A world-class curriculum? Historical thinking and twenty-first century skills in the *Australian Curriculum: History*.

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Abstract

The *Australian Curriculum* represents significant work by educational authorities in Australia to create a curriculum that will serve the needs of young Australians for years to come. This thesis explores the extent to which the *Australian Curriculum: History* achieves its goal in constituting a world-class curriculum that prepares students for life and work in the twenty-first century. The thesis adopts a document content analysis method in order to evaluate the extent to which the explicit curriculum reflects the prevailing research on historical thinking and twenty-first century skills. Judgements are made on the basis of the frequency and context of how skills and concepts are expressed within the document and how they reflect the research. The thesis finds that the *Australian Curriculum: History* does not reflect the research as its articulation of historical thinking is unclear and lacks coherence. Furthermore, its articulation of twenty-first century skills fails to embed these into the document in ways appropriate to the discipline. This thesis lays bare the failings of the curriculum design process and recommends that future revisions of the curriculum more clearly reflect the research on historical thinking; and that further work be undertaken to determine how twenty-first century relate to the concepts of historical thinking and how these can be expressed in the explicit curriculum.

Declaration of originality

This is to certify that

i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Masters except where indicated,

ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

iii. the thesis is 20 726 words in length, inclusive of citations, but exclusive of tables and bibliographies as approved by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

Signature: *Ashley K Pratt*

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I would first like to thank and acknowledge my supervisor, John Whitehouse. John, your kind and caring personality smoothed the bumpy roads of this journey. Your knowledge and passion for history and history teachers is inspiring and uplifting. Thank you for everything you have done to assist me on this journey.

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ACCI - Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACARA - Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ALP - Australian Labor Party
BCA - Business Council of Australia
ICT - Information and Communication Technology
MNO - Multi-National Organisations
MNC – Multi-National Corporations
SOSE - Studies of Society and Environment

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

This project aims to explore the extent to which the *Australian Curriculum: History* achieves its goal of constituting a world-class curriculum that prepares students for life and work in the twenty-first century. Central to this exploration are the disciplinary structures of historical thinking and the twenty-first century skills that have been embedded into the *Australian Curriculum: History*. Historical thinking concepts enable individuals to inquire into the past; these ideas form the basis of the History learning area at a school level. Twenty-first century skills are intended to enable students to live more productive lives in the global economy in which they will live and work as they move into adulthood. The articulation of these two strands forms the basis of the explicit curriculum for Australian school students studying History.

Section 1.1 Introduction

> We are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that haven't yet been invented, in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet.
>
> (Trilling & Fadel, 2009, p. 3)

The changing nature of the global economy has wide-ranging implications for education authorities across the globe. As many first-world nation-states transition into an 'information' or 'knowledge' economy, education authorities are confronted with fundamental questions regarding the knowledge, skills, and concepts that they seek to instil in the next generation (McWilliam & Haukka, 2008; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Some researchers argue that traditional educational structures are no longer appropriate and that traditional content knowledge has little inherent value within the information economy (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009; Anderson, 2008). In response to these ongoing changes, many nation-states, Multi-National Organisations (MNOs), and Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) have become more vocal in articulating the twenty-first century skills needed for the global economy. These MNOs and MNCs desire for young people to manipulate and understand information in completely new and innovative ways (Griffin, Care, & McGaw, 2012). Some researchers, however, have challenged the prevailing discourse surrounding twenty-first century skills. Greenlaw (2011) challenges the metanarrative

that has developed around twenty-first century skills and argues that the technological change occurring in society does not fundamentally alter the educational needs of students in the twenty-first century. In order to meet the challenges of the evolving world economy many have called for education authorities to review curricula currently being used in primary and secondary schools. As such, the role of traditional discipline areas within school curricula, such as history, and its relationship to twenty-first century skills is an area of growing importance to educators, curriculum writers, and policymakers across the globe (Sawchuk, 2009; Yates, Woelert, Millar, & O'Connor, 2017).

