership Authority. By viewing leadership as a form of micropolitics, researchers have opportunities of examining and understanding authority relationships in specific school settings (Dao & Cranston, 2018). Blase and Anderson (1995) divided school leadership into two broad categories: a closed style epitomised by an unwillingness to share power and expectations of teacher compliance; and an open style where leaders are more collegial and trustful of teachers' work. Central to their ideas were the terms, *power over*, *power through* and *power with* (p. xiv), associated with four different approaches to curriculum leadership. A closed authoritarian stance is utilised when leaders are focused on maintaining the status quo by minimising teachers' capacity to make independent curriculum decisions. An adversarial leader adopts a similar stance but is more confrontational in pushing through desired educational reforms. Both types of leadership are considered as having *power over* teachers' work. Facilitative leaders strive towards educational goals by motivating others and exercising *power through* distributed leadership. While this style of leadership is promoted as a more democratic approach within schools, Blase and Anderson (1995) cautioned that with "bureaucratic manipulation towards pre-established goals" (p. 20), facilitative leadership can simply be a covert means of exerting *power over* teachers. True democratic leadership, *power with*, involves trust of teachers' work, the acceptance of alternative viewpoints and shared decision making.

Autonomy

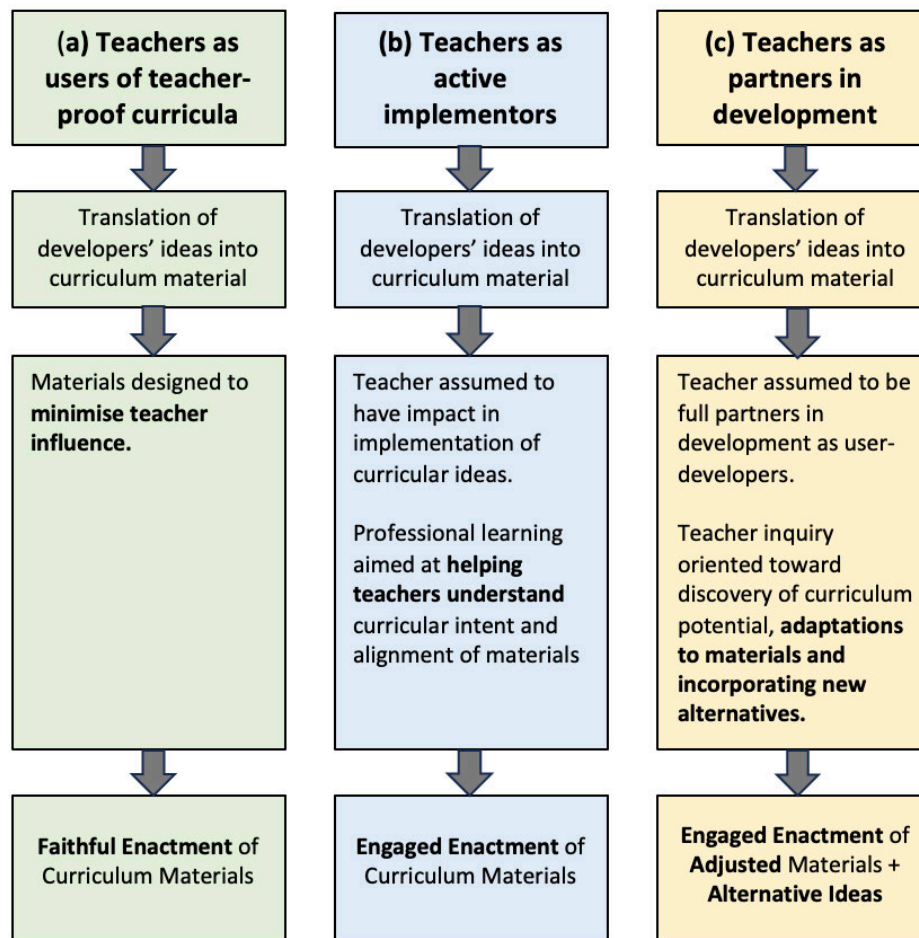
Self-Determination Theory. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), *autonomy* is a core underlying concept of human behavioural regulation. In their Theory of Self-Determination, they posited that in order to achieve psychological growth, individuals need to exert a degree of control over their behaviours. Additionally, by developing competency of skills and

connectedness with others, individuals are more likely to achieve their goals. Ryan and Deci contended that their theory was not only concerned with “understanding the nature and consequences of autonomy, but also in detailing how autonomy develops, and how it can be either diminished or facilitated by specific biological and social conditions” (p. 1562). In applying Self-Determination Theory to educational research, Zhang et al. (2021) found that teachers with greater autonomy exhibited stronger engagement and motivation towards their work. Daniels’ (2017) study, examining teachers’ perceptions of their basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, determined that individual school contexts influenced teachers’ motivations in becoming and remaining effective educators.

Autonomy and Teachers’ Perceived Professional Space. *Educational autonomy* is a multifaceted and value-laden construct that can be perceived from both administrative and teachers’ perspectives (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015). In educational studies, the term has been defined as “regulation of the self” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 1557), controlling one’s working environment (Huang & Benson, 2013; Zhang et al., 2021), acting independently (Tran & Moskovsky, 2022), and an absence of external control (Erss, 2018). As education systems have responded to systemic accountability demands by moving towards greater centralised curriculum control, the focus has shifted to teachers delivering, rather than developing curriculum. As such, conceptualising autonomy as teachers’ freedom within the classroom is unrealistic and ignores this systemic shift to collective responsibility of curriculum (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015). An alternative view, proposed by Voogt et al. (2018) is that autonomy is best understood by examining who has decision-making authority in schools. Consequently, autonomy can be defined as the degree of scope teachers exercise, based on their professional knowledge, beliefs and ethical principles, to control the conditions of their work within the constraints of a system’s structure, policy and direction (Mausethagen & Mølstad, 2015; Lennert da Silva and Mølstad, 2020). A closely aligned

concept is that of teachers' perceived *professional space*. Nguyen et al. (2022) contended that *professional space* refers to teachers' recognition of the boundaries that contain their work, both in terms of objective rules around professional conduct and in teachers' subjective interpretations of school-based curriculum decisions.

Fidelity Expectations and Teachers' Autonomy. According to Gelmez-Burakgazi (2020), the term *fidelity* refers to the “degree to which teachers and program providers implement programs as intended by the program developers” (p. 922). Connelly and Ben Peretz's (1980) theoretical ideas on fidelity expectations, presented in the adapted model in Figure 15 below, is useful in understanding how school-based decisions around the use of mandated learning materials such as C2C impacts teachers' autonomy in enacting curriculum. The three levels depicted in the model coincide with variations of the Queensland Department of Education's *adopt or adapt* policy regarding these materials.

Figure 15*Mandated Curriculum Materials and Teacher Autonomy*

Note. Adapted from "Teacher roles in the using and doing of research and curriculum development" by F. M. Connelly and M. Ben Peretz, 1980, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 12(2), p. 106. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/0022027800120202>). Copyright 2009 The Authors. Taylor & Francis.

In situations where perfect fidelity to mandated materials is required (a), teachers are viewed as *users of teacher-proof curricula* with minimal influence on implementation. Instead, interpretation of official curriculum lies in the hands of the authors of these materials. Where teachers are allowed flexibility in the use of mandated materials (b), they are seen more as *active implementors* of curriculum. As such, schools have a responsibility to

ensure that teachers are provided with the professional development necessary for understanding and applying the official curriculum. In the third level of the model (c), teachers are perceived as *partners* in the development of curriculum. Here, teachers are afforded a greater degree of autonomy in interpreting the official curriculum, adapting units of work and in choosing alternative materials.

Researchers offer various reasons why teachers abide by fidelity expectations set by school administrators. Some discovered that in complying with these demands, teachers considered that students would benefit from a whole-school commitment and dedication to the goals of these programs (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Duncan Seraphin et al., 2017). This contrasts with Ben-Peretz (1990) who argued that rigid fidelity expectations “may inhibit teachers in using the potential richness of existing curriculum materials in a manner which is most appropriate for their students” (p 9). Other studies suggested that teachers accept a loss of curriculum autonomy in order to maintain congruence with their colleagues (Pease-Alvarez & Samway, 2008) or to simply “go with the flow” (Lennert da Silva & Mølstad, 2020, p. 119). Maniates (2010) took the position that “Rather than forcing teachers into a resistance stance in opposition to fidelity policies, districts could expect and encourage teacher adaptation of pedagogical strategies in order to preserve fidelity to the promised outcomes” (p. 99). By observing fidelity to a program’s goal rather than following materials prescriptively, teachers could maintain a degree of autonomy over their enactment of curriculum “as a professional rather than a technician” (Maniates, 2010, p. 6).

Teachers’ Sense of Professional Self

Teacher Identity. In broad terms *identity* refers to “the way that people understand their own individual experience and how they act and identify with different groups” (Sachs, 2005, p. 8). Tambyah (2008) argued that teachers’ *professional identities* differ from other occupations in that knowledge of themselves “straddles the personal and the professional” (p.

69) as teachers draw from curricular, pedagogical, and social knowledge gained from lived experience. Teachers' commitment to their role can be determined as a "psychological bond to the teaching profession" (Lauermann et al., 2017, p. 322) and is supported by teachers' individual "beliefs, dispositions, interests, and orientation towards work and change" (Drake et al., 2001, p. 2). Teachers also develop professional identities based on perceptions of their own accountability and the enabling and constraining school-based influences impacting their role (Lennert da Silva & Mølstad, 2020). In expressing concern for the impact that restrictive school and systemic demands have on beginning teachers, Day (2002) argued that efforts must be made to sustain teachers' enthusiasm for, and identification with their work, particularly in regard to "investment of their cognitive and emotional selves" (p. 688). Strong professional identities have been found to improve teacher effectiveness, energise action, and support resilience (Ng, 2019). Teachers' personal values drive aspirations and school behaviours and in turn support encapsulations of their own abilities in the classroom (Barni et al., 2019). By supporting teachers' capabilities through ongoing professional learning opportunities, teachers' sense of their own efficacy is reinforced, allowing them "to see themselves as capable of forging a positive future" (p. 132).

Self-Efficacy. The concept of *self-efficacy* draws from the social-cognitive theory developed by Bandura (1977) and is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Bandura saw self-efficacy as a coping mechanism and proposed that people are capable of exercising control over their behaviours by organising, regulating, and reflecting on their own actions. His development of a 30-item instrument using a nine-point scale was an attempt to provide insight into teachers' self-efficacy by creating a multi-faceted picture of teachers' beliefs of their own capabilities (Bandura, 1997).

In expanding on Bandura's (1977) theory, Skaalvik & Skaalvik, (2010) determined that self-efficacy involved "individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals" (p.1059). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) considered teachers' self-efficacy a "simple idea with significant implications" (p. 783). They perceived that teachers with strong levels of self-efficacy were more organised, open to new ideas, resilient to change and more likely to remain in the profession. However, the question of how teachers' levels of self-efficacy may be effectively ascertained has been elusive (Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Quantitative studies, focused solely on Likert-scale responses in questionnaires have particularly been open to criticism. Issues have included confusion around concept clarity, the specificity of contexts, and conflicting opinions about how results should be analysed (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The stigma teachers perceive in responding negatively on matters of personal efficacy may also impact the validity of these types of studies (Wyatt, 2015). By contrast, qualitative studies focused on rich descriptions of teachers' perceptions and behaviours, offer researchers opportunities of gaining deeper and more situated insights of the knowledge and beliefs that underlie teachers' perceptions of their own classroom efficacy. By incorporating personal factors into self-efficacy studies, such as teachers' experiences, personality traits and motivational needs, further opportunities arise in illustrating dispositions and teaching practices aimed at improving student outcomes (Klassen & Tze, 2014).

Teacher Motivation. Research into teacher motivation has increased over the last decade as educators increasingly recognise its impact on staff retention, student engagement, educational reform, and teachers' wellbeing (Han & Yin, 2016). At the heart of motivation theory is the desire to understand what moves people to "make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort and persist in action" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010, p. 3). While studies

have focused on general factors including motivating and demotivating influences on the profession (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010), career choice (Richardson & Watt, 2010), impact of classroom autonomy (Kaiser, 1981), and the overall status of teaching (Sinclair et al., 2006), limited research has been conducted in relation to teachers' motivation for teaching a specific learning area (Han & Yin, 2016).

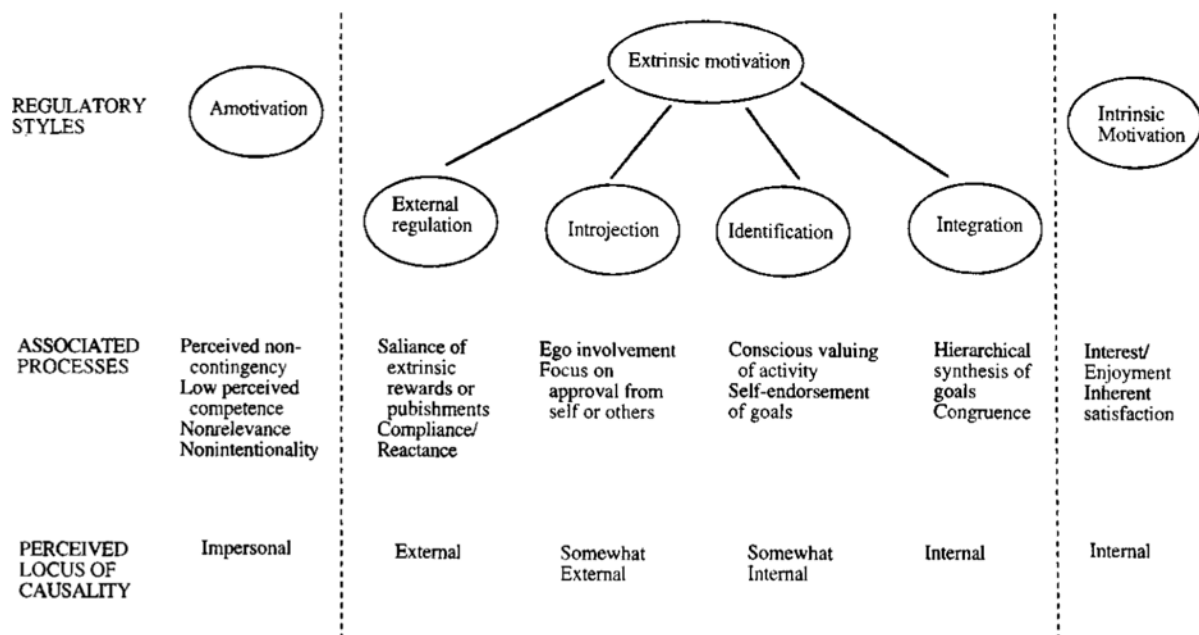
A study by Mahler et al. (2018) combined the cognitive and affective domains of teachers' motivational orientations towards the teaching of science by exploring three different elements; teachers' perceived self-efficacy and depth of knowledge around content, teachers' inherent interest in the subject, and their enthusiasm for teaching it to students. As such, teacher *enthusiasm*, “the excitement, enjoyment and pleasure associated with both a school-subject and the activity of teaching” (p. 3) was incorporated as an observable manifestation of teachers' motivation. The results of Mahler's study indicated that teachers' passion for a specific subject had a greater significance on student test scores over teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy. Keller et al. (2014) agreed that teacher enthusiasm was a “compelling yet complex variable in the educational context” (p. 743), however they considered the term ambiguous and argued that attempts to effectively measure it had been elusive. Studies examining teacher enthusiasm have largely focused on the relationship between teachers' observable characteristics such as specific gestures, facial expressions and vocal delivery, and students' interest and engagement (Becker et al., 2014; Burić, 2019). Keller et al. (2014) consciously separated “displayed enthusiasm” (p. 747) from a more in-depth conceptualisation of teachers' classroom motivation by incorporating teachers' enjoyment of teaching and their value of, and commitment to a specific learning area.

In their work on self-determination, Ryan and Deci (2000) differentiated *intrinsic* motivation, where individuals are engaged in activities because they are inherently interesting and enjoyable, from *extrinsic* motivation where actions are based on meeting external goals.

Their continuum of six motivational states based on varied reasons that support individuals' actions, ranges from total disengagement to inherent satisfaction and active volition. This continuum, described as "A taxonomy of human motivation" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 61) is represented below in Figure 16.

Figure 16

Taxonomy of Human Motivation



Note: From "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions" by R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci, 2000 *Contemporary educational psychology*, 25(1), p. 61.

(<http://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>), Copyright, 2000 by Academic Press.

An adapted continuum, based on Ryan and Deci's (2000) taxonomy is utilised in this study to differentiate five different levels of teachers' motivation towards the teaching of HASS. Central to this continuum is Ryan and Deci's underlying premise that motivation is based on the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: the autonomy necessary to be innovative educators; perceived competency, "recognizing one's effectiveness and/or believing that the skills one possesses are sufficient for meeting a challenge at hand"

(Daniels, 2017, p. 3); and relatedness, a perception that teachers are able to connect meaningfully with learners. In the adapted continuum, the sixth and lowest level, *amotivation* is not deemed appropriate in this situation as teachers must demonstrate an acceptable level of ethics, integrity, and knowledge of curriculum by abiding by requisite national professional standards (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers). The continuum is presented below in Figure 17.

Figure 17

Adapted Continuum of Motivation

← EXTRINSIC →				INTRINSIC
External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Compliance to school's requirements. No enjoyment of subject.	Ernest effort in enacting HASS units Little enjoyment in teaching subject	Takes pride in completing units well Sees value in HASS	Inputs aspects of personal interests into HASS units Enjoys and values HASS	High interest, value and advocacy for HASS Autonomy in working with HASS content

Teachers who respond to extrinsic motivation are focused on complying with systemic and school demands such as preferred pedagogical practices and mandated learning materials. The graduation between *External* and *Integrated Regulation* highlights teachers' different levels of enthusiasm for, and perceptions of competency in enacting HASS curriculum. For teachers who are motivated intrinsically, they are interested in and value HASS for its own sake, perceive a high degree of their own efficacy in content knowledge, are confident in their abilities to engage with students, and have the autonomy needed to generate their own curricular ideas.

Agency

Sociological View of Agency. From a theoretical standpoint, *agency* is defined as a “temporally embedded process of social engagement” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 963), informed by the past and focused on future orientations. Biesta and Tedder (2007) posited

that human agency should not be conceptualised as something an individual may possess, but rather what can be achieved through deliberate action. Utilising an ecological perspective, Biesta and Tedder further argued that agency is achieved through interactions within specific contexts, that “actors always act *by means* of an environment rather than simply in an environment” (p. 137). As achievement of agency is dependent on economic, cultural, and social factors within a specific context, an actor may achieve agency in one circumstance, but not necessarily another. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) conceptualised agency as a “chordal triad” (p. 970), the dynamic interplay of three dimensions; the *iterational*, making use of past interactions, the *practical-evaluative*, considerations made in response to present demands, and the *projective*, the possibilities of future action. As such, agency is concerned with the ability of actors to “critically shape their responses to problematic situations” (Biesta et al., 2006, p. 11).

Teacher Agency. By applying this theoretical framework to an educational context, agency can be defined as teachers’ “intentional efforts to act in accordance with their beliefs, goals, and knowledge as they engage with their various working contexts” (Nguyen et al., 2022, p. 667). The *iterational* dimension of teachers’ agency draws from the depth of personal, practical, and professional knowledge that teachers acquire over their careers as well as the values and beliefs they bring to the classroom (Biesta et al., 2015). Teachers’ daily curricular actions, within the confines of recognised obligations and school-directed autonomy forms the basis for the *practical-evaluative* component of agency. The *projective* dimension of teachers’ agency encompasses future orientations such as goal setting and forward planning (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Teacher Agency and Educational Reform. Educational reform is inevitable when institutions adapt to economic, technological, and societal changes, and is “a fact of teachers’ professional lives” (Vahasantanen, 2015, p. 1), The advent of educational reforms epitomised

by “narrow notions of fidelity to policy intentions” (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 210) has implications for all three dimensions of agency: in relation to potential mismatches with teachers’ prior beliefs, values, and experiences (*iterational*); the constraints on teachers’ autonomy to make deliberate choices in the classroom (*practical-evaluative*); and in teachers’ philosophical aspirations for education (*projective*) (Priestley et al., 2012).

Smylie et al. (1999) asserted that teachers have always been tasked with enacting new ideas in systemic policy reforms and that they should be viewed as *active agents* rather than *subjects* of change. Vahasantanen (2015) made the point that as teachers process educational reform measures, their professional identity undergoes realignment as new ideas are either embraced, accommodated, or rejected. By seeing agency through a developmental lens, Paris (1988) argued that by reflecting on, and even challenging new ideas, teachers are engaged in deep learning, which influences their ability to purposely apply curricular and policy changes within their school environments. As a consequence, the onus is on schools to provide engaging and reflective professional learning opportunities to support teachers’ thinking. Teachers need a degree of ownership in curricular change. When *top-down* measures are instituted in schools without consultation, teachers feel a sense of disempowerment and disengagement, leading to either passive or reactive agency responses (Jenkins, 2020).

Vahasantanen (2015) described the situation where teacher obligations are shaped by quality assurance measures as “subordinated agency” (p. 2). By contrast, when teachers perceive a degree of trust and value of their efforts, they are more inclined to be proactive in applying intentional changes to their practices (Ngo, 2021). The degree to which teachers apply agency is dependent on an individual’s strong professional identity and understandings of their own professional space (Lennert da Silva & Mølsted, 2020), their perceptions of competence (Peel et al., 2023), and the support they receive from collegial relationships (Robinson, 2012).

Zhang et al. (2021) made the point that teacher agency is exemplified as a “high degree of work engagement” and “is generally connected with more commitment, better involvement, and increased productivity” (p. 1). Altogether, teacher agency is apparent when individuals actively seek to make a difference to “the structures and cultural fabric of a school” (Evans, 2015, p. 36).

Summary of Chapter Four: Conceptual Framework

The aim of this chapter was to outline the two different conceptual frameworks deemed necessary for addressing the purposes of this study: to describe and explain how the Australian primary HASS curriculum is implemented within a Queensland context, and to develop theoretical understandings of the four central and interrelated constructs that underpin this examination of school-based enactment of curriculum. By doing so, these frameworks provide a means of responding to the four sub-questions of this study: identifying specific school-level organisational decisions; highlighting teachers’ perceptions of their own capabilities and motivations to teach the learning area; and to seek understandings of how these two different halves of the implementation process impact teachers’ autonomy and agency in enacting HASS curriculum. A series of published curriculum enactment models were presented and discussed to identify ideas which were incorporated into a new model to meet the circumstances of HASS implementation in a Queensland context. An overview of the main tenets of these models and their relevance for this study is presented below in Table 3.

Table 3

Overview of Curriculum Implementation Models

Author/s	Description of Model	Relevance for Study
Donnelly & Wiltshire (2014)	Implementation as 3 overlapping elements: • Intended: the road map, • Implemented: what happens in the classroom and • Achieved: learning outcomes	• Model separates <i>curriculum</i> as an artefact and as an action • Acknowledgement of external factors influencing curriculum
Dixon et al. (2015)	Model illustrating 4 stages in implementation process • Intended: external influences on curriculum • Stated: official documents • Enacted: State, school and classroom modification of curriculum • Realised: Teachers' interpretation and students' engagement with curriculum	• Model incorporates political and interest group influence on official curriculum • Enacted stage highlights school leaders' decision making • Realised stage acknowledges teachers' agency in interpreting curriculum
Remillard & Heck (2014)	Model presented as a web of interrelated elements. 3 processes: • Official: designated aims, content and assessment • Operational: school-based process of translating official curriculum for school and classroom use • Enacted: students' learning experiences	• Adoption of the terms, <i>official</i>, <i>operational</i> and <i>enacted</i> curriculum • Model incorporates external influences on official curriculum and the impact of instructional learning materials
Ross (2017)	Model uses metaphor of excursion to differentiate 3 stages of implementation: • Intended: (the map) Policy documents • Planned: (the chartered course) Teachers' interpretation of curriculum • Enacted: (the journey) Classroom experiences	• Model highlights teachers' role in interpreting and planning for curriculum
Choppin et al. (2022)	Model presented as 2 processes: • Official: aims, content and assessment defined by education authorities Recognises Instructional Materials can be incorporated into official curriculum • Operational: planned and enacted classroom lessons	• Observation that state-sanctioned learning materials can serve as proxy standards • Teachers' classroom enactment can be impacted by external interpretation of curriculum
Schulte (2018)	Model differentiates 2 processes: • Envisioned practices: policy goals • Enacted practices: teachers' attempts to translate goals into classroom realities Incorporation of 2 approaches to disseminating policy: <i>top-down</i> or <i>bottom-up</i> initiatives	• Model recognises a range of pressures and influences on how teachers enact curriculum, including sanctioned learning materials, dominant educational discourses and preferred practices • Model recognises teachers' potential agency in interpreting and enacting policy independently

A common aspect of each model is the differentiation of *curriculum* as an artefact; the policy documents written by education authorities, and as an action; the process of translating a static document into enacted classroom lessons. In the literature review presented in Chapter Three, a third definition conceptualised *curriculum* as the alignment connecting policy direction and teachers' actions, an aspect of curriculum-making that is central to this researcher's study. The new model created to understand the machinations of this process for a Queensland context draws from Dixon et al.'s (2015) *enacted* stage which recognises school-level curriculum modifications and Ross's (2017) *planned* stage highlighting teachers' preparation for enacted lessons.

Another relevant element incorporated into the new model is the impact of external influences on both official and operational curriculum (Remillard & Heck, 2014; Dixon et al., 2015; Schulte, 2018). This consideration reinforces the argument presented in the literature review that curriculum is a reflection of dominant political, economic and educational ideologies on the purpose of schooling, or in this case, of humanities education. The inclusion of instructional learning materials as an intervening variable in teachers' enactment (Remillard & Heck, 2014, Choppin et al., 2022, Schulte, 2018) is also significant given the Queensland Department of Education's deployment of prescriptive C2C HASS resources.

The second section of this chapter focused on unpacking the four central constructs underpinning school-level enactment and the study's research sub-questions: authority, autonomy, professional self, and agency. *Authority* was explored in terms of the power invested in school leaders to make organisational decisions for curriculum, as well as through their negotiated relationships with teachers. In a wider sense, the construct *autonomy* can be perceived as an individual's regulation of their self, seen as personal freedom or lack of control. But in educational settings, a more precise definition sees *autonomy* as the degree to which teachers have control over the conditions of their work within the authority structure of

the school. From a teacher's viewpoint, the term *professional space* is useful in understanding teachers' individual conceptions of those boundaries and their capacity and determination to make independent decisions in the classroom. A connecting idea is *professional self*, which incorporates teachers' perceived identity, acknowledgement of their own capabilities in enacting curriculum, and motivation towards their role. The final construct, *agency* is also defined in a more specific sense, as teachers' deliberate actions made in accordance with their work. The degree and form of agency teachers exert is dependent on their sense of professional self, authority relationships within the school, and an acknowledgement of the professional autonomous space in which they work.

Chapter 5. Methodology and Research Design

This chapter clarifies the philosophical orientation of the study by reflecting on personal and professional characteristics of the researcher's background and point of view, and by examining the rationale behind the decision to adopt case study methodology to answer the question of how schools and teachers influence HASS implementation in a Queensland context. A multiple case study design based on the work of Stake (2005) is utilised to structure the research from preliminary problem, research questions, data collection, analysis, findings, and final report.

Each element of the study's methods is examined with specific justification for their inclusion in the study. These include the rationale behind selecting a diverse range of participant schools and the use of semi-structured interviews to collect data on each school's organisation and perspectives on HASS curriculum implementation. A flowchart is used to explain in detail the steps taken in thematically analysing the data, both as individual cases and across the six school sites. The chapter concludes by addressing ethical considerations, and the trustworthiness and limitations of the research.

The Researcher's Philosophical Position

In my experience as a classroom teacher, I witnessed the increasing promotion and adoption of systemically recognised *evidence-based practices*, based on the work of a selective group of educational researchers. Influential educators such as Hattie (2009), Archer and Hughes (2011) and Sharratt and Fullen (2012) became familiar names as their ideas permeated through extensive professional learning, coaching sessions, and administrative oversight. Yet, there seemed to be little inclination by school leaders to examine or disseminate the actual research underlying these ideas. On a national level, a new government organisation known as the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) was established in 2021 to collate particular studies recognised by a "broad consensus in the

research community” (Australian Education Research Organisation [AERO], 2023, para. 1) as contributing to greater student success in schools. While this organisation acknowledged that qualitative approaches could be included in their evidence base, the focus appeared to be on studies incorporating large samples across a variety of contexts, the analysis of effect size in test conditions, and in the transferability of results. In recognising Hattie’s (2009) immense influence on educational practice and policy, Nielsen and Klitmøller (2021) argued that the positivist approach underpinning his meta-analysis has led to unintended outcomes. In particular, they asserted that Hattie’s reliance on single causal factors disregards significant contextual dimensions in educational practice and can exacerbate “means-end thinking” (p. 270) for legitimising changes in schools. I acknowledge that quantitative research has a place in school systems and agree with McKnight and Whitburn’s (2020) assessment that many of the principles espoused in Hattie’s (2009) work, *Visible Learning* are examples of effective teaching practice. However, I also believe that qualitative studies offer a degree of balance in systemic-accepted research by providing policy makers deeper understandings of the processes and issues involved in school-level curriculum implementation, illuminating leadership implications and recognising and promoting teacher voice.

Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives

This researcher’s epistemological view concurs with Flyvbjerg’s (2006) statement that “Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals” (p. 224). Qualitative studies give researchers opportunities of gaining holistic and in-depth understandings of “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009, p. 5). Inquiries into humanities education over the last decade have increasingly moved away from quantitative approaches, in favour of qualitative studies

conducted in specific school settings with direct interaction between researcher and participants (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017). In endeavouring to gain an understanding into how different school systems implement the Australian HASS curriculum, this research accepts the ontological position that multiple realities are possible.

Further, by positioning the study within a social constructivist paradigm, it is acknowledged that these multiple and varied meanings are generated through the interpretation of personal interactions within specific contexts and that the researcher is central to that interpretive process (Mabry, 2008). A first step in promoting validity of this type of study is to acknowledge this researcher's "complicity in the embodied relations of power and knowledge" (Dinkelman & Cuenca, 2017, p. 98) within the education sector, and to examine how personal, cultural, and historical experiences may shape interpretations of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Researcher's Reflexivity

As an Experienced Senior teacher with a career spanning 36 years within Queensland State primary schools, I have been directly involved in the systemic policy shift towards a more consistent, standardised and assessment-focused approach to curriculum. I have also had extensive experience in employing the Queensland Department of Education's C2C materials across each learning area. In my last school, I observed how the continuing focus on improving literacy and numeracy goals led to a more marginalised implementation of HASS. The motivation for this research lay in my continuing advocacy for teachers' agency in curriculum decision-making as well as a recognition of the role HASS plays in a child's broad and balanced education. In conducting research in Queensland primary schools, it was expected that my own knowledge and experience would assist in understanding Departmental policies, school contexts and curriculum responsibilities undertaken by teachers.

Nevertheless, as an exploratory study, it was essential that the research was open to

participants' personal and nuanced perspectives, that care was taken not to influence responses and that researcher bias was minimised in the data analysis process by including alternative interpretations and supporting literature.

In applying a social constructivist approach to my research, it was accepted that the participants' varied experiences and perspectives were also significant factors, and that meanings from the data would largely be inductively generated (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Nevertheless, deductive reasoning was also a component of my research, in that my classroom experiences allowed me to formulate a theoretical model of curriculum implementation as a starting point for the research (as shown in Chapter Four). Hatch (2002) described this initial deductive thinking as *Typological Analysis*, "generated from theory, common sense, and/or research objectives" (p. 149). The aim of the conceptual model was not to test theory, but to be utilised as a guide for developing the research's methods. The theoretical constructs encompassed in the second framework (also presented in Chapter Four) were intentionally broad enough to be open to new interpretations and understandings generated from the data, "to increase in conviction that which is known" (Stake, 1978, p. 6).

Case Study Methodology

The application of case study methodology allows researchers to explore complex relationships within naturalistic settings and to generate in-depth understandings of a particular phenomenon under study (Stake, 2005). A common criticism of case studies is that by focusing on specific bounded cases, generalisation of results to a wider population is limited. Case studies are also not easily open to cross checking and may consequently be viewed as selective, personal, and subjective (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). Nevertheless, Punch and Oancea (2014) made the point that transferability is not the goal of case studies, rather it is the understanding of a particular case "in its complexity and its entirety, as well as in its context" (p. 151). By applying case study methodology to an examination of how selected

Queensland schools implemented the Australian HASS curriculum, opportunities arose to represent an array of participant viewpoints, to present deeper understandings of theoretical constructs and to allow readers to judge implications for themselves by reflecting on their own experiences (Cohen et al., 2017).

Nisbet and Watt (1984) considered that a major strength of case studies is their ability to be more easily disseminated and understood by a wider audience, that they are rooted in reality and can provide key understandings to complex issues. The descriptive and exploratory nature of case studies also make them particularly useful in examining research that is focused on *how* and *why* questions (Yin, 2002). They generate vivid accounts by scrutinising all aspects of a case such as demographics, policy, experiences and relationships, the “fine grain detail” providing “powerful human-scale data on macro-political decision making, fusing theory and practice” (Cohen et al., 2017, p 378). This point is particularly pertinent, as a major aim of the research is to understand the dynamic interplay between school-based policy decisions and teachers’ autonomy and agency in the enactment of curriculum.

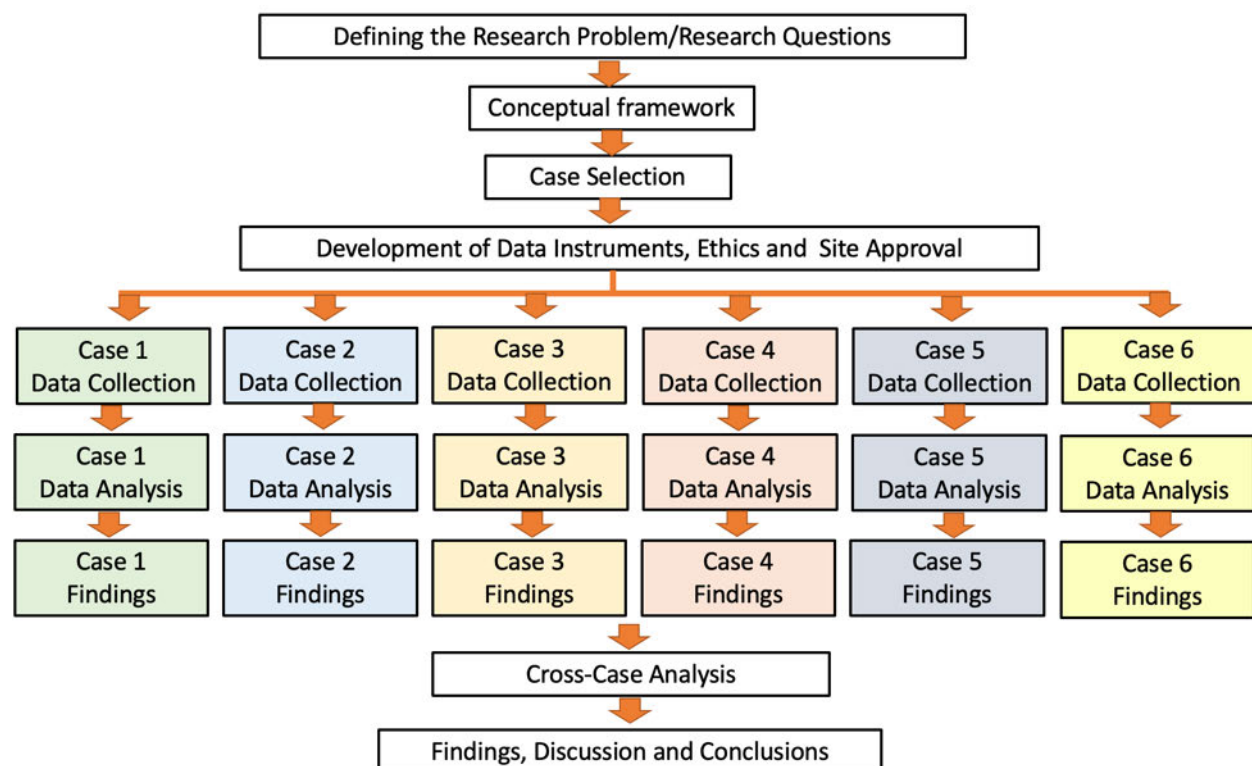
Multiple Case Study Design

Multiple cases can add weight to research results, increasing confidence in the robustness of the phenomenon under study (Freebody, 2003). While Yin’s (2009) perception of multiple case studies focused more on replication of cases to develop theory beyond the specific cases studied, Stake (2005) was primarily concerned with the “complex, situated, problematic relationships” (p. 10) evident in individual cases within a designated phenomenon. In order to understand this overall phenomenon, which Stake referred to as the *quintain*, the researcher needs to select cases based on similar characteristics that allow them to be bound together. While the major focus of multiple case studies is to understand the *quintain*, Stake stressed that steps should be taken not to lose sight of the “specific entity” (p.

2) of the individual cases. As this study sought to investigate the phenomenon of school-level dynamics involved in HASS curriculum implementation across a variety of school contexts, an embedded multi-case research design, based on Stake's ideas was considered the most appropriate approach. A plan for this design is represented below in Figure 18.

Figure 18

Exploratory Multi-Case Research Design



Brief Overview of the Research Design

According to Stake (2005), successful multiple case studies rely on a well-organised plan and the researcher's "integrated, holistic comprehension of the case" (p. 31). The design overview for this research began with the aims, research questions and parameters of the study which were addressed in Chapter One. The two conceptual frameworks outlined in Chapter Four were created to provide a means of guiding the research process and to understand the pertinent theories underlying the study's main constructs. After six schools were identified as the bounded cases within this multiple case study, data instruments were developed and protocols such as ethics and site approval were conducted. Data were collected

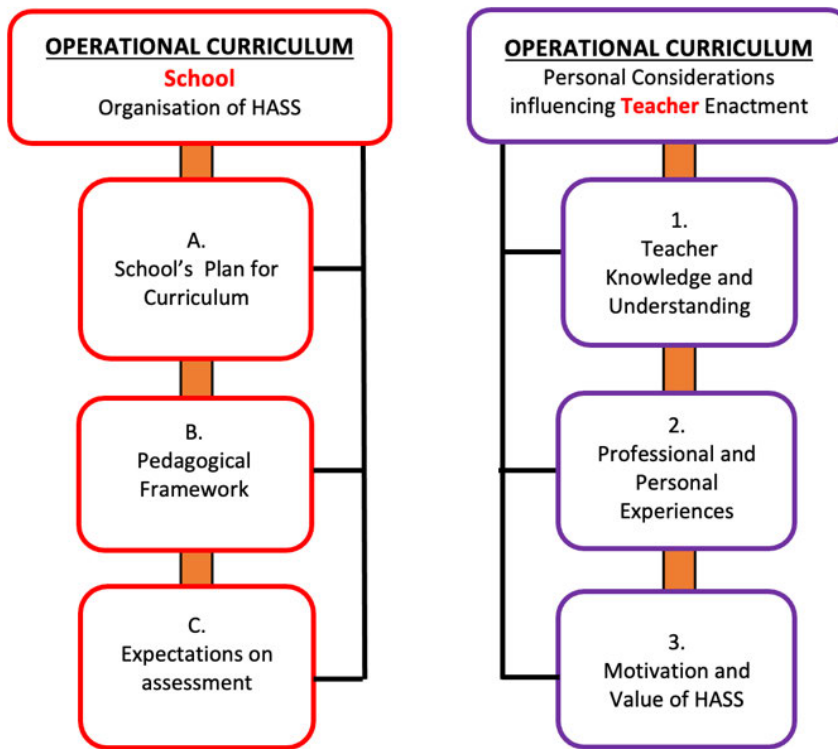
from each school and were analysed separately to create a distinct, holistic portrait of HASS implementation at that site. A cross-case analysis was then employed to explore potential relationships between each school's systemic approach and teacher autonomy and agency in enacting HASS. In the next section, these design elements are discussed in detail, with specific reference to Stake's (2005) conceptualisation of multiple case study.

Case Selection. In considering the number of cases suitable for multiple case studies, Yardley (2000) argued that rigour was not determined by size, but in the ability of samples to “supply all the information needed for comprehensive analysis” (p. 221). According to Stake (2005), between four to ten cases were needed to develop a thorough understanding of a particular phenomenon, as well as addressing the “self-centering, complexity and situational uniqueness” (p. 6) of each case. Stake stipulated that the cases should be relevant to the overall research question, but also representative of diversity across different contexts. To learn more about these contextual differences, Stake further suggested that cases should be partially identified in this planning stage. This coincides with Yin's (2002) position that cases should be chosen according to “pre-identified representation criteria” (p. 34). In this multiple case study, the selected cases comprised six different primary schools chosen from the researcher's local area, based on feasibility of access as well as representing a broad range of schools in one educational district in Queensland. The aim was to include schools from the State, Catholic and Independent sectors, from both urban and rural locations, with variations in size and demographic background of students.

In each of the six schools, two staff members were selected to provide data for the research. A curriculum leader, holding either a classified position of principal, deputy or head of curriculum, or an individual performing a middle leader role was selected to outline information regarding each school's specific organisation of HASS implementation. A teacher responsible for teaching Year Four HASS provided perspectives on their personal role

in the enactment of this learning area. It was decided that by focusing on Year Four, there would be a common curricular frame of reference in the data collection process. By Year Four, the Australian HASS curriculum involves the implementation of three of the four sub-strands - History, Geography and Civics and Citizenship - which would add greater depth to curriculum and teacher based data. As this year level was also the researcher's most recent teaching experience, it was anticipated that this familiarity would assist in the socially constructed interpretation of data.

Data Instruments. To gather the data necessary to gain insights into both administrative decisions and teacher reflections on the implementation of HASS curriculum, two different sets of instruments needed to be employed. These instruments corresponded directly to the components of school-level Operational Curriculum identified in the implementation model presented in Chapter Four and a relevant portion of this model is reproduced below in Figure 19.

Figure 19*School-Level Operational Curriculum*

Interviews are a common form of data collection in case studies, offering rich, personalised information that can directly address research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). While a questionnaire could have sufficed for generating information on each school's approach to implementing HASS, a face-to-face interview was considered more appropriate to this research. According to Cohen et al. (2023), questionnaires can be more time efficient and have greater reliability, in that respondents are more likely to answer honestly, given the perceived anonymity of this form of instrument. However, as this research was seeking to understand the interrelationship between school decisions and teachers' perceptions at the same site, this approach was not adopted. An interview also offered opportunities of addressing potential misunderstandings and in coaxing more nuanced responses from participants (Cohen et al., 2023).

Curriculum Leader Interview. The first of the two data instruments involved a 30-minute semi-structured interview with each school's curriculum leader to gain information on

their school's plan for HASS curriculum implementation. Kvale (1996) perceived that different forms of interviews could be positioned along a continuum, based on their degree of structure and the type of data to be collected. Merriam and Tisdell (2009) suggested that a more structured form of interview is appropriate for generating factual rather than introspective data. Freebody (2003) further contended that structured interviews keep "the focus of talk tight, the data collection focused and efficient, and the compilation of data straightforward" (p. 133). While the aim of this research was to gather specific information regarding each school's approach, the interviews also needed to be open enough to incorporate the curriculum leader's individual perspectives on pertinent issues. Consequently, both closed and open-ended questions were employed in this semi-structured approach (Merriam, 2009). The questions were designed to elicit information on the school's organisational and pedagogical approach to HASS curriculum, the adoption of mandated materials such as C2C, and expectations around how the learning area would be assessed. Specific questions also aimed at determining the type and level of curriculum support for teachers, expected fidelity towards mandated materials and the degree of autonomy and flexibility afforded to teachers. A copy of the questions posed in the curriculum leader's interview is located in Appendix A.

Year Four Teacher Interview. To ascertain teachers' perceptions of their own roles in enacting HASS curriculum, a longer 45-minute semi-structured interview was conducted with a teacher responsible for teaching the learning area from the same school. It was acknowledged that this person could either be a generalist classroom teacher or someone who was employed to teach HASS as part of teacher release arrangements known as *non-contact time*. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) stated that semi-structured interviews allow participants opportunities "to express themselves openly and freely and to define their world from their own perspectives, not solely from the perspective of the researcher" (p. 40). Stake (2005)

further suggested that the most effective interviews involved questions that probe participants' opinions and interpretations on topics that are personally relevant. The questions included in the instrument were necessarily broad and flexible enough to allow the interview to be a "conversation with purpose" (Merriam, 2009, p. 65). Some questions were focused on examining teachers' knowledge and understandings of the primary HASS curriculum while others were aimed at exploring teachers' own experiences and reflections on their self-efficacy and motivation towards teaching HASS content. Questions from this interview are provided in Appendix B. At each school site, it was anticipated that the curriculum leader's interview would be conducted prior to that of the classroom teacher. In this way, the researcher would be familiar with the school's HASS framework while conducting the longer, more exploratory teacher's interview and could guide questions accordingly.

Ethics Approval

Prior to submitting a formal research application with the Queensland Department of Education, ethics approval was obtained from the University of Southern Queensland's Human Ethics Committee (Reference: H21REA293P1). The application outlined how the research complied with the Queensland Department of Education's five core values of ethical research practice:

1. *Privacy and confidentiality*: The use of pseudonyms and removal of identifying details allowed participants and schools to remain anonymous and steps were taken to ensure that all data would be confidentially maintained and securely stored in accordance with the University of Southern Queensland's Research Data and Primary Materials Management Procedure.
2. *Voluntary participation*: School principals and class teachers were advised that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study.

3. *Informed consent*: An initial meeting with the principal was an opportunity to outline the aims, protocols, and procedures of the study as well as to pass on a formal information and consent form for both participants at the school. Efforts were made to ensure participants had the opportunity to gain further information by contacting the researcher by phone or email.
4. *Justice and beneficence*: Potential harm such as disruption to the school day and possible participant discomfort during audio recording was mitigated by holding the interview sessions at mutually convenient times, reassuring participants of the confidentiality of the research, and by taking the time to build rapport with each participant.
5. *Right to review*: Participants were given the opportunity to review their contributions and to have access to a summary of the final report upon completion of the study.

Recruitment of Participants

The Queensland Education Research Inventory (QERI) is the organisation responsible for overseeing research involving Queensland State schools. In applying to QERI, there was a clear stipulation that any proposed research should be accessible to a wide audience, observe high standards of ethical principles, align with the Department's educational priorities, involve open collaboration among participants and be well-designed, purposeful, and relevant to research goals (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-a). This researcher's application to QERI addressed these criteria by acknowledging the Department's goal of building "a local evidence-base in relation to what works for whom, under what circumstances and why" (Queensland Department of Education, 2023c, p. 3). In particular, the study directly aligned with one of the Department's priority research themes: educational leadership and teaching expertise. As the research also needed permission from the Catholic and Independent sectors, separate applications were made to these local organisations.

After the research proposal had been approved from each of the three educational sectors, efforts were made to approach schools in the researcher's local area. Accessing school sites and participants can be a very challenging component of the research process (Wanat, 2008). Principals who are the chief gatekeepers, are understandingly sensitive to perceived criticism of their schools and are very protective of their staff and any demands made on them (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The recruitment process was made more difficult due to the period coinciding with the COVID-19 epidemic. Principals were particularly concerned with minimising disruptions to school routines and maximising teachers' health and wellbeing. Access to each of the six schools was facilitated by former colleagues and acquaintances of the researcher who acted as sponsors (Cohen et al., 2017). These teachers were instrumental in allowing the researcher to gain, and subsequently develop a degree of credibility and trust with principals, and their assistance was greatly appreciated. One particular issue was that the design plan necessitated participation from both a curriculum leader and Year Four teacher from the same school. In two potential situations, the principal was keen to participate, but later withdrew as the Year Four teacher was not comfortable with sitting for an interview.

In the period from March to July 2022, participants from six different primary schools were recruited from the researcher's own local area. They comprised four State schools, one Catholic and one Independent school. Two were from rural areas while the others were located within city boundaries. The schools ranged in size from 20 to 620 student enrolments, with variations in demographic representations. Each school's Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) taken from ACARA's My School website, has been included to provide some indication of cultural and economic comparisons including the percentages of First Nation (Indigenous) students and those with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) (ACARA, 2022). An overview of each participant school (under a given

pseudonym) and their basic contextual differences is presented below in Table 4. Colour is used to highlight the two demographic groups which are referred to in the study: green shading for EAL/D and orange for First Nation students.

Table 4

Overview of Six Participant Schools

	School Name	Sector	Location	Size	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)
1.	Watershed State School	State	Rural	20	1059 53% in top two quarters 5% EAL/D 5% First Nation
2.	Hopeville State School	State	Urban	190	816 94% in bottom two quarters 49% EAL/D 24% First Nation
3.	Darby State School	State	Urban	240	976 76% in bottom two quarters 5% EAL/D 10% First Nation
4.	Jackson State School	State	Urban	620	969 67% in bottom two quarters 54% EAL/D 12% First Nation
5.	St Bob's Primary School	Catholic	Rural	75	999 68% in bottom two quarters 0% EAL/D 5% First Nation
6.	Charles College	Independent	Urban	300	1079 70% in top two quarters 27% EAL/D 2% First Nation

Note: Numerical data utilised in this table: ICSEA ratings, percentages of EAL/D and First Nation students, were obtained from the Australian Government My School website:

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/>

Upon receiving confirmation from participating principals, a follow up email was then sent, outlining the aims, parameters, and protocols of the research with specific mention of ethical considerations around anonymity and confidentiality of data. Effort was made to meet at

times and places that were satisfactory to all participants and minimised disruption to the school day. In the meantime, a more extensive information sheet and consent form, utilising the University of Southern Queensland's formal documentation was sent to each participant. (See Appendix D).

Participant Characteristics

While variation amongst individual participant characteristics was hoped for, the focus of case selection had been on representing the diversity of school contexts. It was fortunate then, that this variance became apparent as the two sets of participants in each school accepted the research proposal. In three schools, the curriculum leader held a classified position of principal, deputy, or head of curriculum; and in the other three situations, the role was undertaken by a teacher assuming a middle management position. In three schools, HASS was taught by a person responsible for non-contact duties, the other three were classroom teachers. The participants had varying degrees of teaching experience and ranged in age from late 30s to mid 50s. An overview of the participants' characteristics (using their pseudonyms) is presented below in Table 5.

Table 5*Overview of Participant Characteristics*

School	Participant	Curriculum Leader Role	Teacher Role	Gender	Age
Watershed State School	<i>Craig</i>	Principal		Male	Early 40s
	<i>Sonya</i>		Relief Teacher Year 3/4 HASS	Female	Late 30s
Hopeville State School	<i>Barry</i>	Hybrid role: Year 6 & curriculum leader		Male	Early 50s
	<i>Gabby</i>		Year 4 class teacher	Female	Early 50s
Darby State School	<i>Mandy</i>	Head of Curriculum		Female	Mid 50s
	<i>Donna</i>	Deputy	Year 3/4 HASS	Female	Late 30s
Jackson State School	<i>Pippa</i>	Deputy		Female	Early 40s
	<i>Heather</i>		Year 4 class teacher	Female	Early 50s
St Bob's Primary	<i>Kerry</i>	Hybrid role: Year 3/4 & Curriculum leader		Female	Early 40s
	<i>Lauren</i>		Relief Teacher Year 3/4 HASS	Female	Early 40s
Charles College	<i>Alison</i>	Hybrid role: Year 6 & Curriculum Leader		Female	Late 40s
	<i>Judy</i>		Year 4 class teacher	Female	Early 40s

While this study has chosen to identify the gender of participants, it is acknowledged that this inclusion can be controversial, as constructivist researchers tend to view gender identities as individual attributes “situated in space, time and context” (Sabbe & Aelterman, 2007, p. 423). Nevertheless, Sabbe and Aelterman (2007) also pointed out that several studies in education have viewed gender as significant in examining differences in student perceptions, teacher beliefs, and wellbeing. The purpose of this researcher’s study was not to explore gender differences in education. Rather, it took the position that the inclusion of gender simply illustrates the range of participant characteristics, and is representative of Australian statistical

data showing male teachers comprise 18.1% of the primary school workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Data Collection

Stake (2005) made the point that while research plans should be well-organised and thorough, researchers should be open to potential emerging issues during the course of the study. In general, the data collection proceeded as planned, except for some rescheduling needed to accommodate staff illness. At each site, the interviews were conducted in quiet spaces on school premises with few interruptions. At the beginning of each session, rapport with each educator was developed by explaining how the interview would proceed and by reaffirming participants' consent in being audio recorded. Throughout the interviews, effort was made to place the participants at ease through applying "active listening" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 518) such as nodding, smiling, and maintaining eye contact. As these sessions proceeded, the participants generally felt more at ease and some gave extensive answers to certain questions, especially those that were of concern or personally motivating. Consequently, some interviews ran well past the allocated time frame. Although it was made known that the interview could be curtailed if they wished, several participants appeared highly engaged in giving their point of view and the extra time was accommodated. At the end of the interview session, each participant was thanked for their support, and were offered opportunities of reading the transcript of their interview and a summary of the final report on its completion.

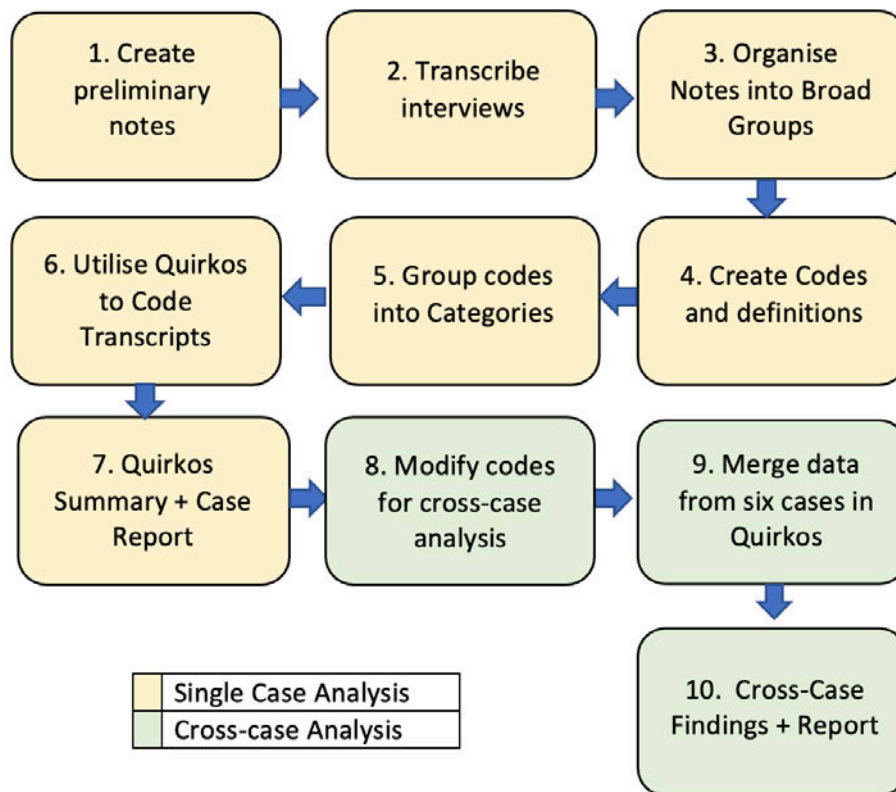
Data Analysis

The flow diagram depicted in Figure 20 below, summarises the process undertaken to thematically analyse this study's data. The colours utilised in the diagram differentiate the two different stages of the analysis process. The first seven components (cream) show the steps taken in separately analysing school sets of case data, and the final three (green) depict

the cross-case analysis. As the research design showed, the cross-case analysis was conducted after each of the six case studies had been separately analysed, findings were summarised, and individual case reports written.