This project will focus on how Australia has attempted to articulate both the conceptual basis of the teaching and learning of history and the development of twenty-first century skills in the most recent version of the national curriculum. Recent international research has led to a much clearer articulation of concepts that underpin the disciplinary structures of history education (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 1996, 2006, 2017; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008; VanSledright, 2004, 2009; Wineburg, 1999, 2001, 2007). This research has informed the development of the *Australian Curriculum: History* in addition to various history curricula across the globe. Beyond this, the national curriculum also attempts to integrate and embed twenty-first century skills, what it terms 'General Capabilities', into the traditional discipline areas around which the curriculum is structured.

In light of the significant research being conducted into both history education and twenty-first century skills there is an opportunity to examine how Australia has combined a traditional discipline area, history, with the stated aim of preparing students for life and work in the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2016h). This thesis seeks to evaluate the degree to which the *Australian Curriculum: History* reflects the research on history education and twenty-first century skills. This thesis will address this by undertaking a document content analysis of the current *Australian Curriculum: History* and will illuminate how this was attempted and the degree to which it reflects the prevailing research.

Section 1.2 Approach to the Study

This project will critically analyse the extent to which the *Australian Curriculum: History* has achieved its stated goal of constituting a world-class history curriculum that also prepares students for life and work in the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2016h). This project will be framed around the following key questions:

- To what extent does the *Australian Curriculum: History* reflect the research on historical thinking?
- To what extent does the *Australian Curriculum: History* reflect the research on twenty-first century skills?
- To what extent does the *Australian Curriculum: History* prepare students for work in the twenty-first century?

To answer these questions, this thesis reviews the research surrounding historical thinking and twenty-first century skills. It examines the key debates and the areas of tension between prominent researchers. Following from this, it will undertake a document content analysis of the *Australian Curriculum: History* to identify how historical thinking and twenty-first century skills have been embedded into the document. Finally, this thesis will analyse the data generated by the document content analysis and make recommendations for future action.

Section 1.3 Key Definitions

In undertaking this research there are key terms that must be clearly defined. These key terms include:

Curriculum – Elliot Eisner succinctly defines curriculum as a means for altering the way students think (Eisner, 1988). Beyond this, curriculum is often conceptualised as including society's requirements of the educational system to prepare the next generation for the challenges of an unknown world (Queen, 1999). Many researchers also define curriculum as the expectations of stakeholders in the learning process and defines the

objectives of educators (Collins & O'Brien, 2011; Griffith & Kowalski, 2010; Lawton & Gordon, 1993; Queen, 1999; Wallace, 2015).

This research is primarily concerned with the 'explicit' or 'intended' curriculum, which can be defined as 'curriculum that is acknowledged in policy statements as that which schools or other educational institutions or arrangements set out to accomplish' (Schubert, 2010, p. 489). This conceptualisation of curriculum builds upon the work of Eisner and his articulation of the three types of curriculum; 'explicit', the publicly articulated goals of schooling; 'implicit', how schools socialise children to a set of community expectations; and 'null', what schools do not teach children (Eisner, 2002). The *Australian Curriculum: History* and its related policy documents constitute the explicit curriculum that will be analysed in this project.

Globalisation – can be broadly understood as a form of cultural integration, usually defined in relation to economics and politics on a global scale (Issitt & English, 2017). It is the increasing interconnectedness of communities around the world, the apparent shortening of distance and ease of communication, and the proliferation of flows of goods and services around the globe (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000; Zajda, 2010b). In regard to education, globalisation is increasingly defined in relation to the increasingly powerful role that supernational institutions, such as the OECD and the UN, play in policy development within nation-states, including education policy (Torres & Burbules, 2000). The process of globalisation has presented an epistemological challenge to how educational authorities frame curriculum in response to these changes (Yates & Young, 2010). This project is primarily concerned with the manner in which education and curriculum authorities have responded to these international forces of change when developing curricula within the Australian context.