Figure 20

Flowchart of Analysis: Single Case and Cross-Case Analysis



Preliminary Notes

According to Stake (1995), data analysis begins well before formal procedures occur and can include researcher observations and notes on early interactions with participants. Merriam (2009) agreed with this point, arguing that the first step in multiple case studies was to gather evidence of the contextual situation of each case. A series of notes was created after each set of interviews while ideas were still fresh in the researcher's memory. These included details on role descriptions, demographic information, teachers' backgrounds and in outlining the framework of the school's organisation of HASS. These notes proved helpful as "frames of analysis" (Hatch, 2002, p. 163), by formulating preliminary groupings of data, helping to

perceive the parameters of the study and how the research questions could be addressed. An example memo is presented in Figure 21 below,

Figure 21

Example of Memo Created after School Interviews

Hopeville State School Interview Notes • 188 students in 2022 • High percentage of indigenous and non-English speaking students • The school due to undergo a Curriculum Review. • Both Barry and Gabby were confident in answers • Both believe HASS is important but school's priority is Literacy, especially considering make up of school. • Barry revealed that prior to his appointment, teachers organised units of work by themselves.

Transcription of Interviews

“Ideally, verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best database for analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p 88). While laborious, the act of transcribing each interview promoted a full immersion in the data, allowing the researcher to listen intently to what each educator was saying and to consider implications for their school's implementation of HASS curriculum (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As the data collection process was spread over a five-month period, the individual transcriptions also allowed emerging ideas and issues to be incorporated into later interviews (Hatch, 2002).

Organisation of Notes into Broad Groupings

At this stage of the analysis, the initial notes created after each interview were re-examined to consider the “logical places to start looking for typologies on which to anchor future analysis” (Hatch, 2002, pp. 152-153). These typologies were in the form of broad groupings of ideas, such as *School Context*, *School and System policy*, *Pedagogies*, and *Professional Experiences*. Sub-groups were added to identify different aspects of each broad group. For example, *Explicit Teaching*, *Inquiry*, *Integration*, *Adaptations* and *Student Engagement* were included as components of the *Pedagogies* group. This stage was also an

opportunity to consider how these preliminary groupings aligned with the research questions, and how understandings of the study's theoretical constructs - authority, autonomy, agency, and professional self could be further developed.

Creation of Codes and Code Definitions

Codes are basic elements of raw data, the “analyzable parts” (Hatch, 2002, p. 163) used to organise information into meaningful understandings. Braun and Clark (2006) stressed that codes are not created in “an epistemological vacuum” (p. 12), but come from initial analysis, previous literature and the researcher's own experience, as well as inductively from the data. Initially, 79 different codes were identified, clustered under the preliminary groupings outlined above. Each of these codes were given a specific definition to improve clarity and objectivity in the coding process. An excerpt of this code list is presented below in Figure 22.

Figure 22

Sample Codes and Code Definitions

School and System Policy	Code Description
Time allocations: System	Stated time allocation for HASS by educational authority
Time allocations: School	Actual time allocation for HASS within school system
Time constraints	Teacher's issues regarding time constraints on implementation of curriculum
Crowded curriculum	Sense that curriculum demands are excessive within designated time frames

Grouping of Codes into Categories

As new ideas arose from the data, the 79 codes were aggregated into seven categories by modifying and combining the preliminary groupings. Morse (2008) defined the term, *code category* as “a collection of similar data sorted in the same place” (p. 727). By assigning clear definitions to each of these seven categories, the analysis was able to move from specific to more generalised meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to (Merriam, 1998), this level of abstraction is improved when fewer categories are determined, allowing communication of findings to be an easier and more manageable task. Table 6 below sets out the seven

categories as they relate to the research questions. The table incorporates the colour-coding system employed in Quirkos, the study's chosen data software, to aid the analysis process and visual representation of the data (Quirkos, 2022). A copy of the final codes assembled under the seven categories is also provided in Appendix C.

Table 6

Alignment of Code Categories with Research Questions

Research Question		Code Category	Category Description
1. What specific organisational decisions frame the way HASS is implemented at a particular school?		Systemic Policy	Perceptions on documented and undocumented policy initiatives that impact on the implementation of HASS from a system curriculum authority.
3. How do school-based decisions on HASS implementation impact teachers' autonomy and agency in enacting HASS curriculum?		School Policy	The decisions made at a school level that frame the way HASS is implemented in relation to the specific contextual aspects of that school. Teacher perceptions of those decisions.
2. What perceptions do teachers have on their own abilities to enact effective HASS curriculum?		Understandings & Perceptions of ACARA HASS	Teachers' stated understandings and perceptions of the ACARA HASS curriculum's structure, content and usability in relation to planning and assessment of this learning area.
4. How does a teacher's sense of professional self , impact their agency and autonomy in enacting HASS curriculum?		Value of HASS	Teachers' stated opinions regarding the rationale and aims of humanities education for students.
		Pedagogical Approach to HASS	Teachers' stated opinions regarding the application of specific pedagogies for the teaching of HASS, the resources used and their perspectives on student engagement and differentiation.
		Professional & Personal Perspectives	Teachers' stated opinions of their own agency, on collegial collaboration and the professional and personal experiences that may or may not influence implementation.
		Accountability	Teachers' reflections on accountability in HASS and how they consider where their primary responsibility lies.

Coding of Transcripts Using Quirkos Software

The software program, Quirkos was chosen to manage the coding process due to its simple interface, visual representations, and ease of application. Separate project files were

created for each case study and the two transcripts from each school (curriculum leader and teacher interview) were uploaded accordingly. The 79 codes (known as *Quirks*) were entered into the program with their accompanying description and category colour, as shown in the example in Figure 23 below.

Figure 23

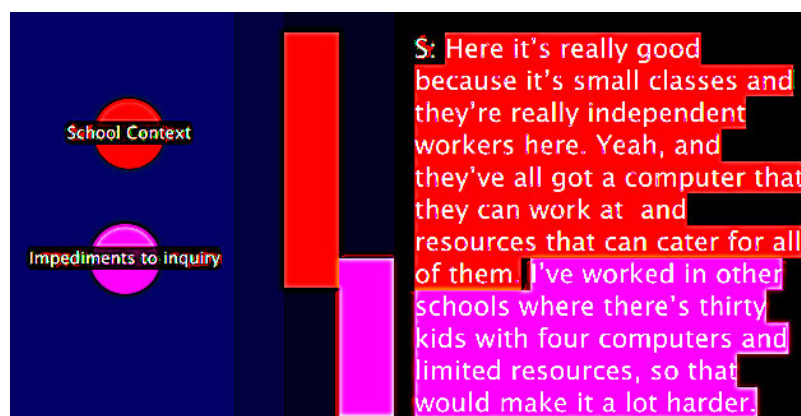
Example of Code (Quirk), Description and Category Colour

Quirk Properties	
Title	Faith in C2C
Description	Teacher's stated opinions around the ability of C2C to deliver effective ACARA HASS implementation
Color	

The coding process required highlighting text extracts and dragging them to a relevant code on the project canvas area. An example of this procedure is provided in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24

Example of Coded Extract



Text data revealing information on the participant's school context was highlighted and dragged to the *School Context* code which was grouped under the (red) *School Policy* category. Consequently, the particular text excerpt was given a red highlight. In the next extract, the participant's reflection on the difficulty in resourcing HASS for inquiry activities

was dragged to the *Impediments to Inquiry* code which formed part of the (pink) *Pedagogical Approach to HASS* group.

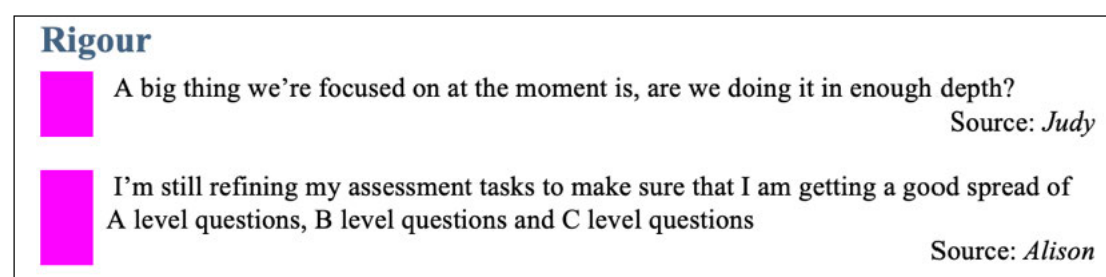
The visual component of the program not only allowed for easy management of the coding process, but also helped in seeing frequencies and patterns in the data. The software allowed text extracts to be assigned to multiple codes and this was apparent in the category colour strips that appeared alongside the text. The highlighting of whole sections of text rather than just key “words or very short phrases” (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 650) was an important consideration in that it allowed teachers’ meanings to be fully understood and reduced the risk of becoming distanced from the data (Baxter & Jack, 2015). While the program supported the inclusion of memos to aid analysis thinking, this was not utilised as the researcher’s original notetaking was deemed sufficient for this purpose.

Merging of School-based Data and Individual School Case Study Report

On the completion of the coding process, a merged summary for each case was created in Quirkos, combining text excerpts from both participants, clustered under each code’s name and allocated category colour as shown in Figure 25 below.

Figure 25

Excerpt of Merged Quirkos Summary



This summary allowed for the examination of each school’s combined data to understand the administrative decisions framing the way HASS was delivered, and educators’ perceptions on their own influences. Consequently, analysis of the findings was both descriptive, in defining the specific context, as well as interpretive by seeking a deeper, richer understanding of the

relationships among data categories (Hatch, 2002). Each case study report was created as a “story that others can understand” (Hatch, 2002, p 187), exploring each school’s approach as a “complex entity located in its own situation” (Stake, 2005, p 12). The six reports are presented in Chapter Six of this thesis.

Modifying Codes and Definitions

Before the cross-case analysis could proceed, it was necessary to re-examine the codes used in analysing the single cases to consider if they need modifying. It became apparent that some codes were not necessary, such as *Accountability to Self* and *Sharing Best Practice*, as relevant comments either did not come up in the conversations or they were addressed by another code. A new code, *General value of HASS* was deemed necessary to accommodate teachers’ views on this topic.

Merged Data from the Six Schools

After these modifications were made, all twelve transcripts were merged. As with the individual cases, the Quirkos program grouped the text excerpts under each code name, arranged by the coloured category groupings. As this was a very large document, the merged data sets were copied onto separate documents to aide manageability of the analysis. The summary also provided a tally collating the number of references to each code (*quirk*) and an extract is provided in Figure 26 below.

Figure 26*Extract of Quirkos Summary Report***Quirks Summary**

Quirk Title	Description	Total Codes
Time constraints	Teacher's issues regarding time constraints on implementation of curriculum	33
Curriculum priorities	Teacher's perception of importance of HASS in comparison to other curriculum areas.	47
Crowded curriculum	Teacher's perception that curriculum demands are excessive within designated time frames	8
Consistency	School's expectations about consistency of practice across year level cohorts.	4
ACARA: Rationale	Teacher's perceived knowledge and understanding of the ACARA rationale for HASS	2

Cross-Case Findings and Report

A summary of a study's overall findings can be encapsulated as "What were the lessons learned?" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 198). This research was undertaken to understand the phenomenon of how Queensland primary schools and teachers influence the implementation of Australian HASS curriculum "both in its commonality and its differences across manifestations" (Stake, 2005, p. 40). To gain a deep understanding of the process of HASS implementation as well as raising significant implications, the study was reliant on the participants' views of the situation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Consequently, evidence from the individual case studies was utilised extensively in the findings to support inductive interpretations. Models and tables were incorporated throughout this section to collate and summarise data and to support interpretations of the findings.

The goal of a report is to describe the research "in such a comprehensive manner as to enable the reader to feel as if they had been an active participant in the research and can determine whether or not the study findings could be applied to their own situation" (Baxter & Jack, 2015, p. 555). By weaving together a narrative supported by relevant data extracts and applicable literature, this study addressed the research questions by further reducing the data into four succinct aspects of the implementation process:

1. The planning expectations for HASS implementation

2. The pedagogical approaches to teaching HASS
3. Views around assessment and student success in HASS
4. The teacher's individual role in enacting HASS

Each of these four aspects are presented as separate sections of the cross-case findings in Chapter Seven.

Themes capture significant understandings, the “meaningful essence” (Morse, 2008) extracted from the data as they relate to research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The discussion component of the cross-case report in Chapter Eight focuses on three broad interrelated themes emerging from the findings: the significance of individual school context, implications for teachers' scope for autonomy, and the different forms of agency employed in curriculum enactment.

Trustworthiness of Research

Stake (2005) pointed out that qualitative studies are by their nature, intentionally value-laden, given that they focus on issues researchers care about and on outcomes they perceive to be important. Consequently, the trustworthiness of a study is dependent on the researcher's “even-handed treatment” (p. 85) in displaying a full account of the phenomena being researched and the processes employed. As such, validity of qualitative studies is concerned with accuracy of findings “from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant or the reader of an account” (p. 199). Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) suggested that researchers can establish authenticity in qualitative studies by addressing four basic criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

The credibility of a study is concerned with whether the findings “capture what is really there” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009, p. 205). This study sought to improve credibility by initially disclosing the researcher's background as a primary school teacher in the State

system, and personal opinions on teachers' curriculum agency. The practice of writing memos, formulating models, and returning to original transcripts to clarify meanings were ways of keeping these potential biases in check. The two interviews conducted at each school site offered a degree of triangulation, especially in confirming the processes involved in each school's organisation of HASS curriculum. Trust amongst participants was encouraged by building rapport with each educator, taking the time to explain the aims, parameters and processes involved in data collection, ensuring the interviews would be conducted in a comfortable and uninterrupted manner, and by reassuring participants that all data would be treated confidentially. The accuracy of results was also promoted by including discrepant findings and meeting regularly with supervisors to discuss the interpretation and referencing of participants' data.

Transferability

While generalisation of results is not a goal of qualitative studies, a multiple case report offers opportunities to "provide people with the vicarious experience useful for transferring assertions from those cases to others" (Stake, 2005, p. 88). The rich descriptions utilised within the individual case studies of this research aim to provide readers with "a holistic and realistic picture" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 78) of each school context. As such, the individual and common elements of each school's approach to HASS implementation can help readers apply findings to their own situation. Transferability of findings was also aided by deliberately selecting schools from a range of contexts, representing differences in school sectors, location, size, and demographics (Miles & Huberman, 2002).

Dependability

The dependability of this research was enhanced by providing a clear and detailed "audit trail" (Bloomberg & Volp, 2008, p. 78), outlining the steps taken in collecting and

analysing participant data, by utilising and maintaining consistent code descriptions and using models to explain findings.

Confirmability

The goal of ensuring objectivity in qualitative studies requires researchers “to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p 8). In this research, objectivity was promoted by checking for errors in the original transcripts, by applying code descriptions consistently, and by returning to the original data to ensure teachers’ meanings were fully understood. Regular reviews of the research conducted with the researcher’s supervisors assisted with minimising potential bias in both procedures and interpretation of results.

Limitations and Delimitations

While the study attempted to provide a degree of transferability by purposively selecting a range of diverse schools, it is acknowledged that the inclusion of State, Catholic and Independent schools does not imply that they are necessarily representative of each sector. As Stake (2005) pointed out, case study research is both dynamic and situational. It is recognised that the generated portraits of HASS implementation in this proposed study are limited to *snapshots in time*, bounded by current policy arrangements and attendant staff. Nevertheless, Cohen et al. (2017) asserted that the worth of case studies lies not in their ability to generalise, but in the social truths generated by real people in real situations and the opportunities of applying assertions to other contexts.

A second limitation is in regard to the personal nature of the interview questions in the semi-structured interviews. Gillham (2000) warned that responses to such questions may be skewed by participants attempting to present a more complimentary view of their own integrity and commitment. It was hoped that by developing a rapport with participants, ensuring confidentiality and by being open and transparent about the aims of the research,

this limitation could be minimised. Despite efforts to keep potential biases in check, the a priori conceptual framework based on the researcher's own experiences in HASS curriculum implementation may also have influenced the direction of questions during the interview process.

Stake (2005) recognised that a case has features that lie within and outside the system. By delimitating the study of HASS curriculum implementation to school personnel, other factors such as parent expectations and student needs are not explored in this study. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this study may lead to further research on aspects of school-specific curriculum implementation, such as examining the impact of C2C use on students' motivations and academic results.

Summary of Chapter Five: Methodology

This chapter began by acknowledging that predictive and generalist theories are currently dominant in the field of education. However, it is the researcher's philosophical position that there are limitations to how this mode of research addresses the diverse range of human behaviour, relationships and contextual circumstances inherent in schools. By contrast, qualitative studies offer stakeholders in education opportunities of gaining deeper and more nuanced insights into phenomena such as school-based implementation of a particular curriculum. In Chapter Three's literature review, it was revealed that findings from humanities education research have largely been derived from observers outside the school system. By employing a social constructivist paradigm, this research positions teachers as central protagonists in their own narratives, and provides an avenue for their understandings, concerns and perspectives to be heard.

A multiple case study design based on the work by Stake (2005) provided a framework for the research, examining HASS curriculum implementation across six different school contexts which differed in sector, size, location and student demographics. Semi-

structured interviews, conducted with a school leader and class teacher from each site were the means by which data were collected to address the twin aspects of this research: determining the organisational decisions that frame the way HASS is implemented at a particular school; and exploring teachers' perceptions of their own influences on classroom HASS enactment. Thematic analysis was employed with the support of Quirkos software, allowing opportunities to identify, sort, then synthesise the extensive data drawn from the twelve transcribed interviews. Being a multiple case study, the analysis was conducted in two stages: the first involving the creation of individual school portraits of HASS implementation; and the second applying cross-case analysis to ascertain patterns across the six case studies. Findings were grouped into four distinct aspects of the implementation process: planning expectations, pedagogical approaches, assessment, and the teachers' individual role. Each school's individual case study report is presented in Chapter Six and the cross-case findings are outlined in Chapter Seven.

Chapter 6. Individual School Case Studies

This chapter comprises reports from the six single case studies and is aimed at exploring the “complex, situated, problematic relationships” (Stake, 2005 p. 10) evident in each school’s implementation of HASS. In doing so, the reports address the overriding research question of the study: *How do schools and teachers influence the enactment of HASS curriculum in Queensland primary classrooms?* As Stake (2005) pointed out, single study reports form the basis of a cross-case study and provide opportunities to illustrate “what has been done to try to get answers, what assertions can be made with some confidence, and what needs to be studied” (p. 14). To provide continuity and ease of reading, the six reports employ the same framework: the school context and participants; school-based administrative decisions, teacher influences and discussion.

Framework for the Six Case Studies

School Context and Participants

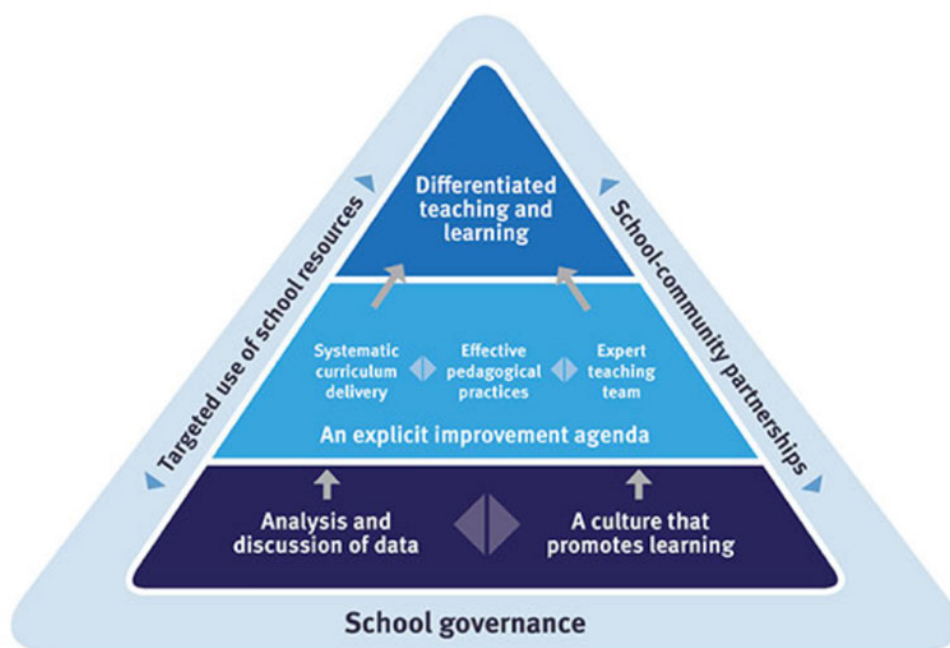
Under a pseudonym, each participant school was described in terms of its broad location, size and sector affiliation: State, Catholic or Independent. Each school’s socio-economic level is identified from the Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage (ICSEA) published on the My School website (ACARA, 2022). For ease of understanding, the ICSEA rating of each school is represented in terms of quartile representation of the general population. In each report, the two educators participating in the study (curriculum leader and classroom teacher) are identified by pseudonyms and are described in terms of their gender, age range, experience and educational role at the school. The participants’ text excerpts are differentiated from other citations by appearing in italics. To identify the role of each participant, text excerpts are referenced by their pseudonym, followed by either *CL* denoting *curriculum leader* or *T* as *teacher* of HASS. The abbreviation *SS* is utilised to denote *State School*.

School-based Administrative Decisions

This section of the report aimed to address the first of the sub-questions of the study: *What specific organisational decisions frame the way HASS is implemented at a particular school?* These decisions align with the explicit improvement agenda highlighted in the central light blue tier of the Queensland Department of Education’s model of School Improvement Hierarchy represented below in Figure 27 (Queensland Department of Education, 2023e). This educational agenda focuses on three interrelated elements: systematic curriculum delivery, effective pedagogical practices and an expert teaching team.

Figure 27

School Improvement Hierarchy Model



Note: Reproduced from School Improvement Hierarchy, by Queensland Department of Education, 15 November 2023. (<https://schoolreviews.education.qld.gov.au/about-us/supporting-school-performance-and-improvement>). Copyright Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

The administrative decisions covered in each school's report include a schoolwide plan for implementing HASS, preferred pedagogical practices, resourcing, assessment expectations and arrangements for HASS teaching personnel. In general, this information was predominantly gleaned from the curriculum leader's text excerpts, but were also confirmed through relevant teacher comments.

Teacher Influences

The second sub-question of the study: *What perceptions do teachers have on their own abilities to enact effective HASS curriculum?* is addressed in this third section of the report. These reflections explored educators':

1. value of HASS education;
2. personal and professional perspectives that may influence enactment;
3. reflections on effective pedagogical practices including explicit teaching, inquiry learning and curriculum integration; and
4. teachers' reflections on perceived accountability towards HASS implementation.

I

In each case study, the teacher's level of motivation towards HASS was ascertained by aligning data findings with the study's Continuum of Motivation, based on the work of Ryan and Deci (2000).

Discussion

A major aim of the discussion section of each case study report was to identify and describe the most distinctive features of each school's approach to HASS implementation and to highlight implications for teachers' autonomy and agency. In doing so, this section specifically addressed sub-questions three and four of the research: the influence of school decisions, and teachers' sense of professional self on the individual actions taken in enacting HASS. Stake (2005) stressed that in analysing and discussing site-specific situations and experiences, "there is an urgent need for researchers to assure that their sense of situation,

their observations, their reporting, and their writing have an accurate aim” (p. 35).

Specifically, Stake emphasised the importance of providing evidentiary confirmation and that significant data and contextual details should be “distributed throughout the report” (p. 16).

The research adopted this approach by ensuring pertinent text excerpts were also utilised in this analytical section of the reports to improve validity, deepen understandings and to maintain teacher voice throughout.

A graphic was included at the end of each report to summarise the most salient influences, and these were assembled under three nested categories: System, School and Teacher Factors. Use of the term, *factor* was a deliberate choice, taken from Stake’s (2005) definition as a “widely found, sometimes influential variable of interest well beyond its situation” (p. 64). By employing the term’s wider definition, it should not be perceived as a quantitative measure of analysis. The six summary graphics aimed to provide a thread of continuity as well as a point of comparison amongst the schools, and to inform the cross-case analysis.

Case Study 1: Watershed State Primary School

School Context and Participants

Watershed is a rural government primary school of around 20 students, situated 50 kilometres from a regional city in Queensland. The students (which included the principal’s own children) were predominantly from farming backgrounds and were distributed across the top three quartiles of socio-educational advantage as reported on the My School website (ACARA, 2022). The school’s staff consisted of a teacher for Prep to Year Two and the principal who was responsible for teaching students in Years Three to Six. In 2022, a third teacher, Sonya was appointed on a part-time basis to allow the principal, Craig to attend to administrative duties one day a week. As well as other designated learning areas, Sonya was

responsible for the teaching and assessment of HASS across the four upper grades in two separate sessions (one for Year Three/Four and the other for the Year Five/Six students).

Craig was an experienced primary teacher in his early forties who had held the position of principal of Watershed since 2018. Sonya, who was a similar age to Craig, had experienced a more intermittent teaching career since taking time off to have a family. Prior to her appointment to Watershed, Sonya had accepted a series of casual, short-term contracts that included teaching Science and providing learning support. For this study, Craig was interviewed as the curriculum leader, Sonya as the teacher responsible for teaching the Year 3/4 curriculum. Given Sonya's short tenure at the school and Craig's recent HASS teaching experience, it was deemed appropriate that the reflections of both educators be sought in examining teacher influences on HASS curriculum enactment.

School-Based Administrative Decisions

Curriculum Framework

Since taking up the position of a small school principal, Craig had created a very thorough scope and sequence curriculum plan based on specific C2C units and their associated assessment tasks for each learning area, including HASS. Craig's conviction that C2C was the most appropriate method of implementing a whole-school plan for his small school context was evident in his statement:

I have a view that if the Department has created this resource to provide us with the baseline minimum, if we were to make changes to that ... it comes down to time, and I wouldn't shift from a C2C unit to a school-based unit until I can guarantee the school-based unit is better than what we're getting from the C2C I have faith that someone smarter than me, with more time than me has written that to align with the Australian Curriculum. (Craig, CL)

To prepare for HASS implementation each term, teachers at the school were expected to familiarise themselves with the scheduled C2C unit, teaching overview and assessment tasks from the scope and sequence plan. Before any teaching could take place, the summative task and marking rubric was printed off and pasted into students' notebooks in readiness for assessment opportunities during the term. Specific C2C HASS lessons and related resources were linked electronically to the scope and sequence plan and scheduled on a weekly timetable, ready to be opened or printed off for application in the classroom. With the focus of implementation being so predominantly on C2C, Craig conceded that there was little point in accessing the ACARA website or viewing it as a source of curriculum: *"I guess it's the unfortunate truth in one regard, but the pragmatic approach in another, with the limited time we have for anything"* (Craig, CL).

Pedagogical Approach, Teacher Autonomy and Application of Agency

While Craig acknowledged that a backward mapping approach could be applied when implementing curriculum, he was not inclined to incorporate the practice. He reasoned:

If it's going to invaluablely build the teacher's confidence, expertise or student learning outcomes, then it has a place. If it's just process for the sake of process, that we've done some collaborative backward mapping in planning the unit, I'm not recommending doing it. (Craig, CL)

Instead, by incorporating C2C units in their entirety, Craig considered that the learning overviews provided by the materials gave teachers all the necessary details to understand *"what parts of this unit actually end up as assessable items"* (Craig, CL). The overviews also prepared teachers for the content and skills to be taught and allowed opportunities to document any necessary adjustments for students with learning difficulties. Sonya agreed that the overviews were helpful, giving her *"a clear understanding of where it's going"* (Sonya, T). Craig acknowledged that implementation of the HASS curriculum required a

mix of explicit teaching and inquiry pedagogies, and he was satisfied that with C2C, *“there would be evidence on both in every unit that we do”* (Craig, CL).

Teacher Influences

Value of HASS

While both educators agreed that HASS could provide students with a strong sense of cultural identity and social cohesion, *“where we’ve come from and where we’re heading”* (Sonya, T), Craig’s ideology seemed more focused on the transmission of heritage: *“a belief about belonging to place”* (Craig, CL) and the inherent values derived from lessons learnt from the past. His rationale was that:

the most powerful and impactful way of making sure that we are continuing to progress in the right direction and the future generations of Australians have the best possible outcomes in life, is to ensure we have rigorous History being taught. (Craig, CL)

Sonya also considered that HASS provided opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills *“because they’re going to be the future and they’re going to have to make decisions”* (Sonya, T).

Professional and Personal Perspectives

Craig and Sonya presented as two very different educators in terms of their perceived knowledge and understanding of the HASS curriculum and the confidence they espoused in teaching the learning area. Craig credited his early experiences as a young child living in Cape York and Torres Strait as having a major impact on his *“perspective of Australian communities and what our ideal future version of what that may be like”* (Craig, CL). He had over twenty years teaching experience in the classroom which included the period of transition to the Australian Curriculum in 2010. Craig professed a deep knowledge of his local area, took an active interest in sustainability issues, enjoyed reading about history and

travelled extensively. He acknowledged that these personal attributes had a major impact on his teaching and the implicit motivation he felt towards the learning area, *“I love teaching HASS. ... I can talk freely off the top of my head about that with excitement in my voice, with light in my eyes, kids will get on board and go with it, you know”* (Craig, CL).

On the other hand, Sonya expressed feeling far less confident in her understanding and teaching of HASS and she ascribed several potential contributing factors for this position. In secondary school, Sonya deliberately chose Science rather than humanities-based subjects, she could not recall pertinent learning in her pre-service teacher education and throughout her teaching career, she had not received any professional development to support her knowledge and understanding of HASS. This, coupled with the admission that she had purposely avoided accepting teaching contracts involving the teaching of the learning area, led her to reflect that she was *“not overly confident with HASS”* and that she found much of it *“a little bit boring”* (Sonya, T). In particular, Sonya felt uncomfortable when explicitly teaching HASS content, something she readily observed was related to her lack of teaching experience in this area. To compensate for the C2C resources that she considered particularly disengaging, Sonya had begun utilising resources from a commercial subscription website. She explained: *“They have videos on there and it’s more recent type information ... and the worksheets are presented in a better format. They’re more interesting”* (Sonya, T).

Reflections on Pedagogies

Craig described his method of curriculum implementation as a *“crocodile-closest-to-the-boat approach”* (Craig, CL), meaning that it was a pragmatic choice based on time-efficiency, clarity and teacher control of content. Nevertheless, he also stressed the importance of student engagement and higher order thinking: *“the ability of kids to actually be able to conduct inquiry questions and then explain and justify, use all those cognitive verbs effectively and demonstrating that”* (Craig, CL). Sonya felt more confident when

students were involved in self-directed inquiry lessons, however she was often frustrated that many of the C2C inquiry questions seemed “*overwhelming*” and “*not very specific, a little bit vague*” (Sonya, T).

By implementing C2C HASS curriculum materials as stand-alone units, there was little opportunity to integrate with other learning areas and Craig was disinclined to change this approach. His recall of integrated themes in the early part of his teaching career as “*choose-your-own-adventure*” units (Craig, CL), lacking in rigour and content specificity had led him to believe that targeted learning outcomes were best achieved by teaching HASS separately. In contrast, Sonya was more open to the opportunities integration could provide, especially with time-management and the incorporation of more hands-on activities. She stated: “*I think if you had more subjects integrated, you wouldn’t have to rush so much maybe, and you could spend more time on whatever you’re trying to achieve and it will be all related*” (Sonya, T).

Perceptions of Accountability

As a principal of a government school, Craig understood and complied with the requirements set out in the Queensland Department of Education’s Curriculum and Reporting Framework to “provide all eight learning areas of the Prep to Year 10 Australian Curriculum to all students” and to “plan, document, retain and monitor or review the school’s plan for systematic curriculum delivery, which includes three levels of planning” (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b, p. 4). However, Craig also viewed his accountability towards HASS in terms of students’ engagement and capacity to learn. Specifically, he saw his responsibility:

to support them and adjust things for them as much as I can, to engage them in learning and love what they’re doing so they can be better at it, so they do more of it, ... and get on that sort of right trajectory of being a

learner. That's probably more important to me than did they get a C or not.

(Craig, CL)

As a classroom teacher, Sonya saw her accountability to HASS as fulfilling the school-level curriculum expectations as set out in the C2C scope and sequence plan. She commented:

"Craig has got it all planned and what units are and when. So, I'm not involved in any of that. I'm responsible for assessing and reporting on it" (Sonya, T).

Discussion

Small-School Impact on HASS implementation

Studies examining rural school contexts often describe their inherent and unique qualities and the need for their preservation (Arnold et al., 2005). One of the most salient features of Watershed State School was its small rural context, which had implications for the choices made in curriculum implementation, the opportunities to provide individual student support and the relationships forged within the community. As principal, Craig was responsible for ensuring that the content from each learning area of the Australian Curriculum was implemented effectively across seven year levels. He was also aware that the current staffing of three teachers for an enrolment of twenty students could change with the departure of a family or a Departmental reallocation of funds. The detailed whole-school scope and sequence plan based on fully resourced C2C units not only ensured efficient curriculum coverage, but was a means of providing consistency for students progressing through a multi-age school setting.

Sonya's observation that *"it's really good because it's small classes and they're really independent workers here. ... they've all got a computer that they can work at and resources that can cater for all of them"* (Sonya, T) illustrated Watershed's resource-rich environment. In particular, the generous ratio of one teacher to seven students was a major factor in facilitating independent inquiry-based research projects and literacy adjustments for certain

students. Crocco and Thornton (2002) found that students in smaller schools were often more successful, had greater participation in extra-curricular activities and demonstrated higher self-esteem. This stance was consistent with Craig's assertion that Watershed's ethos of high expectations permeated all aspects of students' everyday life:

we live those values and we do it through everyone being in the instrumental music program, everyone doing Art, everyone doing an extension in the Science class and everyone doing coding robotics. You don't have to be gifted, you just have to be a learner and be strong and willing (Craig, CL).

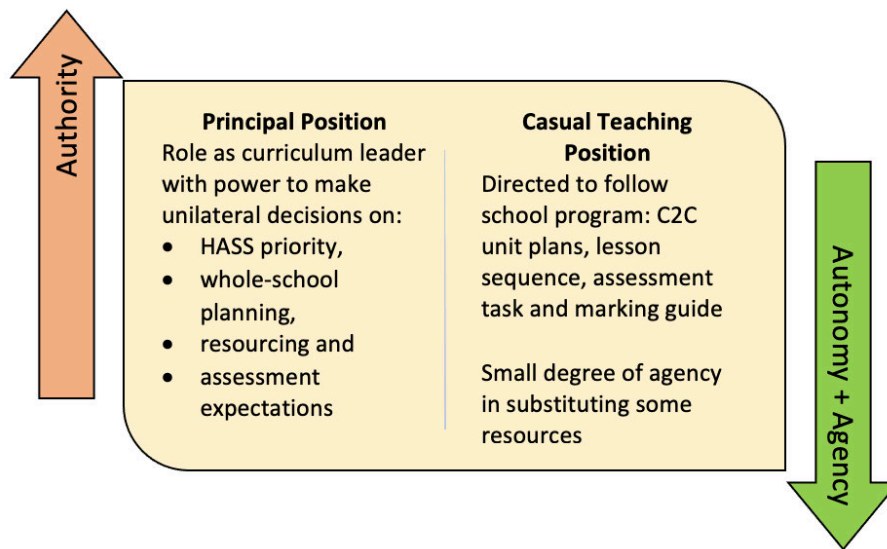
The principal's direct involvement in student and community affairs also aligned with Vulliamy and Webb's (1995) findings that principals in small schools were student-focused and more interested in providing practical solutions over policy documentation. The authors also suggested that teaching principals were more inclined to foster greater school-community ties and this was evident in Craig's statement: *"I live here, this is my community, this school is nine minutes from my driveway. My friends and neighbours' children are the clientele that I serve in my professional capacity"* (Craig CL).

Power Relationships: Authority, Autonomy, and Agency

A second major factor influencing HASS curriculum implementation at Watershed was the marked difference in decision-making capacity of the two participants. As illustrated in the diagram below in Figure 28, Craig's role as a permanent principal of the school invested him with the power to make unilateral decisions on the prioritisation of HASS, whole school planning, resourcing and expectations around assessment.

Figure 28

Contrast in Staff Decision-Making Capacity at Watershed SS



This consciousness of authority was evident in his statement: *“I feel empowered to live and die by the decisions that I make”* (Craig CL). By contrast, Sonya was aware that her casual part-time position afforded limited autonomy within her school’s C2C-based plan, including lesson sequences, assessment tasks and marking rubrics. Nevertheless, Sonya was able to utilise a small degree of independent agency by substituting selected C2C resources with others that she considered were more engaging for students.

While Mausethagen and Mølstad (2015) viewed such a lack of autonomy and agency as micromanagement of teaching and a domination of product and process, Priestley et al. (2012) argued that an individual’s agency was more related to contextual conditions, based on specific personal circumstances, and the beliefs and attitudes of the teachers involved. In this situation, the principal’s decision-making was not only built on pragmatism, but in consideration of his teaching partner’s work-life balance. Craig explained:

I don’t expect teachers on holidays or on weekends sitting up writing unit plans. And if we can’t resource that and fund that through student free days and that sort of thing, I don’t want them to feel like there’s some reason that I have this expectation of things. (Craig, CL)

Sonya not only accepted the situation, but she also expressed gratitude towards Craig's explicit school plan. She commented: *"brilliantly, everything's just planned and set and ready and I take the unit and I teach it"* (Sonya, T). While Cribb and Gewirtz (2007) acknowledged that teacher autonomy supported teachers' creativity, sense of professionalism and wellbeing, they also pointed out that administrative control of teachers' work had certain advantages, such as protecting students from harm, supporting teachers' workload and providing a cohesive and equitable approach to curriculum. This is pertinent here, considering Craig's acknowledgement of Sonya's lack of enthusiasm and experience in HASS teaching.

Interconnections between Experience, Motivation, and Confidence in teaching HASS

A third characteristic determining the manner in which HASS was implemented at Watershed was the apparent contrast in teacher confidence and motivation from the two participants, and the underlying circumstances and attitudes expressed in their statements. An overview of these elements is illustrated in Table 7 below.

Table 7

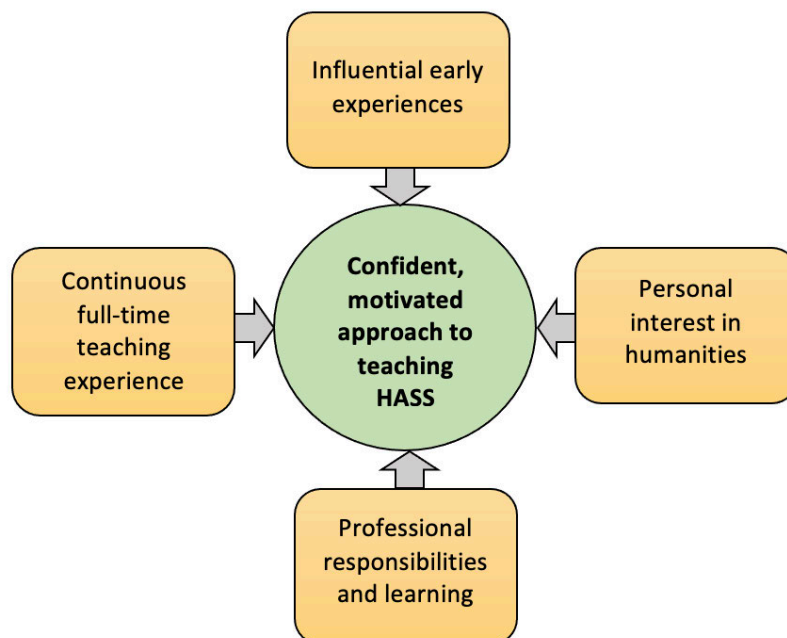
Comparison of Personal and Professional Characteristics

Characteristic	Principal (Craig)	Teacher (Sonya)
Early Experiences in humanities	Influential experiences growing up in Indigenous and rural communities	No recall of primary or high school humanities education or any PD experiences.
Personal Interest in humanities	Inherently interested in history, travel and world events	Busy family life, little professed interest in humanities
Professional Experience	Continuous teaching experience in last twenty years	Intermittent teaching contracts involving areas other than HASS
Confidence and motivation towards teaching HASS	Professed confidence and enjoyment of teaching HASS	Professed lack of confidence, dislike of teacher-directed lessons in HASS lessons

The stark difference in the statements made by the two participants on their motivation to teach HASS is obviously confined to this particular context and cannot readily be extrapolated other situations. Nevertheless, they provide a platform to examine potential relationships between personal and professional influences and teachers' own perceptions of their confidence and motivation towards teaching HASS. A diagram outlining these influences is presented in Figure 29 below.

Figure 29

Teachers' Confidence and Motivation for Teaching HASS



This finding is significant, given the positive relationship Mahler et al. (2018) found that existed between a teacher's enthusiasm for a specific learning area and student performance. It also provides an opportunity to consider how knowledge and confidence may be supported in a small school context, considering the sense of isolation many teachers experience in rural areas (Chapman, 2020).

The Continuum of Motivation based on Ryan & Deci's (2000) theoretical model provides an opportunity to further distinguish the level of motivation exhibited by both educators. Sonya's statements around her lack of enjoyment in teaching HASS and her

recognised compliance towards school policy would place her in the External Regulation category (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In Craig's case, his avowed love and satisfaction in teaching HASS would describe him as having Intrinsic Motivation. However, his allegiance to C2C materials hindered his ability to fully incorporate local knowledge in the way that he might have wished. Consequently, this would place his motivation more in the Integrated Regulation category (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The divergent aspects of Craig and Sonya's approach to HASS was consistent with Ryan and Deci's (2000) findings that motivation is greatly affected by social experiences and external structures that either support or stymie a person's feelings of competence and the autonomous choices they make.

How then might a teacher in Sonya's situation overcome the factors she believed had stymied her confidence and motivation to teach HASS? The C2C scope and sequence devised by the principal offered Sonya a level of security by providing a fully sequenced plan that did not require additional development. By teaching the same C2C units in successive years, Sonya acknowledged that she may build her levels of knowledge and understanding and her consequent confidence in teaching HASS. She also considered she could potentially develop a deeper understanding of the content if she were to create her own units. Craig's awareness of Sonya's lack of confidence led him to occasionally demonstrate HASS lessons in her classroom, providing her with opportunities to view and reflect on motivated and confident lesson delivery and its impact on student engagement. Shepherd-Jones and Salibury-Glennon (2018) made the point that successful school leadership is promoted when there is trust in teachers' competence, open and collaborative communication, and when teachers have an opportunity for some choice and self-direction. By utilising her agency to seek alternative or supplementary materials, Sonya had an opportunity to trial potentially more effective and motivating resources in conjunction with the non-negotiable aspects of C2C planning. This could allow her to develop a sense of ownership and to build confidence in her professional

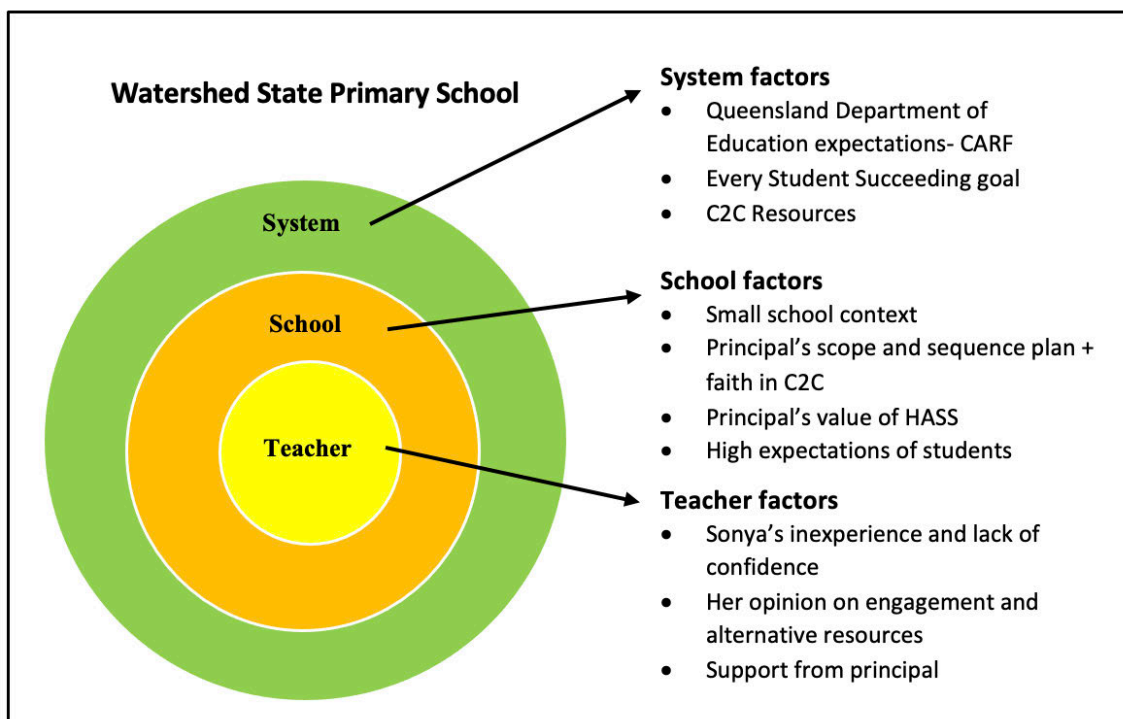
capacity to teach HASS units of work (Reitano & Winter, 2017). Nevertheless, this was contingent on the continuing positive relationship she had with her principal. “Even teachers with a willingness to initiate change are not likely to do so unless they perceive the school as having an ethos that will support their moves and thus suggest a high likelihood of success in what they are trying to achieve” (Johnston, 1992, p. 310).

Summary: Case Study One

The graphic depicted in Figure 30 below illustrates how interrelating systemic, school and teacher factors impacted the implementation of HASS at Watershed State School.

Figure 30

Systemic, School, and Teacher Factors Impacting HASS at Watershed SS



As a State school, Watershed complied with the Queensland Department of Education's strategic goal of Every Student Succeeding by adhering to the requirements of HASS implementation as set out in the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (CARF). In accepting the Department's C2C resources as the most efficient and effective means of delivering HASS curriculum at Watershed, the principal's digital scope and sequence plan

formed the basis of the school's interpretation of content, pacing and assessment for this learning area. Delivery of this curriculum was further facilitated by elements of the school's rural context, including small class sizes, the proliferation of digital resources and close community ties. Despite the principal's advocacy for HASS and the high expectations set for student learning, classroom enactment was heavily impacted by Sonya's stated inexperience and lack of confidence in this area. By following the prescriptive C2C plan, and utilising her agency to substitute certain C2C learning resources, Sonya was beginning to develop a more confident and motivated attitude to HASS.

Case Study 2: Hopeville State Primary School

School Context and Participants

Hopeville State School is a small government primary school of 190 students, located in a regional city in Queensland. A distinctive characteristic of the school was its demographic make-up, where 30% of students were identified as First Nation students and 50% as EAL/D refugees. This specific context, coupled with an ascertainment that 85% of the school's enrolment were in the bottom quartile of socio-educational advantage (ACARA, 2022) had prompted Hopeville administrators to develop a cross-curricular policy framework named *Developing the Whole Child*. As well as outlining targeted strategies for improved attendance and literacy outcomes, this framework also allocated funds for extra personnel such as teacher aides, a school chaplain, language interpreters, and a First Nation liaison officer.

Barry, a male teacher in his late forties, was the participant elected to outline Hopeville's approach to HASS implementation for this study. He was a longstanding staff member with extensive teaching experience, who had recently undertaken a part-time middle leader role to facilitate and support teachers' enactment of Australian Curriculum. Once a

term, Barry met with teachers during their non-contact time to examine upcoming units of work from each learning area. As the school had adopted C2C materials, Barry's role entailed working with teachers to highlight each unit's learning intentions, to clarify assessment tasks and marking rubrics, and if necessary, to suggest alternative resources. As this was an advisory rather than oversight position, Barry was clear that it was "*not my job*" (Barry, CL) to check teachers' individual planning, timetables or assessments.

The second participant in this case study was Gabby, a full-time female teacher in her early fifties, responsible for a Year Four class with one Year Three student. Gabby obtained her teaching degree as a mature-aged student and had taught middle year level students for twelve consecutive years.

School-Based Administrative Decisions

Curriculum Framework

In the previous year at Hopeville, an ancillary teacher was given the role of implementing HASS throughout the school as part of an extra non-contact allocation for classroom teachers. Gabby saw this as a "*privilege*", in that it released her from a "*curriculum that we didn't have to get our head around*" (Gabby, T). A reorganisation of school funds in 2022 meant that HASS curriculum became the responsibility of each classroom teacher, with the exception of Barry, whose lessons were covered by another teacher while he was involved in curriculum work. One of Barry's duties was the creation and maintenance of a school digital platform outlining a scope and sequence plan of agreed-upon C2C units and assessment tasks for all learning areas across each year level. The main aim was to create a degree of clarity and transparency for curriculum implementation across the school so that "*there's no grey area*" (Barry, CL). As the accompanying C2C units, teaching guides, assessment tasks, marking rubrics and resources were also electronically linked, the

site was considered a “go-to” and “one stop shop” (Gabby, T) in supporting teachers’ planning.

Pedagogical Approach, Teacher Autonomy and Application of Agency

Barry and Gabby acknowledged that classroom pedagogy at Hopeville was guided by explicit teaching principles based on the work of Hattie (2009), Archer and Hughes (2011) and Sharratt and Fullan (2012). As Gabby explained: “*We’re a Sharratt school, so clarity is our business. Admin [the school’s principal and deputy] are very passionate about making sure that staff are clear of expectations*” (Gabby, T). Specific examples of this explicit pedagogical approach included clarifying learning intentions, using data to inform learning, providing documented adaptations, focusing on essential learning and to “*get rid of the fluff*” (Gabby, T). No professional development had been conducted at the school to specifically assist teachers’ understanding of the HASS curriculum, however all staff have been trained in embedding First Nation perspectives as part of the school’s *Whole Child* policy.

Students at Hopeville demonstrated their learning in HASS by completing a C2C summative assessment task each semester. As with learning activities, teachers at the school incorporated several adaptations to support students’ success in these tasks. These included pre-teaching test items, reducing the amount of required writing, completing sections incrementally after periods of learning and having teacher aides read questions and scribe answers for students “*so they’re not overwhelmed by text*” (Gabby, T). While administrators at Hopeville supported a degree of teacher autonomy for adapting lessons and the assessment task, they insisted that the C2C marking rubric, known as a Guide to Making Judgement (GTMJ) was not altered. There was a general acceptance that: “*the process used to create them has been quite rigorous*” (Barry, CL) and “*it is acknowledged as coming from the Australian Curriculum*” (Gabby, T). Nevertheless, some allowance was made to adjust the

cognitive verbs within the HASS rubric to accommodate the Year Three student in Gabby's class.

Both educators agreed that backward mapping was an important component in establishing clarity when preparing for curriculum implementation. Gabby explained the process:

My first port of call is to go to the GTMJ. ... Have a look at the modelled response ... maybe discuss it with a colleague and see if there's too much. You get clarity from looking at the achievement standards. What is the end-game? ... Who have I got in my class? How on earth am I going to get them to achieve a C? What is a C? What are they actually expected to do?

(Gabby, T)

Teachers used the assessment rubric to determine an A-E grade which was communicated to parents on a report card issued at the end of each semester. A generic statement describing the content covered in the period was provided in the HASS comments section. The aim of this statement was not to explain differentiated grades, but to give parents some context of student learning in that period.

Teacher Influences

Value of HASS

Comments from the two educators regarding HASS education were largely influenced by their experiences in utilising C2C materials. While Barry acknowledged that HASS was “worthwhile” and “pays a big part in a kid's education”, he perceived that “some of the concepts they are being asked to study or to understand are a bit not age appropriate” (Barry, CL). Similarly, Gabby acknowledged that the History component was an opportunity to reconcile with Australia's colonial past “so that we don't repeat mistakes”. Nevertheless, she also argued: “there's a frustration about how much content is expected to be taught to

little minds” and that the “*general consensus from other teachers I’ve spoken to is that they hate teaching HASS*” (Gabby, T). Gabby pointed out that HASS provided an opportunity to practise literacy skills, which she considered “*our core business*”. Her reasoning was that if students “*get that right, ... then the rest flows from there.*” (Gabby, T).

Professional and Personal Perspectives

Gabby argued that: “*teaching is not devoid of our personal feelings*” and that teachers’ personal and professional lives “*impacts everything we do*” (Gabby, T). In particular, Gabby credited her own pre-service university education for providing a foundational perspective on teaching inclusive Australian History. She stated: “*That was brilliant. I learnt so much about the conflict and the controversy of Australian history in that time ... that was huge for me*” (Gabby, T). By contrast, Gabby recalled her own primary school humanities learning as a largely negative experience, claiming it “*was all book work and dates and facts*” (Gabby, T). It is this factual aspect of HASS that Gabby found difficult in her current circumstances. She considered HASS content “*dry material*” and claimed: “*I don’t know one teacher who wouldn’t say that it’s like pulling teeth, when you’re trying to teach History to children today*” (Gabby, T).

Regardless of her own feelings about HASS, Gabby believed it was her professional duty to present an enthusiastic and motivated approach to HASS in her classroom. She deemed her biggest challenge as: “*how do I sell this to students so that they’re engaged in it?... If you don’t want to sell it, kids won’t buy it*” (Gabby, T). Gabby perceived that teachers were more able to maintain this type of enthusiasm if they were confident with their year level’s HASS curriculum. In her own circumstances, Gabby felt she has developed competence in teaching HASS by remaining on the same year level for several years and by building a repertoire of reliable routines and resources. Gabby was also convinced that teachers’ confidence could be enhanced by establishing clarity of intent in the early stage of

planning for HASS. From her statements, it would appear that Gabby operated within the Introjected Regulation category of the adapted Continuum of Motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). While she felt professional pride in enacting HASS units with clear purpose, projected enthusiasm and the adjustments necessary for student success, Gabby expressed no real enjoyment of the learning area and would have been happy for someone else to take on the responsibility.

Reflections on Pedagogies, Resources and Assessment

In regard to the sub-strands of HASS curriculum, Gabby perceived that it was important to separate the Civics components integrated within the C2C History and Geography units so that she *“can give it the attention that’s due”*. She conceded that *“it’s just easier for our students, too”* (Gabby, T). Gabby’s argument that clarity of content is an essential consideration when operating within fixed timeframes, was evident in her statement:

Time is huge!... We have a very crowded amount of stuff to get through and so that’s why the clarity is more important. ... when I look at a HASS unit, I go, what are they wanting children to take away from this?... If I can’t see where something fits, it’s gone! (Gabby, T)

Despite the school’s adoption of C2C materials throughout the school, Barry saw that differentiation was critical in addressing the diverse needs of students. He argued, *“if you just teach C2C as it is, which we don’t do, it would just be you teaching, kids listening and that’s never going to work for any child, but especially in this context with our cohort that we’re teaching”* (Barry, CL). Inquiry pedagogy was employed within HASS C2C units, but Barry concluded that *“it has to be heavily scaffolded in order to do that... we’re more doing the inquiry with them”* (Barry, CL). Gabby shared this view, arguing that open-ended inquiry was unrealistic for their students, *“pie-in-the-sky stuff”* (Gabby, T).

Gabby recalled the time when C2C was first introduced in 2012, revealing that she felt compelled to use the materials in their entirety and commented on printing “*reams of paper*” (Gabby, T). She reflected that at Hopeville State School, she had the professional space to utilise her agency in determining which C2C materials met the particular needs of her students and which needed to be substituted. To create a greater degree of student engagement, Gabby had turned to video dramatisations, music and worksheets from a range of online teacher sites. She had also adopted Archer and Hughes’ (2011) ideas of active participation by eliciting brisk, choral responses accompanied by hand actions: “*I have to do actions ... [clicking fingers] jazzy, snappy... if you can put a rhyme to it, that sort of thing ... you start, they finish, you start, they finish*” (Gabby, T).

In principle, Barry and Gabby acknowledged that HASS could be strengthened by integrating content across other curriculum areas. “*You have to be continually making connections across the curriculum otherwise you lose your audience*” (Gabby, T). However, as each learning area was anchored to specified C2C units, integration opportunities were often limited to pointing out common concepts or eliminating overlapping activities. One example Gabby noted was that mapping skills appeared in both Geography and Mathematics C2C units. She observed, “*that’s one less lesson I have to do in HASS because we’re doing that in Maths at the moment* (Gabby, T).

Perceptions of Accountability

Gabby’s understanding of her accountability towards the Australian HASS curriculum as well as school expectations was evident in her statement: “*I do have an agenda that I have to meet. I have a standard that I have to deliver ... I’ve got to prove and be accountable that I have assessed and reported on all these areas that we have in our curriculum overview according to our Australian Curriculum*” (Gabby, T). Additionally, Gabby acknowledged her responsibilities in addressing the specific needs of her students by employing a more

engaging approach and enacting a series of adaptations to promote success in HASS. She explained: *“I put a spin on anything, within the constraints of what I’m expected to teach and commitment to the Australian Curriculum and making sure I am teaching the guts of what I need to. But how I do that is everything”* (Gabby, T).

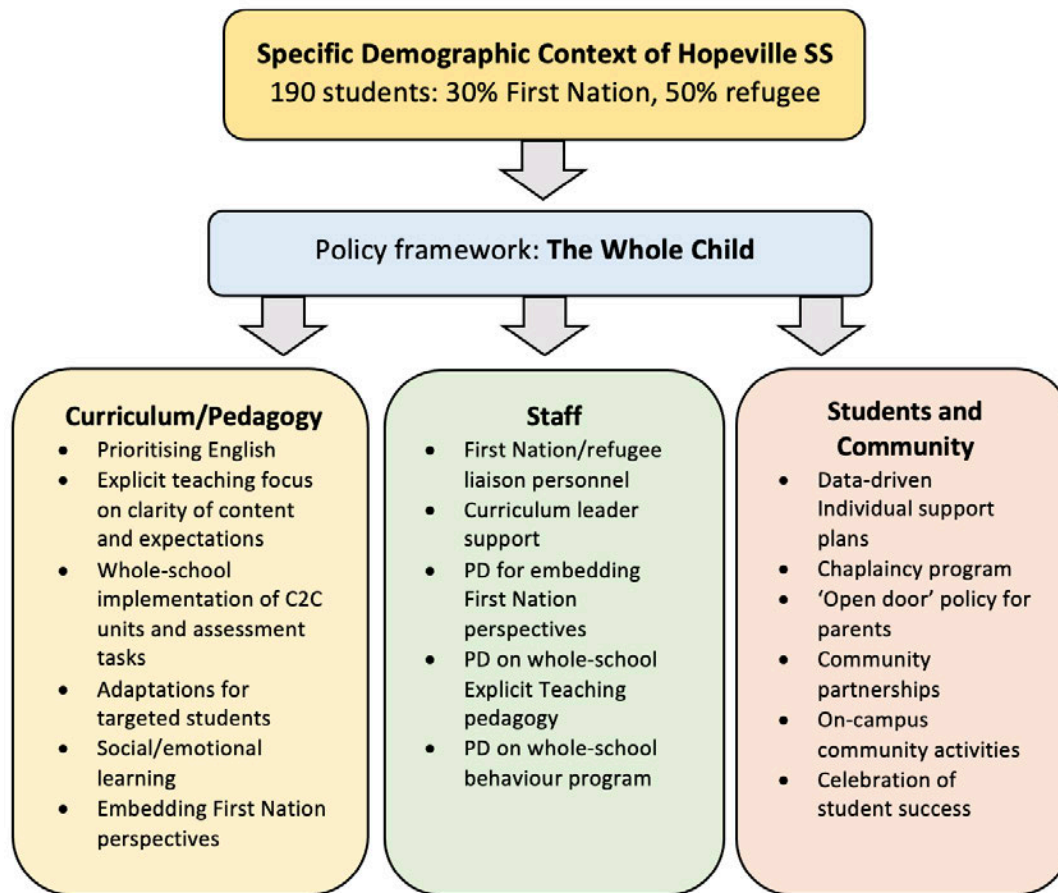
Discussion

Impact of Hopeville’s Demographic Context on HASS curriculum

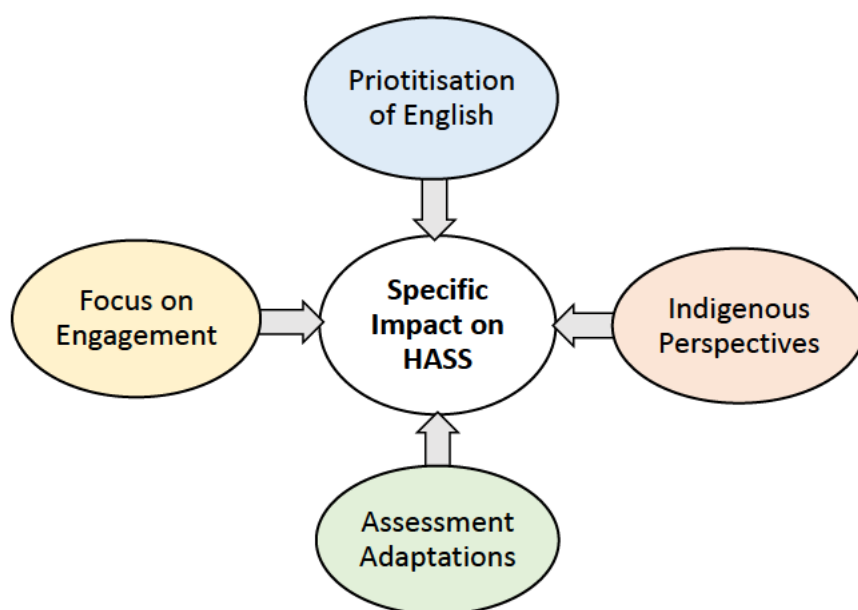
The First Nation and refugee demographic groups at Hopeville were recognised by the Australian Government as two priority equity cohorts that have been historically disadvantaged by conventional school learning environments. Further, the Government’s equity policy required schools to address the specific yet diverse learning needs of these groups so that all students had opportunities of reaching their full potential (Australian Government Department of Education, 2020). Hopeville’s *Whole Child* framework, summarised below in Figure 31, was created to bring together various school initiatives on targeted curriculum outcomes, supporting student well-being, educating staff and garnering community support.

Figure 31

Components of Hopeville State School's 'Whole Child' Policy



Many aspects of the framework, such as the adoption of C2C materials, explicit teaching pedagogy, documenting adaptations and the inclusion of students' social/emotional learning were recognised as current Queensland Department of Education policy and were not necessarily specific to this school. Nevertheless, the additional personnel, targeted professional development and community activities distinguished Hopeville's efforts in addressing their specific cohort. This approach aligned to Pugh et al.'s (2012) view that such holistic approaches to education foster inter-cultural understandings and to support linguistic adaptation. Four distinct areas in which the framework directly impacted the school's implementation of HASS curriculum are summarised below in Figure 32.

Figure 32*Implications of Demographic Context on HASS Implementation*

Prioritisation of English. Hopeville’s plan of prioritising English was in accordance with the Queensland Department of Education’s policy of supporting both demographic groups represented at the school (Queensland Department of Education, 2022a). To address the school’s specific literacy targets, school funds were directed towards the purchase of culturally specific reading books, allocating extra teacher aide time, and in dedicating professional learning for teachers. Gabby agreed that English should have priority over HASS curriculum, reasoning that if students *“can’t read and write, then it’s going to be very difficult to interact with our HASS curriculum”* (Gabby, T). Barry made the point that HASS could benefit from the situation, in that the generous aide support could be used to support the literacy components of C2C HASS materials. This connection between literacy priorities and HASS is underscored by ACARA’s position that *“Success in any learning area depends on being able to use the significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area”* (ACARA, n.d.-g, para. 3).

First Nation Perspectives. ACARA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Cross Curriculum Priority encouraged teachers to employ First Nation perspectives across learning areas in ways that were appropriate to specific communities or contexts (ACARA, n.d). The First Nation liaison officer employed at Hopeville assisted staff to achieve that aim by embedding these perspectives "*wherever we can, integrating that across the curriculum, whether it's English or History or Science*" (Gabby, T). However, Maxwell et al. (2018) cautioned that simply inserting tokenistic, inauthentic activities into pre-existing standardised materials may have limited effectiveness. A more culturally responsive approach to curriculum, where local knowledge and student voice is taken into account may be a more effective way of addressing students' needs (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2022).

Assessment Adaptations. The assessment adaptations employed by Hopeville teachers aligned with the Queensland Department of Education's direction on "tailored supports" (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b, p. 1), enabling equity of access and opportunities to succeed in Australian Curriculum. Gabby acknowledged that some observers could view such adaptations as "*teaching to the test*". However, she argued that "*For children in our context, you absolutely have to give them a chance*" (Gabby, T).

Focus on Engagement. While the Productivity Commission defined student engagement as "the extent to which students identify with and value schooling outcomes" (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2022, p. 57), their only means of measuring this was through student attendance data. Gabby was convinced that student engagement was an essential aspect of HASS enactment: "*If you're not targeting your pedagogy to your current students, you will have increased behaviour issues. You will have disengagement come forward and you will have no learning occur. So, to teach in that manner is pointless*" (Gabby, T). In speaking of refugee students, Spratling (2020) advocated

that culturally appropriate curriculum should focus on students' strengths, allowing them to share their stories with peers and that teachers should have the autonomy to create and assess curriculum that is pertinent to those students.

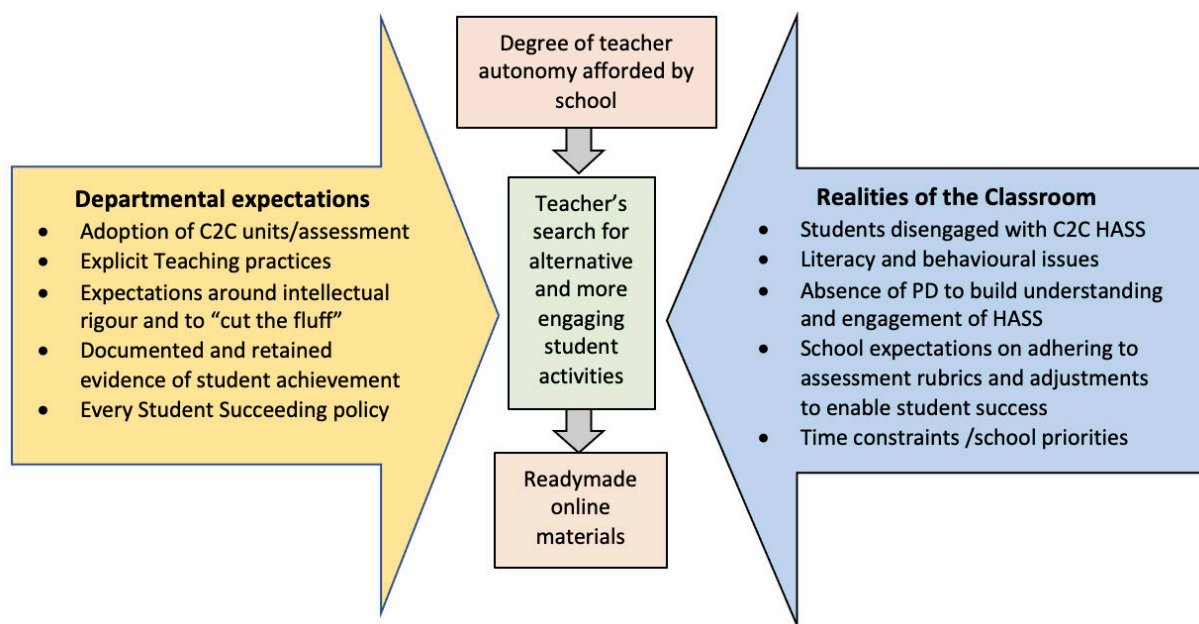
Teacher Autonomy and Use of Alternative Resources

A recent study published through the Grattan Institute, an Australian government think tank, determined that teachers' practice of selecting resources from online sources contributed to "a high degree of variation in teaching and learning from one classroom to the next" (Hunter et al., 2022, p. 3). According to the authors, this practice, termed a "lesson lottery" (p.3) was fraught due to a lack of independent vetting to determine the quality of these materials. The authors surmised that teachers turn to online resources to ease the workload involved in individual planning and from a lack of curriculum leader oversight. They concluded that a central bank of quality-assured resources set up by the government, along the lines of Queensland's C2C program would solve this problem. However, the authors also recognised that defining what constitutes high quality materials could be problematic, with many varied opinions on the subject. In terms of Queensland's C2C materials they observed that "there has been no independent evaluation of the quality of C2C materials or a publicly reported evaluation of their impact on student learning" (Hunter et al., 2022, p. 40).

In Gabby's case, her rationale for employing online resources such as You Tube clips and subscription sites was far more nuanced than the conclusions drawn from the Grattan Institute's study. The graphic depicted below in Figure 33 summarises the underlying elements that influenced Gabby's decision to employ such materials.

Figure 33

Considerations in Gabby's Decision to use Substituted Resources



Gabby was acutely aware of her Departmental responsibilities in ensuring C2C units were enacted with clarity and rigour, and that accountability to Queensland Curriculum entailed assessment tasks and rubrics to be documented, graded and retained. In her classroom, Gabby was faced with the reality of students' poor literacy skills, behavioural issues and disengagement with C2C materials, all the while needing to fulfil the systemic expectation that every student should succeed. In the absence of any professional learning to develop alternative approaches to HASS, Gabby utilised her agency to investigate materials that were not only more engaging, but would deliver the rigour necessary for students to effectively demonstrate their understandings of the HASS curriculum. Gabby was appreciative of the degree of autonomy Hopeville afforded her, stating that if her school denied this, *“I’d get out of teaching altogether”* (Gabby, T). This stance aligned with Savage (2018), who argued that an education system that prioritised curriculum uniformity over diversity risked no longer meeting the needs of individual students. Further, capabilities such as creativity, resilience

and critically thinking were more likely to be fostered through a flexible rather than standardised approach to curriculum implementation (Jackson, 2019).

Teacher Motivation as Observable Enthusiasm

Gabby's conception of teacher motivation was evident in her statement: *"I ultimately think of teaching as sales. It is selling! How am I going to get them to buy it?"* (Gabby, T).

This stance was supported by Burić (2019) who noted the positive relationship between teachers' observable enthusiasm and student learning. She concluded that "teachers who are perceived as more enthusiastic have classes of students who are more intrinsically motivated, experience positive affect to a greater extent, and also more often implement deep learning strategy" (p. 17). These observable emotions included gestures, facial expressions and vocal delivery. Notably, Burić found that less observable emotions, labelled "deep acting" (p. 17) had less impact on students.

A different point of view was presented by Taxer and Frenzel (2018) who warned that "inauthentic enthusiasm" (p 75) epitomised by teachers presenting high degrees of enthusiasm without any real enjoyment, risked a loss of self-efficacy, emotional exhaustion and overall job satisfaction. Keller et al. (2014) found that a teacher's passion for a subject, combining enthusiasm with a genuinely positive disposition towards a subject, was far more conducive to building rapport and influencing student learning. This was supported by Mahler et al. (2018) who concluded that teachers' subject-specific enthusiasm had a greater significance on student test scores than teachers' perceptions of their own self-efficacy in teaching that subject.

This study's utilisation of a Continuum of Motivation based on the work of Ryan and Deci (2000) is therefore a more apt measure of teachers' motivation as it differentiates between the pragmatic and affective aspects of teachers' work. This is pertinent, considering that research conducted in the United Kingdom found that school inspectors identified

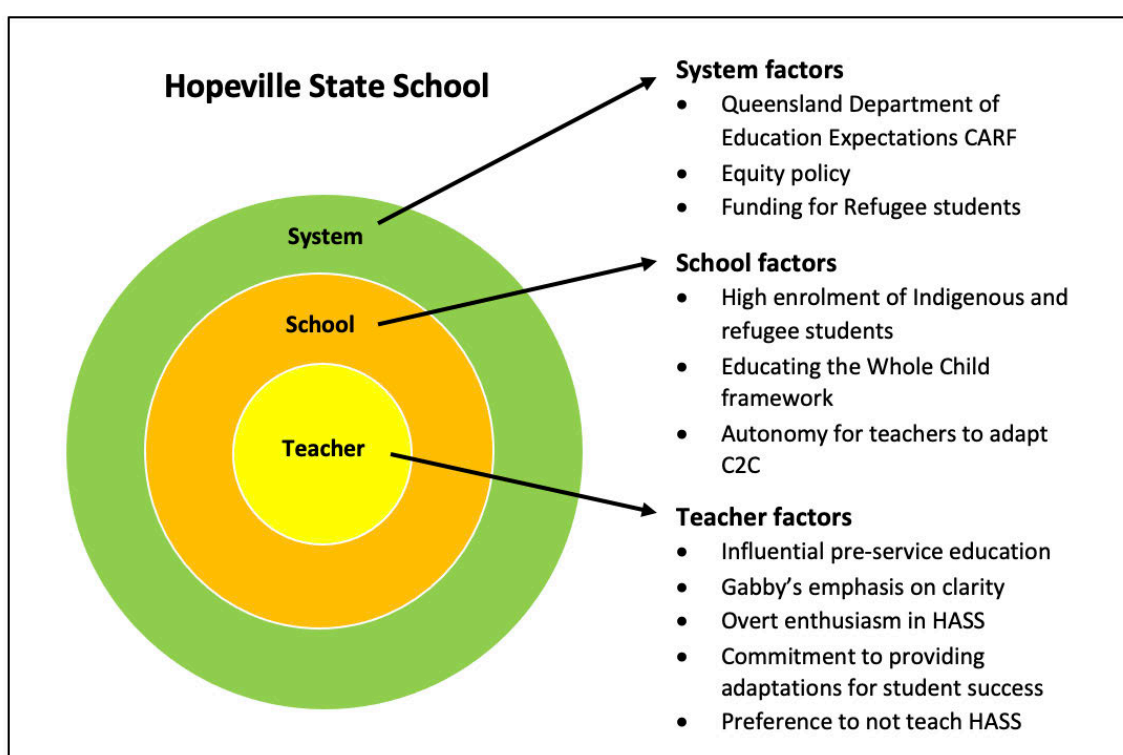
teachers' positive attitude to the humanities as a key characteristic of high-quality humanities education (Catling, 2017).

Summary: Case Study Two

The diagram represented in Figure 34 below depicts the most salient elements influencing HASS curriculum implementation at Hopeville State School.

Figure 34

Systemic, School, and Teacher Factors Impacting HASS at Hopeville SS



In line with equity policies from both the Australian and Queensland governments, Hopeville's *Whole Child* framework shaped the manner in which HASS curriculum was implemented at the school. This framework prioritised the teaching of English and the embedding of First Nation perspectives in all learning areas. While C2C was the basis for curriculum implementation, a degree of autonomy was afforded for teachers to adapt lessons and assessment tasks, ensuring all students had an opportunity of achieving success in HASS. Explicit teaching principles such as clarity of purpose and the elimination of unnecessary

content were features of Gabby's planning and enactment of curriculum. Gabby had a personal philosophy that by *selling* HASS through displaying deliberate, observable enthusiasm and utilising active participation techniques, students would become more engaged in learning. Gabby credited her pre-service training for influencing her perspective that Australian history should be taught with honesty and compassion.

Case Study 3: Darby State Primary School

School Context and Participants

Darby State School is a small government school of 230 students, located on the outskirts of a regional Queensland city. A contextual feature of the school was its historical significance to Queensland, and teachers' support for maintaining close ties with local museums and community groups. Due to changing demographics and a government catchment policy restricting enrolments to a designated geographical area, student numbers at Darby had fallen in recent years. At the time of the study, the school's ICSEA rating indicated that 75% of students were from the bottom two quartiles of socio-educational advantage (ACARA, 2022). The unequal year level numbers across the school led administrators to trial a new approach to class groupings in 2022. As Mandy, one of the curriculum leaders participating in this study explained: *"This year we've consciously moved to a composite model, that every year level is organised into the bands, One/Two, Three/Four, Five/Six"* (Mandy, CL). This arrangement, which left the Prep class as the only single class grouping, complied with the Queensland Department of Education's direction that principals, teachers and the community should be involved in deciding the most appropriate class compositions for their school (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-c).

Over the previous decade, Mandy and Donna had held a range of non-teaching positions at Darby State School and were currently both employed in coordinating and

overseeing implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Mandy, a woman in her mid-fifties had the substantive position of head of curriculum, while Donna, in her late thirties, was the school's deputy principal who was also responsible for behaviour management. To fulfill non-contact requirements for certain teachers, a decision was made in 2022 that both Mandy and Donna would be responsible for teaching HASS across Years One to Four. As both women were considered curriculum leaders, they were interviewed together to outline the school's curriculum plan for HASS. The second interview focusing on a teacher's perspective of enactment, was conducted with Donna as she was responsible for teaching HASS to the Year 3/4 classes.

School-Based Administrative Decisions

Curriculum Framework

The overview presented in Table 8 below highlights the personnel and time arrangements organised for the implementation of HASS at Darby State School in 2022. The shaded areas illustrate that Mandy (blue) and Donna (green) were responsible for teaching HASS to five of the nine class groupings at the school.

Table 8

Teaching Personnel and Time Allocations for HASS

Year Level grouping	Number of class groupings	Personnel to Teach HASS	Time Allocation per week (CARF)	Time Allocation at Darby SS
Prep	1 class	Class teacher	30 Mins	At teacher's discretion
1/2	2 classes	Mandy (Head of Curriculum)	45 mins	1 hour
3/4	3 classes	Donna (Deputy Principal)	1 hour 30 mins	1 hour
5/6	3 classes	Class Teachers	2 hours	At teacher's discretion

It was noticeable that the one-hour weekly sessions conducted by the two educators did not correspond to the time allocations for HASS advised by the Department's Curriculum and Teaching Framework (CARF). While Mandy considered the one-hour timeslot more than adequate for the Year One/Two classes, Donna stated that covering HASS content for the middle year levels was challenging. The classroom teachers in Year One to Four were not expected to complete or follow up these HASS lessons, however Donna made the point that: *"It's a good thing when teachers are in the back of the room and can hear... It's the rich conversations I think at the moment that's making the most difference"* (Donna, CL, T).

As in previous years, C2C materials were *"the primary resource"* (Mandy, CL) employed by the school to implement Australian Curriculum. However, in 2022, the administrative team decided to adopt C2C's two-year alternating A/B planning model for each of the learning areas to support the school's multi-year level arrangement. In doing so, Mandy considered this approach would allow *"a little bit of leeway with our time"* (Mandy, CL). The HASS C2C materials were blended into two inquiry-based units which were taught and assessed once a semester. Although the HASS sub-strands were presented in an integrated fashion in the C2C materials, both Mandy and Donna preferred to teach them separately, arguing there's a *"danger of losing the fidelity"* (Mandy, CL) of learning intent if they were not differentiated.

Pedagogical Approach, Teacher Autonomy and Application of Agency

Over the last decade, both administrators were instrumental in developing the school's pedagogical framework based on the work of Hattie (2009) and Archer and Hughes (2011). Consequently, Mandy and Donna both advocated the use of explicit teaching procedures in their HASS teaching, such as clarifying learning intentions, utilising warm-ups at the start of lessons, and promoting active engagement through rapid student responses. Donna acknowledged that C2C materials were organised around an inquiry question and reflected:

“what we should be doing is putting that up at the start of the unit and saying this is our question that we’re trying to answer by the end” (Donna, CL, T). In general, teachers at Darby State School (including Mandy and Donna) were expected to cover the content descriptors outlined in the HASS C2C units and to complete the required assessment tasks and marking rubrics. However, a degree of autonomy allowed teachers to adapt materials for specific student needs. As Donna stated, it was about *“us trusting them as professionals, to say, okay, here are the achievement standards, if this isn’t working, and there’s another way to do it, knock yourself out”* (Donna, CL, T). Mandy and Donna conceded there was no planning assistance, oversight, or moderation expectation for HASS curriculum at the school.

Teacher Influences

Value of HASS

While Mandy and Donna considered HASS to be an essential aspect of students’ education, they felt frustrated by parents’ apparent disinterest. Donna stated, *“I say I’m teaching HASS, and people say, what’s that? What’s HASS?”* (Donna, CL, T). Mandy suggested that parents were more concerned with their child’s progress in literacy and numeracy because HASS *“doesn’t get the national spotlight”* (Mandy, CL). Both educators stressed the importance of HASS education at Darby *“because our kids don’t have exposure to lots of the content”* (Donna, CL, T). Specifically, they saw the value of HASS in promoting respectful relationships and developing students’ critical thinking skills. As Donna stated: *“sometimes school is the only place where kids can hear a different perspective from what they might get at home”* (Donna, CL, T).

Professional and Personal Perspectives

Donna openly stated that she lacked confidence in her knowledge of Year Three/Four HASS content but believed that her experience as an administrator equipped her with the skills required to adequately navigate and access pertinent Australian Curriculum

information. In reflecting on her own primary school humanities learning, Donna categorised the experience as overly factual, disengaging and irrelevant. However, she credited her family and early friendships with children from diverse backgrounds for developing her philosophy that compassion and kindness should be integral features of HASS education. As Donna explained: *“I was lucky because I had family that were always interested, and we were talking and learning all the time”* (Donna, CL, T).

Donna’s motivation for teaching HASS came not necessarily from lesson content, but from the satisfaction she derived when seeing students actively engaged in learning. She explained:

when you start to see kids sort of thinking or giving responses, they’ve actually thought about what the problem is ... and coming up with solutions. Yeah, that side of it. I like the kids finishing a lesson and knowing something they didn’t beforehand, that they may not have got if they hadn’t done the HASS lesson. (Donna, CL, T)

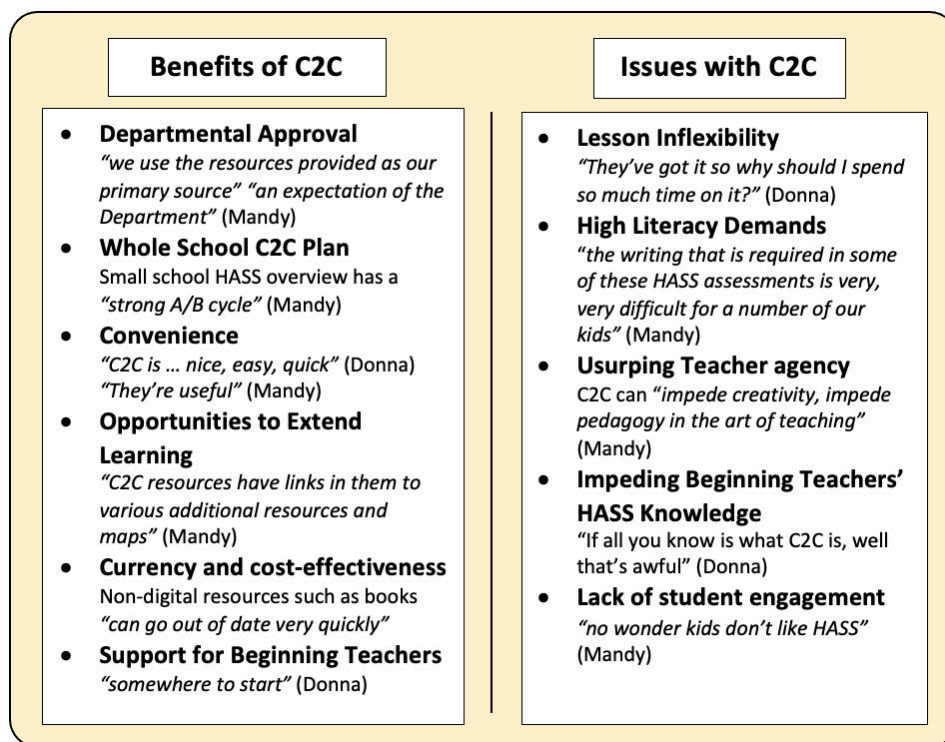
This contrasts with Donna’s self-deprecating dismissal of her current practice: *“Democracy is a bit dry at the moment, but that’s probably my teaching more than anything”* (Donna, CL, T). These statements suggest that Donna was operating at an Introjected Regulation level on the adapted Continuum of Motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), where she expressed a degree of pride in the execution of her HASS lessons but had little enjoyment in the learning area itself.

Reflections on Pedagogies, Resources and Assessment

The graphic in Figure 35 below highlights the conflicting views expressed by Mandy and Donna regarding the utilisation of C2C materials in their school.

Figure 35

Positive and Negative Elements of C2C Use at Darby State School



In a pragmatic sense, the materials provided a ready-made, holistic, and Department-sanctioned resource that was not only *"nice, easy, quick"* (Donna, CL, T), but also provided opportunities to extend student learning. As Mandy pointed out: *"C2C resources have links in them to various additional resources and maps"* (Mandy, CL). For a small school with limited financial resources, C2C was cost-effective and provided a degree of currency compared to using traditional materials such as library books and maps. Taking another perspective, Mandy and Donna also acknowledged the impact of C2C usage on teachers' professional agency and the question of whether the materials adequately met the specific needs of Darby students. While C2C provided beginning teachers with *"somewhere to start"* (Donna, CL, T), Mandy understood that a reliance on the resource could *"impede creativity, impede pedagogy in the art of teaching"* (Mandy, CL). As Donna lamented, *"if all you know, is what C2C is, well that's awful"* (Donna, CL, T). Both educators acknowledged the high

literacy demands inherent in several C2C tasks, conceding it was “*no wonder kids don’t like HASS*” (Mandy, CL).

Despite acknowledging that the majority of their lessons were taught using explicit teaching pedagogy, both educators viewed inquiry learning an important aspect of HASS. Donna’s position as the school’s behaviour management leader was reflected in her justification for explicitly teaching inquiry skills. She stated:

I think if you’re teaching those inquiry skills well, that will also increase engagement of students and if you’ve got engaged kids, you’ve got lot less behaviour issues and then teachers will start to really like HASS because kids are really well-behaved during HASS lessons. (Donna, CL, T)

Mandy also saw value in developing a school-wide approach to specific inquiry skills such as posing questions. As she explained: “*Kids ask questions all the time, but it’s about asking questions respectfully and asking the right questions and checking your sources*” (Mandy, CL). Donna stressed the importance of student engagement by stating: “*it’s not just about posing the questions, it’s trying to instil in kids that curiosity, ... what they want to actually know about an event or know about a certain topic*” (Donna, CL, T).

With their HASS lessons confined to one-hour sessions, Donna conceded there was little scope for integration with other subjects. However, both agreed that other teachers could integrate HASS concepts if they wished, on the condition that “*there still has to be the delineation between what subject area the students are currently working in, because they require different skills*” (Donna, CL, T). This stance on protecting “*the fidelity of each of the learning areas*” (Mandy, CL) was brought into contrast when Mandy described the engaging HASS activities students participated in when visiting a local museum. She enthused: “*They played games, they looked at artefacts, they heard local history, they did art activities, craft activities. It was fantastic*” (Mandy, CL).

Perceptions of Accountability

As curriculum leaders, Mandy and Donna were conscious of their primary responsibility in planning and coordinating implementation of the Australian Curriculum at Darby State School. Through the school's adopted C2C alternating A/B plan, the administrators directed teachers to designated HASS units, specifying: *"This is the content you've got to cover and these are the achievement standards where you're aiming for at a C or above"* (Mandy, CL). In recognising the Department of Education's expectations, Mandy added: *"we are required by the P to 12 framework to explicitly teach, assess and report on HASS, so ... you have to do it"* (Mandy, CL).

Discussion

Impact of Multi-Year Level Class Structure

A defining contextual feature of Darby State School was the deliberate move towards the creation of multi-year level classes from Year One to Six. Most education systems worldwide "are predicated on the notion that learners enter, progress through and exit from *grades* alongside a group of peers" (Little, 2005, p. 2). Decisions to deviate from this preferred single year level structure were often made on a pragmatic basis, such as accommodating school numbers in small schools or through deliberate choice. This second form of multi-level structure, termed "family grouping" (Little, 2004, p.7) is a deliberate choice, based more on ideological grounds such as addressing specific social concerns.

It appeared that the administration team at Darby State School drew from both philosophies to justify their reconfiguration of classes in 2022. Declining enrolments in recent years had led to unequal numbers across year levels, and consequently various multi-level groupings had been created to comply with class size regulations. Mandy's assertion that behaviour management was integral to student success and that: *"our top priority these days is wellbeing for kids and families"* (Mandy, CL) appeared to be the underlying

social/emotional justification supporting the move. Darby's decision was supported by Çakır and Firat's (2022) study, which found that students in multi-level classes developed greater independence in learning, and benefited socially from mixing with a wider age range of students.

C2C's recently introduced A/B cyclical curriculum plan gave the Darby administrators confidence in their ability to provide sequenced coverage of Australian Curriculum for two years. As Grimes (2019) stated, "children in multi-grade settings benefit from a spiral and integrated curriculum where they continue to build on their knowledge each year" (p. 3). This aligned with Donna's point that: *"I should now be building on those skillsets in Year Three/Four, not teaching from the start"* (Donna, CL, T). This view contrasted with Quail and Smyth's (2014) finding that multi-level classes offered no discernible advantage in student academic performance. Further, the study by Ocak and Yildiz (2011) highlighted the difficulties younger students in multi-level classes often experienced when completing common assessment tasks. This was particularly pertinent, considering Mandy's acknowledgment that: *"HASS is a very literature-heavy subject"* and that C2C HASS tasks *"can be quite an onerous task for kids"* (Mandy, CL). In recognising this issue, Taole (2020) argued that steps should be taken to differentiate assessment tasks in multi-level classes, by ensuring students were evaluated against their appropriate achievement standards.

Implications of Enacting HASS by External Teachers

The provision of non-contact time for primary teachers was an award allocation specified for "the purpose of undertaking the planning, preparation and correction necessary to perform the role of a teacher" (Queensland Teachers' Union, 2022, p. 1). In order to fulfil the current allocation of two and a half hours per week for primary teachers, school administrators were tasked with decisions on who would provide the non-contact as well as

identifying curriculum areas that should be covered in this time. Mandy explained that at Darby:

a conscious decision was made when Australian Curriculum first came in to say, 'Right, you focus on these, and we'll get somebody to focus on this'. And we are continuing that model to a certain extent with the two of us teaching HASS. (Mandy, CL)

Ardzejewska et al. (2010) made the point that relief teachers who act in this capacity are rarely directed to teach English and Mathematics, but are often given learning areas deemed of lesser importance such as Art or HASS. The graphic represented in Figure 36 below summarises some of the implications arising from HASS being taught by personnel other than the classroom teacher at Darby.

Figure 36

Benefits and Issues Related to External Teaching of HASS at Darby SS

Benefits of HASS being Taught by Admin Staff	Issues with HASS being Taught by Admin Staff
• Non Contact for teachers • Releases teachers from planning, assessing and moderation workload • Ease of C2C planning across major part of school • Consistency of HASS enactment and assessment across class groupings • Opportunity to build school overviews such as sequenced approach to inquiry questions • Interpersonal staff relations	• Few opportunities to integrate HASS concepts • Difficulties in providing adjustments, catch up work • Lack of teacher voice in planning or assessment • HASS becoming less relevant for teachers • Less opportunity to build teacher capacity in HASS • Program does not extend to whole school • Conflict with other admin duties

Apart from the drop in workload for teachers in Years One to Four, the situation allowed Mandy and Donna opportunities to develop consistency in HASS learning and assessment across class groupings and to introduce specific programs such as targeted inquiry skills. By

working directly with students in classrooms, there was also a chance for the administrators to develop greater curriculum collegiality with teachers.

Eaude et al. (2017) were sceptical about humanities being taught by specialist teachers, arguing that the generalist classroom teacher could “discover and draw on children’s existing funds of knowledge and to work in cross-curricular, interdisciplinary ways” (p 393). At Darby, there were few opportunities for classroom teachers in Years One to Four to integrate HASS. Neither was there an opportunity for these teachers to build capacity in HASS knowledge or pedagogy. Intermittent interruptions and the restrictive one-hour HASS lesson format also impacted the time available for Mandy and Donna to implement individual student adjustments and provide catch-ups for missed learning. Despite these issues, Barnes and Scoffham (2017) argued that school administrators could play a pivotal role in maintaining enthusiasm and relevance for the humanities in their schools.

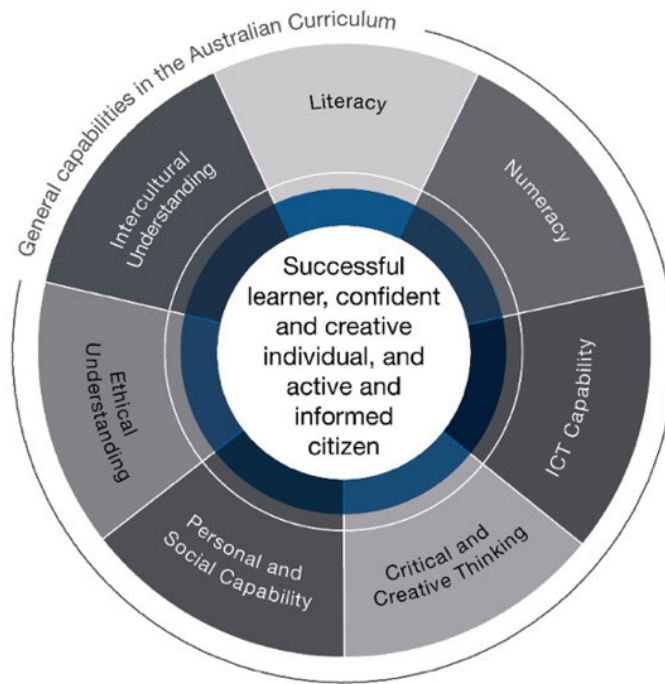
Opportunities to Address General Capabilities through HASS

After the COVID-19 epidemic, Donna explained: “*there was a concern from teachers around behaviour and processes*” (Donna, CL, T). Consequently, the administrative team made a conscious effort to address these issues by examining how the ACARA General Capability: Personal and Social Capability could be utilised to support the school’s behaviour management program. This stance was supported by Carter and Buchanan (2022) who found that many teachers viewed ACARA’s General Capabilities as a means of developing students’ socialisation skills. Further investigation by the leadership team at Darby led to the realisation that the Personal and Social Capability could be incorporated into HASS curriculum, especially through the Civics and Citizenship sub-strand. Reynolds (2018) considered HASS a “value-laden” curriculum that was “particularly focused on these dispositions and behaviours” (p. 19).

Figure 37 below, identifies the seven General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum as they pertain to the goal of HASS in developing a “successful learner, confident and creative individual, and active and informed citizen (ACARA, n.d.-b).

Figure 37

The Seven General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum

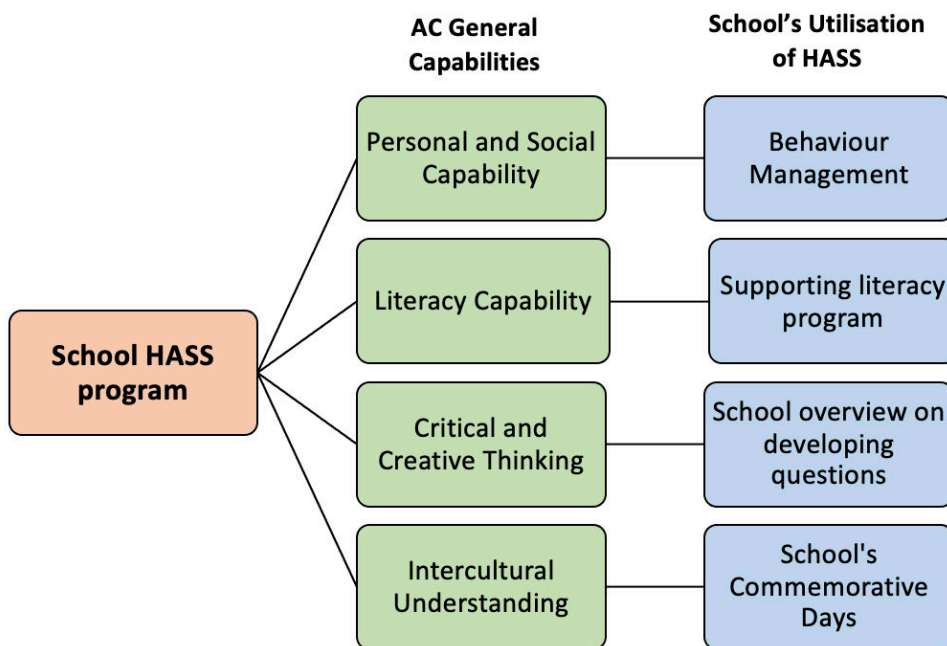


Note: Diagram is from ACARA General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum Humanities and Social Sciences, p. 1 (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/>) Copyright ACARA. Creative Commons 4.0.

Acknowledging they had achieved a degree of success in raising staff awareness of the Personal and Social Capability, Mandy and Donna had begun contemplating how HASS could be utilised to support other General Capabilities. The diagram represented below in Figure 38 summaries how four of the seven capabilities could be addressed through HASS curriculum at Darby SS.

Figure 38

Addressing the General Capabilities through HASS at Darby SS



Mandy's statement that C2C HASS assessments were *"very, very difficult for a number of our kids"* especially *"if you're not literate"* (Mandy, CL), highlights the interconnected nature of HASS and English curriculum (Reynolds et al., 2019). It also illustrates the importance of equipping students with sufficient literacy skills in order to demonstrate success in HASS. These specific literacy skills include comprehending texts, locating information and writing factual reports. With Mandy's suggestion of building a sequential whole-school plan for questioning skills, there was an opportunity of addressing the Critical and Creative Thinking Capability. Reynolds (2018) supported the idea that explicit teaching of inquiry skills could be transferred to other learning areas and that critical thinking was an essential prerequisite for participation in society and lifelong learning. Finally, the school's regular engagement with traditional commemorations and celebrations such as ANZAC, NAIDOC and Harmony days provided an opportunity to imbed elements of the Intercultural Understanding Capability. This capability includes values and dispositions such as fostering curiosity, care, empathy, respect, responsibility and open-mindedness, and are attributes of

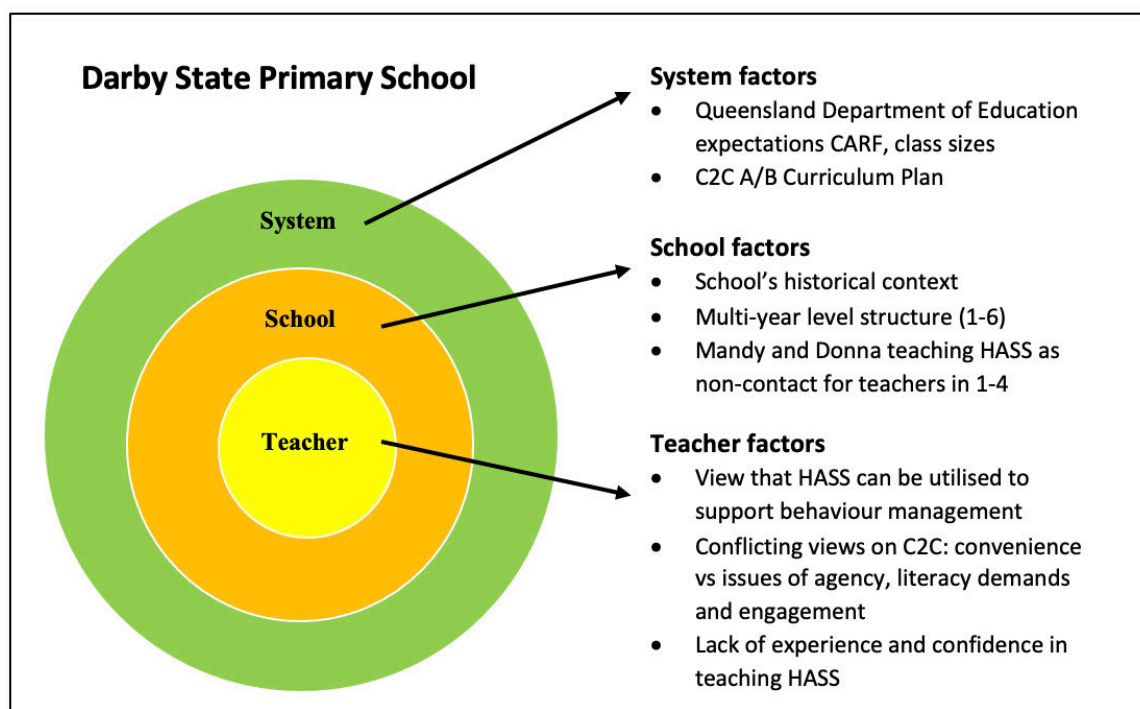
global citizenship (Reynolds, 2018). While Mandy and Donna had aspirations of creating a more focused plan for imbedding these General Capabilities, more work was needed to investigate their potential and to share ideas with their colleagues. This situation was mirrored in Carter and Buchanan's (2022) recent study which found that while teachers generally acknowledged the importance of the Capabilities, they lacked the knowledge and confidence to address them in their classrooms.

Summary: Case Study Three

The diagram represented below in Figure 39 highlights the most salient features impacting on the enactment of HASS curriculum at Darby State School.

Figure 39

Systemic, School, and Teacher Factors Impacting HASS at Darby SS



Darby's HASS implementation was defined by three decisions made by the administrative team in accordance with the Queensland Department of Education's expectations on curriculum delivery, class sizes and non-contact time allocation for teachers. These specific decisions were:

1. To form multi-year level classes across the school, leaving Prep the only single year level;
2. To utilise C2C's two-year, A/B curriculum plan for Year One to Six classes; and
3. For Mandy and Donna to teach, assess and report on HASS for Years One to Four as part of non-contact provision.

Mandy and Donna tended to view their teaching of HASS through the lens of administrators, especially in utilising HASS to support the school's behaviour management program and to develop students' critical thinking skills. While C2C materials offered convenience and a degree of consistency across class groupings, both administrators conceded there were issues for teachers' pedagogical agency, student literacy capabilities and overall engagement in HASS. By continuing to observe traditional commemorations and maintaining community connections, Darby teachers sought to build students' sense of historical identity within the school.

Case Study 4: Jackson State Primary School

School Context and Participants

Jackson State School is a large government primary school located in a regional Queensland city. The school of 620 students was staffed by a principal, three deputy principals, 29 classroom teachers and several auxiliary and support personnel. A distinctive feature of the school was that 54% of enrolments from 41 different countries were identified as having English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). The school's ICSEA's rating indicated that a majority of families were from the bottom quartile of socio-educational advantage (ACARA, 2022).

Pippa was a woman in her mid-forties who held the classified position of deputy principal (curriculum) at Jackson and was the participant elected to outline the school's

specific HASS decisions for this case study. Having retained the position for six years, Pippa saw her role as an intermediary between the Department of Education's policy goals, and teachers' school-based implementation of curriculum. She explained:

Central Office creates all the policy and procedures, QCAA creates all their expectations brought down into the P-12 CARF [Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework]. It is my job at this school to understand the expectations of the P-12 CARF. I then put that in our school programming ... and then share that with teachers. (Pippa, CL)

The participant representing a teacher's perspective was Heather, who taught a Year Four class full-time at Jackson. She was a woman in her early fifties who had extensive experience in teaching HASS in both primary and high school settings and had been a staff member at Jackson for ten years.

School-Based Administrative Decisions

Curriculum Framework

Since the inception of C2C resourcing in 2012, Jackson had adopted these materials for each of the eight learning areas. As Pippa stated: "*we're a C2C school for everything*" (Pippa, CL). She viewed the resource as something "*the Department has developed for us*" and was confident that they had been "*quality assured by a panel of experts*" (Pippa, CL). Pippa also acknowledged the time-saving aspect of C2C, pointing out that teachers were "*busy in the classroom*" and didn't have "*the time and space that the C2C writers have*" (Pippa, CL). A scope and sequence plan tracking C2C units and related assessment tasks for each learning area across the seven year levels was disseminated to teachers and published on the school's website. While Pippa identified the ACARA website as a "*point of truth*" (Pippa, CL) for teachers sourcing curriculum content, Heather commented that her knowledge of the Australian HASS curriculum was derived solely from C2C units. The HASS scope and

sequence plan for Heather's Year Four class was comprised of two C2C units; one focusing on History, the other on Geography with the Civics component integrated throughout. While Heather was happy to use C2C materials, she disliked this integrated approach and made a deliberate choice to teach the sub-strands separately. The school had an expectation that all C2C HASS summative assessment tasks were to be completed, marked and graded for report cards which were issued to parents each semester.

Pedagogical Approach, Teacher Autonomy and Application of Agency

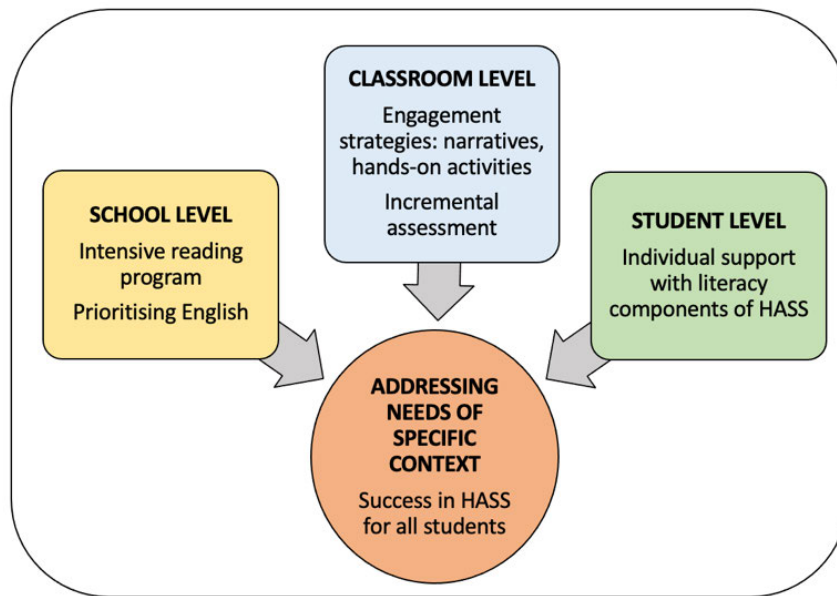
Over the previous decade, Jackson State School had incorporated a pedagogical framework based on explicit teaching principles from the work of Archer and Hughes (2011). Extensive school-based professional development had been undertaken in that time to promote teachers' understanding and classroom application of the framework across all curriculum areas. At the time of the interviews, Jackson's leadership team had begun to reassess the school's pedagogical approach to curriculum. Pippa conceded that explicit teaching had a place, however she argued that the pedagogy tried "*to fit people into a box*" and needed to be more responsive to individual student needs. Alternatively, a more adaptive model termed "*The Jackson Way*", promoted greater focus on "*tailored supports*" (Pippa, CL) by allowing students to demonstrate their learning in varied ways. As a classroom teacher, Heather considered that many of the identified elements of explicit teaching, such as providing clarity over learning and setting high expectations, were components of everyday successful teaching practices and didn't need particular labels.

In response to the large intake of students with poor English skills, Jackson had developed a strategic focus on improving literacy standards by incorporating an intensive reading program, providing documented adjustments for individual students and allocating designated funds for aide support. This strategy complied with Departmental direction that "EAL/D learners need specific teaching approaches to build a language foundation for

successful classroom learning” (Queensland Department of Education, 2022a, para. 8). A diagram illustrating the school’s three levels of focused support is represented in Figure 40

Figure 40

Three Levels of Support for EAL/D Learners at Jackson SS



In addition to implementing an intensive reading program that targeted specific students, the whole-school strategy involved prioritising the teaching of English curriculum over other learning areas. As Jackson’s curriculum leader, Pippa regularly worked with teachers during school time to clarify C2C unit planning, discuss relevant student data and to moderate assessment tasks, however this was largely restricted to English curriculum. The difference in HASS support was evident in Pippa’s statement:

We haven’t stipulated as a leadership team, this is your HASS time to go away to talk or to moderate or do any of that. We haven’t actually even stipulated that they need to talk about it. But, my assumption would be that they do talk about it. ... Whether it was in a formal moderation process, I couldn’t speak to that. (Pippa, CL)

Heather confirmed the situation by stating: “We have never done a HASS planning day ... I don’t think I’ve ever once heard them talk about HASS to be quite honest” and moderation

was “*something that we do in our spare time*” (Heather, T). Both educators reported that there had been no HASS professional development undertaken at the school. While teachers could pursue their own personal HASS learning if they wished, there was no expectation nor funds to support this.

As a class teacher, Heather addressed the needs of her EAL/D students by promoting engagement in HASS lessons through narratives, structured group work and hands-on activities. By completing C2C assessment tasks incrementally after periods of learning, Heather sought to maximise short-term retention of knowledge. For students with identified needs, an aide provided literacy support such as reading texts to students and scribing answers in assessment tasks.

Teacher Influences

Value of HASS

Pippa considered that “*HASS is very important*”, but largely saw its value in terms of the skills and “*field knowledge*” that could be transferred to other learning areas such as English (Pippa, CL). Heather agreed that certain practical aspects of HASS such as notetaking, mapping and timetables were useful transferrable skills. However, she also valued the essential role HASS played in developing students’ appreciation of the past and their own cultural and national identity: “*I just think it’s so important for them to know where they come from. What is my history?*” (Heather, T).

Professional and Personal Perspectives

Heather considered her own family farming background as being fundamental to her perspective on and enjoyment of teaching HASS. She explained: “*Grandfather being in the War... crop rotation, geography of the land. Yeah, I draw a lot from my background. ... Just a love of history because I like to know who I am*” (Heather, T). While Heather could not recall specific details of her own school learning in humanities, she reflected that it was a positive

experience and influenced her decision to become a high school SOSE teacher after graduating. Heather credited her own extensive teaching experience in both high school and in her present primary school position as having the greatest impact on her level of confidence and motivation: *“because I am really familiar with the content, I elaborate on it ... it comes through your experience and your knowledge of History, Geography and things like that, especially if you have a passion for it, if you really love it”* (Heather, T). Such statements illustrate Heather’s interest and value of HASS and her inherent satisfaction in teaching it. However, her acknowledged lack of autonomy inhibited her ability to further develop HASS units. This indicates that Heather was operating within an Integrated Regulation level on the adapted continuum of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Reflections on Pedagogies

Pippa acknowledged that inquiry pedagogy was an important component of HASS but was cautious in promoting student-directed learning, stating: *“teachers can’t jump straight into an inquiry approach without giving them some knowledge to be able to inquire”* (Pippa, CL). Heather was confident that by following C2C lessons with high fidelity, inquiry activities would be covered, as she assumed they would be a component of the materials. She pointed out that C2C lessons were generally structured around an initial inquiry question: *“What are we looking for? What are we trying to find out?”* (Heather, T), however this appeared to be more about framing learning intent than opportunities for individual student inquiry.

In principle, teachers at Jackson had a small degree of autonomy to change the order of C2C units, substitute some resources and to make minor adjustments to assessment tasks to support student success in HASS. While Heather viewed some aspects of C2C *“a little bit content-heavy, especially for our students”*, she generally was satisfied with the materials and the pedagogies outlined within C2C lessons, stating: *“I don’t have a problem with them. I’m*

happy to use them in whatever way I can. ... there's a good variety" and that student worksheets were *"nice and easy to print out"* (Heather, T). While she ideally might like to explore avenues apart than C2C, Heather found that this was circumvented by the extensive amount of HASS content to be covered within defined time limits.

In her role as curriculum leader, Pippa's statements sometimes appeared to waver between official Departmental policy objectives and her own personal opinions. She argued that adherence to C2C was necessary to provide a rigorous and consistent approach to curriculum implementation across classes, but also advocated for a *"more flexible, responsive approach to allow teachers the agency to be the individuals that they need to be in the classroom"*. Nevertheless, she conceded: *"I can't mandate that teachers do that"* (Pippa, CL). In speaking of the past when teachers had more autonomy to create their own integrated units, Pippa considered this a period *"where everything got lost and messy"*. On the other hand, she was concerned that one of the *"fallouts of C2C"* was that *"a generation of teachers... haven't had to write their own units"* (Pippa, CL).