Twenty-first century skills – are broadly defined as the skills and habits-of-mind that learners will require to be successful in life and work in the twenty-first century. These skills are primarily defined in relation to a neo-liberal economic imperative (Zajda, 2010a). Twenty-first century skills are often justified in relation to a 'future-oriented education', in that the education system needs to adopt a more flexible and responsive

approach to the challenges of the future where the skills of critical thinking, adaptability and creativity will be more important than traditional disciplinary content knowledge (Binkley et al., 2012; Greenstein, 2012; McPhail & Rata, 2016; Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Yates et al., 2017). The development of twenty-first century skills research can be seen to be highly influenced by the post-modern and post-structuralist curriculum design research of the 1990s (Andreotti & Major, 2010; Gilbert, 2005; Worth & Simmons, 2001). The *Australian Curriculum* identifies seven twenty-first century skills, what it terms 'General Capabilities', that include: critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, information and communication technology (ICT) capability, intercultural understanding, literacy, numeracy, and personal and social capability.

Historical thinking - Broadly defined as the concepts to engage in historical inquiry. These concepts constitute 'knowledge-in-use structures' that allow historical investigators, of whatever level of expertise, to investigate and understand the past (VanSledright, 2009). These structures define how students both understand and construct their own interpretations of the past and constitute a significant aim of formal history education within the school system (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 1996, 2006, 2017; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008; VanSledright, 2004, 2009; Whitehouse, 2017; Wineburg, 1999, 2001, 2007). Historical thinking builds upon the work of Vygotsky (1962) and Bernstein (1996) in their research on curriculum knowledge structures and are situated within the constructivist paradigm. The *Australian Curriculum: History* identifies seven key historical thinking concepts that include: cause and effect, contestability, continuity and change, empathy, evidence/sources, perspectives, and significance.

Section 1.4 Background and Context

> The first object of any act of learning, over and beyond the pleasure it may give, is that it should serve us in the future. Learning should not only take us somewhere; it should allow us later to go further more easily.
>
> (Bruner, 1960, p. 17)

Aims of the curriculum

Bruner (1960) argued for the construction of curricula that could be taught by teachers to school students that reflected the basic principles of various fields of inquiry, what we

refer to as 'disciplines'. In the 1960s and 1970s the 'discipline thesis', primarily the work of Hirst (1974) and Phenix (1964), gained prominence in debates regarding curriculum development and educational aims. This theory argued that knowledge should be logically categorised into several distinct categories that reflect the development of academic thought over time. This debate had a profound impact on the structure of curriculum design with most school curricula adhering to the central tenants of the discipline thesis. These arguments have influenced recent research regarding 'powerful knowledge' and the intrinsic value of specific forms of knowledge on student development (Beck, 2013; Yates et al., 2017; Young, 2010). The functionalist sociological tradition adopted a very different conceptualisation of the aims of school education in the same period. Prominent sociologists, such as Durkheim (1972), argued that the educational process, a construct of society, exists to socialise the young into the wider community.

Globalisation has had a significant impact on conceptualising the aims of compulsory school education. Rizvi (2014) argues that Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) have played a crucial role in conceptualising a particular social imagery which claims that the process of globalisation forces us to reconceptualise educational aims for the compulsory years of schooling, a view supported by Yates et al. (2017). These IGOs have become major organisers of knowledge regarding this interplay between globalisation and education and have had a significant impact on the framing of curricula across the globe. The influence of these IGOs has had a direct influence on the development of the *Australian Curriculum*. The aims of the *Australian Curriculum* are often couched in terms of the development of learners as successful and productive economic units who will positively contribute to the economic development of Australia within the global economy. These aims have, in turn, influenced the structure and development of the curriculum itself as it has attempted to integrate twenty-first century skills into traditional discipline areas. The tension between the economic imperative and traditional understandings of the aims of school education is most evident in the development and structure of the *Australian Curriculum: History*.

National curriculum development

The development of a unified national history curriculum for Australia has been a series of false starts since the process began in the late 1980s. The constitutional arrangements within the Australian federation have made gaining national consensus on matters of curriculum development in primary and secondary education difficult to achieve. Constitutionally, the various state governments have ultimate authority over school education which traditionally marginalises the role of the Commonwealth. Over time, however, the Commonwealth Government has used several strategies to exert indirect influence on education policy in Australia. These methods primarily relate to the ability of the Commonwealth Government to grant financial assistance to the State Governments under Section 96 of the constitution in terms that it sees fit. This allows the Commonwealth to use financial incentives and penalties to corral the State Governments into acceding to Commonwealth priorities, what Harris-Hart (2010) has described as 'coercive' as opposed to 'cooperative' federalism.