Perceptions of Accountability

Pippa acknowledged that while she may personally advocate for teacher autonomy and individual student success, she conceded that *"we also have a job to do"* and that *"the system puts the notion of accountability on us"*. Inevitably, it was *"the teachers' job to follow what's in the programming"* (Pippa, CL). Heather also took a pragmatic view of her role in making sure that she was covering the content and assessing against Australian HASS curriculum standards by stating: *"That is my accountability, that's what I have to do. That's the way that it is"* (Heather, T).

Discussion

The Impact of School Context on Jackson's Curriculum Priorities

The high proportion of EAL/D students (54% of the school's enrolments) and the consequent strategy of prioritising English over other learning areas greatly impacted the way HASS was perceived and supported at Jackson State School. These differences took the form of teacher release time, planning support, professional learning, allocation of funding and reporting expectations. An overview of the contrasting treatment of the two learning areas is illustrated in Figure 41 below.

Figure 41

Contrasting Elements of English and HASS Curriculum at Jackson SS

English/Literacy	HASS
• Department of Education policy goal • Strategic school goal • Curriculum Leader's focused role • Teacher release planning time • Focused data collection and intervention • Professional Learning priority • Formal moderation of mandatory English assessment • Substantial funding to support literacy goals • Literacy comment on report card	• Not considered a systemic or school priority • No curriculum release time for planning • Not considered Professional Learning priority • Little oversight of HASS lessons • Informal moderation of HASS with colleagues • No specific funding • No specific comment required on report card

This apparent marginalised treatment of HASS mirrored the situation in both the United States and England where humanities was often perceived as a trivial, irrelevant and often dispensable learning area (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Pratt & Atkinson, 2020). Eade et al. (2017) argued that high stakes testing had directly led to a “a generation of primary teachers who have been encouraged to focus on literacy and numeracy skills rather than the interdisciplinary nature of young children's learning and cross-curricular links” (p 394). Heather's frustration regarding the situation at Jackson was apparent when she stated:

There's no focus on HASS whatsoever. It's all about English and reading... It's really sad. It does my head in. We've done it for fifteen years and we still haven't got it right.... If HASS isn't a priority, it doesn't get looked at. And that even comes down to resourcing. For example, give us some atlases! The school won't buy them. They're 'oh no, we need to put those funds towards reading books'. (Heather, T)

Despite the contrasting treatment of these two learning areas, the rationales of English and HASS, published on the ACARA website, share common themes (ACARA, n.d.-h, n.d.-i). These include developing effective communication, critical thinking, informed citizenship and contributing to Australia's future. Relevant excerpts from the English and HASS rationales are set out below in Figure 42 below.

Figure 42

Common Rationales from the English and HASS Australian Curriculum

ENGLISH	HASS
"It helps create confident communicators, imaginative and critical thinkers, and informed citizens". "It helps them become ethical, informed, perceptive, innovative and active members of society. The English curriculum plays an important part in developing the understanding, attitudes and capabilities of those who will take responsibility for Australia's future".	"It plays an important role in assisting students to understand global issues, and building their capacity to be active and informed citizens who understand and participate in the world". "Through studying Humanities and Social Sciences, students will develop the ability to question, think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, make decisions and adapt to change".

A second consideration relating to Jackson's specific context was the culturally diverse backgrounds of their students. While the school offered social and cultural support to families and celebrated an annual Harmony Day, Pippa was unsure if the school's diversity was incorporated into the HASS curriculum. She stated: *"I don't know if that's deliberately planned for and considered prior to implementing the unit... but my guess is... no"* (Pippa, CL). Such a position diminishes possibilities of capitalising on the understandings and experiences which children from diverse backgrounds can bring to the humanities classroom (Catling, 2017). Choi (2013) also warned that "immigrant students often have viewed social studies, which often silences the histories of non-European regions and reinforces narrowly defined national citizenship, as meaningless and irrelevant to their lives" (p 12).

Teachers' Autonomy and Fidelity towards C2C HASS materials

The school's decision to adopt C2C units and assessment tasks in their entirety was a second major influence on how HASS was enacted at Jackson State School. While Heather insisted that the school had taken a flexible stance with using C2C materials, in reality they were followed closely with minimal additions or substitutions. As Heather stated: *"we do two hours of HASS a week. That's all I can get done. And to be quite honest, I can't fit a lot more in than what the C2C unit has in it"* (Heather, T). McCarthy and Woodard (2018) described educators who complied with prescribed programs as "faithful followers" (p.67) who often had little inclination to challenge or adapt materials for particular circumstances or contexts. Some researchers have suggested that teachers often follow mandated curriculum out of a sense of obligation or to maintain congruence with their colleagues (Castro Superfine et al., 2015; Pease-Alvarez & Samway, 2008). Salton (2015) described the practice as an "assembly line mentality" (p.70) where consistency and uniformity were considered key processes in implementing a standardised curriculum successfully. Maniates (2010) made the point that "Policies that mandate particular curricula insinuate that teachers as a group have not fulfilled

their obligations to the social contract and can no longer be trusted with pedagogical prerogative” (p 19).

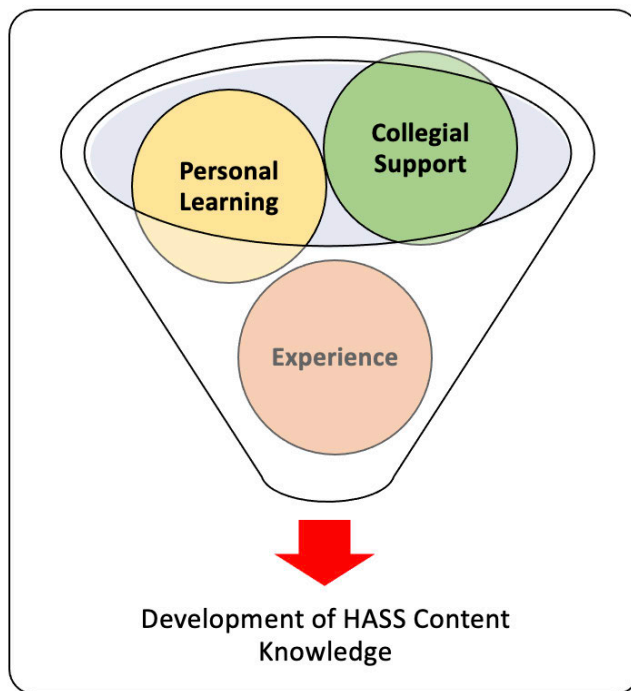
However other researchers have highlighted the benefits of adopting a whole-school approach to curriculum implementation, especially when teachers viewed the program as effective and of value for students (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Rubin et al., 2017). Further, Duncan Seraphin et al. (2017) concluded that students made greater gains when teachers adhered tightly to the guidelines of prescribed materials.

Improving Teachers’ HASS Content Knowledge

Heather regarded her own experience, in both HASS teaching and C2C implementation as a major influence on her enactment of HASS curriculum. While some researchers have failed to discern significant links between teaching experience and student outcomes (Liu, 2011; McNeill et al., 2013), Crocco and Thornton (2002) found that teachers’ experience in the classroom equipped them with a greater facility for managing challenges and adapting to difficult and changed circumstances. In the absence of any school-directed humanities learning at Jackson, Heather was concerned for her younger colleagues who struggled with HASS content knowledge. As she explained: *“because they don’t get that professional development ... their confidence lacks. ... if you’re not as confident, it doesn’t come across in your teaching”* (Heather, T). This was iterated by Pippa who spoke of two beginning teachers who had recently joined the staff, stating: *“they’ve got a lot of learning ahead of them”* (Pippa, CL). How then, might these teachers build the requisite content knowledge in order to become more effective and confident HASS educators? Figure 43 represented below summarises three potential ways of promoting content knowledge at Jackson.

Figure 43

Potential Avenues for Building Content Knowledge in HASS



In general, Pippa considered that personal learning was the responsibility of individual teachers as *“logistically, we have to fit within budgets and time and timelines and timetables and all those bits and pieces”* (Pippa, CL). However, Reitano and Winter (2017) argued that teachers’ content knowledge was an essential element of their profession and needed to be continually supported at a school level. An alternative view is that content-based professional development is largely inefficient and that incorporating universal pedagogical practices that cut across year levels and learning areas, can not only improve teaching practices, but save money and promote collaborative learning (Gore & Rosser, 2022). At Jackson, it would appear that content-based professional learning was prioritised to support the school’s targeted literacy strategy, while a broad pedagogical approach (explicit teaching) was deemed appropriate for all other learning areas. The general assumption was that by adopting C2C materials, the teachers at Jackson would have sufficient content knowledge

supplied to them. While Heather believed this was the case when C2C was first implemented in Queensland, she presently saw that:

the way that the C2C units are now, in their version, they don't have all those really good in-depth lessons with all the information that the kids need to know. Originally, they would have had more of a proper lesson plan all structured out in the C2C. So, if you weren't a confident teacher, that was amazing! (Heather, T)

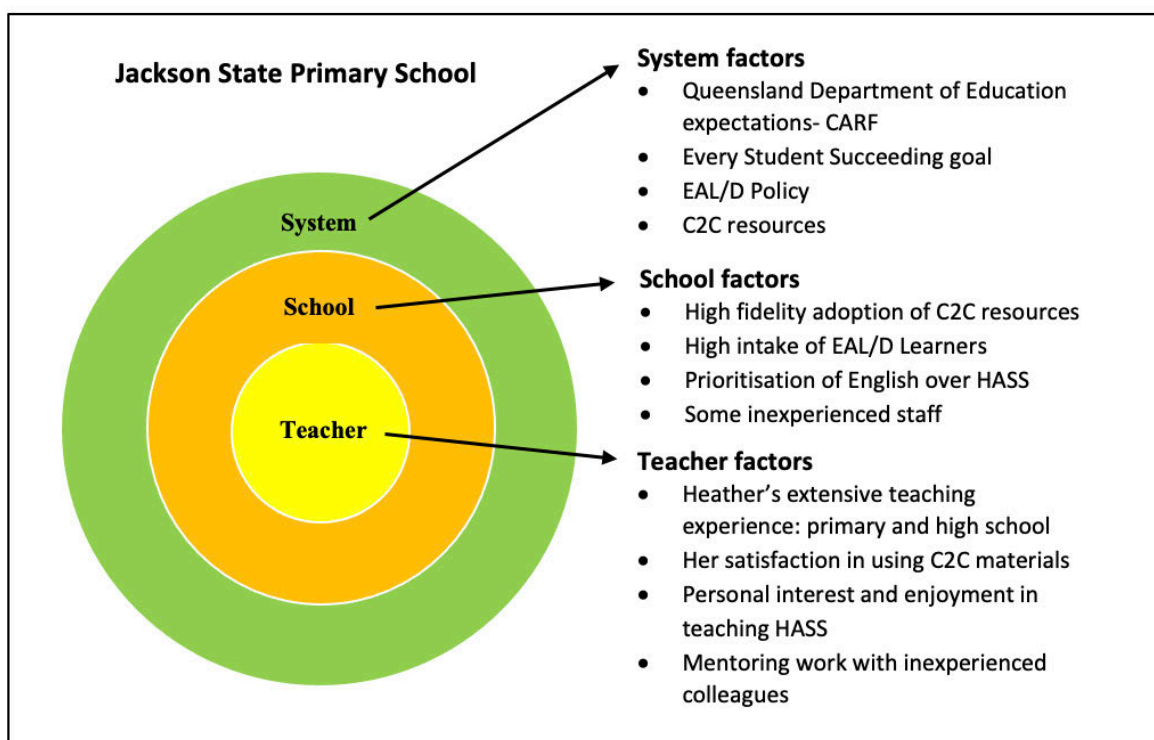
Jackson State School supported their beginning teachers with a general induction program that aligned with guidelines published on the Queensland Departmental of Education website (Queensland Department of Education, 2022c). However, Achinstein and Davis (2014) argued that effective induction involves more than socialisation and emotional support and should include subject-focused mentoring. In recent years, Jackson developed a philosophy around collegial learning and collaboration, termed *High Performance Teams*. With three or four teachers at each year level, beginning teachers have benefited from a “*a bank of colleagues who are also delivering the same units at the same time*” (Pippa, CL). To support her newer colleagues in content knowledge, Heather had passed on older versions of C2C materials and regularly given advice on content and assessment expectations. Research suggests that this type of mentoring improves beginning teachers' content knowledge in shorter periods of time compared to other means, including self-learning (See, 2014).

Summary: Case Study Four

The graphic depicted below in Figure 44 summarises the various influences on HASS implementation at Jackson State Primary School.

Figure 44

System, School, and Teachers Factors Impacting HASS at Jackson SS



The Queensland Department of Education's Curriculum and Reporting Framework provided the foundation for HASS curriculum direction at Jackson State School. Expectations around the *Every Student Succeeding* goal and EAL/D policy (Queensland Department of Education, 2023d; 2022a) were particularly influential on the school's strategic focus on literacy and the prioritisation of English curriculum over other learning areas, including HASS. Despite moving towards a more student-oriented pedagogical approach, the school continued to incorporate the Department's centrally written C2C materials with a high degree of fidelity, and teachers were expected to provide tailored supports to enable individual student success. Heather's experience and enjoyment of HASS teaching and her satisfaction with using C2C materials were major determinants of the way HASS was enacted in her classroom. Jackson's philosophy of promoting collegial collaboration and Heather's commitment to providing mentoring support for her inexperienced colleagues helped to build HASS subject knowledge and confidence amongst teachers at the school.

Case Study 5: St Bob's Catholic Primary School

School Context and Participants

St Bob's Catholic primary school is located in a small rural town in regional Queensland. The school was staffed by a principal, four class teachers and several auxiliary and support personnel. The 70 students enrolled at the school come from families with a mix of farming and town-based occupations and the My School ICSEA rating indicated their socio-educational levels as spread across the bottom two quartiles (My School, 2022). As a Catholic school, St Bob's is governed by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, however the local Diocese was the educational authority directly responsible for overseeing the school's implementation of Australian Curriculum.

The curriculum leader elected to participate in the research was Kerry, a woman in her early forties with extensive classroom teaching experience. For two years, Kerry had been released from her teaching duties one day a week to support the school's implementation of the Australian Curriculum. This non-classified middle leader position gave Kerry minimal authority in making curriculum decisions or to engage in teacher planning oversight. Instead, her role was largely an advisory position, focusing on curriculum facilitation and providing collegial support for teachers. As Kerry commented:

we look at the overview of the subject and we have a lot of discussion around the standards... I'll download different things if teachers are needing more ideas around what they can do for that element to teach. ... we don't have a teaching buddy in the same year level to bounce ideas off. We're very small and at the end of the day, we know what we know ... unless you broaden your horizons. (Kerry, CL)

The second participant, Lauren was employed at the school to cover the one-day release for Kerry as well as teaching Science across the school as part of non-contact release

arrangements. Lauren was interviewed to gauge her perspectives on HASS as she was the person responsible for implementing the HASS curriculum in the middle year levels. Lauren was a similar age to Kerry and had taught for several years, in both the State and Catholic systems.

School-Based Administrative Decisions

Curriculum Framework

In its role as curriculum authority, the Diocese had developed an online digital management system to support teachers' implementation of the Australian Curriculum. The digital planning template within the program enabled teachers to create units of work by selecting appropriate HASS achievement standards and content descriptors, then adding their own student learning ideas and assessment tasks. Kerry explained the process:

It's got tabs along that we follow. You pull in your curriculum that you're doing and all the course descriptors that we'll be covering through that period. ... you've got your sequence of learning so we put that in and it outlines the assessment. There's no element that you can't sort of leave out. The framework's there. We still have the freedom to put in those elements.

(Kerry, CL)

The management system was also used to document student adjustments and record assessment data for the purposes of determining a final HASS grade each semester.

Through mutual agreement, the school decided upon a scope and sequence plan that involved all classes teaching History in the first semester and Geography in the second. The other sub-strands (Civics and Citizenship and Business and Economics) were introduced in the middle and upper grades by integrating their content into areas such as Religion or Mathematics where appropriate. Despite the separated treatment of the sub-strands, the

learning area was referred to as HASS in student and parent communications, including the report cards which were disseminated twice a year.

Pedagogical Approach, Teacher Autonomy and Application of Agency

At St Bob's, Hattie's (2009) work, *Visible Learning* was adopted to provide a consistent pedagogical approach throughout the school. The principles from this framework were aimed at refining and focusing teaching practices, facilitating staff collaboration and in developing individual goals for improved student performance. One of the school's expectations was that all teachers routinely employed learning intentions and success criteria so that students *"know at the end of the lesson, this is what I should know in order to be successful"* (Lauren, T). Within the parameters of the Diocesan planning system, Lauren was afforded a large degree of autonomy in planning for HASS curriculum. Nevertheless, with permission and finance from her school, Lauren had elected to utilise a commercial online HASS program rather than creating her own units.

Teacher Influences

Value of HASS

Kerry and Lauren both agreed that an effective HASS curriculum provided students with a strong sense of cultural identity and skills for future citizenship. In particular, they viewed the importance of HASS through the lens of their own specific context. As Kerry stated: *"it's really important for broadening where we are, our little place in the world, especially from a rural context, there is such history within a rural area and there are a lot of traditions that we go through"* (Kerry, CL). Lauren expanded on this idea by suggesting that HASS could give students an *"understanding of different people and different cultures... world-wide knowledge of where everything is in the world and how things are connected"* (Lauren, T).

Professional and Personal Perspectives

In speaking of her own primary school humanities learning, Lauren recalled hands-on mapping activities and creating projects on selected countries that were often placed on display. Despite the fondness of the recollection: *“we liked going and seeing our work up on the wall!”* (Lauren, T), Lauren did not believe these experiences impacted her present attitude to HASS. Rather, she identified her own personal travel experiences as being extremely influential and saw a distinct link between teachers’ interests and their motivation and confidence in teaching HASS. As she stated: *“when it comes down to it, if you’re interested in the topic, you’re going to teach it more passionately than if you weren’t”* (Lauren, T). She further explained:

it’s only since travelling and seeing all these places that... it’s made my teaching a lot more interesting. Because I can personally refer to it and say, look I’ve done this, and in the past I’ve shown pictures of the actual places. And I think that’s so important. (Lauren, T)

Lauren considered she had a very good understanding of her school’s expectations around the teaching and reporting of HASS, acknowledged that she had quite a degree of influence over curriculum enactment and felt confident in teaching the learning area. In particular, Lauren credited the commercial program she has opted to use with bolstering her confidence in teaching HASS. She stated: *“I think with my experiences as well as with the curriculum and with the resources, ... I think I do have a good understanding of what I’m teaching* (Lauren, T). According to the adapted Continuum of Motivation based on Ryan and Deci’s (2000) work, it would appear that Lauren operated within an Integrated Regulation level of motivation. This was illustrated through her statements about enjoying and valuing HASS as well as her conviction that personal interests had enriched her teaching.

Reflections on Pedagogies

Lauren was satisfied that the commercial program she had chosen was an appropriate means of addressing HASS standards and that the included assessment tasks allowed students to sufficiently demonstrate evidence of learning. Her reasoning for choosing such a program was largely based on expediency: *“everything is there, you’re not bogged down trying to find other resources to help you. ... I do think having everything at your fingertips does help”* (Lauren, T). Lauren also argued that the materials encouraged student discussion, provided opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills, and were highly motivating for students. Kerry’s opinions on commercial materials illustrated a somewhat contrasting perspective to Lauren’s. She stated: *“something mandated isn’t going to cover every cohort because not every child is ready for that ... I think it’s good for a sequence of ideas, but you need to know it’s not mandated to teach it exactly like that”* (Kerry, CL).

Both educators agreed that inquiry skills were an essential component of HASS and needed to be explicitly taught to students. In particular, Kerry argued: *“they’ve got to know the ‘How do I inquire? How do I go and find out the answer? How do I show my evidence at the end?’”* (Kerry, CL). Inquiry was also utilised in Lauren’s regular classroom routine through a strategy she termed: *“I see, I hear, I wonder”* (Lauren, T), designed to pique students’ curiosity, generate discussion and promote independent learning.

A second point of agreement from the two educators was their position regarding integrating HASS with other learning areas. The structure of the school curriculum plan already necessitated a degree of integration in order to cover the content of two of the HASS sub-strands in the middle and upper year levels. Teachers at the school were encouraged to emphasise knowledge linkages: *“if something pops up in Religion for us as a Catholic school, or in Maths and things like that, you go, ‘By the way, you know how we’re learning about this?’ and I think you can make connections”* (Kerry, CL). However, Lauren’s use of

integration was curtailed due to her one-day interaction with the Year Three/Four class. Nevertheless, she agreed with Kerry's view of learning connections, stating: *"I like the integration because ... you're talking about things in different subjects and ... I think it increases their knowledge and awareness of the topic that you're teaching"* (Lauren, T).

Perceptions of Accountability

Both Kerry and Lauren acknowledged that their accountability to HASS lay primarily in fulfilling the demands of the Australian Curriculum. However, they also viewed their responsibilities through a commitment to students and the importance of self-evaluation. This was evident in Kerry's reflection: *"I think there is always that accountability, Have I covered what I need to cover?... Are my kids progressing and is there rigour in what I'm teaching?"* (Kerry, CL). Lauren's statement was similar:

I think you find yourself accountable for the kids' learning... In some things, you go over and over again and you do it in different ways and yet sometimes when you ask the question, and they still don't get it, you go, what am I doing wrong? (Lauren, T)

Discussion

The Community as a Resource

Amongst the advice given on implementing the Australian Curriculum, ACARA stipulated that school programs should reflect local contexts and take into account the backgrounds of students, families and the community (ACARA, n.d.-e). This stance was consistent with Sayer et al. (2013) who argued that "The desire to be a part of a wider social network is a basic human need" (p. 9) and that student outcomes can be improved by fostering close community ties. Lauren's observation appeared to support that view: *"because we're in such a small school... we don't really have the behaviour management issues that I've had in the past in different schools"* (Lauren, T). Kerry also championed the school's

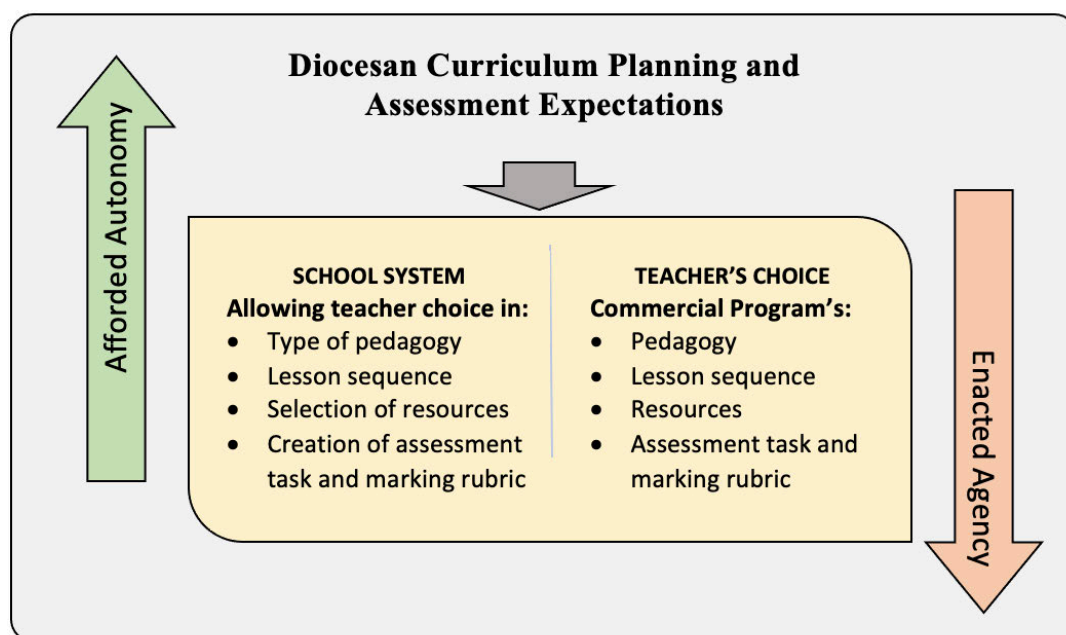
small town context, stating that she felt “*very blessed, ... being a rural community*” (Kerry, CL). Examples of community resources included local museums and volunteer staff: “*They can talk about the artifacts and they’re very giving of their time*” (Kerry, CL), funded excursions by a supportive parent association and combined school/community commemorations such as ANZAC and Remembrance Day. The motivations of both Kerry and Lauren towards giving their students experiences beyond their small community aligned with the view that “Schooling that addresses the issues of the wider world, and equips students to contribute to their world, locally and globally, is a basic right of national citizenship” (Reynolds et al., 2019, p. 103).

Teacher Choices: Autonomy Afforded and Agency Enacted

The graphic in Figure 45 below illustrates the contrast in curricular autonomy afforded to teachers at St Bob’s, and the agency Lauren exercised in choosing to employ a commercial HASS program.

Figure 45

Contrast in Autonomy Afforded and Agency Enacted at St Bob’s



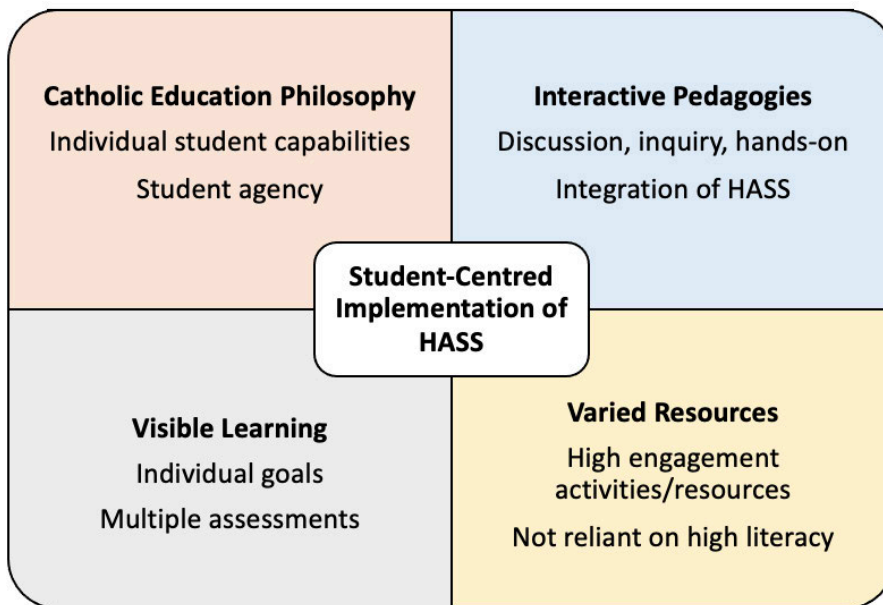
In one sense, it can be viewed that Lauren relinquished the generous degree of autonomy she was granted, to have the pedagogical direction, pacing and assessment of her HASS curriculum determined by a commercial program. According to Connelly and Ben Peretz, (1980), this would categorise Lauren's role as a transmitter of "teacher-proof curricula" (p.106) with little influence on curriculum interpretation. However, another way of looking at the situation, is that Lauren had fully exercised her agency by deliberately seeking out a program she believed would adequately address both the HASS curriculum as well as the students' and her own needs. Lauren still needed to routinely input the unit components into the school's online framework along with adjustments and student assessment data. In supporting Lauren's decision to utilise the commercial program, St Bob's had bestowed a degree of trust and respect for her professional choices. As Mausethagen and Mølstad (2015) stated, "professional autonomy implies that individuals control the terms and content of their work and related issues, based on their professional knowledge and moral and ethical principles" (p 31). Furthermore, trust in teacher decision-making is considered "positively related to perceived self-efficacy, job satisfaction and positive work climate" (Lennert da Silva & Mølstad, 2020, p. 115).

Student-Centred Implementation of HASS

A third distinguishing feature of HASS implementation at St Bob's was the student-centred philosophy that permeated all aspects of school life. The diagram presented below in Figure 46 summaries four examples of this approach: the school's Catholic ethos, adoption of Visible Learning principles, interactive pedagogies and Lauren's commercial material choice.

Figure 46

Student-Centred HASS at St Bob's Catholic Primary School



Catholic Education Philosophy. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission defined *curriculum* as the “public expression of a school’s values and a sure indicator of a school’s educational philosophy” (Commission, 2022, p. 2). The educational direction of St Bob’s aligned with the Queensland Department of Education’s strategic goals around equity and excellence (Queensland Department of Education, 2023a) by promoting student engagement and wellbeing, building resilience and encouraging families to play an active role in their children’s education. In addition, St Bob’s employed a concerted focus on recognising and embracing individual differences, developing personal capabilities and promoting student agency within a Christian context (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, n.d.). Kerry considered this “*Catholic perspective*” (Kerry, CL) underpinned all aspects of curriculum at the school, including HASS.

Visible Learning. In the last decade, Hattie’s (2012) concept of *Visible Learning* has greatly influenced educational practice and improvement agendas in schools throughout Australia (Nielsen & Klitmøller, 2021). Kerry viewed certain *Visible Learning* principles, such as focusing on individual improvement goals and using assessment to respond to

potential learning gaps as integral to the school's student-centred philosophy. She stated: “*one of the beauties that ‘Visible Learning’ has given us is the sense that we’ve got that permission to pause and not just plough through. So we can go back and plug those holes when we need to*” (Kerry CL).

Kerry also considered that an over-reliance on summative assessment tasks ignored students' personal circumstances and was inherently unfair. She argued:

if you’ve got someone who produces something not great, but you know they’ve had family or personal issues or whatever, and they’ve given great discussions and observations and thoughts and reflections and you’ve got this bit of evidence, ... it can help you find a grade. ... It’s not just all on one end. (Kerry, CL)

Brown et al. (2011) stressed that teaching practices do not exist in a vacuum, but are multi-faceted interactions, dependent on an array of variables, including student capabilities and family background. By giving students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, teachers can utilise feedback to promote further learning and avoid “the corrosive effects of ‘teaching to the test’” (Black et al., 2011, p. 466). While Kerry advocated that her assessment approach was due to *Visible Learning* principles, critics of Hattie’s meta-analysis have argued that in singling out causal educational factors through purely statistical measures, the multi-faceted aspects of context that impact student learning are often dismissed (McKnight & Whitburn, 2020; Nielsen & Klitmøller, 2021).

Commercial Material Choice. Beyond the practical reasons already outlined behind her choice of HASS curriculum materials, Lauren considered that the commercial materials allowed students to demonstrate their learning without being impelled to write copious amount of text. Lauren found that unless students (and particularly boys) were curious about finding answers to questions and saw a purpose in writing activities, they could become

quickly disengaged. This observation aligned with a study by Collie et al. (2016) who found that motivation and engagement were the two most salient factors in boys' reluctance to write. Lauren insisted that the literacy demands of inquiry tasks in HASS should not impede the chance of student success in this learning area. She reflected: *"the biggest issue is probably reading the text. Some of those websites... they're not very child-friendly"* (Lauren, T). While she acknowledged that students with higher literacy levels tended *"to do better across the board"*, Lauren argued that when given adequate supports, all students are capable of success in HASS *"as long as they've got that engagement"* (Lauren, T).

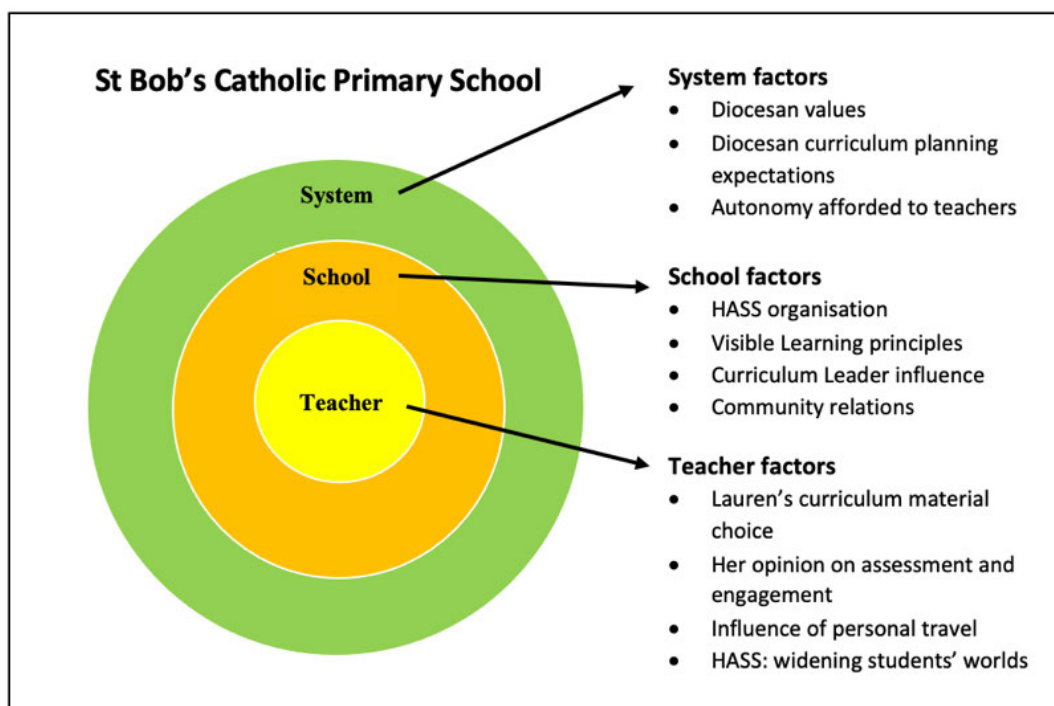
Interactive Pedagogies. Both educators recognised the importance of motivating and interactive learning activities that took student enjoyment into account, something Kerry viewed as *"bringing that fun element to teaching"* (Kerry, CL). Kerry further explained that in open-ended discussions, students were often *"thinking of other ideas they can throw into the discussion, as opposed to just giving a response and doing what they think you want them to be doing ... if they're fully engaged, there's usually a spark there of joy"* (Kerry, CL). This perception is supported by Corso et al. (2013) who stated that engagement "is best understood in a way that recognizes students' internal thoughts and beliefs about being engaged, as well as their external experiences with the various aspects of school life" (p 52).

Summary: Case Study Five

The graphic in Figure 47 below summarises the various factors that have been identified as influencing the way HASS was implemented at St Bob's primary school.

Figure 47

Systemic, School, and Teacher Factors Impacting HASS at St Bob's



The planning and assessment expectations of the local Diocese provided the contextual framework that governed the implementation of HASS and the autonomy afforded to teachers to interpret curriculum and plan their own units of work. The Diocesan priorities of promoting engagement and individual student capabilities underpinned the manner in which HASS was taught at St Bob's. At a school level, decisions on HASS sub-strand organisation, *Visible Learning* principles, curriculum leader support and community involvement all impacted the student-centred approach to HASS implementation. In the classroom, the enactment of HASS was greatly influenced by Lauren's opinions regarding commercial resourcing, formative assessment and student engagement, as well as her own travel experiences and view that HASS was a means of connecting students to a wider world.

Case Study 6: Charles Christian College

School Context and Participants

Charles College is a non-government Christian school, located in a regional city in Queensland. As part of the Independent Schools network in Australia, the school catered for 1000 students from Prep to Year 12, with around 300 students enrolled in the primary campus. A majority of the families subscribed to the Pentecostal faith, however the school was increasingly open to enrolling students from other religious groups with non-English-speaking backgrounds. While Charles College recognised the language needs of these newer students, there was no specific policy of targeting or prioritising literacy goals and benchmarks. Alison, the curriculum leader participating in this study, observed that: *“longitudinal data would suggest that our literacy levels are quite high, especially considering we have a high EAL/D population.”* (Alison, CL). The My School ICSEA rating indicated that overall, 70% of the school’s families belonged to the top two quartiles of socio-educational advantage (ACARA, 2022).

Alison was an experienced female primary teacher in her early 40s. She was employed at the school on a part-time basis, teaching Year Six two days a week and conducting an administrative role for the other two days. As Director of Upper Primary, (covering Years Three to Six), Alison considered her middle leader position as a mentor rather than overseer of curriculum. She stated: *“My role is looking at pastoral care of teachers. It’s also helping them with their behaviour management. It’s actually helping the teachers in every facet of their role as a teacher”* (Alison, CL).

Judy, who taught Year Four on a full-time basis at Charles College was the second participant for this case study. She was a woman of similar age to Alison and had extensive teaching experience in State primary school settings. After an extended period of family

leave, Judy had recently decided to change to the Independent system, based on her Christian faith.

School-Based Administrative Decisions

Curriculum Framework

As an Independent school, Charles College was accountable to a Board which oversaw Australian Curriculum implementation through an extensive audit process conducted every five years. Areas of weakness were identified, and it was the Primary Principal's job to complete a strategic forward plan based on feedback from Board members. However, Alison candidly observed that these plans generally had not been disseminated amongst staff. She stated:

I don't recall seeing the strategic plan at all. I wouldn't be able to tell you what it looked like or what was written in it. And our Principal was very honest in that space in saying that it was written in conjunction with the Board and shared with the Board. But ... it didn't really make its way down into middle management. (Alison, CL)

In the previous three months, Alison had worked with the Primary Principal and her colleague, the Director of Lower School (covering Prep to Year Two) to create a Teaching and Learning Framework as a means of developing a more structured school-level approach to curriculum implementation. To manage the task, the team had settled on choosing Mathematics and HASS as the first two learning areas for consideration. As Alison explained: “we really haven't had a lot of oversight in the last seven years and it's only now that we're starting to get back to that again” (Alison, CL). A common planning template was devised for teachers to use and Alison had begun incorporating more direction in her monthly meetings with teachers, by providing support with “how they're putting their units together and how they're writing their assessment and what they're using for that to inform

themselves” (Alison, CL). Teachers at the school were expected to use a summative assessment task at the end of each HASS unit aimed at demonstrating student learning. While there was no formal moderation of HASS assessment, Alison considered that *“a lot of teachers are now actually marking together”* (Alison, CL) to provide clarification and consistency in teacher judgements. In line with State expectations, student success in HASS was communicated to parents in a report card disseminated twice a year.

Pedagogical Approach, Teacher Autonomy and Application of Agency

In general, teachers at Charles College had *“been very much trusted”* (Alison, CL) in using their experience and initiative to plan and assess units of work and to source or create resources for their individual HASS lessons. While some teachers elected to utilise aspects of C2C resources from the Scootle website, Alison believed that teachers *“enjoy having the freedom to be able to make sure their achievement is meeting the achievement standard, but to be able to do it in their own way”* (Alison, CL). Unlike many schools in the State system, Charles College did not specify that teachers should conform to preferred pedagogies such as employing an explicit teaching framework. Nevertheless, Alison considered that many teachers taught *“explicitly mainly at the beginning of the term”* to cover HASS content and would occasionally employ a *“little bit of inquiry-focus at the end”* (Alison, CL). Neither Alison nor Judy could recall any professional development undertaken to support humanities education at the school.

Teacher Influences

Value of HASS

Alison and Judy acknowledged the role HASS played in helping students develop a strong Australian identity and sense of national pride. Alison considered *“that it’s really important helping children understand where we’ve come from as a culture and then also looking forward to where we’re going”* (Alison, CL). Judy added: *“We are lucky in our*

country to have it and to have grown up with it” (Judy, T). Both educators saw value in the opportunities HASS provided in developing personal qualities, such as being *“open-minded, willing to listen to others”* (Judy, T) and *“building their compassion and empathy”* (Alison, CL). Judy also stressed the importance of helping students develop independent critical thinking skills, to be *“willing to disagree and have different viewpoints”* (Judy, T).

Professional and Personal Perspectives

Judy’s recollection of her own primary school humanities learning was largely positive. In particular, she recalled how the integrated approach her teachers employed in teaching humanities (then known as Social Studies) incorporated music, art and literature, and was deemed exciting and fun. She stated: *“I remember loving it and always telling my parents ‘Oh we learnt this today and we learnt that today’”* (Judy, T). She also attributed her father’s career as a secondary school History teacher as influencing her perception that teachers *“who do have ... that passion for history and love it in their own personal life”* had a huge impact on students’ motivation and success in HASS.

Judy viewed the current HASS curriculum as *“an information-heavy subject”* and despite her opinions on integration, preferred to teach the sub-strands of History, Geography and Civics and Citizenship separately *“because I want to be sure I’m getting through the content”* (Judy, T). She relied heavily on her teaching partner for planning support, especially when she had been moved to a different year level. She stated: *“I think sometimes, I lack confidence, ... when it’s brand new to that year level, there’s so much to teach”* and she conceded *“there’s a lot of new teachers who would feel like that too”* (Judy, T). Nevertheless, Judy acknowledged the importance of experience in building teacher capacity in HASS, especially in the absence of any dedicated professional development in that area: *“I feel like when you do it year after year, you gain that confidence... it’s almost like, you are learning it ... when you’re teaching it to the kids”* (Judy, T).

Judy's stated reflections position her as operating within the Introjected Regulation level of the adapted Continuum of Motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). While she expressed value for HASS and the possibilities of effective classroom enactment, Judy stated that she struggled with confidence and lack of content knowledge, which in turn impacted her motivation for the learning area. She explained: *"My passion is for the kids to be excited in my school. But ... I do feel a lot of pressure to be getting through the content"* (Judy, T).

Reflections on Pedagogies and Resources

Alison and Judy agreed that student-centred inquiry was an important component of HASS, especially in developing ownership of learning and promoting creative and critical thinking. As Judy stated: *"kids are smarter than what we give them credit for, and they think so much outside of the box"* (Judy, T). However, in reality Alison saw several circumstances that impeded teachers' embrace of this pedagogy. She had observed that teachers who struggled with behaviour management issues in the classroom were less inclined to relinquish control of learning to students. She also noted that teachers, who felt overwhelmed by the amount of content needed to be covered within short timeframes, tended to focus on teacher-controlled transmission of knowledge. Judy considered that several of the Key Inquiry Questions included on the ACARA website were confusing and would benefit from using more child-friendly language. She also pointed out that inquiry lessons required a degree of student capability, arguing: *"They're really bad at researching, just putting them on the internet"* (Judy, T).

Both educators professed that student engagement in learning should be paramount when enacting HASS curriculum, regardless of teachers' confidence or motivation to teach the learning area. In considering many of the resources she had used in the past, including C2C materials, Judy reflected:

I think that's where we're doing kids a disservice because we make it boring. We make it about facts and figures and things like that, rather than ... about understanding people ... and what people have been through and how they've achieved the democracy that we have today. It SHOULD be exciting. (Judy, T)

Specific examples of more engaging student activities included incorporating role play and narratives, limiting the amount of written work and sourcing motivating worksheets and PowerPoints from commercial websites.

Perceptions of Accountability

Alison's perception of her accountability towards HASS understandably reflected the role she had taken on as curriculum leader. She largely viewed her responsibility in terms of ensuring teachers were covering and assessing Australian Curriculum content in order to report to parents and to address accreditation obligations. Judy was aware of her accountability to curriculum to the school, however the large degree of professional autonomy afforded by Charles College allowed her to view her responsibilities to HASS by centring on students. She stated:

I would say that as a teacher, my focus is not even on the parents or my bosses or anything. It's on wanting to help them [students] become better versions of themselves. Become better people, better citizens and that's really what it has to be for. (Judy, T)

Discussion

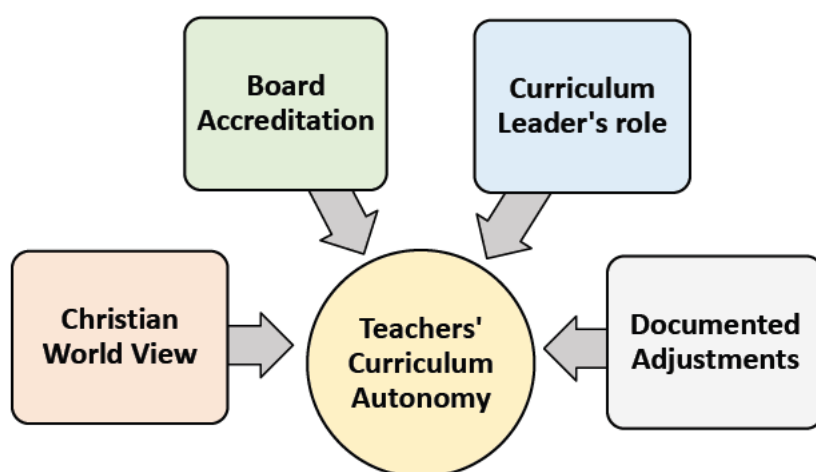
Contextual Elements Impacting Teachers' Autonomy

Judy reflected that her tenure at Charles College differed from her previous State school teaching experience by stating: *"Here, I feel that we are given a lot more freedom"* (Judy, T). Alison's comments about the school's absence of *"oversight"* and *"strategic goals"*

and benchmarks” coupled with her opinion that teachers were “*very much trusted*” (Alison, CL) appeared to support this view. It gave the impression that Charles College extended a large degree of professional autonomy, allowing their teachers to exercise independent agency in planning and assessing their own units of work in HASS. However, the diagram represented in Figure 48 below illustrates that the school’s various structural elements still exerted influence on teachers’ curriculum autonomy.

Figure 48

Contextual Elements Impacting Teacher Autonomy at Charles College



Dieudé and Prøitz’s (2024) study seems to align with Judy’s assumption about having “*more freedom*”, by concluding that teachers in independent schools reported a greater degree of autonomy than those in the public system. However, they also found that teachers in independent schools appeared to exhibit a higher commitment to their school’s specific framework and vision. This finding corresponds to Variyan’s (2019) observation that independent school teachers felt obliged to support institutional goals rather than challenging them.

One of these institutional goals at Charles College was the incorporation of a *Christian World View* into all aspects of school life. Crenshaw (2013) observed that Christian colleges implemented this view by “structuring their mission statements, student life

activities, teaching practices, and overall community ethos to reflect a dedication to faith and learning” (p. 1). Crenshaw conceded that integrating a *Christian World View* into all curricula could be problematic and stressed the importance of professional development to provide guidance for teachers. Alison noted that the principal at Charles College had already begun this process by:

starting from the basics of Christian World View and how we integrate that into our teaching. We find that some teachers probably do it very well naturally, they know how to build Christian World View and weave it throughout their unit in a meaningful way. There would also be some teachers who would admit that they don't really know what that means.

(Alison, CL)

While it was made clear that a Christian perspective permeated all curriculum throughout the school, the participants did not give specific instances of how this impacted the teaching of HASS content.

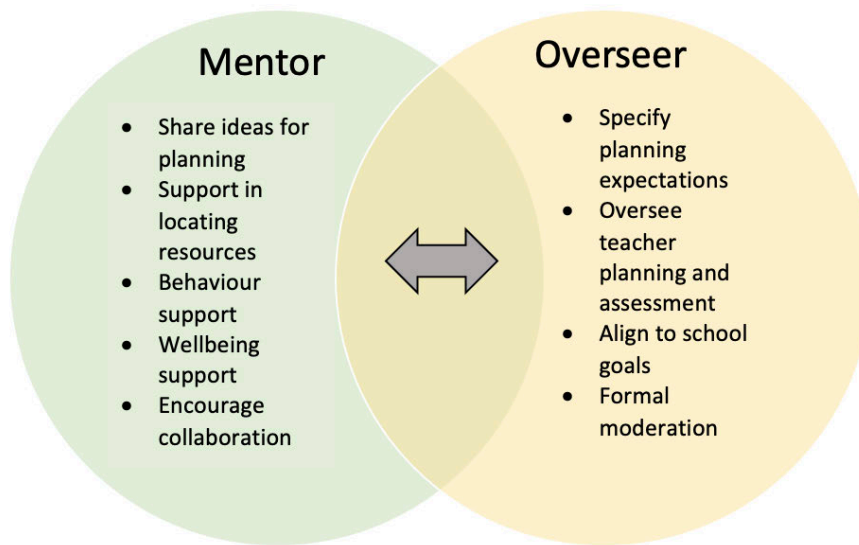
The process of Board accreditation and the move towards a more accountable *Teaching and Learning Framework* were also systemic considerations that impacted the degree of professional autonomy afforded to teachers at Charles College. This was particularly evident in the emerging oversight role of curriculum leaders. The Independent Schools of Australia stated that “When autonomy is combined with appropriate accountability - for education as well as responsible financial management - it has been found to be associated with better student outcomes” (Independent Schools Australia, n.d., para. 3).

Another significant policy element impacting teachers’ autonomy at Charles College was the attention given to differentiating and documenting curriculum adjustments for specific students. This policy was in alignment with the Disability Standards for Education which stipulates that all Australian schools must provide reasonable adjustments to enable

students' equitable access and participation in curriculum (Australian Department of Education, 2005). At Charles College, these adjustments determined that “*all of the modifications have to be recorded in your weekly planning, every day, every lesson, for every student*” (Alison, CL). This intense response to student adjustments can be understood by Variyan (2018) who suggested that fee-paying private schools can be “fearful of the potential of parent complaint and their school administrators' sensitivity to how bad news would resonate amongst the parent population” (p. 232).

Role of Curriculum Leader: Mentor versus Overseer

The changing role of school leaders from addressing behaviour management and other administrative duties to supporting curriculum implementation became more prevalent since the arrival of the Australian Curriculum (Beswick & Hall, 2014). Charles College's decision to employ Alison for both classroom teaching and curriculum leader duties utilised a *hybrid teacher* leadership model popular with educational authorities as a means of facilitating curriculum change using “teacher insiders” (Margolis & Huggins, 2012, p. 976). Loxton (2018) stated, “a collaborative approach, rather than an autocratic one, may ease the burden for leaders by more even distribution of roles and responsibilities” (p. 88). The diagram represented below in Figure 49 outlines two potential versions of the responsibilities undertaken by hybrid curriculum leaders and illustrates Alison's changing role.

Figure 49*Changing Curriculum Leader Role at Charles College*

Essentially, Alison identified her current role as more of a mentor than overseer.

However, as the school made a move to a more accountable approach to curriculum by implementing the Teaching and Learning Framework, Alison would need to take on a more exacting role with teachers, by creating greater direction around planning and assessment, a challenge she accepted may cause dismay because “*it’s new to them*” (Alison, CL). The intersection of the two roles, depicted in Figure 54 presents the medium ground that Alison aimed to achieve: introducing a degree of curriculum accountability while maintaining a collaborative and trusted position amongst her peers. In giving greater powers of oversight to middle leader roles, Margolis and Huggins (2012) acknowledged that relationship deterioration can occur amongst staff. If middle leaders are to be successful, it is therefore paramount that schools maintain open lines of communication and build a culture of trust and respect for individual teacher agency (Beswick & Hall, 2014).

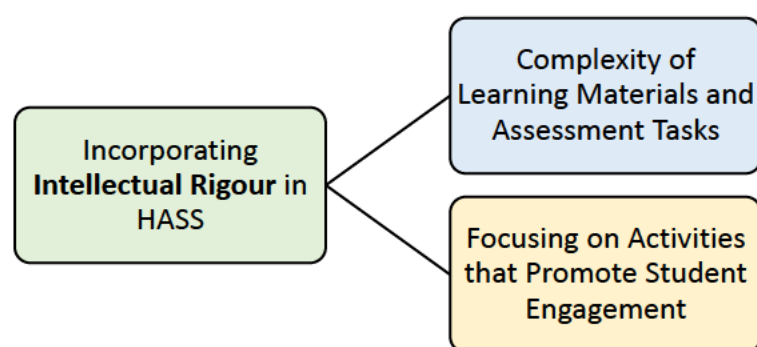
Intellectual Rigour through Student Engagement

Both educators at Charles College understood that a major impetus for the school’s new approach to curriculum involved incorporating greater academic rigour. Alison reflected: “*A big thing we’re focused on at the moment is, are we doing it in enough depth?*” (Alison,

CL). In examining how the school intended to tackle this issue, it is useful to refer to ACARA's delineation of the terms, *breadth*, *depth*, and *rigour*. *Breadth* refers to the range of topics to be covered for a learning area over one year level, while *depth* is concerned with the amount of detail and deep knowledge needed to develop the key concepts necessary for application of these understandings. *Rigour* refers to the intellectual demand placed on students in order to engage in opportunities for higher order thinking (ACARA). The diagram depicted in Figure 50 depicts two avenues in which intellectual rigour could be incorporated into HASS curriculum at Charles College.

Figure 50

Two Means of Incorporating Intellectual Rigour into HASS



When Alison advised her teachers about ways of creating differentiated assessment questions “*that are at an A standard or a B standard or a C standard*” (Alison, CL), she was essentially attempting to inject a degree of prescribed rigour into student learning materials. Several educators in the State system justified the use of C2C materials on the assumption that they were more rigorous in approach (Craig, CL. Watershed SS; Pippa, CL. Jackson SS). However, in addressing feedback from colleagues who had accessed these materials, Alison concluded that the lessons’ extensive content coverage often hindered “*an opportunity to go deep enough into the units*” (Alison, CL).

A second means of fostering student intellectual rigour is by incorporating activities that promote students' interest and engagement. As Harbour et al. (2015) argued, "Student engagement is one of the most well-established predictors of achievement; when students are more engaged in academic instruction, they tend to have greater academic and social success" (p 5). Further, Wright-Maley (2016) argued that because humanities education is focused on teaching about life in the real world, it is logical that students should be involved in authentic learning activities that promote a greater degree of engagement. Judy had a particular inclination to make her HASS lessons more engaging and fun by sourcing ideas from the internet and school library. She stated: *"I generally plan a week ahead and go, 'this is what we're covering'. I'll get online, have a look and then I'd go 'Ahh, that's a bit boring. I wonder if there's a better way to do that?'"* (Judy, T)

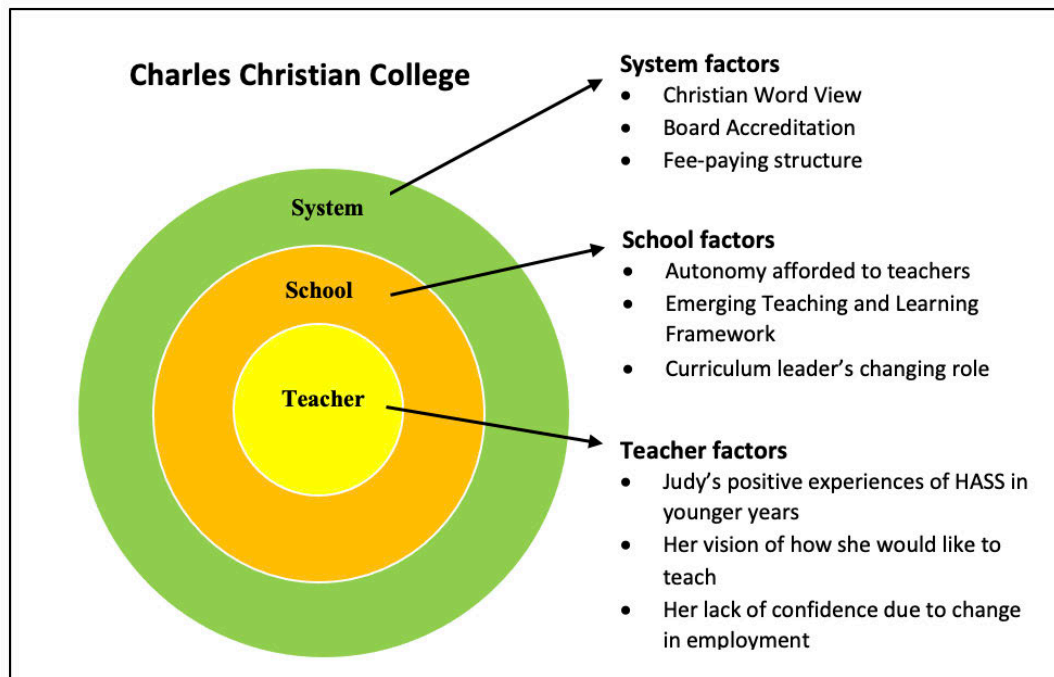
However, DiCamillo (2010) challenged the assumption that engaging activities necessarily promoted student learning, calling them "a kind of intellectual candy" (p. 190). Further, a "piecemeal approach to social studies programming can result in a disconnected conglomeration of activities and teaching methods that lack focus, coherence, and comprehensiveness" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2016, p. 32). With the incorporation of Charles College's Teaching and Learning Framework, there was an opportunity for staff to share opinions on HASS curriculum and to build a more cohesive and focused response to this learning area.