As the end of the millennium approached significant research was undertaken to articulate what a curriculum for the twenty-first century entailed. Reid (2006) argues that the curriculum of the twentieth century was ill suited to prepare students for the challenges of the twenty-first century and that, in a world where knowledge was no longer as fixed and definable, the curriculum needed to focus much more on flexibility, creativity, and innovation. Concern over the extent to which the school curriculum was adequately preparing students for the modern workplace led to the commissioning of three significant national studies throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. The Finn Committee (1991), the Mayer Committee (1992), and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Business Council of Australia (BCA) (2002) produced reports that sought to articulate work-ready competencies and these reports, in turn, influenced the development of curricula across Australia. These reports articulated many of the twenty-first century skills that the research outlines as being essential for students to be successful in life and work in the twenty-first century. Skills such as 'communication', 'problem solving', and 'teamwork' given significant prominence in the reports' findings.

In 1998, a review of curriculum in Australia was undertaken in preparation for a meeting of Education Ministers in Adelaide of the following year. In this review draft goals were outlined and, for the first time, the linking of the school curriculum to improving the outcomes of students for the twenty-first century were articulated (MCEETYA National Goals Taskforce, 1998). At the Adelaide meeting in 1999 the Ministerial Council for Education adopted 'The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century' (Department of Education, 1999). Within the declaration eight key learning areas were identified that would form the basis of curriculum across Australia (Department of Education, 1999). Tudball (2008) argues that the Adelaide Declaration 'affirmed the view that young people can only make sense of their world and be active and informed citizens when they develop a sound understanding of the wider global context in which they are operating' (p. 64). Nowhere in the Adelaide declaration does it refer to the disciplinary study of history in any form and subsumes the discipline within the 'Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE)' key learning area. Furthermore, the rest of the declaration makes only vague references to what may today be regarded as twenty-first century skills.

With moves towards a national curriculum generally stymied, it was not until 2006 that the teaching and learning of history returned to the national agenda. In January 2006, then Prime Minister John Howard called for a 'root and branch renewal of the teaching of Australian history in our schools' (Howard, 2006). Later in the same year the Federal Government convened the Australian History Summit in Canberra to examine what could be done to promote the teaching of Australian history in schools. In preparation for the summit Tony Taylor undertook an investigation into the teaching of Australian history across the different state and territory education jurisdictions. His report was submitted in preparation for the Australian History Summit and found that while there were pockets of excellent history teaching across Australia, these practitioners operated within a 'patchwork curriculum' where Australian history is often not considered mandatory study (Taylor & Clark, 2006, p. 34).

The summit led to the publication of the 'Guide to the Teaching of Australian History in Years 9 and 10' in October 2007. In the introduction to the guide Prime Minister John

Howard stated; 'The Guide sets out a framework of topics, key events and people that have shaped our nation. It also outlines a range of skills which the study of Australian History can help to develop' (Department of Education, 2007, p. 3). The guide also outlined a rudimentary framework of knowledge and skills for a consistent approach to teaching history in Years 9 and 10 across Australia. Proponents claimed that the guide would enhance the teaching of Australian history and that 'most delegates were committed to narrative history: dates, milestones and names' (Henderson, 2007). Critics derided the guide as scarcely teachable and would kill off any long-term interest in the subject at a school level (Taylor, 2007). The election of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in November of 2007 meant that the Liberal-National government's plans for a nationally consistent framework for the teaching of Australian history ultimately never eventuated.

In December 2008 the state, territory, and federal education ministers agreed to the 'Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians' (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008). The declaration committed to providing students with an education that would allow them to effectively compete in the twenty-first century. The preamble to the declaration specifically mentions the major changes that had occurred in the world since the 1989 Hobart Declaration and the following 1999 Adelaide Declaration. Furthermore, the declaration references the enormous impact of the forces of globalisation and technological change on Australian society. The declaration outlines a national curriculum that is based upon eight key learning areas, including history (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008). Beyond these key learning areas, the declaration also set out the attributes that students would need to be successful in the rapidly changing twenty-first century world (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008).