Summary: Case Study Six

The diagram represented below in Figure 51 highlights the most significant systemic, school and individual teacher factors acting on the way HASS was implemented in the primary campus of Charles College.

Figure 51

Systemic, School, and Teacher Factors Impacting HASS at Charles College



As part of the Independent Schools of Australia, Charles College was responsible for implementing the Australian Curriculum within a framework that gave it ownership over educational and religious direction, staffing, and the establishment of its own governing body. The school's emerging Teaching and Learning Framework increasingly impacted the degree of professional autonomy teachers experienced when planning, resourcing and assessing independent units of work in HASS. In her role as curriculum leader for the upper primary, Alison was charged with assisting teachers to achieve a closer alignment with Australian Curriculum achievement standards and to build awareness of incorporating more intellectual rigour into HASS lessons. As a new teacher to the school, Judy enjoyed the level of autonomy she has been afforded, but lacked the confidence to fully embrace her own planning ideals for HASS. She was supported by her teaching partner's planning experience and the guidance she received from monthly curriculum meetings with Alison.

Chapter Summary: The Six Case Studies

The purpose of Chapter Six was to answer the overall research question of this study: How do schools and teachers influence the enactment of HASS in Queensland primary classrooms? Six individual case studies were presented as unique portraits of school-based HASS curriculum implementation. A common framework was utilised throughout to provide consistency of approach, ease of reading, and to allow commonalities and differences to be perceived. The framework was structured to highlight the twin components of school-based implementation: administrative decisions and teachers' personal influences. By doing so, two of the study's sub-questions were directly addressed:

1. What specific organisational decisions frame the way HASS is implemented at a particular school? and
2. What perceptions do teachers have on their own abilities to enact effective HASS curriculum?

A discussion section was included in each of the six case studies to highlight the most salient influences on implementation and to ascertain the implications for teachers' autonomy and agency in enacting HASS in the classroom.

The following chapter focuses on findings derived from the cross-case analysis and is presented in four parts: planning for HASS, pedagogical practices, assessment procedures and the teacher's individual role.

Chapter 7. Cross-Case Findings

Chapter Seven outlines the findings derived from the cross-case analysis of data collected from the six participant schools. To understand the process and associated implications of HASS implementation in Queensland primary classrooms, the study is delimited to examining school-based influences: the decisions made by school leaders, framing the way HASS is planned, taught and assessed; and the perspectives of teachers responsible for teaching the learning area. As the research's aim was also to understand the impact of these influences on teachers' autonomy and agency in enacting HASS curriculum, they are addressed in four separate aspects of the implementation process. The study's findings are therefore presented in four different sections:

1. School-based planning expectations for HASS
2. Schools' approach to pedagogy
3. Views around assessment and student success
4. The role of the teacher

Part One of Findings: School-Based Planning Expectations For HASS

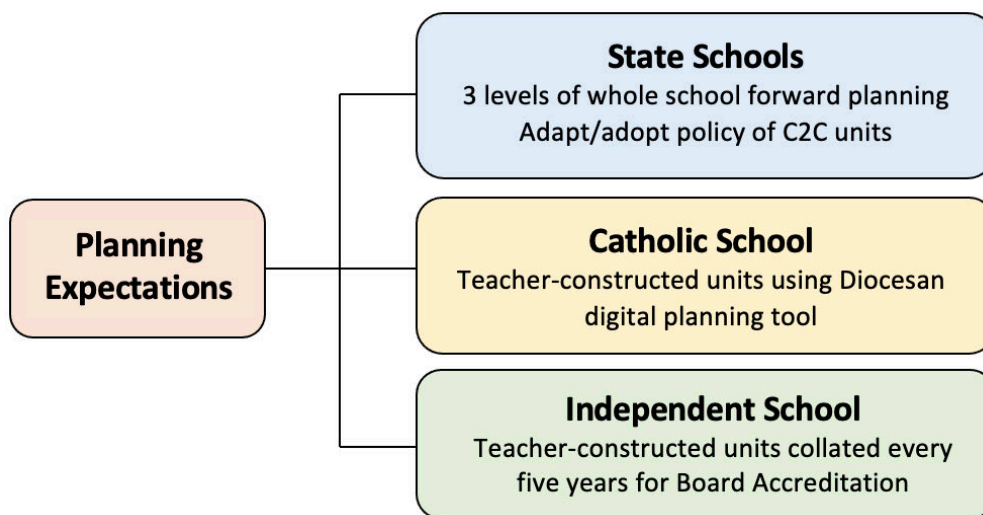
This first section of the cross-case findings explores the decisions made by school leaders determining the plan for how HASS curriculum was implemented in the different school contexts. These decisions included the development of a whole school scope and sequence plan, the personnel responsible for teaching and assessing the learning area, and expectations around the adoption and fidelity towards mandated curriculum materials. Because the C2C program is a dominant feature of Queensland schools' approach to curriculum (Poulton, 2020), this section also explores educators' varied and conflicting opinions of these materials.

Whole-school Curriculum Mapping

The Grattan Institute defined whole-school curriculum mapping, as a “coordinated plan for how a school will implement its curriculum” and a means of providing school administrators with “a bird’s-eye view” of the plan’s scope and sequence (Hunter et al., 2022, p. 7). Figure 52 depicted below, identifies the different positions on school-based curriculum planning taken by the State, Catholic and Independent sectors investigated in this study.

Figure 52

Curriculum Planning in State, Catholic and Independent Schools



Whole School Planning: State Schools

The Queensland Education Department clearly specified that administrators from each State school must document, retain and monitor a whole-school curriculum, assessment and reporting plan for each learning area in the Australian Curriculum. Three levels of planning were to be addressed: a scope and sequence of every curriculum area across the whole school, planning for specific year levels, including summative assessment tasks and associated marking rubrics, and individual unit plans (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b). With such exacting demands, it is understandable that each of the four State schools in this study elected to adopt C2C’s ready-made materials rather than committing limited resources of time and personnel to create their own independent, alternative three-level plan.

At Darby State School, administrators chose to adopt C2C's two-year A/B HASS program to align with the school's multi-year level structure being trialed across the school. The other three State schools stayed with the single year-level plan. Both plans consisted of one unit per semester: one History, one Geography, with the other sub-strands (Civics and Citizenship and Business and Economics) integrated where appropriate. To assist teachers in accessing planning materials, administrators at Watershed and Hopeville utilised a school-specific digital platform to upload relevant C2C unit plans, individual lessons, student resources and assessment tasks for each year level. Darby administrators were in the process of establishing a new digital facility after the Education Department retired their previous web-based platform. At Jackson, an overview of each year-level plan was distributed, but teachers needed to access the materials themselves from the Education Department's C2C portal.

Across the four State schools, teachers expressed an appreciation of the clear expectations established by their curriculum map. As Gabby explained: *"that curriculum overview is how we get that consistency and that clarity from Admin"* (Gabby, CL, Hopeville SS). Barry continued: *"at this school, it's very, very organised... I'll know everything, so I am ready to go on Day One"* (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). Sonya, who re-entered the workforce after an extended period of leave, expressed gratitude for her school's plan, exclaiming: *"brilliantly, everything's just planned and set and ready and I take the unit and I teach it"* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). Gabby had a similar opinion regarding the accessibility of the materials, stating that Barry, her school's curriculum leader *"took care of that for us. And that makes it very easy. It's a one-stop shop"* (Gabby, CL, Hopeville SS).

Whole School Planning: Non-State Schools

Both Charles College and St Bob's Catholic school differed from the State system in that a forward curriculum overview was not stipulated and unit plans were largely developed

by individual teachers throughout the school year. The Grattan Institute noted that this was not an unusual circumstance, with findings from a recent survey establishing that “a whole-school approach to curriculum planning is the exception in Australia, not the rule” (Hunter et al., 2022, p. 3). Furthermore only 38% of the survey’s respondents considered an absence of such a plan hindered their preparations for classroom enactment of curriculum.

The teachers at St Bob’s planned for HASS implementation by utilising a digital curriculum management tool created by the local Diocese for this purpose. The interactive nature of the program allowed teachers to align learning activities with ACARA planning information, to input student assessment data and to generate report cards. As Kerry stated: *“There’s no element that you can’t sort of leave out. The framework’s there”* (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s). Planning materials obtained from online subscription sites, such as the commercial program adopted by Lauren, could be attached as an appendix. Part of the curriculum leader’s role involved assisting teachers with the planning tool, ensuring HASS content was fully addressed, and in devising suitable assessment tasks.

As each class at St Bob’s had a multi-year level structure, teachers combined year-level HASS content to create an alternating A/B plan with a sequence spanning two years. Two HASS units were planned for each school year: History in the first semester and Geography in the second, with Civics and Citizenship integrated into the principal’s Religion class, and Business and Economics linked to Mathematics curriculum. School and central Diocesan administrators were able to keep track of HASS curriculum implementation as the teacher-constructed units were added to the digital system over the school year. This oversight was confirmed in Kerry’s statement: *“there are generally education officers who are in charge of different subjects who will then do checks”* (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s).

At Charles College, classroom teachers were responsible for creating their own units of work directly from the ACARA website, utilising a specified planning template *“they’re*

very much trusted to be using” (Alison, CL, Charles College). To support this individual planning, the school engaged two staff members to act as curriculum leaders, assisting teachers with Australian Curriculum content and assessment alignment, selecting suitable resources and improving rigour in summative assessment tasks. A recent initiative to develop a Teaching and Learning Framework across the school, beginning with HASS and Mathematics, sought to establish a more cohesive approach to whole school planning. As Alison explained: *“it’s only now that I’ve started gathering some of that information so we can actually ... look at the big picture of how HASS is going”* (Alison, CL, Charles College). Curriculum accountability was largely established when individual unit plans and assessments were collated every five years for a Board accreditation process.

An overview of each school’s plan for the implementation of HASS is presented below in Table 9. The table summarises the specific approach taken by each school in planning whole-school curriculum, and the means by which teachers could gain access to that planning information.

Table 9*Summary of Each School's HASS Plan*

School	Sector	Form of HASS School Plan	Teacher access to plan
Watershed SS	State	C2C Whole-school, multi-year level and individual unit plans 2 year-alternating A/B format	Principal's digital platform linking units, lessons, student resources and assessment tasks
Jackson SS	State	C2C Whole-school, single year level and individual unit plans	Teachers directed to C2C online portal to access materials themselves
Darby SS	State	C2C Whole-school, multi-year level and individual unit plans 2 year-alternating A/B format	In process of creating digital platform for teachers to access C2C materials
Hopeville SS	State	C2C Whole-school, single year level and individual unit plans	Curriculum leader's digital platform linking units, lessons, student resources and assessment tasks.
Charles College	Independent	Teachers created units of work directly from ACARA	Individual rather than collated whole-school plans Teacher units collected for Board accreditation
St Bob's	Catholic	Curriculum organised into two-year A/B plan Diocesan digital planning tool to create units of work.	Teacher units collated on Diocesan planning tool

Decisions around HASS Teaching Personnel

The overview depicted in Table 10 below differentiates the two different means by which HASS curriculum was delivered in the six participant schools. As full-time generalist teachers, Heather, Gabby and Judy were expected to enact HASS curriculum as part of their normal classroom duties. For the other three schools, the HASS curriculum was implemented by an external person as a means of providing non-contact release for either teachers or principal.

Table 10*Role Descriptions for Teachers of Year Four HASS*

School	Teacher	School Position	HASS Responsibility	Rationale for Decision
Jackson SS	<i>Heather</i>	Full-time Year 4 class teacher	Teaching HASS to own class	
Hopeville SS	<i>Gabby</i>	Full-time Year 4 class teacher	Teaching HASS to own class	
Charles College	<i>Judy</i>	Full-time Year 4 class teacher	Teaching HASS to own class	
Darby SS	<i>Donna</i>	Deputy	Teaching HASS to 3 Year 3/4 classes	Provision of non-contact release for teachers
St Bob's	<i>Lauren</i>	Casual contract teacher	Teaching HASS to Year 3/4 class	Provision of non-contact release for curriculum leader
Watershed SS	<i>Sonya</i>	Casual contract teacher	Teaching HASS to Years 3-6 in two different classes	Provision of non-contact release for principal

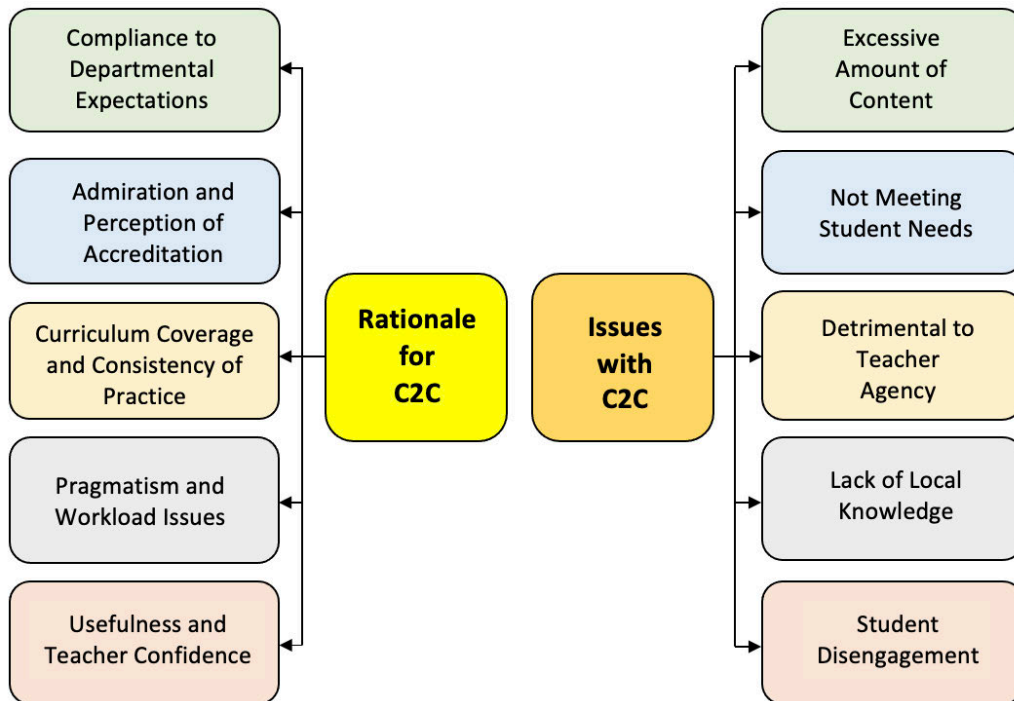
In each of these circumstances, a deliberate decision was made by school leaders on which learning area should be utilised for non-contact provision. Ardzejewska et al. (2010) suggested that these decisions are underpinned by leaders' philosophies on the role of primary schooling and their perception of "subject status" (p. 206) where humanities is often considered less important than English and Mathematics. As a deputy, Pippa rejected this view of curriculum priorities, declaring: *"For me, it's Maths, English, Science, HASS. I think HASS is in there as well"* because *"classroom teachers are best positioned to be delivering that content and having ownership of that"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Eaude's (2014) point that greater opportunities of connecting content are afforded when humanities is taught by classroom teachers is borne out in Pippa's assertion that: *"you need that transfer of learning"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Further, Dixon et al. (2015) argued that when teachers were exempt

from teaching humanities, they missed opportunities of developing essential knowledge and skills which could be called upon should there be a change in non-contact circumstances.

At Darby, Mandy explained that: *“a conscious decision was made to say, Right, you focus on these, and we’ll get somebody to focus on this”* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). By ensuring external teachers took full responsibility for implementing HASS, classroom teachers were not only given requisite non-contact release, but had their workload reduced by having one less curriculum to enact, a situation Ardzejewska et al. (2010) found was highly prized by teachers. This was evident in Gabby’s comment regarding HASS being used for non-contact in previous years: *“it blew my mind we would be given such a privilege”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). Besides workload issues, schools may benefit from having an external humanities teacher bringing enthusiasm and focus to the learning area (Dao & Cranston, 2018). Nevertheless, this would depend on the individual’s expertise and motivation, as Judy observed: *“in an ideal world, how cool would it be to have dedicated HASS teachers or Art teachers, experts in that field and come in and teach the kids. But it’s not the system”* (Judy, T, Charles College). As external teachers, Mandy and Donna also pointed out the difficulties experienced in providing individual adjustments for certain students and in completing work within set time frames.

School Decisions around Adoption of C2C Materials

While there was unanimity in State school teachers’ appreciation for the clarity and direction that C2C unit plans provided, opinions on the materials themselves were mixed. The graphic featured in Figure 53 below highlights two different educator viewpoints: supportive arguments for adopting C2C and issues arising from their implementation.

Figure 53*Pros and Cons of Adopting C2C Materials*

Although the statements cited in this section were largely from State school personnel, viewpoints from the two non-government schools have been included due to teachers' recollections in using C2C materials, either from previous experience teaching in State schools or through current Scootle website access. It should also be noted that despite the issues raised in this section, no teacher from the four State schools advocated abandoning C2C in order to create their own units.

Rationale for using C2C

Compliance. In each of the four State Schools, administrators made the decision to utilise C2C materials largely based on the assumption that it was: *“what the Department has developed for us”* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Consequently, adoption of the program was viewed as: *“an expectation of the Department”* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). The teachers in these schools appeared to recognise and accept the obligation that: *“we’re a C2C school and that’s what we follow”* (Heather, T, Jackson SS). This type of acquiescence is indicative of

teachers' reported sense of powerlessness within the educational system in recent years (Barton et al., 2014; McCarthy & Woodard, 2016). Nevertheless, the carefully worded advice from the Queensland Department of Education specified that although C2C was encouraged, it was not a directive: "C2C has been designed as a starting point for school curriculum planning and can be adapted to meet individual student learning needs and to suit local school contexts" (Queensland Department of Education, n.d.-d, para. 3).

Admiration/ Perception of C2C as an Accredited Program. As the only principal participating in this study, Craig argued that his decision went beyond simple Departmental compliance. He admired the C2C program for its *"intellectual rigour, the resourcing, the scheduling and the incorporation of all of the cross-curricular priorities"* and reasoned: *"I wouldn't shift from a C2C unit to a school-based unit until I can guarantee the school-based unit is better than what we're getting from the C2C unit"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). Pippa's admiration for the authors of C2C was evident in her statement: *"I think it's a very challenging position as C2C writer, and to create a screed of resources for a state. Like, that's phenomenal! I take my hat off to those people"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Alongside this admiration, was the perception that C2C materials had *"been quality assured by a panel of experts who have the time and space to be able to do that"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). This assumption was in contrast to the Grattan Institute's recent finding that no formal accreditation or impact study had been conducted for the program (Hunter et al., 2022).

Coverage of Australian Curriculum and Potential for Consistency. Generally, the teachers in the four State Schools expressed faith that C2C adequately addressed Australian Curriculum HASS content and as a consequence, they did not see a need to interact directly with the ACARA website unless necessary. As Barry stated, C2C planning gave teachers reassurance that *"our coverage is there"* (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). In responding to questions regarding HASS curriculum information on the ACARA website, Sonya

commented: *“I haven’t really delved into it yet”* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). This finding is similar to Ross’s (2017) conclusion that teachers who closely followed C2C materials became distanced from the official intended curriculum (ACARA) and no longer perceived it as integral to curriculum planning. It is perhaps relevant to consider Connelly and Ben-Peretz’s (1980) notion that teachers who rely on prescribed materials have a danger of becoming “mere transmitters of ‘teacher-proof’ materials” (p. 106) rather than active and engaged implementors of curriculum.

For larger schools, C2C adoption provided an opportunity to create a more consistent approach to enactment across year level cohorts. As a deputy, Pippa considered classroom consistency an essential component of her school’s implementation of curriculum, both in terms of improving teacher collaboration, and in presenting a united front for parents. In speaking of teachers’ opportunities to create minor adaptations to C2C materials, Pippa asserted:

I probably wouldn’t say yes to one class making changes in the year level plan like this and another class doing a different way. I’d try to have consistency of implementation across the year levels. So there has to be a lot of agreement in there, because parents talk, and we need to have that consistency. (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS)

This view complied with the Department of Education’s direction that schools develop quality assurance measures by monitoring the consistency, fidelity and clarity of curriculum enactment (Queensland Department of Education, 2022b). Kavalari et al. (2014) suggested that in adopting consistent classroom practices, teachers were more amenable to accepting evidence-based, contemporary teaching methods. Such a stance, however, is at odds with research by Reitano and Winter (2017) who warned that suppression of teachers’ individual

autonomy could negatively impact their creativity, personal practical knowledge and overall identity as a teacher.

Pragmatism/Workload Issues. Craig's comments regarding adoption of C2C not only revealed his admiration for the materials, but provided insight into the authority that administrators had over curriculum direction in their schools: *"I feel empowered to live and die by the decisions that I make"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). This stance appears to reject Hardy's (2015) assertion that principals' advocacy for C2C reflected their compliance to bureaucratic policy direction from more senior regional administrators. Craig's statements also allow for greater understanding of a decision-making process that goes beyond ideological reasoning. As a small-school principal struggling with *"the myriad, the millions of things that you do ... in one single day"*, Craig observed that pragmatism was an important factor underlying his decision to C2C materials. He stated:

I guess I have a view that if the Department has created this resource to provide us with the baseline minimum, if we were to make changes to that – and there are some things that I'd like to – it comes down to time ... and time is not abundant to allow us to plan and resource. (Craig, CL, Watershed SS)

Craig conceded that in adopting C2C, he relied on the program writers' interpretation of the HASS curriculum rather than accessing information directly from ACARA. Nevertheless, he reasoned: *"I guess it's the unfortunate truth in one regard, but the pragmatic approach in another, with the limited time we have for anything"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). While Pippa acknowledged that the teachers in her school theoretically had the capacity to create their own units of work, she conceded that: *"they're busy in the classroom which prevents the time and space that the C2C writers have"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Pippa's assessment of teacher

workload is corroborated in Heather's statement: *"you're so time poor the whole time... Fitting everything in, how many hours you have to do this, this, this. Which is really sad But that's just the way it is"* (Heather, T, Jackson SS). This issue of workload stress was considered one of the top reasons why teachers consider leaving the profession and was the rationale behind the Productivity Commission's advocacy for a national data base of curriculum materials for teachers (Australian Government, Productivity Commission, 2022).

Usefulness/Building Teachers' Confidence. Overall, teachers from all sectors recognised the usefulness of C2C resources. As Donna stated: *"C2C is nice, easy, quick"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). Heather was pleased with the materials, arguing: *"there's a good variety"* (Heather, T, Jackson SS). In reflecting on her previous time working in the State system, Judy conceded that: *"they definitely were helpful"* (Judy, T, Charles College). Teachers also recognised the benefit of utilising C2C planning materials to support curriculum direction and to build teacher confidence: *"It's great if you're just wanting a few ideas"* (Kerry, CL, St Bobs), *"somewhere to start"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS) *"so that you weren't starting from scratch"* (Judy, T, Charles College). While Barton et al. (2014) acknowledged that C2C materials included some excellent ideas and resources, they insisted the program "be open to critique and flexible adaptation to suit the variety of contexts in which they may be used" (p 20).

Issues with C2C

Excessive Coverage/Lack of Depth. A common concern from the teachers, especially when directed to closely follow HASS C2C lesson plans, was the excessive amount of content covered in these units. As Kerry explained: *"it can be very overwhelming.... there's a lot of information"* (Kerry, CL, St Bobs). Mandy's comment: *"We're not getting examples that are manageable in your weekly routine"* (Mandy, CL,

Darby SS) highlighted teachers' struggles to complete lessons in the finite time allocated for HASS. Teachers also felt that there were few opportunities to develop deeper understandings of HASS concepts. Although Alison had not personally used C2C materials, she had observed:

The most common thing I've heard from teachers in looking at C2C units is that there are far too many lessons, and they tend to achieve, to quote 'an inch deep and a mile wide' so they don't have an opportunity to go deep enough into the units. (Alison, CL, Charles College)

Barry made a similar argument, stating: *"I think the whole thing needs to be toned down a bit... we're teaching a lot but we're not digging deep into anything"* (Barry, CL, Hopeville).

This conclusion coincided with a 2021 review into the ACARA HASS curriculum which found that despite recent revisions to the structure of HASS, teachers still reported difficulties in covering content and that further decluttering should be conducted to allow students to achieve better learning outcomes (ACARA, 2021a).

Not Meeting Individual Needs/Literacy Demands. In schools with a low ICSEA rating (such as Darby, Hopeville and Jackson), teachers were particularly concerned about the high literacy demands contained within C2C materials, especially in assessment tasks. Mandy stated:

the writing that is required in some of these HASS assessments is very, very difficult for a number of our kids... The thing that frustrates me about C2C resources is when we are looking at how we are assessing, if you look across the board, in all learning areas of C2C, the overwhelming majority of assessment is written. (Mandy, CL, Darby SS)

Gabby shared a similar opinion, stating that if students *"can't read and write, then it's going to be very difficult to interact with our HASS curriculum"* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). Judy

complained that: *“some of it just doesn’t feel like people understand kids... what works really well”* and concluded: *“it’s the worst way to teach, to present them with a piece of paper and do lots of reading”* (Judy, T, Charles College). Fairbanks and Andrew (2020) acknowledged that students with learning difficulties often struggle with standardised HASS assessments. They argued that a more flexible, inquiry-based approach to assessing HASS could provide a better measure of students’ understandings, divergent thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Detrimental to Teacher Agency. Judy characterised her C2C experience in the State system as: *“overwhelming ... I didn’t feel supported in it”*. She spoke of how C2C impacted her independent agency in enacting HASS lessons: *“I felt massive pressure to be doing it that way ... because that was the way it had to be done”* (Judy, T, Charles College). While Sonya described C2C as: *“very restrictive”* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS), other teachers currently utilising C2C materials appeared satisfied with the situation and felt their agency was best directed towards adapting lessons to meet individual student needs. As Gabby stated: *“I am grateful for it, all the legwork has been done so that you can focus on differentiation.”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS).

Nevertheless, the administrators in this study expressed some disquiet about teachers’ ongoing ability to interpret and develop curriculum apart from C2C. Donna, who was both a deputy and current teacher of HASS, reflected on the differences between teachers who taught prior to the introduction of C2C and those who came after:

I think if you’ve got some experience and you were taught how to plan a unit and how to plan lessons and what should or shouldn’t be in there, you get presented with something like this and think ‘Oh, great! Somewhere to start. I can tweak this, and I can do that’. Whereas if you haven’t done it

before and this is all you've got, I think it can paralyse teachers... If all you know is what C2C is, well that's awful for a start. (Donna, CL, Darby SS)

This stance aligned with Pippa's view:

I guess one of the fallouts of C2C is we're now into our second generation of teachers who haven't had to write their own units. ... do they actually know how to do that? As compared to what we learnt pre-C2C? (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS)

Lack of Local Knowledge. Maniates (2010) asserted that “When an externally designed curriculum meets students in a classroom setting, its strengths and limitations are exposed” (p. 73). One such limitation was the capacity of schools to include local content, especially when teachers had been directed to closely follow C2C lesson sequences. As Barry stated: “*You can be talking about any culture and any city*” (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). In considering whether the teachers at her school incorporated local information, Pippa stated:

I don't know if that's deliberately planned for and considered prior to implementing the unit... but my guess is no.... I think because C2C has been written from the perspective of delivering this content for this task, it's not stopping to say, these are the forty-one countries that the kids at your school come from. (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS)

Such a stance seems at odds with Departmental advice that C2C should suit local school contexts (Queensland Education, n.d.-d). This is pertinent given Judy's observation: “*I always find that kids are naturally more interested in their local area and what's relevant to them*” (Judy, T, Charles College).

Student Disengagement. While there was general agreement on the usefulness of C2C, several teachers commented that students found some of the materials disengaging. This was apparent in Sonya's statement: “*I do find a lot of it a little bit boring... The slide*

shows that they have on there. They're not very engaging at all" (Sonya, T, Watershed SS).

This was similar to Judy's assessment: *"I found the HASS stuff very dry.... It was boring... if anything, it's influenced me to always, always make it a bit interesting and fun and engaging as possible"* (Judy, T, Charles College). As a consequence, teachers occasionally substituted C2C materials they deemed less engaging with alternatives from online subscription sites.

While examining her year level's current C2C HASS worksheets, Gabby exclaimed:

"They're not very exciting, are they? No, and that's why we look at the curriculum and adjust them. ... you'd lose your kids, and no child is going to sit and listen to it. They don't"

(Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). This stance was supported by Catling (2017), who argued that successful humanities teaching required a clear yet flexible approach, prioritising activities that develop deeper understandings of concepts through student engagement.

Fidelity Towards Mandated HASS Materials

The term, *fidelity* can be defined as "the degree to which teachers and program providers implement programs as intended by the program developers" (Galmez-Burakgazi, 2020, p. 922). In the context of this study, higher fidelity indicates a greater degree of teachers' adherence to these materials, while lower fidelity is achieved through instituting a series of adaptations, either to the original program itself or the manner in which it is enacted in the classroom.

State Schools: Fidelity to C2C

While each of the four State schools adopted C2C as the basis of their HASS curriculum, there were differences in the level of fidelity towards the program expected by each school's leaders. An overview of the different position taken by each of the four State schools regarding adherence to C2C lesson sequences, resources and assessment tasks is presented below in Table 11.

Table 11*Differences in Fidelity Expectations for C2C*


	Hopeville SS	Darby SS	Watershed SS	Jackson SS
C2C Lesson sequence	Generally followed lesson sequence. Added activities such as music, videos	Generally followed lesson sequence. Some deleted due to lack of time	Teachers followed lesson sequence as directed in unit plan	Teachers followed lesson sequence as directed in unit plan
C2C Student Resources	Teacher substituted C2C worksheets. Occasionally created own PowerPoints	Generally utilised C2C resources. Some deleted due to lack of time	Occasional substitution of C2C PowerPoints and worksheets	Utilised all resources. Occasionally added library books.
C2C Assessment task	Some alterations to task Deleted parts re-worded questions Adaptations: Completed incrementally, pre-taught test items, Aide support for EAL/D students,	Slight alterations to task Deleted parts that took a longer time to complete Adaptations: Aide support	No changes to task Pasted into student workbooks at beginning of unit. Adaptations: Completed incrementally Aide support for one child with literacy issues	No changes to task Adaptations: Completed incrementally, Aide support for EAL/D students, scribed answers
C2C Marking Rubric	Some adaptations made for particular students	No changes to rubric	No changes to rubric	No changes to rubric

Of the four schools, Jackson State School appeared to have adopted C2C materials with the highest fidelity in terms of adhering to lesson sequences, student resources, assessment tasks and marking rubrics. Despite the deputy's assertion that only the assessment task and rubric was compulsory, class teacher Heather made it clear that the HASS curriculum at Jackson was implemented entirely through C2C materials: *"that's the way we teach it here"* (Heather, T, Jackson SS). A school policy allowing an unlimited capacity for reproducing C2C worksheets facilitated this adherence. Any adaptations made were not to the materials themselves, but involved aide support for students to complete assessment tasks. At Watershed, the principal was desirous of a closer adherence to C2C HASS materials, but was

accepting of his teaching partner's decision to substitute certain resources she found less engaging for students. The enactment of HASS curriculum in Years One to Four at Darby State School was impacted by the one-hour time constraint, associated with the school's non-contact provision, and by Mandy and Donna's other administrative commitments. Consequently, certain HASS lessons and assessment tasks, especially those requiring written responses, needed to be reduced or omitted.

While it is considered that teachers at Hopeville had a lower degree of fidelity towards adhering to C2C, administrators at the school still expected the marking guide to be kept intact. As Gabby had one Year Three student in her class, she made small allowances in relation to the language used in the marking guide. Other changes Gabby made to C2C lesson sequences, resources and assessment tasks were focused on creating greater student engagement, and to facilitate opportunities of achieving success in HASS. It would appear that the degree of autonomy afforded to Gabby to make these adaptations allowed her to pursue "fidelity to a goal" rather than a narrow "fidelity to a procedure" (McNeill et al., 2018, p. 14).

Non-State School Approach to Fidelity

Without school direction to adopt a specified program for implementing HASS, the teachers in the Catholic and Independent sectors were afforded greater autonomy in HASS planning. Nevertheless, Lauren from St Bob's, elected to use an online commercial HASS program with similar fidelity to her State school counterparts. Lauren expressed confidence in the program's ability to cover Australian Curriculum content, stating that: *"it has all the lessons and then it has assessment at the end... they address all of the ACARA achievement standards*. She outlined the benefits of ready-made materials, stating: *"everything is there, you're not bogged down trying to find other resources ... I do think having everything at your fingertips does help"* (Lauren, T, St, Bob's). While Lauren's colleague, Kerry acknowledged

the practical benefits of using online curriculum programs, she argued that experienced teachers should be able to exercise their professional agency in discerning the efficacy of these materials. She pointed out that: *“something mandated isn’t going to cover every cohort because not every child is ready for that”* (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s). This view aligns with Bradfield and Exley’s (2020) position that external contextual factors impact curriculum enactment and that educators should “analyse and audit supplementary materials” (p. 13) when considering fidelity towards prescribed programs.

Summary of Findings: Whole-School Planning for HASS

This section of the cross-case findings examined each schools’ plan for implementing the Australian HASS curriculum. A distinct difference became apparent between State and non-State schools in their approach to incorporating a whole school implementation plan for HASS. In the State system, the Department of Education’s directive that schools develop a comprehensive three-tiered scope and sequence plan which included specific units and assessments for each year level, had a major influence on each school leader’s decision to adopt C2C’s ready-made curriculum programs in HASS. In non-State schools, whole school plans were generally developed incrementally as teachers’ unit plans were added throughout the school year. The Catholic school in this study utilised a Diocesan digital management tool for the collation of these units, and supported both teachers’ own units of work, as well as commercial curriculum programs. Oversight of the Independent school’s curriculum plan was achieved through an accreditation process conducted by a School Board every five years.

The provision of non-contact release for teachers was a second major influence on how HASS curriculum was implemented. Leaders were tasked with making decisions on whether HASS curriculum would be utilised in these relief sessions, and who would be responsible for teaching and assessing the learning area. The study showed that three schools had elected to utilise HASS for non-contact provisions and three were taught by class

teachers. Positive implications stemming from the decision to use external personnel for HASS included a decrease in class teachers' curriculum workload and a potential for developing HASS expertise across year levels. However, there were limited opportunities to integrate HASS with other learning areas, and the one-hour time slot made it difficult to complete lessons and to provide suitable adjustments for students.

In examining the rationale behind the adoption of C2C, it became evident that educators had varied opinions on the matter. Decisions to adopt C2C programs were largely made on pragmatic grounds with the materials perceived to be convenient and useful, however they were also acknowledged as accredited, rigorous and aligned with the Australian Curriculum. On the other hand, teachers were concerned about the amount of content to be covered, student disengagement and high literacy levels needed to complete written tasks. Administrators were also concerned that ongoing reliance on prescriptive materials could be detrimental for teachers' agency and overall professional ability to plan for curriculum.

Another major decision impacting HASS concerned the degree of fidelity expected by school leaders towards C2C HASS materials. While each of the four State schools elected to adopt C2C HASS, there were variations in the scope of autonomy that teachers were afforded in implementing the materials. Where schools acknowledged C2C units could be adapted, teachers had a greater capacity to substitute less engaging resources and to make adjustments to support individual students in assessment tasks.

Part Two of Findings: Pedagogical Approaches in Teaching HASS

While the term, *pedagogy* generally can be defined as “the art and science of educating” (Reynolds, 2014, p. 33), *pedagogical knowledge* “refers to the specialised knowledge of teachers for creating effective teaching and learning environments for all students” (p. 2). This section of the findings utilises this more precise definition to examine

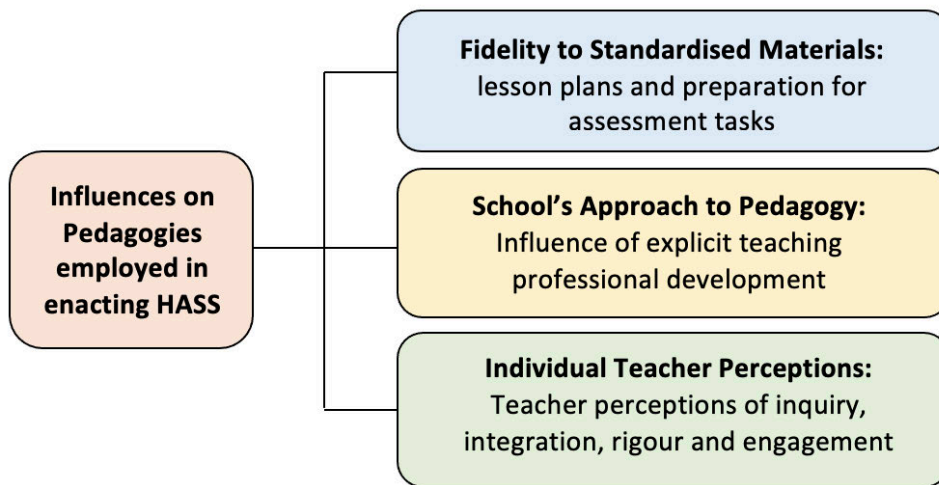
how systemic, school and teacher-based influences impacted the pedagogies used to enact the Australian HASS curriculum in Queensland primary schools.

Current advice from the Australian Curriculum determined that P-6 HASS was “flexibly designed to suit a range of implementation approaches and classroom contexts” (ACARA, 2021b, p. 9). This “pedagogically free” (Loxton, 2018, p.16) stance suggested that teachers should have the autonomy to decide “how best to introduce essential concepts and processes, and how to progressively deepen understanding of discipline-based content, including through cross-disciplinary learning that broadens and enriches each student’s learning” (ACARA, 2020, p. 17).

Pippa’s statement that: *“Ultimately the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ is developed by the leadership team, the ‘how’ is created by the teachers”* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS) appeared to align with ACARA’s position. However, evidence suggested that teachers’ approach to pedagogy was not autonomous and was often underscored by the “theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it” (Reynold, 2014, p. 33). This study identifies three major influences impacting teachers’ pedagogical approach to enacting HASS in Queensland primary schools: fidelity to standardised materials, each school’s preferred approach to pedagogy, and individual teacher perceptions of effective classroom practices. These three elements are represented below in Figure 54.

Figure 54

Major Influences on Pedagogies for HASS Enactment



Pedagogical Fidelity to Standardised Materials

In the previous section, it was established that five of the six classroom teachers participating in this study utilised standardised materials with varying degrees of fidelity to enact Australian HASS curriculum. Given the reliance on the materials' lesson sequences and summative assessment tasks, it was apparent that teachers' pedagogical decisions were largely framed by these prescriptive programs. As Craig explained:

when you're looking at that front load of your unit, you know what processes the kids need to be able to do rather than just the content ... it's easy to plan for. This is HASS, this is what we need to do in the lesson.

(Craig, CL, Watershed SS)

Sonya was more explicit, stating: *"I just look at the C2C and teach from that"* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS).

Despite the tendency for standardised materials to dictate teachers' pedagogical decisions, Priestley and Philippou (2018) stressed that "even under the most prescriptive 'teacher-proof' curricula, spaces exist for teachers to mediate the curriculum" (p. 153). This position was supported by Remillard and Heck (2014) who pointed out that contextual factors

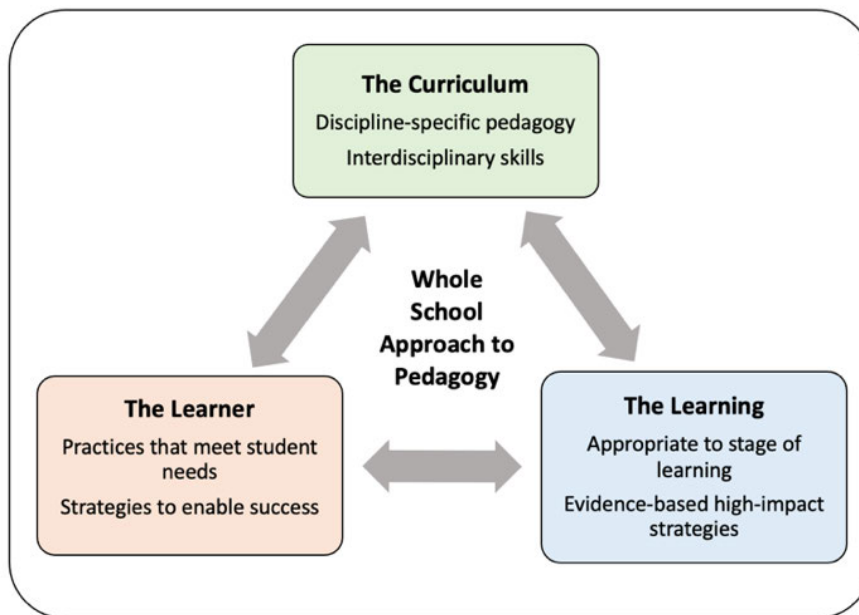
and the interactive nature of teaching, influence day-to-day classroom curriculum enactment. Considering that Lauren employed a commercial curriculum program with a high degree of fidelity, her statement about capitalising on teaching opportunities was relevant:

we do a lot of discussion and sometimes they go in a bit different way ... I think sometimes it's better to roll with the question because they're interested, they want to know. ... I think it's important to explore those questions and I guess as long as they know the facts, then they're able to formulate ideas and opinions. (Lauren, T, St Bob's)

With Charles College being the only school in this study not using standardised curriculum materials, the teachers were “*very much trusted*” (Alison, CL, Charles College) to independently interpret the HASS Australian Curriculum and plan suitable learning activities and assessment tasks. Nevertheless, pedagogical decisions at the school were still influenced by the school's commitment to providing a Christian World View and the principal's recommendations after the Board accreditation process.

Whole School Approach to Pedagogy

Pippa's comment that: “*the system has moved towards a whole school approach to pedagogy*” (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS) referred to the Queensland Department of Education's current policy around school-level pedagogical focus. In collaboration with staff, school administrators were tasked with developing a committed and documented vision that promoted effective evidence-based pedagogical strategies that aligned with their school's specific improvement agenda. The diagram in Figure 55 below illustrates three interconnecting principles of a school's approach to pedagogy: specific pedagogical aspects of the Australian Curriculum (such as the utilisation of inquiry in HASS); acknowledged evidence-informed pedagogical practices; and teachers' employment of strategies aimed at supporting individual students (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b).

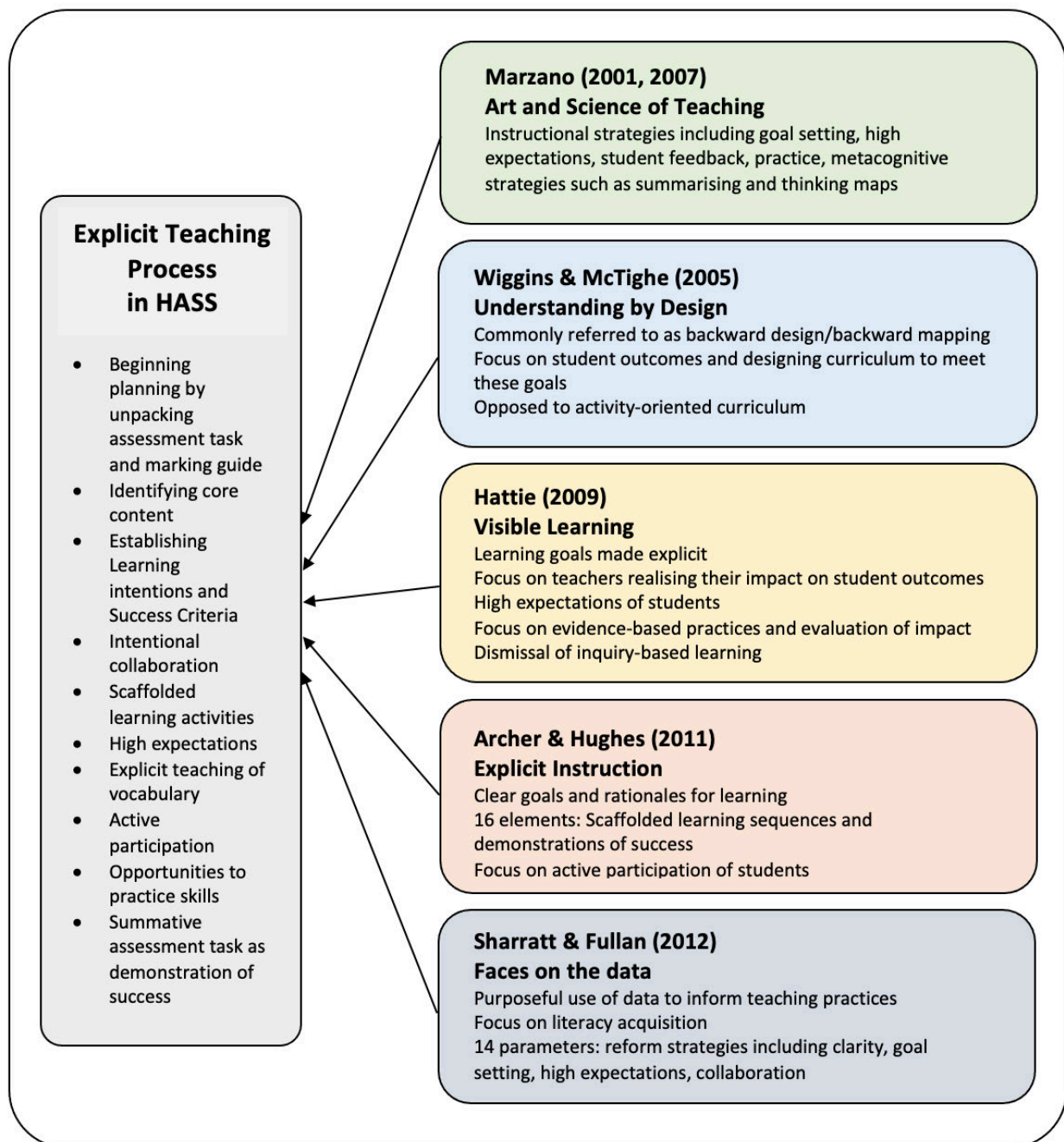
Figure 55*Major Influences on Pedagogies for HASS Enactment*

When teachers in this study announced that “*We’re a Visible Learning school*” (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s) and “*We’re a Sharratt school*” (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS), they were identifying their school’s pedagogical approach in terms of prominent and influential educators, such as Hattie (2009) and Sharratt and Fullen (2012). This commitment was derived from deliberate leadership choices and a prolonged period of professional learning aimed at improving student outcomes (Eacott, 2017). In 2014, the Queensland Government recruited Master Teacher positions across the state to work with teachers on improving their pedagogical practices (Queensland Government, 2014). This program of extensive professional development and school-based coaching and feedback sessions was largely based on the work of Hattie (2009) and Archer and Hughes (2011). Despite the widespread promotion and acceptance of Hattie’s *Visible Learning* principles, critics have argued that his theories fail to address important contextual differences, especially with students’ varied circumstances, and that his ideas are often exempt from constructive educational debate (McKnight & Whitburn, 2020; Nielsen & Klitmøller, 2021). Eacott (2017) had a more

cynical view, suggesting that the motivation behind policy leaders' enthusiastic embrace of Hattie's work lay more in the desire to legitimise the constriction of teachers' autonomy in a period of competitive curriculum reform. The diagram provided below in Figure 56 identifies specific research elements identified as significant to an explicit teaching approach.

Figure 56

Pedagogical Elements of Explicit Teaching



While some participants made direct reference to Hattie (2009), Archer and Hughes (2011) and Sharratt and Fullen (2012), researchers such as Wiggins and McTighe (2005) and Marzano (2001) were less known. Nevertheless, elements from each of these works could be found in the generic pedagogy which participants referred to as *explicit teaching*, as seen in Barry's statement: "*we do an explicit teaching model at the school here*" (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS).

A common pattern for enacting HASS curriculum, based on this conglomeration of explicit teaching elements was evident across all schools participating in the study and these are represented as dot points in Figure 56 above. Teachers began planning for HASS units by examining the summative assessment task (either standardised or teacher-constructed) and identifying core content and skills to be taught. Learning intentions and success criteria for achievement in HASS were explicitly defined and communicated to students. High expectations for student success and intentional collaboration amongst teachers and leaders were important components of the process. Learning activities were scaffolded, attention was focused on highlighting specific HASS vocabulary and students were given opportunities to practise skills. Teachers utilised active participation techniques such as eliciting rapid and varied student responses in classroom interactions. At the end of the HASS unit, the pre-identified rigorous summative assessment task was conducted as a means of demonstrating student success against Australian Curriculum achievement standards.

Table 12 below lists specific examples of these explicit teaching elements as identified by the participants, aligned with the research that was referenced. Further detail regarding the work of these five educationalists is provided as background information in Chapter Two.

Table 12

Examples of Explicit Teaching Principles

Explicit Teaching Element	Example	Research Reference
Backward Mapping	<i>“for me, if I’m not clear about what I am teaching, what’s the point? So, clarity is everything and you get clarity from backward mapping”</i> (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)	Wiggins & McTighe (2005)
Clear Content Direction	<i>“know what’s going to be taught, make sure that we have scheduled our lessons, we know where all of the content is going to be delivered”</i> (Craig, CL, Watershed SS)	Hattie (2009) Sharratt & Fullan (2012)
Success Criteria	<i>“this is what I should know in order to be successful”</i> (Lauren, T, St Bob’s)	Hattie (2009) Sharratt & Fullan (2012)
Learning Intentions	<i>“You always start off with the lesson: What are we going to do? How are we going to do it?”</i> (Heather, T, Jackson SS)	Hattie (2009)
High Expectations	<i>“having high expectations of our students ... you actually do expect a lot out of those kids. Like, there’s no excuse for them not to learn what they need to”</i> (Craig, CL, Watershed SS)	Marzano (2001) Hattie (2009) Sharratt & Fullan (2012)
Focus on Individual Students	<i>“We know our kids well and we all know every child and we have lots of discussions within staff meetings”</i> (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s)	Sharratt & Fullan (2012)
Focus on Key Content	<i>“Anita Archer, you know, ‘cut the fluff and teach the stuff’. That’s very much about what it is, especially in our context”</i> (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)	Archer & Hughes (2011)
Scaffolded Learning	<i>“it’s that very explicit teaching of how to pose questions ... and giving kids sentence stems and questions to get started”</i> (Mandy, CL, Darby SS)	Archer & Hughes (2011)
Active Participation	<i>“I have to do actions ... [clicking fingers] jazzy, snappy ... if you can put a rhyme to it, that sort of thing ... you start, they finish, you start, they finish”</i> (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)	Archer & Hughes (2011)
Summative Assessment as Evidence of Learning	<i>“Our focus is on academic rigour ... We want to be able to give those kids who are really strong in this area a chance to show us”</i> (Judy, T, Charles College)	Marzano (2001) Hattie (2009)
Intentional Collaboration	<i>“Making sure that we’re all marking the same, giving our kids the same opportunity and giving them the opportunity to earn as I say, the HAs and VHAs”</i> (Judy, T, Charles College)	Sharratt & Fullan (2012)

The statements from Table 12 illustrate how strongly explicit teaching principles had permeated teachers' professional dialogue and everyday classroom practices across all sectors participating in this study. They also confirmed each school's commitment to employing an explicit teaching pedagogical approach for HASS curriculum implementation.

Individual Teacher Perceptions on Specific HASS Pedagogies

Inquiry Learning: The Case for Inclusion

The Australian HASS curriculum is structured around two interrelated strands: knowledge and understanding, and inquiry skills. While ACARA advocated a flexible pedagogical approach, it also specified that "inquiry skills in the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum require explicit teaching, with the type of questions asked, the information, evidence and/or data gathered, and the analysis applied" (ACARA, n.d.-c, para. 15). Kerry's understanding of this direction was evident in her statement:

I think if you're going to do inquiry well, kids have got to have that foundation to them, and the confidence and the knowledge to go, OK, this is what I know. This is a question I have. And they've got to know the, How do I inquire? How do I go and find out the answer? How do I show my evidence at the end?' (Kerry, St Bob's)

In general, the educators in this study acknowledged the importance of incorporating inquiry-based pedagogy in HASS curriculum. Judy valued inquiry "*because you're teaching them how to be learners. And you're teaching that skill of thinking for yourself*" (Judy, T, Charles College). Mandy's view was that by developing inquiry skills in HASS, students had the capacity to apply them to other aspects of their learning. She declared: "*we need them in Science, we need them in Maths ... we need them across the board, and you need them in life*" (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). This position aligned with Costes-Onishi et al. (2020) who

considered inquiry pedagogy a core feature of humanities education, especially in its role of preparing students for future citizenship.

Several of the educators utilising C2C programs in HASS pointed out that inquiry pedagogy was a key feature of the materials, both in unit direction and within specific lessons. Mandy viewed C2C key inquiry questions as a means of providing learning intentions for students. She explained:

there's usually three inquiry questions ... as the driver of the unit. Probably what we should be doing, is putting that up at the start of the unit and saying this is our question that we're trying to answer by the end. Have it up on our learning walls so that it's there. (Mandy, CL, Darby SS)

Heather was satisfied that C2C provided not only the inquiry questions, but sufficient print resources to allow students to conduct investigations: *"we look at different resources ... it might be a story or whatever resources are there and we gather information that'll help us to answer that question"* (Heather, T, Jackson SS).

Inquiry Learning: Impediments

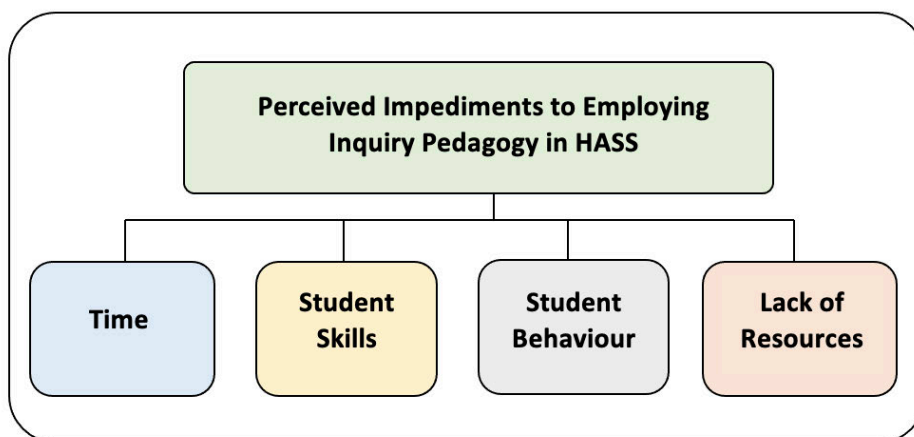
Despite the consensus on incorporating inquiry learning in HASS, teachers spoke of lacking confidence in employing the pedagogy in their classrooms. Sonya considered inquiry questions *"overwhelming"* and *"a little bit vague"* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). Donna observed that teachers in her school *"are OK with delivering content"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS), but struggled with inquiry-focused lessons. Educators from across all sectors agreed with Mandy's observation that: *"There's been very little PD [professional development] around HASS for a long time... it's the skills, the sequence of inquiry skills that we probably need more support with"* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). In the absence of opportunities to build capacity in inquiry pedagogy, Alison commented:

the newer teachers that we have in our school and just thinking about the pedagogy in the classroom, I would say that they haven't been exposed to a lot of that. Some of our teachers who have been teaching for a lot longer, they're probably the ones who are more willing to use inquiry methods within their classrooms. (Alison, CL, Charles College)

The diagram presented below in Figure 57 identifies four different issues: time, student skills, behaviour, and lack of resources, that teachers across all sectors perceived as constraining elements impacting their employment of inquiry pedagogy in HASS.

Figure 57

Teachers' Perceived Impediments to Employing Inquiry Pedagogy in HASS



Time. Donna considered that time was a major reason why inquiry “*always gets left off a little bit*” (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). Teachers acknowledged that inquiry activities such as research and communication took a much longer period for students to complete, especially when compared to lessons focused on explicit teaching of content. Gabby stressed that: “*Time is huge. We have a very crowded amount of stuff to get through*” (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). The issue of balancing transmission of content with student-focused inquiry was apparent in Judy’s statement: “*I feel that tension all the time between getting through all the stuff we need to get through and taking the time to do things the way I’d like to do them. I’m sure most teachers feel like that*” (Judy, T, Charles College). Alison confirmed this

perspective, stating: *“I see a lot of teachers will teach explicitly mainly at the beginning of the term and maybe there’ll be a little bit of inquiry-focus at the end of the term”* (Alison, Charles College).

Students’ Lack of Skills. Teachers also considered that many students did not have the skills necessary to efficiently complete inquiry tasks. Judy observed:

there’s just too much, they don’t know what you want them to look for. They don’t know how to aim in on things. So, you know how we tend to say ‘You go and research this person. You find out information’. It’s too broad. They’re really bad at researching, just putting them on the internet. (Judy, T, Charles College)

Donna had a similar opinion: *“to work independently, it’s got to be very, very structured ... I have to say at the moment, the kids don’t actually have the skillset to do that”* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). Gabby was more blunt in her assessment, stating: *“they talk about inquiry, but inquiries are guided. So, in terms of ‘Let’s create our own!’, that’s pie-in-the sky stuff. That doesn’t happen”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS).

Student Behaviour. A similar argument concerned teachers’ confidence in maintaining student behaviour during group and independent inquiry activities. Mandy observed that: *“many teachers are hesitant to do group work or pairing or shared ‘talk-to-your partner’ activities because it doesn’t always go well”* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). Likewise, Alison was candid about the level of student self-discipline and independence required for successful inquiry lessons:

Sometimes when I’ve had a higher number of behaviour management issues in my own class, that’s when you’re probably less willing to keep it going ... it may be perceived that maybe the children don’t have the capacity for independence. So that’s where explicit teaching would come back in. I

definitely think that behaviour management does impact that. (Alison, CL, Charles College)

Providing a contrasting view, Donna considered that effective use of inquiry in the classroom could actually improve student behaviour. She reasoned:

if you're teaching those inquiry skills well, that will also increase engagement of students and if you've got engaged kids, you've got lot less behaviour issues and then teachers will start to really like HASS because kids are really well-behaved during HASS lessons. (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS)

Lack of Resources. For some teachers, the lack of digital resources and support personnel were cited as contributing reasons for limiting inquiry-based lessons. As Donna stated: “*We don't have enough laptops or enough iPads for a class*” (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). This contrasted with the situation at Watershed, the smallest school in this study, which had abundant resources to support HASS inquiry. Sonya explained:

Here it's really good because it's small classes and they're really independent workers ... they've all got a computer that they can work at and resources that can cater for all of them. I've worked in other schools where there's thirty kids with four computers and limited resources, so that would make it a lot harder. (Sonya, T, Watershed)

These findings support Fairbanks and Andrew's (2020) study which highlighted similar challenges, including teachers' limited knowledge of inquiry, their lack of confidence in applying the pedagogy and in managing students. A move to a more flexible and responsive approach to employing inquiry in HASS is only possible when constraining issues are recognised and the pedagogy is valued and endorsed by school administrators (Fairbanks & Andrew, 2020; Harvie, 2013; Preston et al., 2015). Further, Costes-Onishi et al. (2020)

asserted that improving inquiry pedagogical practice “is not a matter of better teaching method or technique, it requires necessary commitments and support at all levels of the education system to create a system-wide culture of inquiry” (p. 562).

Educators’ Views on Integration of HASS

From examining ACARA support documents over the past decade, it is possible to discern a distinct shift in pedagogical advice regarding integration of HASS with other learning areas. During the first years of the Australian Curriculum, teachers were advised to draw on “integrated approaches where appropriate” and to use “pedagogical approaches that account for students’ needs, interests and the school and community context” (ACARA, 2012, p. 13). By 2020, the focus had sharpened towards developing essential concepts and processes and “to progressively deepen understandings of discipline-based content” (ACARA, 2020, p. 15). These two statements appear to reflect the ideological shift from a largely student-centred approach towards one preoccupied with content coverage and teacher control of curriculum.

This changed stance on integrated learning was reflected in the comments made by school administrators involved in this study. Craig referred to the thematic units he taught in his early career as: “*choose your own adventure curriculum*” where “*very little content was ever really delivered*” (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). In a similar vein, Pippa recalled the period as a time “*where everything got lost and messy*” (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Donna added: “*kids wouldn’t know whether they were working in English or Science or History*” (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). These opinions aligned with Bauml’s (2016) observation that teachers in the United States who trivialised humanities integration, did so “at the expense of striving for relevance, meaning, or substance” (p 56).

By contrast, teachers’ recollections of integrated studies appeared more favourable, although they acknowledged the current changed pedagogical direction. Heather recalled:

“Years ago you could do such a fantastic integrated unit on ANZAC Day. ... You used to be able to do that really well. ... it’s not like that these days” (Heather, T, Jackson SS). Judy exclaimed: *“I loved that approach because you immersed yourself in that for a while.... I feel like we’ve moved away from that and there’s a lot more focus on this subject and what has to be covered”* (Judy, T, Charles College). Despite their diminished autonomy in arranging curriculum, teachers stressed the importance of making valid linkages across learning areas to deepen understandings and maintain student interest. As Swift (2017) stated, “It can mean the difference between learning isolated bits of information for recall that hold little significance to the learner and engaging with new information for a purpose” (p. 365). This was apparent in Gabby’s statement: *“everything’s linked. You have to continually be making connections across the curriculum otherwise you lose your audience”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). Lauren suggested such linkages supported students to *“increase, expand their knowledge”* (Lauren, T, St Bob’s) and Barry commented: *“anything you can do with cross-curricular, it makes the kids interested”* (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS).

Educators’ Views on Student Engagement in HASS

Teachers contended that HASS teaching should not only be rigorous, with high expectations established for students, but should also be engaging. As Gabby argued: *“If you don’t want to sell it, kids won’t buy it”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). In considering the rationale for teaching HASS, Mandy reasoned: *“we want them to be excited about countries and excited about our place in the world and our time in the world, what used to happen and what might happen”* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). For Kerry, student engagement was key to successful HASS teaching:

if they’re fully engaged, there’s usually a spark there of joy... the enthusiasm they show, and you know they’re listening with their eyes and their ears. They’re not fiddling, they’re literally thinking of other ideas they

can throw into the discussion, as opposed to just giving a response and doing what they think you want them to be doing. (Kerry, CL, St Bob's)

Examples where participants employed activities to promote engagement in HASS included Heather's use of library books, Gabby's incorporation of You Tube clips and music, and Alison's employment of whole class role play to teach about government. Duducu and Chapman (2018) suggested that practices such as these could help students "find a way into a subject which may otherwise appear entirely foreign and separate from their lives" (p. 61). Despite following C2C lesson sequences with high fidelity, Craig argued that teachers' manner of curriculum delivery was an essential component for fostering student engagement, explaining: *"you can put that hook into their learning, you know and take them on a journey with you"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). This finding aligned with Cox's (2017) position that student engagement was more than simple classroom participation. Rather, it involved students feeling empowered, and demonstrating curiosity and interest in humanities content. As Craig explained: *"if we set the conditions for enjoyment, and connection and relationship between the teacher and the student, get that engagement happening, that's our whole school approach to pedagogy"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS).

Summary of Findings: Pedagogical Approach to HASS

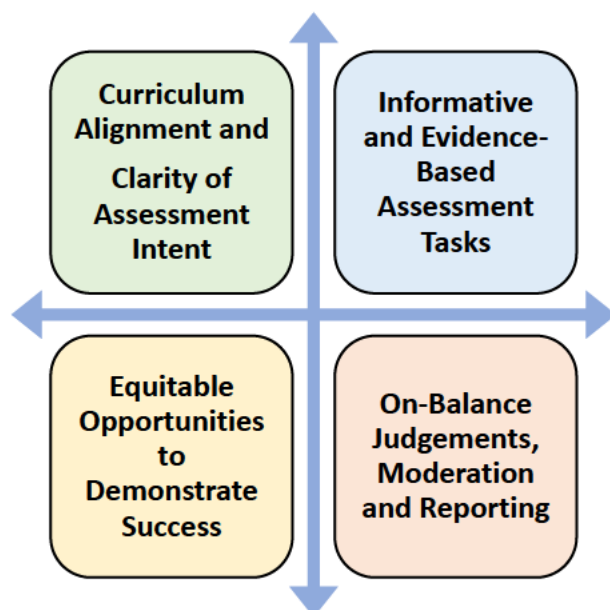
This second component of the cross-case findings endeavoured to show how standardised curriculum, explicit teaching practices and individual perspectives on inquiry, integration, and student engagement influenced the pedagogical practices teachers utilised in enacting HASS curriculum. The study found that teachers who employed standardised materials, both C2C and commercial, tended to rely on the lesson sequences and pedagogical practices outlined in these programs. In contrast, where there was no requirement to follow these programs, teachers had a greater degree of autonomy in choosing suitable pedagogies for their HASS lessons.

A common element across the three school sectors was the adoption of an explicit teaching pedagogical framework based on an amalgamation of theories from influential educators. Teachers were familiar with explicit teaching terminology such as backward mapping, learning intentions, success criteria, and active participation, and used these to explain and justify the processes they employed for enacting HASS units.

While educators from all sectors acknowledged the importance of inquiry learning in HASS, many were not confident in applying the pedagogy in their classrooms. They cited a lack of professional development, time constraints, students' poor skills, behaviour issues and limited resources as reasons why inquiry was often curtailed in HASS lessons. Integrated learning was generally negatively viewed by administrators, who argued that the practice diminished rigour and depth of learning in HASS. Teachers had a more favourable view of HASS integration, however they largely accepted their school's perspective of focusing on specific learning area content. Despite this, teachers from across all sectors acknowledged the importance of making valid linkages across learning areas to deepen understandings and to promote student engagement.

Part Three of Findings: Assessment of HASS

This third section of the cross-case findings deals with the assessment processes employed by schools to determine student success in HASS curriculum. *Assessment* can be defined as “the ongoing process of gathering, analysing and reflecting on evidence to make informed judgements about the achievement or capabilities of individuals” (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2023, para. 1). This study identifies four distinct, interrelated, and iterative elements of the assessment process used in HASS curriculum implementation and these are listed in graphic form in Figure 58.

Figure 58*Four Elements of Assessment in HASS*

The following section examines these four elements in depth, identifies how they pertain to the assessment practices employed by the schools under study, and outlines implications arising from their implementation.

Curriculum Alignment and Clarity of Assessment Intent

Collaboration

The study found that schools across each of the sectors: State, Catholic and Independent, supported the Department's direction in fostering positive, school-wide collaboration in implementing and assessing curriculum. By working in collaborative teams, teachers had the ability to deepen their knowledge and application of Australian Curriculum content and associated achievement standards (Queensland Department of Education, 2019a). Pippa explained her school's collaborative approach to curriculum:

We've got a really strong philosophy around the power of the team and that shared understanding and collective ownership across the team of teachers ... We're lucky we've got generally four teachers at each year level, so

they've got a bank of colleagues who are also delivering the same units at the same time. (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS)

At Darby State School, Donna referred to her school's curriculum meetings as *TATAL*, a framework based on ideas from Schonell et al. (2016) who coined the acronym to mean "Talking About Teaching And Learning" (p. 21). The process was aimed at building trusted and reflective collegial partnerships, "focusing multiple sets of eyes on teaching experiences; providing the possibility of different interpretations and options for action" (Schonell et al., 2016, p. 21). In Darby's case, TATAL sessions were scheduled twice a term, where one of the two curriculum leaders would meet with teachers to examine upcoming C2C units of work and their alignment to Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards. As Donna stated: *"It's the rich conversations I think at the moment that's making the most difference"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). As well as holding similar curriculum alignment meetings, Charles College had begun focusing on teacher-led curriculum leadership. Alison explained: *"we have five subject-focused professional learning teams and we meet on Tuesday afternoons and every primary teacher is involved in one of those subjects"* (Alison, CL, Charles College).

Despite the overall culture of collaboration found across the six schools, there appeared to be a difference in the way classroom teachers were supported in preparing for HASS curriculum. In Watershed, Darby and Jackson State schools, the curriculum leader held a classified administrative position of either principal, deputy, or head of curriculum. Each leader acknowledged that English and Mathematics were priorities for their schools' improvement agenda and as a consequence, formal teacher meetings were restricted to examining C2C units of work from these two learning areas. In speaking specifically about collaboration around HASS planning, Pippa explained:

We haven't stipulated as a leadership team; this is your HASS time to go away to talk or to moderate or do any of that. We haven't actually even stipulated that they need to talk about it. But my assumption would be that they do. (Pippa, CL Jackson SS)

Despite Pippa's presumption that teachers would independently replicate the process of examining C2C units and assessment tasks for HASS curriculum, she conceded she was unsure if this occurred, stating: *"because we don't unpack HASS in planning days, I'm not privy to those conversations unless I'm invited"*. She also confided: *"HASS is not my area of expertise"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). As a classroom teacher, Heather confirmed the situation:

We have never done a HASS planning day... I don't think I've ever once heard them talk about HASS to be quite honest.... There's no focus on HASS whatsoever... It's all about English and reading... It does my head in.
(Heather, T, Jackson SS)

Heather acknowledged that collegial planning for HASS did occur but was: *"just something that we do in our spare time"* (Heather, T, Jackson SS).

By contrast, the curriculum leaders at St Bob's, Charles College and Hopeville State School were part-time classroom teachers taking on a middle leader role. Lipscombe et al. (2020) described such teachers as being *"in a unique but complex position where they influence both executive leadership and teachers within the school organisation"* (p. 1063). While the focus of scheduled teacher meetings at these schools was similarly oriented to English and Mathematics, there were opportunities to incorporate other areas of curriculum, including HASS. Barry, the curriculum leader at Hopeville, organised teacher meetings once a term during his non-contact release time to discuss upcoming C2C units and assessment tasks. In these sessions, Barry and his colleagues: *"looked at HASS units specifically and then*

looked at resources in the library” (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). Alison explained her approach at Charles College:

we will spend an hour together and, in that time, they are able to ask any question they have, anything that they need help with. ... I’ve started directing the conversations a little bit more, ... how they’re teaching HASS, in particular, how they’re putting their units together and how they’re writing their assessment and what they’re using for that to inform themselves. (Alison, CL, Charles College)

At St Bob’s, Kerry described a similar process, emphasising the collegial aspects of her role:

the first port of call is encouraging teachers to look at the ACARA website, making sure they’ve a good understanding of what the curriculum is actually asking of them in the first place ... we look at the overview of the subject and we have a lot of discussion around the standards. ... I’ll download different things if teachers are needing more ideas. (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s)

Curriculum collaboration and external professional support also appeared to be different for the small rural schools. Participants from Watershed State School and St Bob’s were able to utilise local “*collaboration days for small schools*” (Craig, CL, Watershed SS) to meet with colleagues to build capacity around Departmental policy, curriculum, and assessment. These regular meetings provided avenues to counter the sense of isolation felt by teachers in rural settings (Vulliamy & Webb, 1995). Kerry acknowledged this perspective:

We usually meet in small school clusters ... which is really handy because whilst small schools have a lot of benefits to them, there are also a few challenges. ... We don’t have a teaching buddy in the same year level to

bounce ideas off. We're very small and at the end of the day, we know what we know ... unless you broaden your horizons. (Kerry, CL, St Bob's)

Backward Mapping

Gilbert and Hoepper (2016) asserted that “assessment activities should be the concrete realisation of the key learnings which the unit aims to develop” (p. 79). In Part Two of the cross-case findings, the process of backward mapping, based on the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2005) was identified as central to the explicit teaching pedagogical framework adopted by schools across all three sectors of this study. Specifically, backward mapping aimed to promote clearly defined goals, tightly aligned assessment tasks and purposeful teaching, but was not to be viewed as “a rigid program or prescriptive recipe” (Defined Learning, n.d., para. 3).

A distinct difference in the way schools employed this process lay in whether teachers created their own assessments or utilised set prescriptive tasks such as C2C. A basic premise of Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) Backward by Design model was that teachers were inherently designers, and an essential component of their profession involved crafting assessments to diagnose student needs, guide teaching and evaluate whether goals had been met. In speaking of the autonomy teachers at Charles College had to create their own assessment tasks, Alison commented: *“I think that's where teachers enjoy having the freedom to be able to make sure their achievement is meeting the achievement standard, but to be able to do it in their own way”* (Alison, CL, Charles College). By contrast, teachers at the other schools began their process of alignment by examining a pre-existing standardised task and marking rubric. As Sonya stated: *“we go straight to the assessments, put them in their books so we know what we're doing”* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). In this way, the set task had an outsized influence over how HASS units were enacted. Gabby described her process of preparing for HASS units:

my first port of call is to go to the GTMJ [C2C marking rubric], the achievement standard, ... have a look at the modelled response. ...what's the end-goal? ... What is a C? What are they actually expected to do?

(Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)

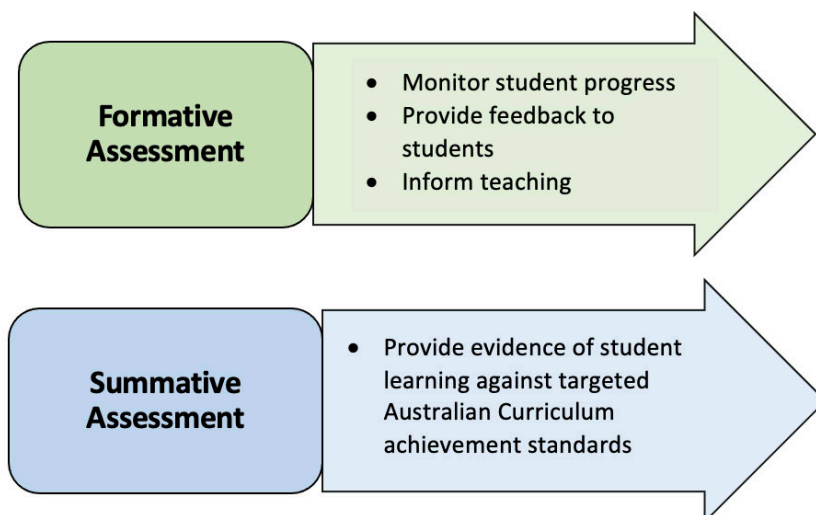
This preoccupation with satisfying the demands of external assessment was consistent with Poulton's (2020) finding that C2C summative assessments dominate the objectives of teachers' planning sessions and often impede "their collective decision-making related to contextualised teaching and learning" (p. 43).

Informative and Evidence-Based Assessment Tasks

When backward mapping was employed in teachers' curriculum alignment meetings, the focus largely centred around summative tasks designed to provide evidence of students' understandings after a period of learning. However, the Queensland Department of Education also acknowledged that effective curriculum implementation required ongoing formative assessment to gauge students' progress, provide feedback and inform teaching (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b). The differences in these two forms of assessment are represented in Figure 59 below.

Figure 59

The Purposes of Formative and Summative Assessments



According to Tiknaz and Sutton (2006) teachers were often conflicted in how to incorporate formative assessment while attempting to address specific standards in a national curriculum. This was evident in the varied opinions regarding formative HASS assessment across the sectors. At St Bob's, Kerry considered that her school's adoption of explicit teaching principles gave her a greater degree of flexibility in using formative assessment to change teaching direction, to reinforce ideas, practise skills and to accommodate student absences. As she explained:

I think that's one of the beauties that Visible Learning has given us is the sense that we've got that permission to pause and not just plough through. So, we can go back and plug those holes when we need to... We like to think that we're assessing as we go and that's also going to inform our next practice. We're not leaving it to one piece at the end and the whole grade hinges on that. (Kerry, CL, St Bob's)

Lauren supported her colleague's view that formative assessments had a role in determining student success in HASS, stating: *"the formal piece adds to it. But it's not solely"* (Lauren, T, St Bob's). However, Alison from Charles College was more cautious about using formative assessment as evidence of student achievement, and conceded: *"I would need to know I really understood my subject area if I was going to use formative to inform my final mark... I still rely heavily on the summative simply because it really is physical evidence"* (Alison, CL, Charles College). For Judy, summative assessments had a constraining influence on her HASS teaching:

I wish we were a bit freer to just go with what the kids are really interested in ... especially if it's a particular skill that you're wanting them to get. It doesn't matter what the content is so much, as long as they're getting the skill. (Judy, T, Charles College)

For Kerry, a flexible approach to assessment allowed greater focus on addressing student needs:

you may end up tweaking your unit and go, they know this part.... Let's follow this track because it's more engaging for your students. It's going to be more beneficial in the long run and they're actually learning something new as opposed to learning something some of them actually know. ... you need that broad picture and to be a bit flexible as well (Kerry, CL, St Bob's)

This position aligns with Black et al. (2011) who asserted that a basic requirement of effective assessment was that students find tasks engaging. Kerry's view around flexibility in assessment was supported by Eaude (2017a) who contested that a cumulative portfolio of student work including bookwork, drawings, photographs and completed projects provided a more valid and holistic means of assessing student capabilities in humanities curriculum than relying on one final piece of assessment.

In the State system, Mandy simply observed: *"I don't think there's a lot of formative assessment in HASS"* (Mandy CL, Darby SS). Nevertheless, the common practice of splitting C2C summative tasks and completing sections incrementally throughout the semester, *"so kids can remember"* (Heather, T, Jackson SS) could also be viewed as a means of incorporating formative procedures. Heather explained:

you sort of do the first little bit of content and then you assess that and the next bit, assess that, next bit, assess that. So, there's no set time frame. If your kids don't get the History part of it, then take an extra two weeks on it.

(Heather, T, Jackson SS)

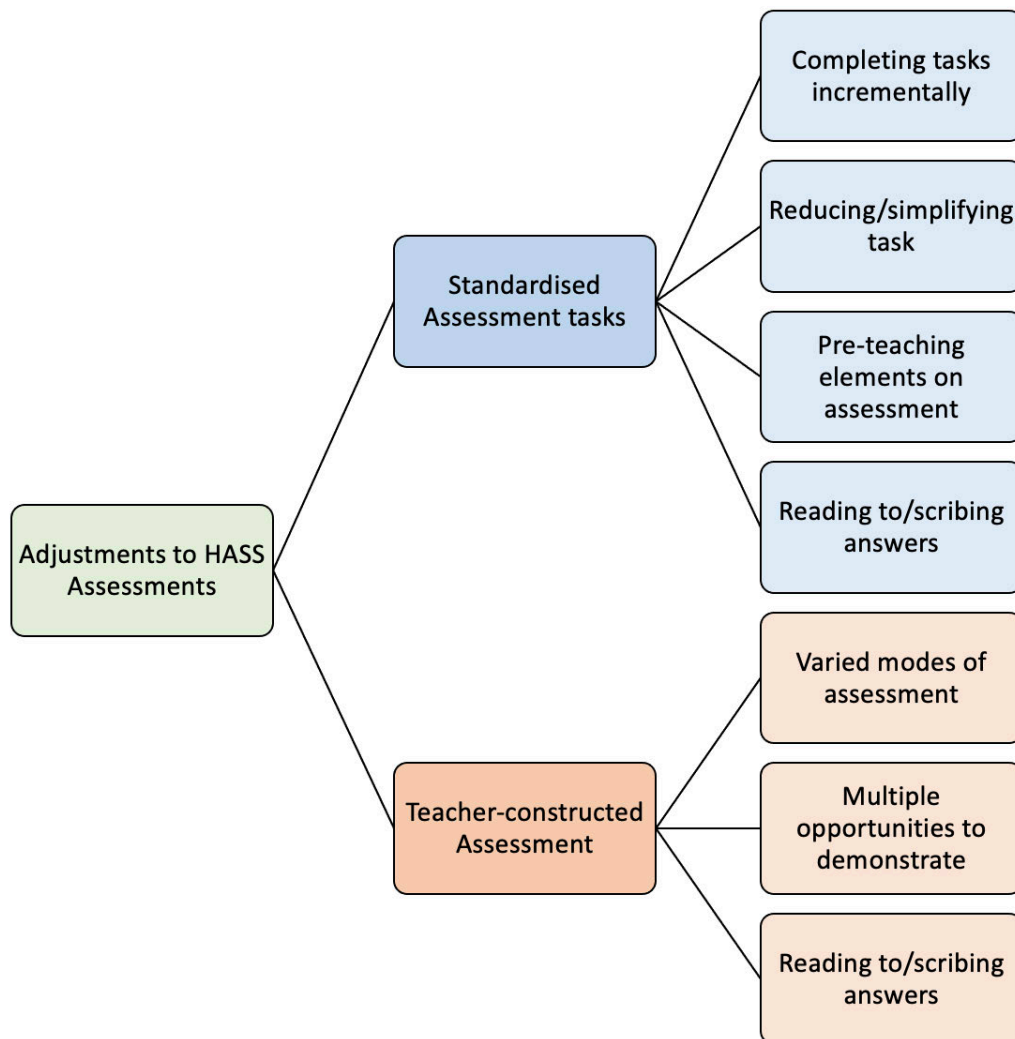
However, while these "bite-sized assessments" (Ratnam-Lim & Tan, 2015, p. 70) allowed teachers to monitor student progress, they could also result in fragmented learning, and

considering their focus was on determining a final grade, could diminish opportunities for teachers to change direction or provide productive feedback for students.

Equitable Opportunities to Demonstrate Success: Student Adjustments

In planning meetings, when Gabby reflected on: “*who have I got in my class? How on earth am I going to get them to achieve a C?*” (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS), she was heeding educational direction that teachers should consider the needs of individual students prior to assessment to ensure each student had the opportunity of demonstrating their knowledge and skills against identified achievement standards (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2023). The Department made clear that planned adjustments should provide equitable access to assessment but did not involve “compensating for what a child does not know, understand and cannot do” (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b, p. 10).

The diagram presented below in Figure 60 depicts the types of adjustments teachers used to support students’ ability to demonstrate their understandings in HASS. Given that teacher-constructed tasks were more likely than standardised assessments to incorporate the specific needs of students (Wright & Endacott, 2016), the graphic separates HASS adjustments into two sections; those made to standardised tasks and those from teacher-constructed assessments.

Figure 60*Adjustments to Standardised and Teacher-Constructed Assessments*

The strategy of completing C2C HASS summative assessment tasks incrementally was identified in Part One of the cross-case findings as a major whole-class adjustment in supporting students' ability to retain knowledge. Donna made the case that C2C tasks should not be implemented at the completion of units of work, stating: *"to pop that [C2C task] on a grade Three or Four's desk at the end of it, that's not the pedagogy now. It should never have been"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). Barry expressed a similar opinion, arguing that leaving tasks to the end of a semester was *"not going to work with our children"* (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). In referencing the demographic Gabby presumed C2C was written for, she added: *"If you were in a leafy green school, perhaps"* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). The main

demographic groups enrolled at Hopeville - refugee and First Nation - were recognised by the Australian Government as two priority equity cohorts (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2022). Consequently, targeted adjustments to support students' achievement were listed as features of Hopeville's *Whole Child* framework. For HASS, these adjustments included reducing parts of C2C tasks and simplifying the language used in questions. Gabby also considered that success in HASS was dependent on students' ability to understand what was required of them in these assessments and that a reasonable way of preparing the class involved pre-teaching and practising specific question types. She stated:

you want to maximise their success by scaffolding the task and saying, these are the kinds of questions you can expect to see. Let's practise this one here. ... you have to, otherwise you're going to have all Es andDs. [referring to grade] (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)

Gabby observed this could be perceived as "*teaching to the test*", however she justified the practice, stating that for the students in her context, "*you absolutely have to give them a chance*" (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). A criticism of this practice was expressed by Pratt and Atkinson (2020) who suggested that narrowing curriculum through the use of standardised assessments was pernicious and could lead to a situation where "testing, in effect, can become the curriculum" (p. 358).

For students with recognised disabilities, "tailored supports" (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b, p. 1) were expected to be provided for assessment tasks as well as general learning activities, and were required to be specific and documented. At Charles College, Alison outlined her school's policy: "*For Independent schools, all of the modifications have to be recorded in your weekly planning, every day, every lesson for every student who needs a modification*" (Alison, CL, Charles College). Tailored supports included

practices such as providing sentence starters and having adults read questions to students and scribing their answers. Craig explained his school's approach:

we do try using those documented adjustments to ensure that we set the conditions for success. We've got to give them the content of the HASS rather than the literacy standard, I guess. And as long as those adjustments are sort of reasonable for lessons. ... you do want every child to be succeeding. (Craig, CL, Watershed SS)

As teachers from non-government schools were not directed to utilise standardised assessment tasks, there was greater scope in employing varied modes of assessment such as oral presentations and community projects and in giving students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understandings. Judy's statement highlighted her rationale for incorporating more than one assessment task:

if you look at the marking guide, it shows that they need a thorough understanding of things and they need to apply it to different contexts But if we don't give them the opportunity to show that, then it's not fair to those kids who do have really deep understanding or have the ability to do higher order thinking, but we're not giving them the opportunity to show it.
(Judy, T, Charles College)

In the State system, some educators considered changing their school's dependence on standardised assessments. Pippa stated that she would like her teachers to move away from paper-based C2C tasks and begin incorporating digital devices. She envisaged that students could take and upload photos onto See Saw, the school's digital journal, and orally record their ideas. An added benefit would be that teachers could: *"go in digitally, mark it off and have it captured that way"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Barry pondered: *"why don't we just create a poster?"* and reflected that it might be: *"far more interesting than doing a test"*

(Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). This stance was supported by Wallace et al. (2016) who contested that: “As a communication tool, a well-designed poster has several advantages compared to a detailed written document” (p. 68). Eade (2017a) argued that standardised testing for humanities curriculum was a “a crude and inappropriate method of assessment” (p. 217) that was inherently demotivating for students and stressful for teachers. Fairbanks and Andrew (2020) supported this view by contending that multiple, flexible and varied modes of assessment were more likely to demonstrate students’ divergent thinking, problem-solving and creativity, all of which were key components of HASS curriculum.

On-Balance Judgements, Moderation and Reporting

Marking Rubrics: Assisting On-Balance Judgements

The Queensland Department of Education determined that students’ overall achievement in HASS should be based on evidence of students’ work and ascertained through teachers’ consistent and on-balance judgments (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b). These judgements were considered “fundamental in achieving greater coherence between system level accountability and local level assessment practice” (Wyatt-Smith et al., 2010, p. 59). To support teachers’ personal and collective judgements of students’ understandings, it was recommended that schools utilise task-specific marking rubrics. (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2023). According to Gilbert and Hoepper (2016) these rubrics offered a more reliable and valid means of judging students’ attainment and assisted teachers in understanding and applying HASS achievement standards.

This study found that while all three sectors demonstrated compliance with these directives, there were distinct differences in their application. For the four State schools, the C2C HASS marking rubric known as Guide to Making Judgements, and referred to as GTMJ, was perceived as the most valid way of ensuring consistent and evidence-based teacher judgements. Gabby stated: “*I don’t change the GTMJ because it’s done ... and it is*

acknowledged as coming from the Australian Curriculum” (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). Barry added: *“the process ... used to create them has been quite rigorous”* (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). Craig, the principal from Watershed considered the GTMJ was *“reasonably clear-cut”* and as *“it comes from C2C, we just use it in that fashion”* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS).

Nevertheless, several teachers expressed frustration when applying these rubrics in practice. While Gabby insisted that her HASS GTMJ was not altered, she stated that some of the cognitive verbs in the statements were modified to accommodate some of her students. Heather experienced difficulty in disentangling the rubrics’ integrated sub-strand statements, especially when she had taken pains to teach these separately. She explained:

you have a look at these Guide to Making Judgements and try and mark on that and it’s ridiculous. ... They should have kept them separate so at least the Guide To Making Judgement is just about History, and you can actually see it clearly. But then you look at them and it’s History, Civics and Geography, all in this one thing. Who decided that? Who thought that was a good idea? (Heather, T, Jackson SS)

Sonya remarked that: *“some Guide to Making Judgements are very, very vague ... the language that they use is definitely not student friendly”*. She also pointed out the difficulties of making on-balanced judgements when students *“might not achieve some of the things that’s at a C level, but they’ve achieved some of the A and B”* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). Kazak (2016) argued that a reliance on such rubrics was not only simplistic and subjective, but also diminished teachers’ ability to provide students with effective feedback on their performance.

In the two non-government schools, educators had the choice of utilising pre-existing marking rubrics such as C2C or to create their own. Alison acknowledged the difficulties in creating rubrics from scratch, stating: *“I’ve found some of our younger teachers ... don’t*

really know how to create a rubric because they don't know what to put in it. They're not using anything to guide them in making their rubric" (Alison, CL, Charles College). She also admitted: *"I've been guilty of writing assessment tasks where I don't have anyone getting an A or a VHA [Very High Achievement] and I know my task was too hard"* (Alison, CL, Charles College).

At St Bob's, the Diocesan digital planning tool allowed teachers to address the Australian Curriculum HASS achievement standards directly by examining statements *"that are linked to the achievement standards and so we look at that and make a judgement on that one standard"* (Lauren, T, St Bob's). However, Lauren also considered that other aspects of students' work in HASS should be taken into account when making an on-balance judgement of their achievement in HASS:

a lot of it is teacher judgement as well which I think is important because, like I said, you can't judge just one thing that they know off an assessment piece ... just looking in their books, how they're answering questions, if they're got an understanding of the topic and group work. (Lauren, T, St Bob's)

Lauren's argument is backed up by Wright and Endacott (2016) who insisted that "measuring student achievement based on a narrower and more technical set of performance criteria ... may miss holistic aspects of student learning" (p. 309). Nevertheless, Wyatt-Smith et al. (2010) warned that teachers' inclination to rely on perceptions of student knowledge outside of designated assessment tasks diminished the objectivity of their judgements.

Moderation: Consistency in Judgements

School-based moderation, where teachers adjudicate students' work, was considered key to establishing coherence and consistency of teacher judgements (Black et al., 2011; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2010). As discussed previously, collaborative meetings to prepare for

HASS were not considered school priorities in State schools and this also appeared to be the case for moderation of teachers' judgements after HASS assessments had been completed. As Mandy stated: *"I don't think we've ever moderated HASS"* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). At Jackson, Pippa acknowledged a similar situation stating: *"We haven't articulated they have to do that for HASS. ... I would be really surprised if there was no conversation about it. Whether it was in a formal moderation process, I couldn't speak to that"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Heather confirmed that teachers at Jackson worked with their colleagues to share ideas in an informal moderation process for HASS. She explained:

a lot of it is all about, 'Is this the mark?'. ...we try and sit together and I think it's important because, especially if you've got newer teachers ... they need to know... And that's your job. You need to work together. (Heather, T, Jackson SS)

At Charles College, Judy noted a similar inclination amongst teachers to work together: *"Making sure that we're all marking the same, ... and giving them the opportunity to earn the HAs [High Achievements] and VHAs[Very High Achievements]"* (Judy, T, Charles College). Being part of a small rural school, the teachers at St Bob's benefited from an annual cluster moderation day which had the potential to support teachers' HASS judgements. Kerry explained:

We have a CTJ which is a Consistency in Teacher Judgement day in Term Three and there's usually a different subject chosen each year as to what we're moderating ... We'll meet with another school. That's always really handy. (Kerry, CL, St Bob's)

According to Allal (2013), effective professional judgement of student success requires a three-layered process: individual teacher cognition involved in the marking of assessments, informal teacher discussion of results, and a formal moderation process using multiple pieces

of evidence. Given the low priority that HASS was given in schools compared to targeted learning areas such as English, Allal's approach may seem aspirational but unlikely to be fully realised in the present circumstances.

Reporting: Communication of Student Assessment

Reporting is considered an essential component of the cooperative relationship between schools and families, and should involve "mutual responsibility, respect and trust" (Queensland Studies Authority, 2012, p. 1). Since 2013, Australian schools have been obliged to issue biannual written report cards to parents, to communicate student achievement and effort using a five-point scale in each learning area covered in that period (The Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities, n.d.). In comparison to the objective stance expected of teachers in determining the achievement grade through moderated on-balance judgements and student evidence, the grade for effort appeared to be far more subjective. Craig's view was that: *"It will be an understanding of what that child's capability is versus what they have produced. So, effort is just arbitrary ... It's engagement demonstrated in a measurable way"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). Masters (2021) noted that in the United States, student grades were often artificially inflated due to teachers incorporating subjective perceptions of students' effort in that learning area.

While there was space in Queensland's computer-generated reports for teachers to clarify assessment and effort grades, four of the six schools under study did not perceive that specific HASS comments were necessary. Donna contended: *"That's what parents want to know. That's who the report is for. So, yeah, lots of parents don't want the teacher-talk"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). At St Bob's, Kerry pointed out that: *"Specific comments to that child, we do for Religion, English, Maths and we do a general at the end ... we don't have a specific subject comment for the other subjects"* (Kerry, CL, St Bob's). If students performed poorly in HASS, Kerry acknowledged that more information could be provided to parents

through scheduled interviews: *“if their child’s a D in any subject, not just in English and Maths”* (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s). These views contrasted with an Australian report concluding that the communication of isolated grades could be demotivating for students and that parents welcomed personalised comments, especially if they showed elements of student progress (Australian Council of Educational Research, 2019).

At Jackson and Hopeville schools, a generic HASS comment, explaining the content covered in that period, accompanied the grade and effort in students’ reports. Pippa explained:

we’ve moved away from the comment that is reflective of what the child has demonstrated. We just really ‘tick and flick’ and then there’s a brief outline that says this is what the child, or children - they get the same comment - have learnt in HASS this semester. So, it ... positions parents to know what’s happening in that learning area. It doesn’t say ‘Jared did this to a high standard. And to improve, they need to blah, blah, blah.’ (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS)

An Australian study on student report cards conceded that the job of creating informative individual reports placed a burden on teachers and added to their overall workload stress (Ratnam-Lim & Tan, 2015). To alleviate this, the authors advocated for an online digital management system where parents could obtain immediate and ongoing communication of their child’s progress. Such a program would entail teachers uploading student results continuously throughout the school year. However, Ratnam-Lim and Tan, (2015) conceded that teachers were unlikely to welcome such a mode of reporting.

While the generic descriptions of HASS content provided in report cards at Hopeville and Jackson did not communicate individual student success, they at least offered parents some context for the achievement and effort grades obtained by their children. This is

pertinent given Donna's observation: *"I say I'm teaching HASS, and people say, what's that? What's HASS?"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS).

Summary of Findings: Assessment of HASS

This section examined the process by which Queensland primary schools assessed students' understandings of HASS against targeted standards of the Australian Curriculum. A model was utilised to highlight four interrelated elements of this assessment process: collaboration in aligning assessment with the Australian Curriculum, employment of informative and evidence-based assessment tasks, the provision of adjustments enabling all students to demonstrate their understandings, and the use of on-balance judgements to report student success in HASS.

The study found that backward mapping, a procedure where teachers clarified assessment expectations during initial planning meetings, was common across all sectors. However, there was a distinct difference in how this process was applied in assessment proceedings. In schools that utilised externally constructed assessments such as C2C, teachers predominantly used summative over formative assessments, and tended to utilise the final task to inform their teaching. To improve students' ability to succeed in the task, teachers applied adjustments such as completing parts incrementally, reducing or omitting sections and providing assistance for students with poor literacy skills. For schools where standardised assessments were not mandatory, teachers were more likely to employ formative tasks, to vary modes of assessment and to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understandings in HASS.

Marking rubrics were seen by all schools as a means of promoting objectivity in teachers' judgements. For the State schools utilising C2C materials, administrators had stipulated that while adjustments could be made to the assessment task itself, the accompanying rubric, the GTMJ, should be kept intact. Issues identified by teachers included

problems in differentiating and describing degrees of rigour in teacher-constructed rubrics, and in understanding obscure language and assigning overall grades in pre-existing standardised rubrics. While formal moderation for HASS was not employed at any of the schools, the educators agreed that on-balance judgements could be strengthened by collaborating with their peers. All schools identified the learning area as *HASS* in their biannual report cards despite focusing on History in one semester and Geography in the other. While all schools reported student success in HASS with an A-E grade and effort mark, only two schools provided an accompanying comment and this was in the form of a generic statement assigned to all students as a means of communicating the content covered in the unit.

Part Four of Findings: The Teacher's Individual Role

The previous three sections of this study's findings have examined educators' perspectives of HASS curriculum enactment in regard to the systemic organisational framework in which they have worked. This fourth section brings the focus down to the individual teacher by exploring reflections of their professional selves and beliefs of their own efficacy in teaching HASS. This research has adopted Skaalvik & Skaalvik's (2010) definition of *self-efficacy* as "individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals." (p.1059). Further, it is contended that teacher knowledge, experience and motivation are critical elements underlying those beliefs (Bandura, 1977; Ryan & Deci, 2000, Klassen & Tze, 2014).

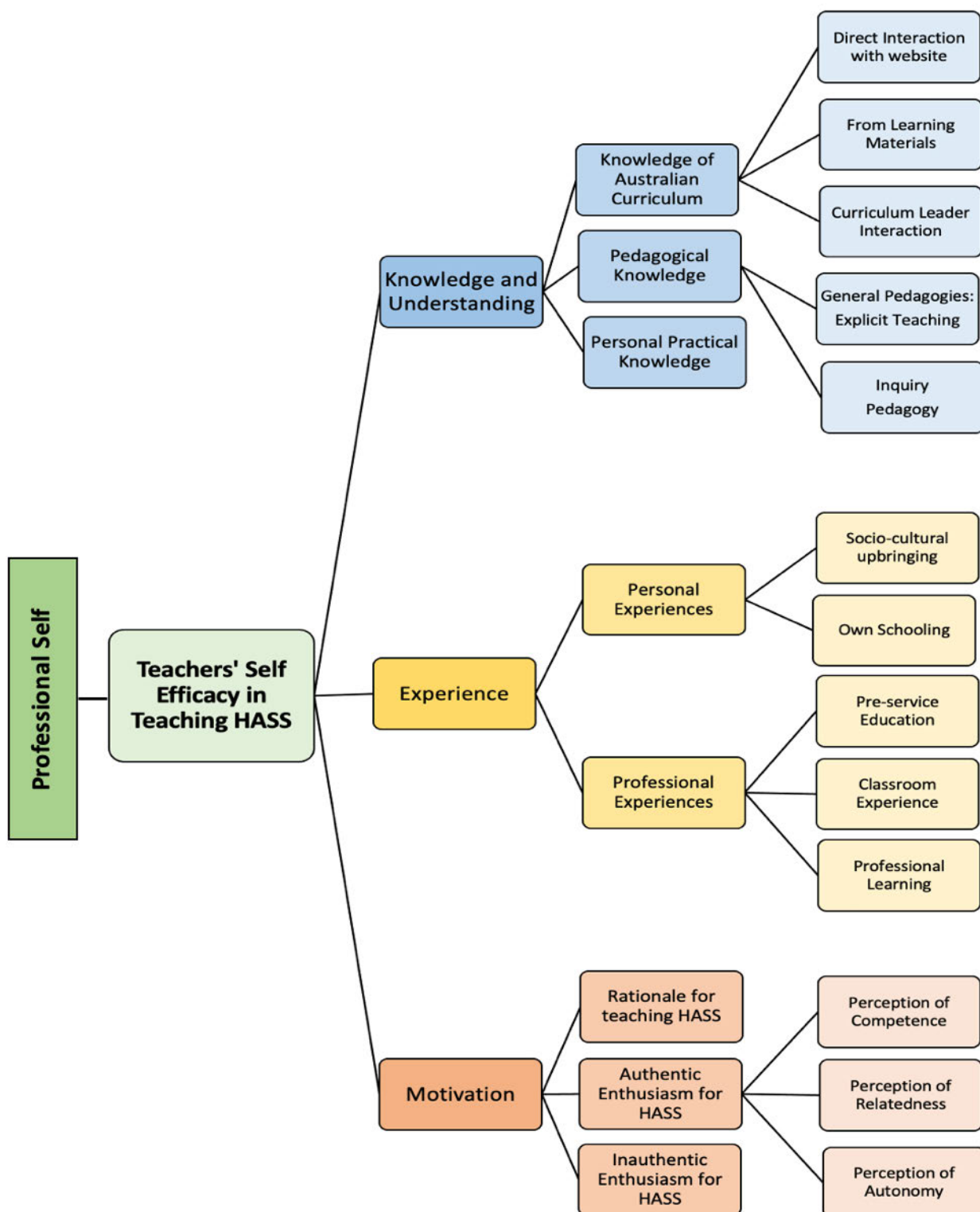
In regard to humanities education, the study shares the position taken by Hawe et al., (2010) that teachers' perceived efficacy is impacted by individual life experiences such as the socio-cultural context in which they have lived, the form of humanities learning experienced in their own schooling, and the influence of predominant discourses in both pre- and in-service humanities learning. By encompassing personal as well as professional aspects of

teachers' life experiences, this study aimed to provide a more nuanced understanding of teachers' conceptualisation of their own abilities and confidence in enacting the Australian HASS curriculum.

This section aims to directly address the second and fourth sub-questions of this study: What perceptions teachers have on their own abilities to enact effective HASS curriculum; and how teachers' sense of their professional selves impact their agency and autonomy in enacting HASS. The findings in this section are organised around three aspects of teachers' self-efficacy: their knowledge and understanding of HASS, relevant personal and professional experiences; and their motivation towards the learning area. A diagram summarising the structure of this section is presented below in Figure 61.

Figure 61

Different Aspects of Teachers' Perceived Self-efficacy in Enacting HASS



Self-Efficacy: Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge of the Australian HASS Curriculum

Several of the classroom teachers in this study readily admitted that their knowledge of HASS curriculum had not been achieved through interactions with the official curriculum published on the ACARA website. As Sonya stated: *“I haven’t really delved into it ... I just look at the C2C and I teach from that”* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). As a deputy responsible for curriculum, Pippa confirmed that teachers’ knowledge of the HASS curriculum was largely achieved through using standardised materials: *“I think C2C has served its purpose for us in understanding what are the curriculum expectations, how are content descriptors reflected in the achievement standard”* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Craig, the only principal involved in this study, revealed the practical reasoning behind relying on C2C’s interpretation of curriculum rather than accessing ACARA directly. He explained: *“I don’t use it very much, no ... I guess it’s the unfortunate truth in one regard, but the pragmatic approach in another with the limited time we have for anything”* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). Similarly, in the Catholic system, Lauren’s knowledge of the official HASS curriculum was generally derived by utilising a commercial program despite her application of curriculum elements in the digital management tool provided by her Diocese. She, too reported minimal interaction with the ACARA website, stating: *“It might sound terrible, but I go onto it if I need it. And I guess when I need it, then I do find it useful”* (Lauren, T, St Bob’s).

These findings align with Remillard and Heck (2014) who observed that learning materials sanctioned by educational authorities could be viewed as “a de facto part of the formal curriculum” (p.710). As such, curriculum knowledge provided by these materials can act as a form of mediation between intended and enacted curriculum (Choppin et al., 2022). Giving an alternative perspective, Ben-Peretz (1990) suggested that in situations when curriculum knowledge was restricted to externally prepared learning materials, teachers’ full

understanding of curriculum was diminished, and as a consequence, this impacted their ability to flexibly and creatively employ the materials in their classrooms.

Participants in this study generally considered that familiarity with the official curriculum and direct interaction with the ACARA website was a responsibility for curriculum leaders rather than classroom teachers. An acknowledgement of this duty was apparent in Pippa's statement regarding curriculum planning: *"Ultimately the 'what' and the 'why' is developed by the leadership team"* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). This aligned with Ross's (2017) Queensland study examining implementation of the Mathematics curriculum, which similarly found that teachers had minimal interaction with ACARA and relied on school leaders to disseminate relevant information. Conversely, in the Independent sector, Alison considered the ACARA website *"very important"* and understood that her leadership role entailed being a curriculum intermediary: *"encouraging teachers to look at the ACARA website first, making sure they've a good understanding of what the curriculum is actually asking of them in the first place"* (Alison, CL, Charles College). This approach supported Margolis and Huggins's (2012) view that middle leaders remain "grounded in the realities of classroom life and the enactment of curriculum" (p 957).

Personal Practical Knowledge

Several teachers in this study identified aspects of their own lives which influenced their approach to HASS teaching. Heather recognised that her early experiences living on a multi-generational rural property had provided opportunities to enhance her delivery of HASS curriculum:

Grandfather being in war, ... talking to children about crop rotation, geography of the land and what does that mean, ... Yeah, I draw a lot from my background, family background, farming background. Just a love of history because I like to know who I am. (Heather, T, Jackson SS)

Likewise, Donna identified “*the social setting of where I grew up*” where “*a lot of friends ... were Indigenous or in foster care*”, as well as the support from her family, as being highly influential elements in her commitment to providing varied perspectives in HASS. She explained:

I was lucky because I had family that were always interested, and we were talking and learning all the time. Whereas if I didn't have that, if that's all I thought, there's no way on earth I'd want to teach it. (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS)

These statements align with Hung's (2020) finding that teachers' personal practical knowledge and lived experiences were important components of curriculum enactment. In particular, Hung contended there was space in “externally imposed curriculum” for teachers to engage students in potentially controversial issues by connecting “the personal and the professional” (p.288).

Gabby's reflection: “*to me, part of building a relationship is about sharing of self through skills and things you enjoy and that what I am passionate about*” (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS), was supported by Crocco and Thornton (2002) who asserted that teachers' interests are central to effective humanities teaching. This was particularly the case for Lauren who enthused:

it's only since travelling and seeing all these places that I guess it's made my teaching a lot more interesting, because I can personally refer to it and say, look I've done this. And in the past I've shown pictures of the actual places. ... I think that's so important. (Lauren, T, St Bob's)

Self-Efficacy: Personal and Professional Experiences

Recollections of Primary School Humanities

In reflecting on their own primary school experiences, teachers recalled the most positive humanities lessons incorporated narratives, hands-on mapping activities and independent research projects. Interwoven with these memories was the sense of pride and celebration in sharing humanities work with peers, parents and the community. Judy commented: *“I just remember the whole room was decorated and huge murals on the wall and everything that we wrote, it was never on a plain piece of paper... I just remember feeling like it was a really exciting thing”* (Judy, T, Charles College).

In contrast, lessons focused on factual retention were negatively perceived by teachers, as in Donna’s statement: *“I don’t have a great experience with primary school ... Every time, it was ‘Get out your SOSE text book’ and we’d all read the first five pages”* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). This is similar to Gabby’s recollection that humanities was: *“all book work and dates and facts. Not reality and relationships”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). These findings align with Green’s (2015) study that showed that pre-service teachers’ least favoured primary school humanities lessons were centred on fact-based learning and worksheets.

These recollections provide an avenue of viewing the apparent disconnect that exists between teachers’ perceptions of effective humanities education in their own schooling and the practices they currently adopt for enacting HASS. While the teachers acknowledged that student-led inquiry projects and hands-on activities were far more effective than book-based lessons in their own humanities learning, they currently largely rely on prescribed teacher-led and worksheet-based lessons to teach HASS. Judy, who had experience in both the State and Independent school systems, presented as the most self-aware in terms of this dichotomy of thought:

I think that's where we're doing kids a disservice because we make it boring. We make it about facts and figures and things like that ... My passion is for the kids to be excited in my school. But ... I do feel a lot of pressure to be getting through the content. (Judy, T, Charles College)

Pre-Service Teacher Education in Humanities

If recalled at all, most teachers considered that their pre-service humanities education was largely based on curriculum content coverage rather than practical ideas for enacting lessons. As Judy explained: *"It was more focused on ... what we teach and why we teach it, but not so much how"* (Judy, T, Charles College). Donna agreed with this assessment, and stressed that: *"Pre-service teachers need a better experience with what it could look like, examples of kids actually being engaged with it"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). Gabby was the only teacher who acknowledged that her pre-service humanities education was a positive learning experience. In particular, she credited the *"strong emphasis on ... being inclusive of Indigenous People, to try and lift living and learning and socio-economic status"* as being foundational to her present perspectives in teaching Australian history (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). Lanahan and Yeager (2008) acknowledged the challenges education institutions often face in countering student teachers' pre-conceived negative ideas about humanities and advocated for the inclusion of practical strategies aimed at increasing engagement, such as role play, simulation and inquiry projects.

In-Service Professional Learning Experiences in Humanities

Teachers across the six schools observed that: *"very little training or professional development"* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS) was made available for teachers to support their understandings of the HASS curriculum apart from sessions focused on embedding First Nation perspectives across learning areas. As Judy stated: *"I can't remember anything specifically HASS focused"* (Judy, T, Charles College). Heather particularly recognised *"a*

need for it, for a lot of teachers, especially young teachers” and argued, *“because they don’t get that professional development, their confidence lacks. ... if you’re not as confident, it doesn’t come across in your teaching”* (Heather, T, Jackson SS). Lauren presented a similar view, suggesting that a focus on *“how to teach it would be beneficial”* (Lauren, T St. Bob’s). However, with schools prioritising professional learning for targeted areas such as literacy improvement and digital technologies, HASS learning was largely viewed as an individual teacher responsibility. This was evident from Sonya’s statement: *“we get training for teaching how to code Scratch games and stuff, but we never have any PD, not with HASS”* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). Further, Pippa as a deputy, commented that teachers should also bear the costs in potential HASS learning as *“logistically, we have to fit within budgets and time and timelines and timetables and all those bits and pieces”* (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). This position reinforced overseas findings on the marginalised status of humanities education in comparison with areas deemed essential for high stakes testing regimes (Barnes & Scoffham, 2017; Pratt & Atkinson, 2020).

The teachers’ desire for practical HASS support aligned with Talbot’s (2015) argument that teachers should have greater agency over their professional learning needs, regardless of whether or not they conformed to their school’s targeted improvement agenda. Continued professional learning was considered critical for teachers to “renew their knowledge, develop new practices, and engage in critical reflection” (Ng, 2019, p. 118). In speaking specifically of improving teachers’ capacity in humanities teaching, Crocco and Livingston (2017) stressed the importance of opportunities to “consider more systematically and comprehensively than has been the case in the past, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become such exemplary teachers” (p 378).

Collegial Support

In the absence of professional learning opportunities in humanities, Donna and Mandy, the administrators who took responsibility for teaching HASS at their school, recognised the importance of providing newer teachers with practical examples of effective HASS teaching and suggested that their “*collegial engagement framework*” could be utilised “*to make sure there’s time for watching others work*” (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). Judy appeared to support this position by stating: “*There are so many teachers out there with loads of experience and knowledge. They’re the best ones to ask. They’re practicing it day in and day out*” (Judy, T, Charles College). Heather’s opinion that experienced teachers should assist their newer colleagues by sharing HASS learning materials was supported by Achinstein and Davis (2014) who argued that “developing novices’ content teaching is a distinct and critical mentor role” (p. 121). As Heather stated: “*that’s your job. You need to work together*” (Heather, T, Jackson SS).

Teaching Experience

The study found a consensus amongst participants that ongoing teaching experience contributed to greater confidence in enacting HASS curriculum. As Sonya stated: “*the more you do it, the easier it is*” (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). For Judy, familiarity with the content from a certain year level was an important component in establishing her confidence in teaching HASS. She explained:

It’s very overwhelming if you’re on a new year level because you just don’t get a sense of where it’s come from and where it’s heading. I feel like when you do it year after year, you gain that confidence ... it’s almost like, you are learning it ... when you’re teaching it to the kids. (Judy, T, Charles College)

Teachers also emphasised that clarity around the specific content to be taught was a significant factor in building confidence. For Gabby, clarity was established by examining the unit assessment task and marking rubric to determine exactly what students were expected to demonstrate. She stressed: *“if you don’t know it, you don’t want to teach it, confidence is shot. So, to me, clarity is everything”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). Eaude (2014) considered that expertise in humanities teaching required more than simple knowledge of subject content; it included pedagogical understandings and the development of intuitive and deliberate interpersonal skills. This appeared to be evident in Lauren’s statement that over time, *“you know what works and what doesn’t, what kids are interested in”* (Lauren, T, St.Bob’s). Heather’s comments aligned with Eaude’s (2014) position that teachers’ perceptions of their own expertise were “linked to one’s own circumstances, dispositions and personality” (p. 12).

*I think just because I am really familiar with the content, I elaborate on it,
... most definitely, it comes through your experience and your knowledge of
History, Geography and things like that, especially if you have a passion for
it, if you really love it.* (Heather, T, Jackson SS)

Self-Efficacy: Teachers’ Motivation and Value of HASS

Rationale For Teaching HASS

By contemplating the rationale of a learning area, teachers have an opportunity of gaining deeper understandings of a curriculum’s purpose, clarity around content to be taught, and a focus on specific end goals (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In perceiving teachers as gatekeepers of curriculum, Hawley (2010) considered rationales a means of allowing teachers to connect aspirational aspects of curriculum with the realities of what was possible in working within educational systems, “how far they open the curricular-instructional gate; for whom, when, and which gates to what they open” (p. 418). For the participants in this study, the official HASS rationale published on the ACARA website was not considered a necessary

component in teachers' preparation for curriculum implementation and many stated that they had not known about it. Gabby was blunt in explaining how the practicalities of her teaching role far outweighed potential philosophical considerations:

In terms of needing to know why, I don't get the time to ask those questions.

... I'm spending the majority of my time around how to differentiate that unit for my students. Differentiation trumps the 'why' at the moment.

(Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)

Nevertheless, when teachers were asked to reflect on the purpose of HASS education, their responses indicated depth of thought and appeared to coincide with extracts from ACARA's published rationale. This alignment demonstrates teachers' ability to assimilate intended curriculum content with their own perceptions, experiences and motivations to create wider understandings of humanities education. As Lauren explained: *"I think with my experiences as well as with the curriculum and with the resources, ... I think I do have a good understanding of what I'm teaching"* (Lauren, T, St Bob's). Table 13, presented below provides examples of teachers' reflections on the purpose of HASS and how these correlate with excerpts from the official HASS rationale.

Table 13

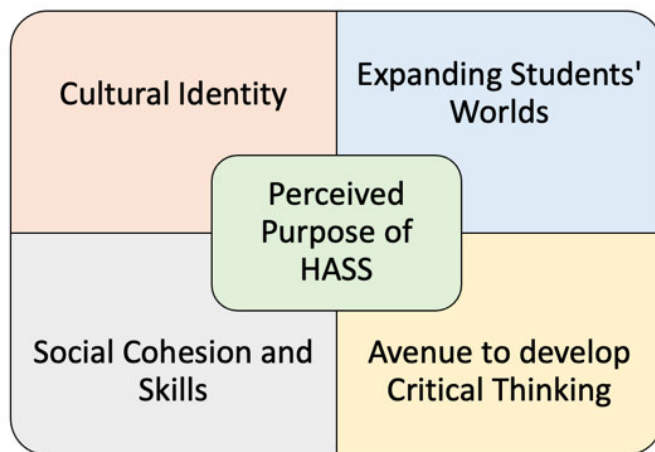
Teachers' Reflections on the Purpose of HASS

Element of Rationale	Teacher Comments on Purpose of HASS	Excerpt from ACARA Rationale
Cultural Identity		
Knowledge of Past	<i>"I just think it's so important for them to know where do they come from, what is my history" (Heather, T, Jackson SS)</i>	"gives students a deep understanding of the world they live in from a range of perspectives, past and present" (para. 3)
Reconciliation with past	<i>"to me, it's about being honest about our history... I do try to be very sensitive to that... the reason we learn it is so that we don't repeat mistakes" (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)</i>	
Appreciation of democracy	<i>"I think about my own children of how lucky they are to be in this country... they do usually eventually realise that as imperfect as it is, democracy is the best thing we've got going" (Judy, T, Charles College)</i>	
Expanding Students' Worlds		
Awareness of place in wider context	<i>"it's really important for broadening where we are, a little place in the world... expanding their world view from this little part of Queensland that is in our state and our country and our world" (Kerry, CL, St Bob's)</i>	"harnessing students' curiosity and imagination about the world they live in" (para. 2)
Awareness of global issues	<i>"because of everything that's going on in the world, they need to have knowledge of that" (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS)</i>	"value their belonging in a diverse and dynamic society" (para. 2)
Social Cohesion + Skills		
Reinforcing School Values	<i>"I think it's more a personal development subject for kids. That they have the ability to relate the values that are demonstrated" (Craig, CL, Watershed SS)</i>	"students become well placed to contribute to Australia's ideas of a cohesive society" (para. 5)
Respect for diversity	<i>"Respect of others' history, respect of others' geography, respect of others' life" (Mandy, CL, Darby SS)</i>	
Empathy and Compassion	<i>"I feel I'm accountable to help produce people who have the ability to think ... reflect, ... and empathise with others ... I try and model for them an attitude that I would want them to have, which is being open-minded, willing to listen to others" (Judy, T, Charles College)</i>	"develop an appreciation and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity" (para. 3)
Critical Thinking Skills		
Presenting alternative perspectives	<i>"sometimes school is the only place where kids can hear a different perspective from what they might get at home. So I think it's important that it's not 'You must think this way' but 'Have you thought about or how did you know this?'" (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS)</i>	"Thinking about and responding to issues requires an understanding of different perspectives" (para. 3)
Openness to students' views	<i>"children really don't have a filter, they're going to ask questions because they want to know the answers. So I think it's important to explore those questions" (Lauren, T, St Bob's)</i>	"students are given opportunities to develop their ability to question, think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, make decisions and adapt to change" (para. 4)
Forming opinions	<i>"To me, I should be able to teach the children to be critical thinkers and read what's out there ... and then one day you make up your own mind" (Heather, T, Jackson SS)</i>	
Expressing opinions	<i>"to challenge respectfully... and then looking at actual sources" (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS)</i>	

These comments not only provide insight into teachers' perceptions of the purpose of HASS, they reflect a wider ideological stance towards education. Figure 62 below illustrates the four broad areas presented: cultural identity, social cohesion and skills, expanding students' worlds and developing critical thinking.

Figure 62

Teachers' Reflections on the Purpose of HASS Curriculum



Cultural Identity/Expanding Students' Worlds. A large proportion of teachers' reflections revolved around the role of HASS in reinforcing students' cultural identity: *"where do they come from, what is my history?"* (Heather, T, Jackson SS), as well as understanding students' *"place in the world, historically and geographically"* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). Both of these aspects were recognised by Eaude (2017b) as central to the role humanities plays in helping students "understand themselves and other people in relation to place, time, belief, identity and culture" (p. 343). Teachers were also cognisant of the challenges in balancing reconciliation of Australia's colonial past with promoting appreciation of country. As Gabby explained: *"to me, it's about being honest about our history. I do try to be very sensitive to that... the reason we learn it, is so that we don't repeat mistakes"* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). In commenting on Australia's present situation, Judy reflected that it was important that her students: *"realise that as imperfect as it is, democracy*

is the best thing we've got going. We are lucky in our country to have it and to have grown up with it" (Judy, T, Charles College).

Social Cohesion and Skills. HASS was also seen as a *"personal development subject"* where students had opportunities *"to relate the values that are demonstrated"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS). These included: *"respect of others' history, respect of others' geography, respect of others' life"* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS), *"the sense of justice and what's right"* (Craig, CL, Watershed SS) and *"being open-minded, willing to listen... and empathise with others"* (Judy, T, Charles College). These perspectives were consistent with Ruto et al. (2022) who considered humanities education to be *"the engine of social cohesion"* (p. 260) and Hawe's (2010) view that the role of humanities teachers *"is to transmit the agreed-upon knowledge, values and beliefs that hold society together"* (p. 291).

Avenue for Critical Thinking. It was apparent that the educators largely perceived their role as transmitting knowledge rather than transforming social order (Marsh, 2010). Nevertheless, teachers also acknowledged that students were *"going to be the future and they're going to have to make decisions"* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS), and that: *"we need more time and more skills and strategies to explicitly teach creative and critical thinking"* (Mandy, CL, Darby SS). Donna observed that: *"sometimes school is the only place where kids can hear a different perspective from what they might get at home"* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS). Lauren emphasised the need for teachers to be open-minded when responding to students' ideas, contending that: *"children really don't have a filter, they're going to ask questions because they want to know the answers. So I think it's important to explore those questions"* (Lauren, T, St Bob's). For Judy, the goal of active citizenship involved preparing students *"to be people who think for themselves"* (Judy, T, Charles College).

While the varied statements on the purpose of HASS were collected from separate interviews, the amalgamation of these ideas highlights the potential for shared reflection and

discourse in school settings. In doing so, teachers would have the opportunity to hear and consider other points of view, allowing for deeper understandings of the “big ideas” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 5) underpinning humanities education and promoting greater focus on identified goals.

Teachers’ Motivation for Teaching HASS

The adapted model of Ryan and Deci’s (2000) Theory of Self Determination was useful in delineating and describing teachers’ stated feelings about their motivation towards teaching HASS curriculum. From statements given by the teachers in this study, it was possible to categorise their motivation using Ryan and Deci’s (2000) terminology, based on the psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness. An overview of where the six teachers appeared in this adapted continuum is provided in Table 14 below.

Table 14

Categorisation of Teachers' Motivation Towards HASS

←————— EXTRINSIC —————→				INTRINSIC
External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Compliance to school’s requirements. No enjoyment of subject.	Ernest effort in enacting HASS units Little enjoyment in teaching subject	Takes pride in completing units well Sees value in HASS	Inputs aspects of personal interests into HASS units Enjoys and values HASS	High interest, value and advocacy for HASS Autonomy in working with HASS content
Sonya (Watershed SS) Feels compelled to fulfill school’s expectations No enjoyment of HASS	Donna (Darby SS) Satisfaction in teaching social elements of HASS Little enjoyment of content Gabby (Hopeville SS) Commitment to social justice and creating student enthusiasm Little personal enjoyment of HASS Judy (Charles College) Values HASS and aspires to teach it better Lacking confidence in ability to cover content		Lauren (St Bob’s) Enjoys and values HASS Personal interest in travel influencing HASS enactment Heather (Jackson SS) Personal enjoyment in History and Geography Motivation and confidence in enacting HASS	

Given that each of the educators in this study were bound by external strictures from the Education Department, local Diocese or School Board, it would appear that authentic intrinsic motivation where teachers are given the autonomy to pursue their passions through innovative curriculum enactment was diminished (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Lennert da Silva and Mølstad (2020) made the point that such restrictions can lead to a “lack of creativity, professional integrity and fun in teaching and learning” (p 116). For non-government schools where no directive was made to adopt standardised curriculum materials and assessments, there was greater potential for teachers to explore innovative practices. As Alison stated, teachers at her school had *“been very much trusted”* to create their own units of work and assessment tasks (Alison, CL, Charles College).

Interestingly, despite their advocacy for, and fidelity towards standardised curriculum materials, Heather and Lauren presented as the most motivated teachers in the study, positioning them in the Integrated Regulation category. Both teachers professed enjoying teaching HASS curriculum, in terms of the learning area itself, and in their capacity to teach it well. As Lauren stated: *“when it comes down to it, if you’re interested in the topic, you’re going to teach it more passionately than if you weren’t”* (Lauren, T, St Bob’s). A second common element was that both teachers viewed HASS as an opportunity to incorporate their own interests, such as Heather’s farming background and Lauren’s travel experiences.

At the other end of the scale, Sonya appeared to be the least motivated teacher and presented as operating in the External Regulation category. She openly stated: *“I do find a lot of it a little bit boring”* and acknowledged that it was an area that she had actively avoided in her teaching experience. She explained: *“I’ve always chosen the Science and off-loaded the HASS. I haven’t really taught HASS for a while.”* One of the main reasons Sonya gave for disliking the learning area, was her school’s reliance on C2C learning materials which she

considered: *“not really fun teaching. You’re always talking”*. By contrast, Sonya considered Science far more motivating because: *“the kids seem to enjoy it more because it is so much more hands-on”* (Sonya, T, Watershed SS). It was evident that Sonya perceived that all three psychological needs; competence, relatedness and autonomy contributed to her lack of motivation in teaching HASS.

Donna, Gabby and Judy appeared to be positioned between these divergent groups, demonstrating aspects of both Introjected and Identified Regulation. Both Gabby and Donna perceived that their knowledge and determination for students to be engaged and successful learners were significant attributes of their competence in teaching HASS. Nevertheless, Gabby’s acknowledged dislike of the learning area greatly impacted her teaching approach. She commented: *“I’d look at it from a fact that it’s dry material... I don’t know one teacher who wouldn’t say that it’s like pulling teeth, when you’re trying to teach History to children today”* (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). For Donna, *“external factors”* (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS) related to her administrative position, such as being called away to solve behaviour issues, diminished her potential motivation for teaching this learning area. Having previously taught in the State system, Judy was conscious of the increased autonomy she was afforded in her present position and the potential for incorporating creative learning activities. Nevertheless, she expressed a constant struggle in balancing aspirations of greater student engagement with the external demands of curriculum. As she stated:

I feel a lot of pressure as a teacher... I feel like I’m very much always so focused on what has to be covered so that I can feel good about myself and know that yep, tick, we did that. (Judy, T, Charles College)

Faked Enthusiasm for Teaching HASS

Another aspect of teachers’ motivation revealed in the study was the concept of faked or “inauthentic enthusiasm” (Taxer & Frenzel, 2018, p. 75). Burić (2019) insisted that

“teachers who are perceived as more enthusiastic have classes of students who are more intrinsically motivated” (p. 17). The emphasis here was on clearly observable signs of enthusiasm which may or may not be linked to teachers’ genuine motivation for a learning area. Judy made the point that faked enthusiasm can play an important role in HASS teaching:

At high school, they teach the thing they love, what they’re passionate about. We’re expected to teach every subject ... I would hope that as a professional, teachers would make it [HASS] as interesting as possible and model for the kids, this is great and it’s worth learning about, without looking at our personal feelings. (Judy, T, Charles College)

Gabby made a similar observation:

If I’m not interested in it, then it’s dry and I’ve got to find a way to get passionate about it and so that’s where the energy comes into it. ... It’s a teaching style thing. I put a spin on anything, within the constraints of what I’m expected to teach ... The biggest challenge is, how do I sell this to students so that they’re engaged in it? (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)

It was apparent that while teachers’ embrace of faked enthusiasm for HASS was based on their commitment to providing the best outcomes for students, this could also be viewed as yet another external regulation in Ryan and Deci’s (2000) model of motivation. Further, Taxer and Frenzel (2018) warned that continued inauthentic practices could have a detrimental effect on teachers’ self-efficacy and lead to emotional exhaustion and overall job dissatisfaction. A more positive approach would be for school administrators to address potential impediments to teachers’ motivation for HASS by acknowledging the three psychological needs identified by Ryan and Deci (2000) – competency, autonomy and relatedness. In this way, motivation could be improved by promoting and facilitating collegial

support, allowing teachers a greater degree of autonomy over HASS enactment and by examining alternative learning activities to improve student engagement.

Summary of Findings: The Teacher's Individual Role

This fourth section of the cross-case findings focused on aspects of individual teachers' professional beliefs underpinning their efficacy in enacting HASS curriculum. A model was utilised to identify three separate elements of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs: their knowledge and understanding of HASS; relevant personal and professional experiences; and their motivations towards the learning area.

The study found that teachers who utilised standardised curriculum programs such as C2C derived their knowledge and understanding of the Australian HASS curriculum through these materials rather than from the ACARA website. Conversely, Independent school teachers were encouraged to access the site directly when planning for curriculum. In general, teachers agreed it was the responsibility of curriculum leaders to be an intermediary between the official HASS curriculum and themselves. Several teachers considered that their own personal practical knowledge, such as travel and family background was an asset that could be utilised to enhance HASS lessons.

When recalling their own primary humanities learning, teachers perceived that approaches involving hands-on and integrated activities were deemed positive experiences while lessons focused on retention of facts and worksheets were less enjoyable. The teachers generally considered their pre-service education could have been improved by including practical ideas for enacting HASS education, rather than focusing on knowledge of the official curriculum. In the absence of any professional learning for HASS in schools, teachers advocated for greater collegial support in developing common understandings and to share examples of effective practices. There was agreement that continued classroom experience,

especially when allowed to stay on the same year level could help teachers develop knowledge and confidence in HASS curriculum and pedagogy.

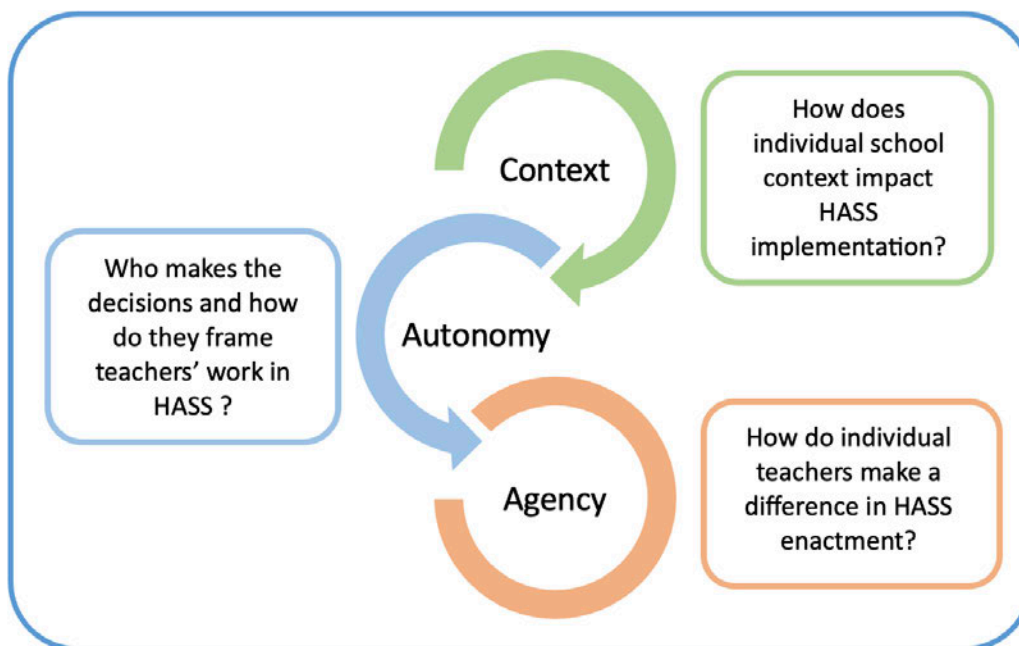
Although educators expressed not knowing the ACARA rationale for HASS curriculum, when asked their opinions on the purpose of the learning area, their combined comments illustrated they were closely aligned with this document. Participants' statements on the purpose of HASS fell into four different areas: recognising students' cultural identity, expanding students' worlds, developing skills that promote social cohesion and as an avenue for critical thinking. The adapted Continuum of Motivation based on the work of Ryan and Deci (2000) was used to differentiate teachers' stated motivations towards HASS curriculum. The study found little correlation between the degree of autonomy afforded to teachers and their motivations towards teaching HASS. Instead, teachers who had extensive classroom experience and could incorporate personal interests, were more likely to enjoy teaching HASS. The least motivated teacher reported having little experience in teaching the learning area, found many of the C2C materials disengaging and felt uncomfortable in explicitly teaching HASS content. Several teachers asserted that regardless of their own feelings, it was essential that they portray an enthusiastic and positive attitude in order to maintain student motivation for HASS.

Chapter 8. Discussion

This study aimed to contribute to existing models conceptualising the processes involved in school-based curriculum by examining how the Australian primary HASS curriculum was enacted in a Queensland context. The overarching research question was centred on understanding how individual schools and teachers influenced that enactment. In doing so, the study identified specific organisational decisions made by schools on the planning, pedagogy and assessment of this learning area. The study also found that teachers' professional and personal knowledge, experience and motivation were significant elements impacting the way HASS was enacted in their classrooms. To synthesise the large range of findings into a more cohesive understanding of the influences on HASS enactment in Queensland primary schools, three broad themes were developed: school context, autonomy and agency. The diagram in Figure 63 below illustrates the linkages between the themes as they pertain to HASS enactment and previews how they are examined in this chapter.

Figure 63

Three Interrelated Themes: Context, Autonomy, and Teacher Agency

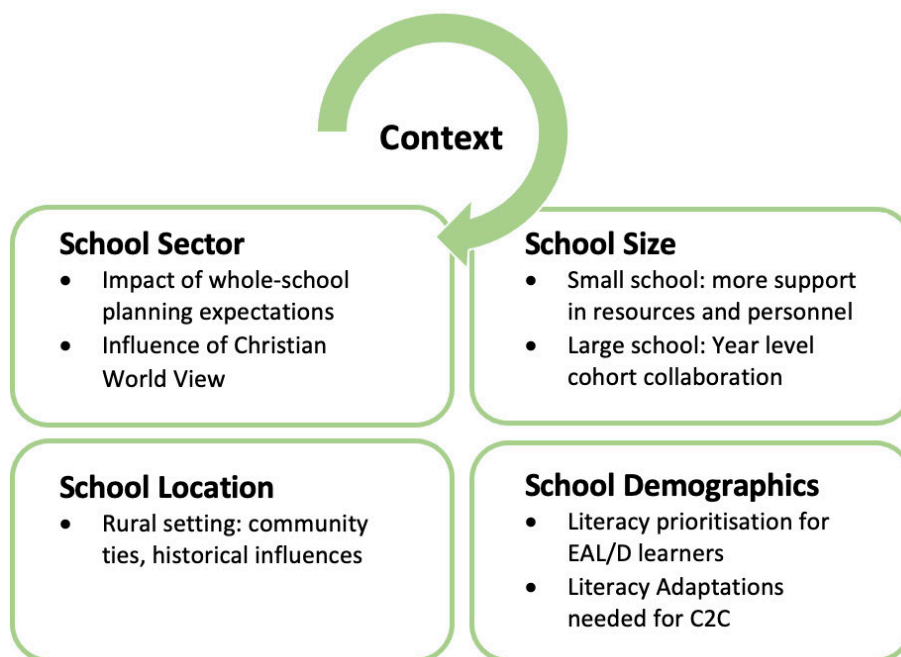


The Influence of Individual School Context on HASS Implementation

In conducting this multiple case study, the individual context of a school has been identified as a significant factor impacting schools' implementation of HASS, with implications for teachers' autonomy and agency. This conclusion aligns with Stake's (2005) premise that an individual case study "reflects a complex entity located in its own situation" (p. 12). Particular aspects of individual contexts found to have influenced HASS implementation include the educational sector to which the school belongs, the location and size of the school, and the socio-educational status reflected in student demographics. These four contextual elements, represented in Figure 64 below, are discussed and referenced by pertinent examples in the following section.

Figure 64

Four Contextual Elements Influencing HASS Curriculum



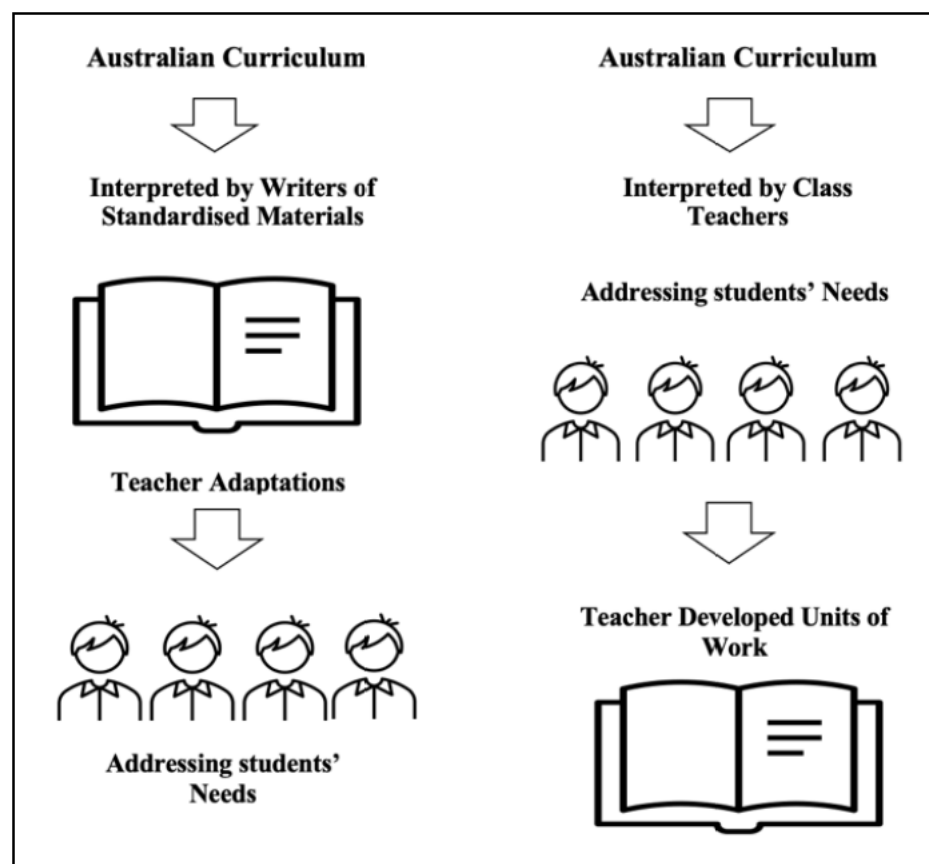
The Impact of School Sector Differences on HASS implementation

Within each of the three educational sectors participating in this study - State, Catholic and Independent - educators demonstrated a stated commitment to implementing the Australian HASS curriculum with rigour and integrity. Nevertheless, a distinct difference

emerged in how the different sectors employed whole-school curriculum planning, and this had ramifications for the scope of autonomy afforded to teachers and the agency utilised in enacting curriculum. The Queensland Department of Education's specific demand for comprehensive three-level planning for each learning area heavily influenced State school administrators to adopt C2C's ready-made holistic plans which were backed up with extensive units, resources, and assessment. Underlying this decision was the perception that the materials were not only convenient, but were reputable, rigorous, and fit for purpose. By contrast, HASS units of work in non-government schools were largely developed by teachers and a whole-school implementation plan was developed incrementally over the school year. The diagram represented in Figure 65 below illustrates the basic difference between these two different approaches.

Figure 65

Two Approaches to Curriculum Enactment



When schools adhere to programs created by external personnel such as the writers of C2C, the self-contained units of work, assessment tasks and marking rubrics are listed on school overviews much like packages on a shelf ready to be unpacked, enacted, and assessed within designated time frames. Teachers' agency is consequently utilised in making the adjustments necessary to promote student engagement and enable success in prescriptive assessment tasks. In schools where administrators have allowed teachers a degree of autonomy over curriculum planning, teachers can apply agency in addressing the specific needs of students before decisions are made to develop curriculum plans. In circumstances where teachers independently adopt commercial programs, interpretation of the Australian Curriculum has a similar potential of being external to the needs of the particular students in their classes. However, without leadership direction over the fidelity towards these materials, teachers have greater control and choice when making curricular decisions.

A second contextual feature differentiating religious schools from State schools involves the incorporation of a Christian World View and its influence on HASS curriculum. Crenshaw (2013) explained that this holistic faith-based approach impacts all aspects of school culture, including mission statements, curriculum direction and classroom practices. While educators at Charles College did not give specific examples, the curriculum leader acknowledged that professional development was prioritised for helping teachers weave a Christian World View *"throughout their units in a meaningful way"* (Alison, CL, Charles College). At St Bob's, the principal recognised that his school's Christian values coincided with several aspects of the HASS Civics and Citizenship sub-strand, and consequently the decision was made to teach this area within the school's religious education program. While State school administrators acknowledged that the values promulgated in HASS curriculum could be utilised to strengthen their school's ethos and behaviour management program, the official HASS curriculum, based on C2C materials remained a separate entity.

The Influence of School Location

Sayer et al. (2013) contended that social connection is a fundamental aspect of students' lives and that schools "as social institutions, have an important role to play in forming and maintaining constructive geographical and relational communities" (p. 9). It became apparent during this study that the smaller rural schools were more likely than their urban counterparts to foster close community ties, and to incorporate local cultural history and traditions into HASS programs. This was particularly evident at St Bob's where staff contended that community resources such as excursions to easily accessed local museums and visits from volunteer personnel were effective and engaging means of enriching the school's HASS programs. In other rural and semi-rural schools such as Watershed and Darby State Schools, staff similarly expressed pride in their local area's rich history and geography. However, their school's commitment to employing centrally written C2C HASS units generally meant that excursions and observances of commemorations such as Harmony and ANZAC Days were viewed as stand-alone activities, conducted outside of formal HASS curriculum.

The Influence of School Size

Educators at the two small schools (St Bob's and Watershed) recognised the benefits of having smaller classes when implementing HASS, especially when conducting student-led inquiry activities. These advantages included having a more favourable teacher-student ratio to support student work and greater access to digital resources. This finding aligns with Vulliamy and Webb (2006) who identified several positive advantages for curriculum implementation in small schools. By contrast, teachers in larger schools perceived that time restrictions, student behaviour and lack of resources were impediments to their full embrace of inquiry pedagogy in HASS. One benefit acknowledged by educators from larger schools

was that multiple cohorts of the same year level allowed for greater collaboration and support from teaching partners, especially when seeking clarification on HASS assessment standards.

The Influence of School Demographics

It was evident that the specific demographic makeup of schools, particularly those with high numbers of students from First Nation or EAL/D family backgrounds had ramifications for HASS implementation. While both Jackson and Hopeville schools addressed cultural elements of these demographic groups through social support, professional learning on embedding First Nation perspectives and in observing celebrations such as Harmony Day, these were not considered part of C2C HASS programs. The prioritisation of literacy and English curriculum over other learning areas however did impact HASS, by creating a perception that HASS was of less importance. Teachers in these schools revealed that HASS was rarely discussed in formal curriculum meetings, minimal funding was available for resources or professional learning, HASS assessment was not moderated and limited reporting of student success in HASS was communicated to parents. The literacy demands of prescriptive worksheet-based C2C learning materials and assessment tasks was another complication which required extensive adaptations to allow students from these priority cohorts to demonstrate their understandings in HASS. While Spratling (2020) agreed that a holistic approach was needed for supporting refugee students, they also advocated for schools to embrace and integrate cultural differences into school curriculum.

Teacher Autonomy in HASS Implementation

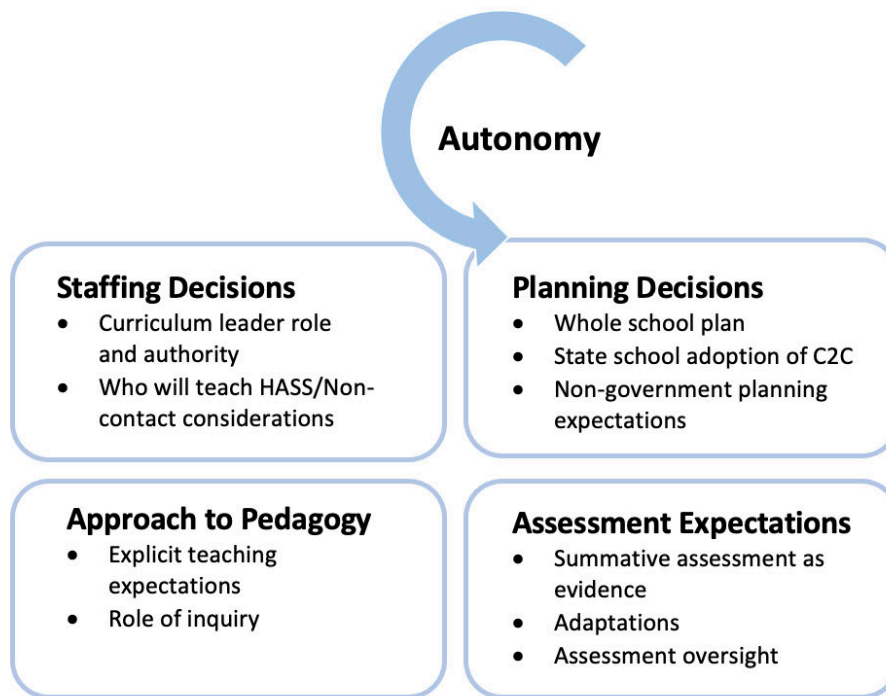
While the sector, location, size, and demographics of schools are all recognised as significant contextual features influencing HASS curriculum, school leadership and the impact of individual teachers remain crucial factors in determining how this learning area is implemented in schools (Fairbanks & Andrew, 2020; Loxton, 2016). This study utilises Lennert da Silva and Mølsted's (2020) definition of autonomy as teachers' capacity to make

key curriculum decisions within the strictures of systemic and school expectations, and is predicated on power relationships within the school. The following exploration of these expectations and the implications for teacher autonomy addresses two of this research's sub-questions: What specific organisational decisions frame the way HASS is implemented at a particular school? and How do school-based decisions on HASS implementation impact teachers' autonomy and agency in enacting HASS?

In the last decade, the global emphasis on improving academic standards has led to a standardised national curriculum that has “ratcheted up the importance of the principal as curriculum leader” (Glatthorn et al., 2016, p. 2). At a school level, principals are tasked with realising exacting systemic demands on teachers' planning, enactment and reporting of curriculum (Queensland Department of Education, 2023b). The graphic depicted below in Figure 66 summarises four different areas in which leaders' curriculum decisions influence teachers' autonomy in enacting HASS curriculum. They include decisions on staffing, curriculum planning, expectations around preferred pedagogies and the role of assessment.

Figure 66

Leadership Decisions Impacting Teachers' Autonomy in Enacting HASS



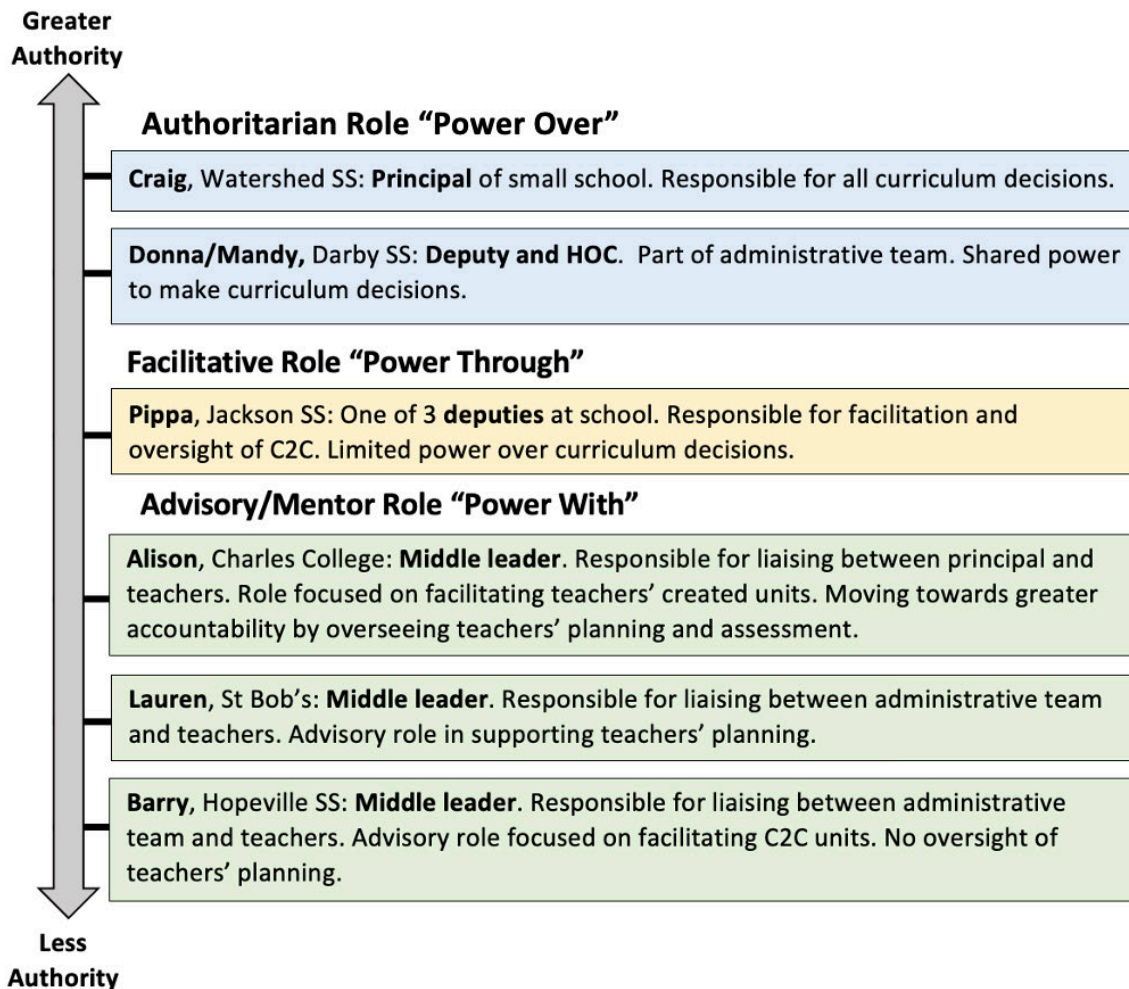
Staffing Decisions and Teachers' Autonomy

Curriculum Leader. To ensure effective oversight of Australian Curriculum implementation, principals make a series of staffing decisions that include the type and scope of curriculum leader authority, and in determining whether HASS will be taught by classroom or external teaching personnel. This study incorporates Dao and Cranston's (2018) position, based on earlier research by Blase and Anderson (1978), that the delegation of curriculum leadership authority has immediate implications for teachers' autonomy in enacting curriculum. An authoritarian stance, *power over* is adopted when classroom teachers are isolated from a majority of curriculum decisions. A more indirect approach, *power through* centres on facilitating implementation through the use of deputies and heads of curriculum. A third more democratic approach, *power with* uses middle leaders acting as mentors to support teachers' work. This study revealed evidence of all three curriculum leadership types, and

these are presented below in Figure 67 as a continuum, demonstrating the varying degrees of authority over teachers' enactment of HASS.

Figure 67

Continuum of Authority Represented in the Six Participating Schools



Craig's adoption of an authoritarian stance was based on his perceived responsibility for ensuring his small school had a holistic, cohesive, and workable curriculum implementation plan that could withstand contingencies such as falling enrolment numbers and ensuing loss of staff. At Darby and Jackson schools, the role of curriculum oversight was distributed to members of the administrative team with varying degrees of authority over curriculum decisions. This was apparent when Pippa personally considered that teachers should have greater flexibility in utilising materials other than C2C but admitted that she

couldn't "*mandate that teachers do that*" (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). The middle leader positions held by Alison, Lauren and Barry had the least authority over curriculum decision making, and classroom teachers in these schools identified as having greater autonomy over their work. The curriculum leader's role in these schools involved liaising between teachers and administrative leaders, supporting teacher's understanding of curriculum and in ensuring compliance with agreed-upon policy directives.

Who Will Teach HASS? In Chapter Seven, it was determined that principals' decisions on whether HASS would be taught by classroom teachers or external personnel was often based on pragmatic rather than ideological considerations. A major factor impacting this choice was the provision of non-contact time for administrators and teaching staff, which at the time of this study comprised two-and-a half hours per week for each full-time teacher. This staffing decision has a range of implications for teachers' autonomy in enacting HASS curriculum. For those employed to cover teacher release time, the stringent time allocations diminish opportunities for these HASS teachers to employ inquiry projects, integrate HASS with other curriculum areas and to incorporate individual student adaptations. By contrast, classroom teachers have greater flexibility over allocations of time, and opportunities to utilise teacher aide support in addressing student needs. Teachers who are no longer responsible for teaching HASS may simply express relief at having a diminished workload, as evident in Gabby's observation that such circumstances were considered a "*privilege*" (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS).

Planning Decisions and Teachers' Autonomy

Another significant aspect of the cross-case findings centred on the decision to adopt whole school curriculum plans such as C2C, and teachers' expected level of fidelity to those materials. These decisions directly contributed to teachers' acknowledged compliance, and degree of passivity in making curricular decisions. This was evident in various statements:

“*you have to do it*” (Mandy, CL, Darby SS), “*I just teach it*” (Sonya, T, Watershed SS) and Heather’s reflection: “*That’s the way that it is*” (Heather, T, Jackson SS). This concurs with Lennert da Silva and Mølstad’s (2020) finding that teachers who are faced with restrictive autonomy generally “go with the flow” (p. 127). A reliance on externally written curriculum materials also has direct implications for teachers’ understanding of the Australian HASS curriculum rationale, content, and achievement standards. Nevertheless, the study found that despite teachers’ concern for various aspects of the HASS C2C program, such as the amount of content, literacy requirements and ambiguous assessment, no teacher advocated for independent creation of HASS units. This aligns with recent research, confirming that teachers struggle with curriculum planning obligations and that workload stress is a major factor in teachers’ decisions to leave the workforce (Hunter et al., 2022).

The study revealed that teachers in non-government schools perceived themselves having a greater degree of autonomy over HASS planning than in State schools. Although teachers at Charles College were expected to utilise a common planning template and submit units of work for Board Accreditation where they could be “*pulled up and checked*”, Alison spoke of having “*choice*” over HASS curriculum arrangement and that teachers were “*very much trusted*” in designing independent units of work (Alison, CL, Charles College). Similarly, teachers at St Bob’s were directed to employ the digital planning tool provided by their local Diocese to create or upload HASS units. Nevertheless, Kerry pointed out that teachers “*still have the freedom*” (Kerry, CL, St Bob’s) to make independent professional decisions on content organisation, learning activities and assessment, which included the use of commercially produced resources. It would appear that the autonomy structure at these schools was more compatible with advice from ACARA, stipulating that: “Teachers choose how best to introduce essential concepts and processes, and how to progressively deepen understanding of discipline-based content” (ACARA, 2020, p. 15).

Pedagogical Expectations and Teacher Autonomy

Across all sectors, it was apparent that explicit teaching, based on an agglomeration of ideas from educators such as Hattie (2009), Archer and Hughes (2011) and Sharratt and Fullen (2012), was considered the preferred pedagogical approach for implementing curriculum. Teachers were familiar with explicit teaching concepts such as backward mapping, learning intentions, success criteria and active participation, and could readily identify these when explaining and justifying the processes they employed in enacting HASS units.

Nevertheless, differences were detected in how some schools interpreted explicit teaching principles and this had implications for teachers' ability to make independent curriculum decisions. In State schools, Hattie's (2009) work was generally cited as a justification for front-ending the prescriptive C2C assessment task, establishing clarity around goals evident in the assessment piece and eliminating extraneous and distracting content. While educators at St Bob's agreed that clarity of intent was an essential component of effective curriculum implementation, Hattie's principles were interpreted as a rationale for teachers to have greater autonomy in monitoring ongoing student achievement, modifying student goals, and in changing content direction. As Kerry stated: *"one of the beauties that Visible Learning has given us is the sense that we've got that permission to pause and not just plough through"* (Kerry, CL, St. Bob's).

In general, State school teachers accepted the pedagogical direction inherent in C2C lessons and were conscious that while inquiry elements were evident, the materials largely followed a teacher-led explicit teaching focus. Despite having greater autonomy to incorporate integrated, inquiry-based lessons in HASS, teachers from non-government schools were similarly cautious in utilising this pedagogical approach. This was evident in Alison's observation that: *"a lot of teachers will teach explicitly mainly at the beginning of*

the term and maybe there'll be a little bit of inquiry-focus at the end" (Alison, Charles College). Teachers revealed that their reluctance to employ inquiry was based on time constraints, students' poor inquiry skills, behaviour issues, limited resources, and a lack of practical knowledge on how inquiry could be effectively utilised in HASS curriculum.

Assessment Expectations and Teacher Autonomy

A common view evident across sectors was that teachers' accountability to HASS curriculum entailed providing demonstrated evidence of students' understandings against specific components of ACARA's year-level achievement standards. Teachers' statements around collecting "*physical evidence*" (Alison CL, Charles College), a need to "*prove and be accountable*" (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS), and "*to have something that is written*" (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS) highlight the way summative assessment tasks dominated teachers' curriculum decisions. This was particularly evident in State schools tethered to prescribed C2C assessment tasks, where teachers' autonomy had the propensity of being subject to the "corrosive effects of teaching to the test" (Black et al., p. 466). Generally, non-government schools had greater flexibility in designing varied assessment tasks, utilising student feedback to modify learning, and in giving students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understandings.

Despite the demand that assessment tasks should be rigorous, evidence-based, supported by student adjustments and "*kept indefinitely*" (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS), school administrators from all sectors were unlikely to monitor teachers' preparation, enactment, or evidence of HASS assessment. Similarly, while some teachers elected to work with teaching partners to mark students' assessments, formal moderation and reporting of student success in HASS was not considered a priority in any of the schools. It could be argued that this laissez-faire approach to oversight allows for a greater degree of teacher autonomy in assessing

HASS, however it is more likely to reinforce teachers' perception that HASS curriculum is considered of lesser importance than areas such as English and Mathematics.

Teacher Agency in HASS Implementation

Teacher agency refers to the deliberate professional actions teachers make, based on perceptions of their own abilities in performing their educational duties within a defined context (Lennert da Silva & Mølstad, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022). Teachers' agency in enacting curriculum is multifaceted, individualised, and temporal, and is essential in developing teachers' sense of professional identity, commitment to their work, and overall wellbeing (Vahasantanen, 2015). As Gabby asserted:

I put a spin on anything, within the constraints of what I'm expected to teach and commitment to the Australian Curriculum and making sure I am teaching the guts of what I need to. How I do that is everything! (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)

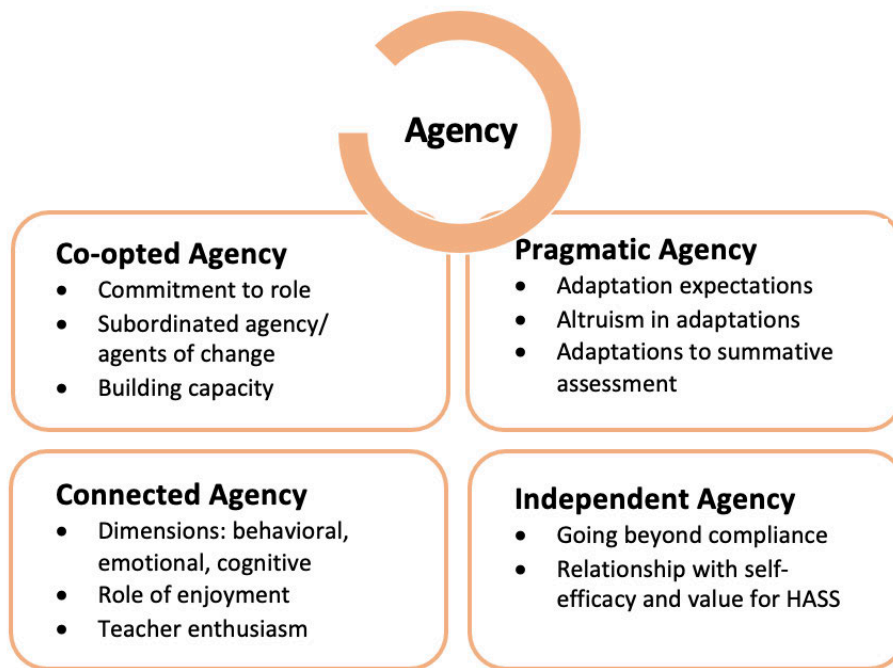
This statement illustrates the way teachers exerted their agency within their school's structural framework and reinforces the idea that "even under the most prescriptive 'teacher-proof' curricula, spaces exist for teachers to mediate the curriculum" (Priestley & Philippou 2018, p. 153).

It is acknowledged that while administrative decisions frame teachers' autonomy and impact the conditions of teachers' work, they do not necessarily determine the level or type of agency used by teachers in enacting HASS curriculum. This section focuses on the third interrelated theme - teacher agency - by identifying and discussing four different ways teachers navigate their autonomous environment, to exert agency in HASS curriculum enactment. In doing so, this section addresses two sub-questions of this research: What perceptions do teachers have on their own abilities to enact effective HASS curriculum?; and How does a teacher's sense of professional self, impact their autonomy and agency in

enacting HASS curriculum? The four forms of teacher agency identified in this study are given specific terms and are summarised below in Figure 68.

Figure 68

Forms of Teacher Agency in Enacting HASS Curriculum



Co-opted Agency: Accommodating Curriculum Reforms

A distinctive feature of this research was teachers' acknowledged compliance to systemic goals and priorities, and an acceptance of their professional responsibilities, as evident in a common refrain:

"It is my job at this school" (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS)

"that's your job" (Heather, T, Jackson SS)

"that's not someone else's job to do it for me." (Judy, T, Charles College)

According to Priestly et al., (2012), teachers' application of agency is undermined by the fidelity expected towards systemic policies and programs. In these situations, Vahasantanen (2015) described teachers' actions as "subordinated agency" (p. 2). Vongalis-Macrow's (2007) statement that "Policy has a tendency to mechanize and control the teacher rather than seeking to broaden their capacity to transform education systems" (p. 437) suggests that

teachers only truly exercise agency when actively working against educational reforms. This point of view ignores the fact that in promoting change, education systems rely on teachers' agency in realising these goals (Smylie et al., 1999). The teachers in this study have demonstrated a capacity to assimilate new ideas and to create opportunities to employ them effectively in their classrooms, not simply as a result of compliance, but through an openness to professional growth and a commitment to their professional role. Hence, the term *co-opted agency* is a more apt way of describing teachers' efforts to accommodate reform measures. Heather's situation illustrates this premise. With the administrative decision to adopt C2C materials in their entirety, the teachers at Heather's school arguably had the least autonomy in enacting HASS curriculum. Nevertheless, Heather's positive sense of self-efficacy, coupled with a passion for teaching HASS allowed her to confidently derive success from her implementation of C2C materials:

I think just because I am really familiar with the content, I elaborate on it, you know most definitely, it comes through your experience and your knowledge of History, Geography, and things like that, especially if you have a passion for it, if you really love it. (Heather, T, Jackson SS)

A significant factor contributing to the successful uptake of education reforms and teachers' consequent agency in demonstrating new skills and knowledge, lies in the provision of dedicated professional learning (Ngo, 2021). It was evident that teachers' confidence and facility in employing explicit teaching pedagogy was the result of several years of intensive and targeted professional development. By contrast, the lack of any HASS-focused learning opportunities, particularly in the application of inquiry, "*what it could look like*" (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS) left teachers feeling uncertain and less likely to utilise their agency in advocating for, or incorporating this pedagogy into their HASS units.

Pragmatic Agency: Making Prescribed Curriculum Work

The strategic goal of *Every Student Succeeding* was a significant factor behind each schools' expectation that teachers provide appropriate and individualised adjustments designed to enable student success in HASS (Queensland Department of Education, 2023d). This was an area where teachers were afforded greater scope to make pragmatic decisions in catering for individual student needs. Gabby's reflection illustrates some of the thought processes she employed when exercising *pragmatic agency*:

How can I be creative in making sure that I maximise students' success into a very heavy document that I have already adjusted and differentiated for our students? How can I support them further to interpret that and have most success? (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS)

Teachers often viewed these adjustments as moral obligations existing beyond compliance and a reflection of their professional identity. This altruistic form of agency was evident in teachers' comments: "*we owe it to our children to support them to achieve the best that they can achieve*" (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS) and: "*for children in our context, you absolutely have to give them a chance*" (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS).

Nevertheless, teachers clearly understood their responsibilities to curriculum: "*I do have an agenda that I have to meet*" (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS) and their commitment to "*high stakes learning*" (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS). Certainly, success in HASS was not viewed in the same manner as English and Mathematics, where schools' strategic plans focused on improving student grades in these learning areas. However, questions arise around the purpose of adjustments, especially when they are predominantly utilised in enabling students to complete prescriptive assessment tasks. Assessment grades are not only a measure of students' demonstrated success but are also a reflection of teachers' capabilities in enacting curriculum (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Sahlberg, 2008). This prompts the question of, at what

point do the extensive adjustments made to assessment tasks impact the validity of that assessment? When test questions are practiced, key phrases are listed on the whiteboard or an aide reads then scribes answers to written questions that may or may not be within students' sphere of understanding, does a 'C' grade reflect the student's abilities in HASS or the teacher's success in creating the appearance of that achievement? These questions are pertinent given Eaude's (2017a) argument that humanities assessment "must be manageable for both children and adults, and not take up too much time, without becoming so simple that the results become meaningless" (p. 220).

Connected Agency: Engaging Students

The Australian Curriculum clearly stipulates that student engagement is considered a right of every student: "All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs that address their individual learning needs" (ACARA, 2020, p. 22). It is also considered a teacher's duty, to "empower every student to actively engage in learning of the Australian Curriculum" (Queensland Department of Education, 2021). The teachers from this study readily acknowledged this responsibility and the agency that was required in making relevant connections with students: "*That is your job, to work out ways to engage kids*" (Judy, T, Charles College). Nevertheless, the concept of engagement is often ill-defined in educational dialogue. As a "malleable, multi-dimensional construct" (Pedler et al., 2020, p. 48). student engagement can be perceived as having behavioural, emotional or cognitive interpretations.

At a Departmental level, the use of attendance and disciplinary data as metrics for success in student engagement would suggest that this goal is more focused on behavioural concerns (Queensland Department of Education, 2021). In the classroom, teachers' facility with active participation strategies such as conducting lessons at a brisk pace, eliciting frequent responses and choral reading were promoted as fostering students' cognitive

engagement (Archer & Hughes, 2011). However, these strategies could also be construed as techniques for managing student behaviour in the classroom by controlling the conditions of learning (Parliament of Australia, 2023).

Emotional engagement “refers to a student’s feelings toward learning, school, teachers, and classmates; it looks at students’ identification and feelings of belonging” (Centre for Inspired Teaching, 2018, p. 5). Student wellbeing was a targeted goal for several of the participant schools, particularly those with large enrolments of First Nation and EAL/D students and this was reflected in current national and State educational policy (Parliament of Australia, 2023; Queensland Department of Education, 2021). Teachers’ agency in facilitating this emotional connection was evident when embedding First Nation perspectives and in supporting celebratory cultural events such as Harmony Day. In regard to HASS curriculum, students’ emotional connection is considered an essential component of teachers’ enactment (Lawrence-Doyle, 2019), especially in encouraging students to accept multiple viewpoints and “*empathise with others*” (Judy, T, Charles College).

Across all sectors, teachers perceived that cognitive engagement in HASS was promoted by employing explicit teaching strategies, especially in focusing on the specific content clarified from assessment tasks. Craig’s comment: “*it’s our job as a teacher to make it as interesting and engaging as possible without watering it down or doing less than the standard*” (Craig, CL, Watershed SS) illustrates teachers’ preoccupation with ensuring rigour in HASS enactment. For many teachers, especially those in State schools, that rigour and focus on HASS content was achieved by eliminating “*the fluff*” (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). It was apparent that teachers from non-government schools, not only had greater autonomy in planning and assessment, but also a greater capacity to integrate HASS with other learning areas, by incorporating music, role play and art activities as “*a way of bringing that fun element to teaching*” (Kerry, CL, St. Bob’s).

Craig's admission that students succeed in HASS when they "*love what they're doing*" (Craig, CL, Watershed SS), and Donna's point that: "*if you've got engaged kids, you've got lot less behaviour issues*" (Donna, CL, T, Darby SS), positions all three domains - cognitive, emotional, and behavioural - as components of student engagement in HASS and consequently of teachers' *connected agency*. The idea that enjoyment, that "*spark of joy*" (Kerry, CL, St Bob's) could also be included as a pertinent aspect of student engagement is reflected in the Australian Curriculum where the first aim for HASS is to develop "a sense of wonder, curiosity and respect about places, people, cultures and systems throughout the world, past and present, and an interest in and enjoyment of the study of these phenomena" (ACARA, n.d.-i, para. 7). This position is particularly relevant, given that many participants described HASS curriculum as: "*a little bit boring*" (Sonya, T, Watershed SS), "*dry*" (Judy, T, Charles College) and on par with "*pulling teeth*" (Gabby, T, Hopeville SS). In the four State schools utilising C2C, teachers utilised their *connected agency* by substituting certain C2C resources with others perceived to be more attractive to students, to "*do the same thing, ... but in a more interactive way*" (Barry, CL, Hopeville SS). Educators from across all sectors acknowledged that students' engagement was dependant on the degree of enthusiasm teachers portrayed in HASS lessons, regardless of their personal feelings towards the learning area (Burić, 2019).

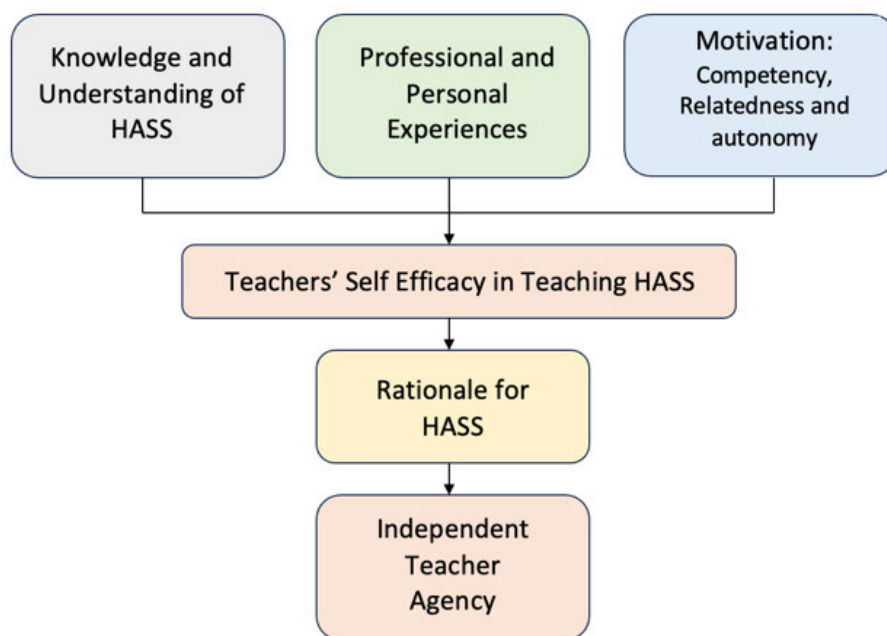
Independent Agency: Drawing on Professional Self

So far, teachers' application of agency in HASS has been described in relation to specific policy direction: in requirements for planning and enacting curriculum; utilising explicit teaching practices; the provision of adaptations; and in employing strategies to promote student engagement. This fourth area - *independent agency* - differs in that it explores the various ways teachers exercise their agency outside of their school's autonomous structure, by promoting individual ideas connected to teachers' own educational and personal

beliefs around HASS learning. The diagram represented below in Figure 69 illustrates the relationship between the elements of teachers' self-efficacy identified in Chapter Seven (knowledge, experiences and motivation), their rationale for HASS, and the agency utilised in independently augmenting HASS programs with their own ideas.

Figure 69

Links between Self-efficacy, Rationale and Teachers' Independent Agency



The study revealed several instances that illustrate the relationship between these elements. One example was the link between Heather's intergenerational farming background, her perception that an effective HASS program builds a sense of national identity and her incorporation of family knowledge, such as crop rotation and her grandfather's war experiences into her Geography and History lessons. For Lauren, her recent travel experiences provided a greater understanding of how HASS could be utilised to expand students' horizons and foster interest in the wider world. She considered her photographs and travel stories not only improved her knowledge and motivation for teaching HASS, but allowed for a greater sense of relatedness in being able to share these experiences with her students. In Gabby's situation, her impetus to provide students with an honest portrayal of

Australia's colonial history developed out of enlightening experiences from her pre-service university education. As both teacher and curriculum leader, Donna was able to connect various aspects of her professional and personal life when enacting a HASS unit on democracy. She acknowledged that her lessons benefitted from incorporating social justice ideals drawn from her early experiences mixing with a diverse socio-economic community as well as her present duties overseeing student behaviour.

In each of these circumstances, teachers enhanced their HASS curriculum by finding opportunities to link knowledge, foster interest and relevance, and to create personal connections with their students. By utilising agency in this way, teachers claim a degree of ownership over HASS curriculum, despite policy decisions that advocate for conformity and compliance. The participants' rationale for HASS outlined in Chapter Seven, demonstrates that teachers understand the dynamic and value-laden nature of HASS curriculum and that its future orientation and focus on interpersonal skills differentiates it from other learning areas. Motivation for HASS is dependent on teachers' positive perceptions of their own competency, their ability to relate to others and in the degree of autonomy needed for them to be innovative, creative educators who can maximise students' learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Pippa's philosophical comment is particularly relevant in positioning teachers' agency as central to successful HASS curriculum implementation:

We need to go back to our 'why' - why do we teach, what gets us out of bed in the morning? How do we go about making a difference in the lives of these children that are in front of us? (Pippa, CL, Jackson SS)

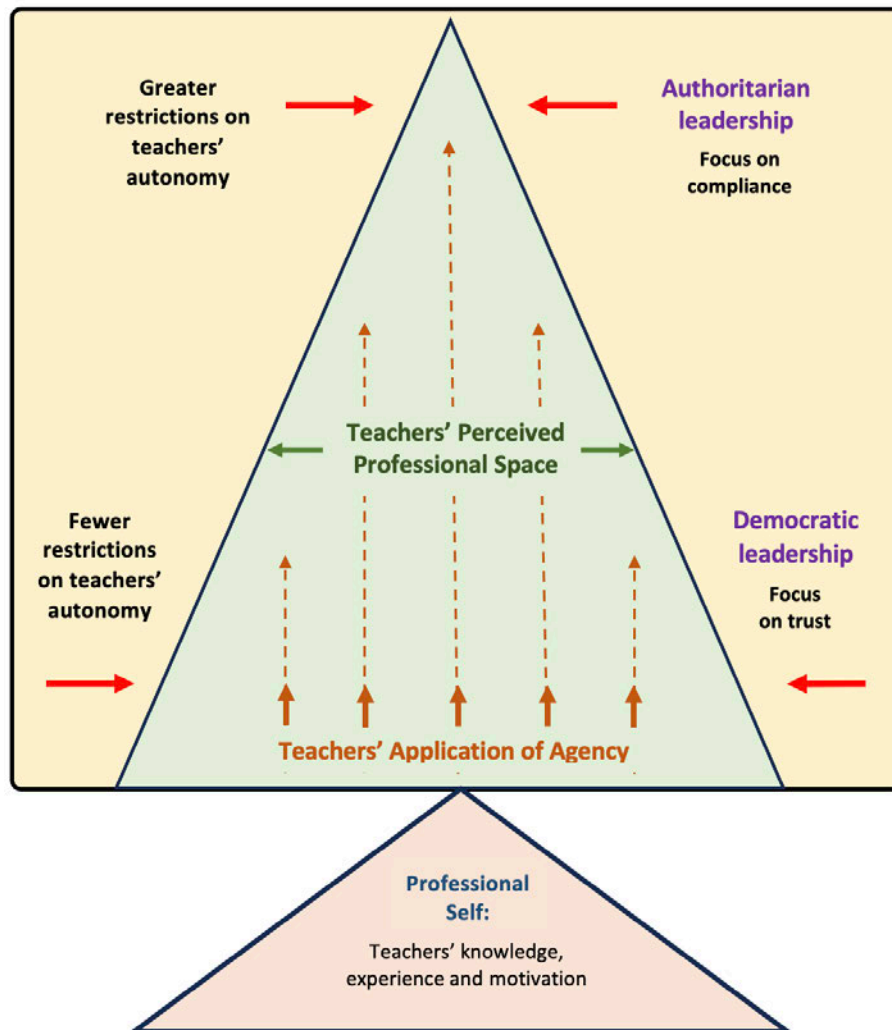
Interconnections Between Authority, Professional Self, Autonomy and Agency

It has been established that within a specific school context, all four elements identified in this study's conceptual framework: leadership authority, teachers' sense of their professional selves, curricular autonomy and teachers' application of agency, play important

roles in the implementation of HASS curriculum. Figure 70 below graphically represents the interrelationships of these four elements.

Figure 70

Relationships between Authority, Professional Self, Autonomy, and Agency



The green triangle, denoted as teachers' professional space, represents both the degree of autonomy conceded by curriculum authorities, as well as teachers' perceptions of that autonomy. This two-way consideration of autonomy acknowledges the perspective that power is a negotiable construct between individuals, and is based on teachers' "previous educational experiences, their articulation of their expectations for more appropriate provision in the future, and their lobbying those they see as having access to power to facilitate the fulfilment of their expectations" (Danaher & Danaher, 2000, p. 310).

Working as an inverse perspective of autonomy, the cream section of the model represents the degree of authority that curriculum leaders exert over teachers' work. At one extreme is an authoritarian leadership style which restricts teachers' autonomy and is predicated on compliance to certain policy decisions. This approach was evident in schools where leaders insisted on high fidelity towards the employment of C2C HASS curriculum materials. Conversely, when curriculum leaders adopt a more democratic approach, based on trust of teachers' professional capacities, an increased professional space opens up, allowing teachers greater opportunities of incorporating their own curricular decisions.

The orange arrows depict the potential for teachers to utilise their independent agency when enacting curriculum. The findings in this study showed that in even in the most restrictive environments, teachers still found ways to augment HASS curriculum by including personal stories and connecting learning. When given permission to adapt curriculum for student adjustments, teachers perceived and took ownership of a greater degree of professional space to make these decisions for their students. In less restrictive school situations, such as in Charles College, teachers acknowledged they had greater opportunities of integrating HASS curriculum, incorporating local knowledge and pursuing more student-led learning activities. Nevertheless, it became apparent during the course of the study that the potential scope of autonomous space did not necessarily determine teachers' application of agency. Just because teachers acknowledged that they had the "*freedom*" (Kerry, CL, St Bob's) to employ a greater array of student learning experiences and assessment tools did not necessarily mean that they chose to, or had the capacity to do so. A greater determinant of teachers' willingness to incorporate their own agency pivoted on teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy: their understanding of, and confidence in applying the ACARA HASS curriculum, the ability to draw on past experiences, and in their motivations towards teaching the learning area.

Summary of Chapter Eight: Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to distil the extensive data collated across six different primary schools examining the “messy and complex process” (Biancotti, 2018, p.8) of HASS curriculum implementation into a synthesised, comprehensive and coherent narrative. Consequently, the study’s findings have been clustered around three broad themes: school context, autonomy and teacher agency. The diagram presented in Figure 69 outlined the framework of this chapter by presenting these three themes as questions to be explored:

1. Context - How does individual school context impact HASS implementation?
2. Autonomy - Who makes the decisions and how do they frame teachers’ work in HASS?
3. Agency - How do individual teachers make a difference in HASS enactment?

Each of these themes were examined in terms of the study’s research questions, by detailing evidence from the data as well as pertinent research from the field. The chapter concluded by including a diagram (Figure 70) designed to connect this study’s findings with the four constructs identified in the conceptual framework: authority, self-efficacy, autonomy and agency.

The following chapter aims to further clarify understandings of the study’s research questions by linking the identified themes with the initial aims of the research and positioning the current portrait of HASS curriculum within the historical context of Queensland humanities education. This chapter will also outline implications of the study’s findings and suggest recommendations for policy, schools and further educational research.

Chapter 9. Conclusion And Recommendations

This final chapter of the thesis revisits the research problem and initial motivations behind the study, restates the research questions, and identifies how the study addresses current gaps in the literature. The researcher's ontological position and methodological choice are outlined to reaffirm the approach taken in answering the overall research question. The methods, analysis and major themes drawn from the study are summarised, and significant findings, in the form of new and expanded information, reframed ideas and conceptualisations, are presented as contributions to the field of theory, policy and educational practice. The chapter concludes by listing a series of recommendations for future research and educational application.

The Research Problem and Motivations of the Researcher

The motivation for this thesis lay in the researcher's curiosity to obtain a greater understanding of how individual schools navigate a standardised curriculum such as HASS in a period of increased accountability and targeted literacy focus. The last two decades have been marked by increasing government and public scrutiny around Australia's academic standards and greater demand for school accountability ever since international test scores in literacy and numeracy were published in the early 2000s (Keddie, 2015; Reintano & Winter, 2017; Sahlberg, 2008). The *education revolution* proposed by the Rudd Government in 2007 eventuated in the establishment of a national board to oversee curriculum, the beginnings of an annual testing regime and the publication of test scores from individual schools. By 2010, ACARA began incrementally rolling out Australia's first national curriculum, based on explicit statements of year level content and standards of achievement (Savage, 2018). The incorporation of the Queensland Education Department's comprehensive sets of curriculum unit plans, *Curriculum into the Classroom* or C2C heralded a new era in state schools' approach to curriculum, with an emphasis on rigour, standardised assessment and uniform

enactment of curriculum (Ross, 2017). This new approach resulted in a realignment of teachers' curricular and pedagogical autonomy, and school leaders' increased direction and oversight of curriculum (Barton et al, 2014; Reik, 2018). The state-wide embrace of generic *evidence-based* pedagogical practices based on the work of influential educators such as Hattie (2009) and Archer and Hughes (2011) further shaped teachers' classroom autonomy and enactment of curriculum (Queensland Department of Education, 2011).

HASS was selected as the object of this investigation for a number of reasons: the recognised lack of Australian research in this field (Harvie, 2013; Loxton, 2018), the learning area's inconsistent structure and approach over time (Parry, 1998; Reynolds, 2018), the apparent marginalised treatment of humanities education (Bauml, 2016; Edge et al., 2015) and the researchers' own recent experiences in teaching the learning area. It was also wondered how a learning area focused on exploring essential understandings of human identity and skills for future citizenship could be fully realised when incorporating an approach that emphasised explicit teaching of content, means-end learning and consistency of practice (Eaude et al., 2017; Henderson, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2019).

Gap in the Literature

In the past decade, a small number of Australian studies have addressed different aspects of primary HASS curriculum implementation. These included a cross-state examination of the procedures and practices involved in implementing the initial History curriculum (Dixon et al., 2015); stakeholders' opinions of the learning areas' ideological stance (Bloor, 2018); the role of instructional leadership (Loxton, 2018); and the challenges in employing inquiry pedagogy (Fairbanks & Andrew, 2020). This thesis sought to understand school-based implementation of HASS curriculum by examining two distinct, yet interrelated aspects of that process: the organisational decisions made by school leaders and the influence of individual teachers. By examining these twin aspects across a diverse range

of state and non-state primary schools, this research sought to create a fuller understanding of the dynamics involved in school-based implementation, the impact of standardised learning materials and influences on teachers' autonomy and agency.

Methodological Choice

The rationale presented in Chapter Five of this thesis outlined the reasons why a qualitative approach was chosen to answer the question of how Queensland primary schools and teachers influence the implementation of HASS curriculum. As a teacher with extensive classroom experience, this researcher took the ontological stance that multiple realities exist in educational practice and supported Flyvbjerg's (2006) position that while predictive and statistically-based theories are useful in deriving global understandings, they may be less applicable in individual, contextually diverse situations. As such, rigorous qualitative research can complement generalist studies by offering deeper, more relational and situated insights into specific areas of interest. For educational research, qualitative studies can present a unique insider's point of view that may not be fully disclosed through large scale empirical studies. These studies can elevate individual teachers' viewpoints by providing a platform to reflect and express opinions on the challenges and successes involved in their sphere of work. By incorporating qualitative studies into current educational dialogue, opportunities arise to add balance to the current dominance of systemically-approved *evidence-based* research, emphasising meta-analysis, effect size and transferability of results.

Research Questions

In examining school-based influences on implementation of the Australian primary HASS curriculum in Queensland schools, four sub-questions were identified:

1. What specific organisational decisions frame the way HASS is implemented at a particular school?

2. What perceptions do teachers have on their own abilities to enact effective HASS curriculum?
3. How do school-based decisions on HASS implementation impact teachers' autonomy and agency in enacting HASS curriculum?
4. How does teachers' sense of their professional selves impact their agency and autonomy in enacting HASS curriculum?

Summary of Methods, Analysis and Themes

A multiple case study design based on the work of Stake (2005) was utilised to guide the research from conceptual framework, to case selection, collection and analysis of data, individual case studies, cross-case analysis and final report. Six primary schools from the researcher's local area were recruited, based on contextual differences in educational sector, size, location and demographic composition. Data were generated from semi-structured interviews conducted with two staff members from each site. A curriculum leader outlined their school's specific decisions on the planning, assessment and pedagogical practices expected for HASS implementation; and a teacher responsible for teaching Year Four HASS provided insight into issues and perspectives relevant to their own enactment of curriculum. The sets of audio-taped interviews were transcribed by the researcher and notes were written to assist with preliminary groupings of data. Subsequently, 79 different codes were identified and defined, then entered into Quirkos software to begin the process of analysing each participant's data. After merging the two sets of coded transcripts, now separated into seven distinct categories, an individual case study report was constructed, detailing each school's specific context, approach to HASS implementation and teachers' perspectives on enactment. In the cross-case analysis, the coded transcripts from all interviews were merged, reducing the data into four distinct areas of the implementation process: planning arrangements for HASS, pedagogical expectations, views around assessment and reporting, and the teacher's

individual role. Three broad themes were derived from the overall findings: the influence of individual school context, implications for teachers' autonomy, and forms of teacher agency.

Study's Contribution to Theory

Multiple Case Study Design

The multiple case study design utilised in this research was an effective means of illuminating both the common and unique aspects of each case's "specific entity" (Stake, 2005, p. 2). By investigating HASS implementation across six contextually diverse schools, it was possible to discern commonalities such as the prominence of assessment, the employment of explicit teaching principles and teachers' concern for intellectual rigour. Significant aspects of individual school contexts found to have impacted HASS implementation included the location and size of each school, student demographics and educational sector. In particular, the research highlighted how a reliance on externally written curriculum materials skews the process of ensuring curriculum is designed to meet the needs of particular students. Further, a policy of targeted focus on literacy can have significant impacts on the enactment of other learning areas (such as HASS) in terms of oversight, finance and professional support.

The interviews conducted for this study were effective in eliciting specific, nuanced and sometimes conflicting detail around current educational issues. One example from the study was the reasoning involved in decisions to adopt C2C learning materials. While administrators and teachers considered the materials rigorous, accredited and aligned with the Australian Curriculum, they also gave pragmatic reasons for the program's adoption: they were ready-made, convenient and useful. However, several issues were raised in respect to employing the materials: teachers often struggled with excessive content and the overreliance on written assessments, few opportunities existed to link local knowledge, and students found some materials disengaging. Several educators were also concerned about the potential

impact on teachers' future professional capabilities in interpreting and enacting curriculum. Despite these misgivings, state school leaders largely expected a high degree of fidelity towards C2C and no teacher advocated abandoning the programs to construct their own units of work. Varied findings such as these have the potential to add depth to conclusions drawn from prominent government studies such as the Grattan Institute's recent investigation on developing curriculum support materials for Australian teachers (Hunter et al., 2022).

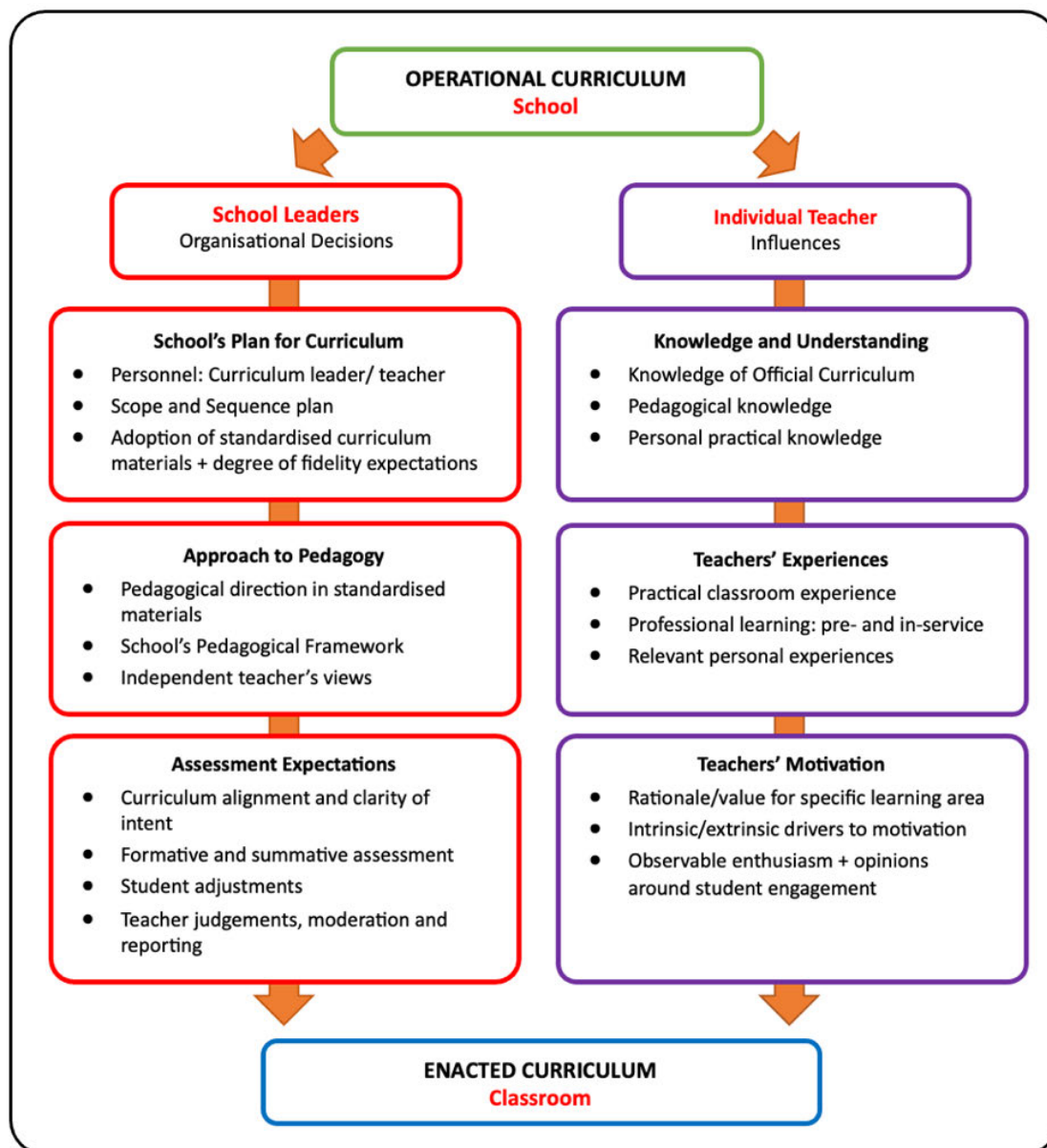
Conceptualisation of School-based Implementation

This study sought to build on previous understandings of the processes involved in translating curriculum policy into enacted classroom experiences (Choppin et al., 2022; Dixon et al., 2015; Remillard and Heck, 2014) by creating a conceptual model for a single learning area (HASS) and Queensland context. Specifically, the research sought to delimitate the process by bringing the focus down to an individual school level, regarding schools as unique ecological systems defined not only by external policy decisions, but the humans involved within that structure. In doing so, the research visualised the operational stage of implementation as two halves of the process: the organisational decisions made by school leaders and the influence of individual teachers. The role of teachers in classroom enactment is commonly cited as crucial for the successful implementation of curriculum and improvement of student results (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2017; Sharratt, 2019). Yet, this presumption rests largely on teachers' application of systemically approved *evidence-based* practices rather than any personal or professional attributes they may bring to the classroom. By seeing individual teachers as equal partners in the implementation process, the model provides a new way of looking at curriculum that goes beyond the homogenising aspects of standardised curriculum, mandated learning materials and preferred pedagogical practices. The model presented below in Figure 71 expands on the original diagram presented in Chapter Four by including specific new information drawn from this research. As such, the

model directly addresses the study's overarching research question: *How do schools and teachers influence the enactment of Queensland Primary HASS curriculum?* As with Remillard and Heck's (2014) work, this second model has been structured to cater for a wider audience, by being applicable to other learning areas and other education systems.

Figure 71

Two Halves of the Operational Stage of School-Based Implementation



As well as identifying the most prominent aspects of school-based implementation, the study sought to develop a deeper understanding of the four theoretical constructs underpinning this process: leadership authority, teachers' sense of professional self,

autonomy, and agency. A second theoretical model (Figure 75) presented in Chapter Eight is significant in that it aims to conceptualise the interrelationships between these four constructs. In particular, the model highlights the individuality of teacher's agency and the impact of leadership authority on teachers' curriculum autonomy which is presented as a negotiated construct, *professional space*. Further detail regarding the contribution of this new knowledge is provided below in the section on Educational Practice.

Contribution to Educational Policy

School Compliance

One significant feature gleaned from the study was the degree to which educators across all sectors complied with systemic educational directives. This included adhering to expectations on whole school planning, assessment and reporting, as well as specific government dictates, such as support for students with disabilities, EAL/D and First Nation learners. The Queensland Education Department's desire for injecting greater academic rigour into curriculum was also apparent within each sector, through the incorporation of curriculum alignment, intentional collaboration, employment of explicit teaching pedagogy and the use of summative assessment as proof of learning. The teachers' statements regarding their acceptance of policy change as their *job*, does reinforce the idea this is a form of acquiescence, representing a sense of professional powerlessness (Barton et al., 2014; McCarthy & Woodard, 2016). However, another way of viewing the situation is by acknowledging teachers' commitment to their role, loyalty to their profession and openness to assimilating new ideas in educational reform. This acceptance of responsibilities was evident in each state school's adoption of C2C materials, regardless of the concerns raised in their employment. The finding that teachers in non-government schools were highly knowledgeable of their schools' religious values and direction, and accepted their responsibilities in incorporating this perspective throughout curriculum, reinforces Variyan's

(2019) conclusion that teachers in these schools tend to support rather than challenge institutional goals.

Standardised Curriculum, Assessment and Student Diversity

An implication that became clear in the study and which has relevance for educational policy is the question of how externally-written standardised materials incorporate local knowledge and meet the needs of a diverse range of students. The diagram depicted in Figure 65 of Chapter Eight presents a new way of considering the divergent approaches to teachers' enactment of curriculum. When pre-existing standardised materials are utilised, interpretation of the official curriculum lies in the hands of external curriculum writers, and the onus on teachers is to find ways of making these materials suit the particular needs of their students. These varied adjustments need to cater for students of varying abilities, cultural background, life experiences, predispositions and location. Alternatively, in situations where teachers have a degree of autonomy over curriculum direction, there is greater scope to incorporate the needs of students prior to the development of unit plans. The finding that externally written assessment tasks had considerable influence on state school teachers' enactment of curriculum, reinforces Poulton's (2020) Queensland study and prompts a concern that "testing, in effect, can become the curriculum" (Pratt & Atkinson, 2020, p. 358). The study also raised the question about the validity of these assessments in terms of their practical application. It seems ironic that schools rationalise the use of standardised assessment tasks and marking rubrics such as C2C on the basis of their intellectual rigour, yet in complying with Departmental direction that all students succeed (Queensland Department of Education, 2023d), teachers may need to resort to a range of accommodations that could weaken that rigour. Adjustments that teachers cited were completing tasks immediately after periods of learning, practicing or omitting questions, having prompts on the whiteboard or scribing student answers. An alternative, and perhaps more equitable approach would involve giving

students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning, and using varied modes of assessment, rather than persisting with one centralised task (Fairbanks & Andrew, 2020).

Status of Australian Humanities Education

One of the aims of the study was to examine the status of Australian humanities education in relation to prominent international studies, as well as determining current ideological views on HASS education and its position within the historical context of Queensland curriculum. In comparison with studies from the United States where humanities curriculum was often reduced, subsumed into other learning, or viewed as trivial and irrelevant (Fitchett & Heafner, 2010; Good et al., 2010; Heafner, 2018), this study shows that Australian teachers observe stipulated time allocations, ACARA HASS content coverage, and strive for intellectual rigour in teaching and assessment. Nevertheless, as with British research (Butt et al., 2017; Pratt & Atkinson, 2020), Australian HASS curriculum is often perceived as having less importance than other learning areas such as English and Mathematics. Teachers reported there were few expectations around HASS planning, no professional development was provided to support teachers' knowledge or pedagogy, and oversight of teachers' lessons or moderation of assessments was not considered necessary. As one teacher reflected, she had never heard curriculum leaders ever mention HASS curriculum.

An overview of Queensland's primary humanities curriculum from 1860 to present was provided in Chapter Two to not only provide a historical context for this thesis, but to aid understanding of the shifting ideologies impacting humanities education. By examining these major changes, it was possible to discern how a range of societal, economic and political events influenced broad eras of philosophical thinking around the function of curriculum and the changing role of teachers. This study's findings suggest that the current approach to HASS education centres around explicit, teacher-controlled lessons, focused on content

coverage and summative assessment as evidence of learning. While student-centred inquiry lessons are a component of both the ACARA HASS curriculum and C2C materials, teachers across all sectors revealed that inquiry lessons were either heavily guided or conducted at the end of units after essential learning. This result reinforces the work of Fairbanks and Andrew (2020) who similarly noted that teachers were often reluctant to employ inquiry pedagogy in HASS lessons. Among the reasons teachers gave were: insufficient time, lack of suitable resources, the absence of relevant professional learning, and concerns about student behaviour. In reflecting on the current ideological perspective, it would appear that HASS implementation mostly resembles the period prior to the 1952 Queensland Syllabus, when humanities was in the form of separate disciplines and exemplified a utilitarian view of education, based on transmission of content and productivity of output. It appears somewhat incongruous how this current means-end perspective of education is juxtaposed alongside Australia's stated educational goals of ensuring excellence and equity in curriculum, and allowing all students to become confident, creative and successful lifelong learners with the skills needed for active citizenship (Australian Government Department of Education Skills and Employment, 2019).

Contribution to Educational Practice

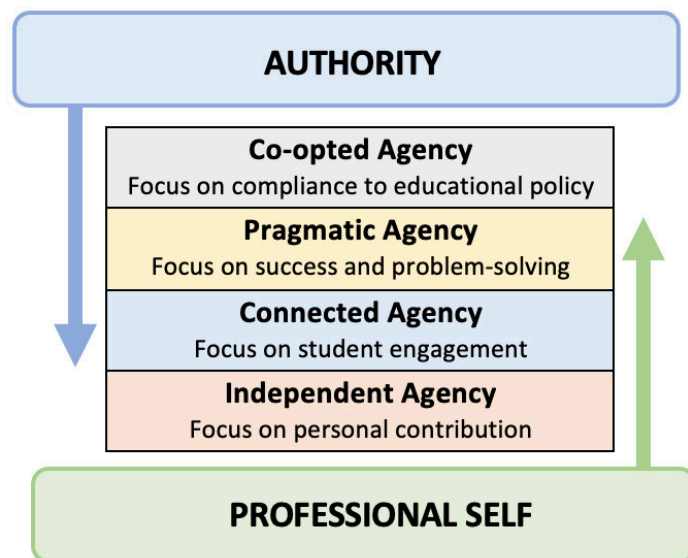
Leadership Authority

A central theme of this study involved the relationship between leadership authority and teacher autonomy, and was encapsulated in the question, *Who makes the decisions and how do they frame teachers' work?* Blase and Anderson's (1978) theory on the micro-politics of leadership was particularly useful in differentiating the varying degrees of authority assigned to curriculum leaders from the six schools in this study. The diagram presented in Figure 67 of the Discussion illustrates the range of authority positions evident in the study and the power associated with those roles. As with Dao and Cranston (2018), the study found

that staff members with classified positions such as principals, deputies, and heads of curriculum, had the most authority in exerting *power over* curricular decisions. These included the prioritisation of learning areas, the adoption and fidelity expected towards prescribed teaching materials, the provision of professional learning, and curriculum oversight. Alternatively, the use of teachers as hybrid middle leaders (assuming dual teaching and leadership duties) was a form of distributive authority, exerting *power with* other teachers (Blase & Anderson, 1978). Consequently, this leadership role was focused on facilitation and support, rather than oversight and control of curriculum. Classroom teachers in these schools reported having a greater degree of professional space to make relevant curriculum decisions and to meet the needs of their students. As “teacher insiders” (Margolis & Huggins, 2012, p. 976), middle leaders offer opportunities of bridging the divide between authority figures and classroom teachers and promoting an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. The employment of middle leaders also has the potential of relieving some of the external pressures placed on principals who are themselves subject to systemic authority (Niesche, 2011).

Forms of Teachers’ Agency

By defining agency as the deliberate actions taken by teachers in making a difference to curriculum enactment, the focus shifts from discussions of conformity and consistency of practice, to one that highlights and champions the role of individuals. This study has proposed four different forms of agency, evinced from teachers’ reflections on their enactment of HASS curriculum. The model in Figure 72 below, depicts these four forms of agency: co-opted, pragmatic, connected and independent, and their relationship to school authority and teachers’ sense of their professional self.

Figure 72*Teacher Agency in Relation to Authority and Professional Self*

The model visualises agency as the tension between systemic demands for uniformity, and teachers' efforts in making personal contributions. As such, the model is compatible with other ideas combining top-down/bottom up approaches to curriculum (such as Maniates, 2010; Priestley et al., 2016; Poulton, 2012; Schulte, 2018).

Co-opted Agency. At a basic level, co-opted agency involves actions taken in relation to educational reform measures and is perceived as teachers' active commitment, rather than "subordinated agency" (Vahasantanen, 2015, p. 2). It is acknowledged that this form of agency is influenced by each school's interpretation of *evidence-based* practices and ongoing provision of professional development (Ng, 2019). Also pertinent is the presumption that teachers assimilate and respond to new ideas in highly individualised ways in response to their school's approach (Ingvarson et al., 2005; Talbot, 2015).

Pragmatic Agency. Teachers' professional pragmatism is evident in the adjustments made to bridge the divide between standardised and prescribed curriculum and the individual needs of students (Biesta et al., 2015; Maniates, 2010). While student adjustments are an expectation from systemic authorities, teachers also view this form of agency as a moral

obligation, connected to the way they see themselves as professionals. Unlike blanket approaches, effective student adjustments are tailored to meet specific needs and require teachers' deep understandings of the capabilities, circumstances and dispositions of each student.

Connected Agency. The agency teachers utilise in engaging students can be perceived in various and sometimes contrary ways (Pedler et al., 2020). From systemic policy direction, *engagement* is largely viewed in terms of its cognitive or behavioural function, and is addressed through teacher-controlled measures such as the promotion of intellectual rigour and active participation strategies (Queensland Department of Education, 2021). An alternative view positions *engagement* as students' emotional connection, interest and enjoyment of learning and is enhanced by teachers' deliberate classroom actions in promoting responsive curriculum (Pedler et al., 2020).

Currently, concern about students' lack of engagement in Australian schooling has prompted a Senate inquiry, where submissions have been collected from a range of interested stakeholders. The Interim Report released in December, 2023 (Parliament of Australia, 2023) clearly positioned engagement as a behavioural connotation, measured in terms of student attendance and compliance to school routine. Consequently, the committee's recommendations centred around increasing teachers' capabilities in behaviour management, eliminating open-area classrooms and reinforcing explicit teaching pedagogies. It was only in the reply by the Australian Greens [political] Party, that an alternative viewpoint was proposed: that students' apparent disengagement may be related to boredom and a reaction to compartmentalised, teacher-controlled curriculum direction.

Independent Agency. The fourth means by which teachers exercise agency exists beyond systemic authority and is most related to teachers' positive sense of their professional selves. The study determined that regardless of the autonomous structure in which they

worked, teachers who applied personal, independent agency were more willing to engage in curriculum by drawing on their own knowledge and experiences. These teachers appeared more motivated, saw value in curriculum and had a strong sense of their own efficacy. In light of this finding, it is apt to consider Senator Allman-Payne's response to the Interim Report on student disruptions, that "Education policy should fundamentally be about inspiring enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning" (Parliament of Australia, 2023, p. 66).

Recommendations

For Future Research

The multiple case study design employed in this study was an effective means of examining a phenomenon such as the implementation of curriculum, both within and across different school contexts. By incorporating interviews from both a class teacher and administrator at the same site, it was possible to gain a more cohesive understanding of each school's approach to curriculum, as well as elevating an insider's perspective. The framework for the design provided in this thesis has the potential to be used as a template for exploring other curriculum, as well as areas of particular educational concern, such as student disengagement. The model of school-based operational curriculum presented in Figure 71 also offers opportunities to further explore elements identified in the process, in particular the part played by individual teachers. Such research could develop a greater understanding of teachers' motivations for teaching a particular learning area, and how personal and practical experiences impact curriculum enactment.

For Education Systems

While teachers were appreciative of the structure and support that standardised materials such as C2C and similar commercial programs provided, issues such as teachers' disconnect with the Australian Curriculum, adjustments needed in adapting pre-existing assessment tasks, and student disengagement were all negative consequences of their use. It

is suggested that organisations responsible for these programs consider incorporating greater variety and choice in resources and assessment, allowing teachers a degree of autonomy in selecting activities and assessment tasks deemed most appropriate for their students.

Additionally, the use of interactive planning platforms could enable teachers to incorporate local knowledge as well as their own ideas into these prescribed programs. For school systems, the provision of greater choice in planning and support materials could assist in reducing teachers' workloads, encourage greater curricular engagement, and promote the individual attributes and capabilities of teachers.

For Schools

Clarity of learning intent was considered an essential component of planning and enactment of curriculum by all educators in this study. However, this attention to clarity was largely limited to the planning needed to support assessment criteria identified from a single unit of work. Clarification of the wider purpose of a particular learning area, such as HASS was not deemed important. This finding highlighted the current compartmentalised and means-end approach to curriculum, which deprives teachers from obtaining holistic and connected understandings, such as opportunities to consider the purpose of specific learning areas, understanding the sequence of content and the progression of students' skills. While the teachers in this study indicated no inclination to explore ACARA's rationale for HASS, they nevertheless were able to articulate various ideas when asked directly. As part of the collaborative process, it is recommended that schools set aside an opportunity for teachers to reflect on the purpose and scope of different curriculum and to share examples of their challenges and successes. In doing so, administrators could obtain a greater understanding of teachers' curriculum knowledge as well as their concerns and support requirements such as professional development for inquiry learning. This study highlighted both the lack of professional learning opportunities for humanities and teachers' low motivation in teaching

the learning area. This situation can only improve when teachers' professional needs are recognised and stimulating and pertinent learning opportunities are made available (Crocco & Livingston, 2017; Dündar, 2015).

Summary of Chapter Eight: Final Words

The purpose of this final chapter was to draw together the various threads of the thesis: the context, motivation and research questions that drove the study, and to acknowledge the apparent gap in the literature. The methodological position of the researcher was revisited and an overview was presented of the methods undertaken to collect, analyse and collate the data necessary for answering the question of how schools and teachers influence implementation of the Australian primary HASS curriculum in Queensland schools. Major new findings drawn from the research were framed as contributions to theory, educational policy and school-based practice, and a series of suggested recommendations were proposed.

The thesis' limitations, outlined in Chapter Five acknowledged that as a qualitative study, the findings, captured as *snapshots in time*, may not necessarily apply to other school situations, and consequently cannot be generalised in the same way as larger quantitative studies (Cohen et al., 2017). In addition, interview responses may be skewed by participants' sense of loyalty to their school, or desire to present a positive view of their own integrity and commitment (Gillham, 2000). Nevertheless, unlike large-scale studies, case studies offer rare opportunities of gaining specific insights from within the system, by acknowledging and valuing the input of individuals. In an era where teacher retention and student disengagement are pressing issues (Longmuir, 2023; Parliament of Australia, 2023), perhaps it is time to re-evaluate the case for uniformity and to listen more to the educators who are most impacted by accountability measures. This research has indicated that as agents of change, teachers largely accommodate and even promote elements of educational reform, while remaining focused on

the practicalities involved in making these measures work for their students. Viewing teachers as “technicians of accountability” (Edge et al, 2014, p. 222) only diminishes the input of individual teachers and the agency they employ in providing a balanced and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of every student.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Curriculum Leader Interview Questions

A. Value of HASS
• What role do you believe HASS plays in a student's education? • How important is HASS in comparison with subjects such as English and Maths?
B. School's Approach to HASS Curriculum
ACARA • Are all sub-strands of the current HASS curriculum covered in your school? Can you outline how this takes place? • How important is the ACARA website? What aspects of the ACARA website are most useful?
HASS Personnel • At your school, who is responsible for teaching HASS? Can you explain how this operates? • In some schools a specialist teacher teaches HASS as part of non-contact time. What is your opinion on this?
HASS pedagogy • Can you comment on the pedagogies that teachers might employ in teaching HASS? • What role does inquiry play in your school? • What is your position on integration of HASS with other subjects?
Assessment • Can you outline your school's expectations on HASS assessments? • Are HASS assessments moderated? Are they kept for the next year's teacher? • How is student HASS achievement reported to parents? • Are there expectations around levels of achievement for the report card?
C. Curriculum Support
Support Materials • In your opinion, what support should be given to teachers in their implementation of HASS? • Does the school employ C2C or other mandated materials for HASS? If so, can you explain how these are utilised? All or some units? How do you decide? • In what way are C2C assessment tasks used?
Professional Development • Can you talk about any professional development your school has provided for the implementation of HASS? If not, what PD would you consider appropriate or necessary?
Teacher Planning and Budgeting • How do teachers plan for HASS at your school? • Can you outline the budgeting for HASS at your school?

D. Teacher Autonomy and Flexibility

Flexibility of HASS Units

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important is local knowledge in HASS? • What is your opinion on the use of excursions for HASS curriculum? • Can you talk about commemorative days such as ANZAC, NAIDOC and Harmony days? |
|--|

Teacher Autonomy

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you be specific about the level of autonomy teachers have to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) design alternative or adapted unit plans b) use resources and c) create alternative assessment tasks. |
|---|

E. Dissemination of HASS plan

- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you explain how teachers are made aware of your school's plan for HASS implementation?
Is there a scope and sequence plan? |
|--|

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Questions

A. Understandings About Current Australian Primary HASS Curriculum
ACARA • What is your opinion of the ACARA HASS rationale? • Can you talk about the ACARA HASS framework? • How might your understandings of ACARA be strengthened? • What is your opinion of the ACARA website's usefulness in helping you plan for your HASS curriculum? School's HASS Program • Can you explain your school's expectations around teaching HASS?
B. Professional Experiences, Agency and Beliefs
Professional Experiences • Can you talk about your pre-service training in humanities? • How important is teaching experience? • In your teaching career, do you recall any Professional Development for humanities? Do you think it was helpful? In what way? • What Professional Development might be useful? Teacher Autonomy • In thinking of the decisions that are made at your school on how HASS is implemented, how much influence do you have on those expectations? • How much influence do you think you have over the planning of HASS units of work, including assessment tasks? • How much influence do you think you have over the resources you use for HASS curriculum? Pedagogies • Can you comment on the type of pedagogy that you may use to teach HASS? • What is your opinion on integrating HASS? • How is inquiry used in your HASS curriculum? • What sorts of HASS activities are the most engaging for students? Which activities result in less engagement? • What are the main resources that you use in teaching Year 4 HASS? Assessment • Can you comment on how your HASS units are assessed? • How are formative and summative assessments used? • How important is a rubric or Guide to Making Judgements? • What do you think about your accountability in HASS?

C. Confidence in Teaching HASS • How confident do you feel in teaching the HASS content set out for your year level? • How do you approaching sensitive topics in HASS? What should a teacher's role be here? • In what ways could teacher confidence and knowledge be supported? D. Personal Experiences, Motivations and Value of HASS Personal Experiences • Do you recall your own primary school learning in humanities? Was it an enjoyable experience? Do you think it may impact on how you teach this subject? Motivations • Would you say that you enjoy teaching Year 4 HASS? What are some issues that may impact on this? • How might a teacher's personal passions or biases influence how they teach a subject like HASS? • Can you think of any hobbies, experiences or interests that may influence the way you teach HASS? Value of HASS • How do you rate the importance of HASS compared to the other subjects that you teach? • Can you identify any issues that impact on your teaching of HASS?

Appendix C: Codes and Code Descriptions

Code	Code Name	Description
SP	Systemic Policy	Perceptions on documented and undocumented policy initiatives that impact on the implementation of HASS from a system curriculum authority.
SP1	System HASS expectations	Perceived expectations around the implementation of HASS by educational authority
SP2	System HASS Assessment	Perceived expectations around the assessment of HASS by educational authority
SP3	Influential research	Specific researchers whose ideas that have been incorporated and prioritised by school system
SP4	Time allocations: System	Stated time allocation for HASS by educational authority
SP5	Adopt or adapt	Directive from Queensland Department of Education on use of C2C materials in terms of their potential adoption or adaptation by schools
SD	School Decisions	The decisions made at a school level that frame the way HASS is implemented in relation to the specific contextual aspects of that school. Teacher perceptions of those decisions.
SD1	School Context	Details of school's specific context including sector, location, size and demographics
SD2	Scope and sequence	School's implementation of the four sub-strands: History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Business and Economics across school.
SD3	Local knowledge	The incorporation of local historical, cultural and community knowledge
SD4	Commemorations	School's observance of cultural commemorations and celebrations such as ANZAC and NAIDOC Day.
SD5	Excursions	School's utilisation of excursions, incursions such as visiting personnel and other community resources.
SD6	Time constraints	Teacher's issues regarding time constraints on implementation of curriculum
SD7	Curriculum priorities	Teacher's perception of importance HASS in comparison to other curriculum areas.
SD8	Crowded curriculum	Teacher's perception that curriculum demands are excessive within designated time frames
SD9	Consistency	School's expectations about consistency of practice across year level cohorts.
SD10	Budget	School's stated policy in regards to purchasing resources to support HASS curriculum.
SD11	Summative Assessment	Teacher's perceptions on a formal assessment piece designed to ascertain students' demonstrated skills, knowledge and understanding after a period of learning
SD12	Formative Assessment	Teacher's perceptions on formal and informal assessments designed to check students' skills, knowledge and understanding throughout a period of learning
SD13	GTMJ	Teacher's reflections on formal rubric based on ACARA HASS achievement standards designed to support teacher's evidence-based judgements on student success
SD14	Report card expectations	School expectations around the grading and comments provided to parents on HASS achievement in report cards.
SD 15	Teacher Leader Relationship	Reflections on the role or relationship to either leader or teachers

V	Value of HASS	Teachers' perceived overall opinion of humanities education for students.
V1	General Value of HASS	Educator's view of the value of the learning area beyond a HASS rationale
V2	HASS: Cultural identity	Teacher's view that HASS can develop a student's sense of belonging and citizenship
V3	HASS: Diversity	Teacher's view that HASS can develop a respect for social, cultural and religious diversity.
V4	HASS: Expanding Worlds	Teacher's view that HASS can widen students' ideas of the world
V5	HASS: Social Cohesion	Teacher's view that HASS can develop students' ability to develop social skills
V6	HASS: Critical Thinking	Teacher's view that HASS can develop students' abilities to consider perspectives, analyse information and solve problems
A	Understandings & Perceptions of ACARA HASS	Teachers' stated understandings and perceptions of the ACARA HASS curriculum's structure, content and usability in relation to planning and assessment of this learning area.
A1	ACARA: Rationale	Teacher's perceived knowledge and understanding of the ACARA rationale for HASS
A2	ACARA: knowledge	Teacher's perceived understanding of ACARA HASS knowledge and understanding strand including content descriptors and elaborations
A3	ACARA: Skills	Teacher's perceived understanding of ACARA HASS skills strand
A4	ACARA: Achievement Standards	Teacher's perceived understanding and application of HASS achievement standards
A5	Curriculum change	Teacher's perceptions of how humanities education has changed in Queensland over time.
A6	CCP: Indigenous	Teacher's perceptions of how the Cross-Curricular Priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Cultures impacts implementation of HASS
A7	GC: Personal & Social Capability	Teacher's perceptions of how the General Capability: Personal and Social Capability impacts implementation of HASS
A8	GC: Critical & Creative Thinking	Teacher's perceptions of how the General Capability: Critical and Creative Thinking impacts implementation of HASS
A9	ACARA Website	Teacher's perception of the usefulness of the ACARA website
P	Pedagogical Approach to HASS	Teachers' stated opinions regarding the application of specific pedagogies for the teaching of HASS, the resources used and their perspectives on student engagement and differentiation.
P1	Explicit Teaching	Application of an Explicit Teaching framework based on the ideas of Hattie, Archer and Hughes, Sharratt
P2	Backward mapping	Application of model designed to focus on specific learning experiences that will lead to success in a given assessment task.
P3	Rigour	Teacher's perceptions regarding the intellectual rigour of HASS curriculum
P4	The 'what'	Specific curriculum content to be taught within a unit of learning
P5	The 'how'	Specific strategies employed to teach content of a specific unit of learning
P6	Inquiry pedagogy	Teacher's perceived understanding of inquiry as a form of pedagogy.
P7	Inquiry skills	Teacher's application of inquiry skills in HASS lessons
P8	Guided inquiry	A teacher's use of scaffolding (such as pre-teaching, use of teacher aides, limited research) to support inquiry skills in HASS lessons.
P9	Explicit Teaching and Inquiry	Teacher's opinions of how inquiry can be applied with an explicit teaching approach.

P10	Impediments to inquiry	Teacher's perceptions of various issues that may impede the use of inquiry in the classroom.
P11	Faith in C2C	Teacher's stated opinions around the ability of C2C to deliver effective ACARA HASS implementation
P12	Issues C2C	Teacher's opinions regarding issues with using CC materials
P13	Commercial materials	Teacher's opinion in regard to using commercial HASS programs
P14	Integration: sub-strands	Teacher's opinions on integrating sub-strands in HASS curriculum
P15	Integration: + rigour	Teacher's opinion that integration of HASS with other subject areas can build intellectual rigour
P16	Integration: - rigour	Teacher's opinion that integration of HASS with other subject areas can take away from the intellectual rigour of HASS
P17	Differentiation	Deliberate changes to curriculum and assessment to support individual student success
P18	Student adjustments	Specific adjustments made to individual students to enable success in HASS including aide support
P19	Importance of Engagement	Teacher's opinions regarding the importance of students engaging in HASS curriculum
P20	Student motivation	Identified strategies employed to increase student engagement in HASS
P21	Student Disengagement	Identified strategies employed in HASS that are perceived as less engaging to students.
P&P	Professional & Personal Perspectives	Teachers' stated opinions of their own agency, on collegial collaboration and the professional and personal experiences that may or may not influence implementation.
P&P1	Pre-service humanities	Teacher's recalled usefulness of pre-service training in humanities education
P&P2	PD: Humanities	Any specific professional learning experiences designed to support some part of humanities education in schools.
P&P3	PD: HASS	Specific professional learning experiences designed to support teachers' understanding and application of the HASS curriculum
P&P4	PD: ACARA	Specific professional learning experiences designed to support teachers' understanding and application of the ACARA curriculum
P&P5	Personal Learning: HASS	Teacher's identified personal learning that supports their implementation of the HASS curriculum.
P&P6	Experience as PL	Teacher's opinions regarding how teaching experience can influence HASS implementation
P&P7	Planning agency	Teacher's perceived agency to plan or adapt own units of work for HASS
P&P8	Pedagogical Agency	Teacher's perceived agency to choose or adapt learning activities for units of work in HASS
P&P9	Resource Agency	Teacher's perceived agency in selecting or adapting resources to support HASS learning
P&P10	Assessment Agency	Teacher's perceived agency to create or adapt assessment tasks for HASS units of work
P&P11	Personal interests	Particular teacher interests that may influence HASS curriculum
P&P12	Primary School experiences	Teacher's recollection of own Primary school humanities education and its influence on present teaching
P&P13	Teacher Motivation	Teacher's stated feelings towards the teaching of HASS
P&P14	Teacher Confidence	Teacher's identified level of confidence in teaching HASS curriculum
P&P15	Sensitive topics	Teacher's opinions around the teaching of topics that may be considered politically or culturally sensitive eg First Contact, climate change

P&P16	Sharing best practice	Teachers' opportunity to share ideas, resources and successful practices with colleagues.
P&P17	Moderation	Formal procedure to collectively view and confirm student achievement
P&P18	Collegial support	Planning and assessment support given by colleagues and curriculum leaders.
RA	Reflections on Accountability	Teachers' reflections on accountability in HASS and how they consider where their primary responsibility lies.
RA1	Accountability: AC	Teacher's reflections on responsibility to deliver Australian Curriculum: HASS
RA2	Accountability: System	Teacher's reflections on responsibility to fulfill systemic expectations on HASS implementation
RA3	Accountability: School	Teacher's reflections on responsibility to fulfill school's expectations on HASS implementation and assessment
RA4	Accountability: Students	Teacher's reflections on responsibility to meet student needs when implementing HASS
RA5	Accountability: parents	Teacher's reflections on responsibility to communicate with parents regarding HASS content and student achievement
RA6	Accountability: Self	Teacher's reflections on responsibility to one's self to deliver rigorous and engaging HASS curriculum

Appendix D: Participant Information and Consent Form

	University of Southern Queensland Participant Information Sheet
	USQ HREC APPROVAL: H21REA293

PROJECT TITLE

Investigating School and Teacher Influences on how the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum is Enacted in Queensland Primary Schools

Researcher and Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Mrs Debra Powell

Email: [REDACTED]

USQ Supervisors

Dr Elizabeth Curtis

Dr Karen Peel

Description

Few studies have explored the specific relationship between school-level policy decisions and individual teacher influences on curriculum implementation in Australian schools. This research aims to examine these factors by exploring perspectives around the implementation of the Australian HASS curriculum across six different Queensland primary school contexts. HASS is a subject that has undergone several revisions in recent years and is arguably the least researched school curriculum. The study seeks to gain a greater understanding of the school-teacher dynamic in curriculum implementation by focusing on the importance of curriculum leadership and highlighting the personal and central role teachers play in enacting curriculum.

The research is being conducted by Debra Powell, a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Queensland.

A. Participation: Curriculum Leader

As a **curriculum leader**, your participation in this research will provide an important understanding of the specific policy decisions that frame the way HASS is taught and supported in your school. Your participation will involve an interview of approximately 30 minutes. Any documentary material that may further explain the school's implementation of HASS would be very appreciated. These may include year level overviews, HASS statements or sample plans.

B. Participation: Teacher of Year 4 HASS

As a **teacher responsible for Year Four HASS** at your school, your participation will provide a valuable insight into the professional and personal influences that shape how this subject is enacted in the classroom. Your participation will involve a 45-minute interview that will explore your reflections on the Australian HASS curriculum, your beliefs on student learning and your opinions around the value of this subject.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

This research directly addresses the Queensland Department of Education's position of building a local evidence base examining what works for whom, under what circumstances and why. In particular, the study directly aligns with two of the Department's priority research themes:

1. Examining the effectiveness of school leadership, expertise and support in relation to improved teaching and learning.
2. Investigating the pedagogy, curriculum and assessment practices that enable positive outcomes for students.

This research aims to build on the body of existing work investigating the Australian Humanities curriculum and to promote HASS as a subject worthy of research attention. The completed report will be submitted to the Queensland Department of Education and disseminated to relevant stakeholders through the Department's shared Evidence Hub.

Risks

There are no risks associated with your participation in either of these interviews other than an imposition of your time.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses are confidential unless required by law. Pseudonyms and removal of identifying details will allow participants and schools to remain anonymous. Each interview will be audiotaped and later transcribed. Should participants wish, they can be provided with a copy of their interview transcript and the final report can be made available to each school.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely, as per University of Southern Queensland's [Research Data and Primary Materials Management Procedure](#).

Consent to Participate

I agree to participate in the research project titled **Investigating School and Teacher Influences on how the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum is Enacted in Queensland Primary Schools** conducted by Debra Powell.

- I understand the purpose and nature of the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering a series of questions in a one-to-one interview.
- I agree to my interview being audio recorded.
- I agree to the collection of sample HASS planning documents (Curriculum leader).
- I understand that all information will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that the name of myself and my school will remain anonymous.
- I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the completed thesis.
- I reserve the right to suggest a meeting time that does not interfere with my normal duties.
- I understand that I am free to contact the researcher to seek further clarification of the research.

Questions

Please refer to the Research team contact details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland, Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can address your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project.

Name of Participant: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Principal's Name: _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____