The National Curriculum Board was established to manage the creation of a unified national curriculum for Australia. In May 2009, they published the 'Shape of the Australian Curriculum' paper that was to guide the curriculum development process (National Curriculum Board, 2009a). In this paper, the National Curriculum Board stated that 'A curriculum for the twenty-first century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgment of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future' (2009a, p. 6). The

shaping paper goes on to outline, for the first time, the use of 'General Capabilities' for students that stand outside the traditional discipline areas. It states, 'Not all learning is contained in the learning areas into which the school curriculum has traditionally been divided. Reflections on the nature of work in the twenty-first century typically identify important General Capabilities, and many people argue that schools should help students develop them' (National Curriculum Board, 2009a, p. 11). Curriculum development for the *Australian Curriculum* was intended to both address the key learning areas identified in the Melbourne Declaration as well as providing students with the interdisciplinary skills necessary to be successful in the twenty-first century.

Published at the same time as the overarching 'Shape of the Australian Curriculum' paper was the 'Shape of the Australian Curriculum: History' paper, which outlined the development process specifically for the history learning area (National Curriculum Board, 2009b). The document includes a generic statement about the development of the General Capabilities that will be included in each learning area 'in ways appropriate to that area' (National Curriculum Board, 2009b, p. 15). Alan Reid levels significant criticism at the vague wording of the history shape paper, arguing that the shape paper gives little direction as to how the curriculum will be structured in order to achieve its goals and specifically that 'the History paper addresses the role of capabilities by simply listing them again and asserting they should be represented appropriately in the History curriculum' (Reid, 2009, p. 8). Furthermore, he argues that there was a significant disconnect between the stated aims of the curriculum and the curriculum itself with the 'drip feeding' of subjects fatally undermining the design of a futures-oriented curriculum (Reid, 2009). This 'drip feeding' refers to the first four learning areas, *English*, *History*, *Science*, and *Mathematics*, being written and published before the design of the remaining curriculum areas.

In the published document the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, previously known as the 'National Curriculum Board') identified seven General Capabilities including: *Literacy*; *Numeracy*; *Information and communication technology (ICT) capability*; *Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability*; *Ethical understanding*; and *Intercultural understanding* (ACARA,

2016a). These capabilities were intended to address the work-ready skills that the Finn, Mayer, and the ACCI reports of the 1990s and early 2000s had identified as crucial skills necessary for success in the twenty-first century economy (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002; Finn, 1991; Mayer, 1992). Within the history curriculum ACARA gave general advice about the integration of these General Capabilities that would 'encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century' (ACARA, 2015, p. 1). In the detail of the curriculum itself it states that the General Capabilities are identified where they offer the opportunity to add depth and richness to student learning (ACARA, 2015).

After its publication, the history curriculum was described as offering little guidance for how to incorporate historical thinking into teaching practice (Hoepper, 2011). Whitehouse (2011) levels significant criticism at the decision to exclude one of the key components of historical thinking, ethical thinking, describing its omission as a source of concern. Others went further and described the curriculum as fundamentally compromised (Hart, 2015). While there was significant criticism of the amount of content knowledge to be covered, the curriculum did begin to address some of the concepts of historical thinking that had been the subject of scholarly research.

Significant criticism of the initial *Australian Curriculum: History* focused on issues of content, particularly from right-wing think-tanks and media publications. Following the election of the conservative Liberal-National Coalition government at the 2013 Australian Federal election, a review into the curriculum was ordered which laid bare the conflict between the advocates of 'memory history' and 'disciplinary history' (Martin, 2016). The review recommended widespread alterations to the curriculum, particularly at the primary school level, where the reviews argued that the history curriculum should focus much more on the transmission of knowledge and understanding rather than the development of historical thinking (Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014). These changes were championed by prominent News Ltd. publications in Australia, most prominently *The Australian* newspaper, which promoted a 'predominantly celebratory master narrative'

for school students to be taught across the compulsory years of schooling (Taylor & Collins, 2012). Whitehouse (2015a) argues that the changes result in an 'incoherent curriculum' that fail to properly articulate the key historical thinking concepts that students should be expected to develop over the compulsory years of schooling. Hart (2015) concurs with Whitehouse in arguing that the curriculum focused too much on the transmission of significant amounts of historical information at the expense of the development of historical thinking skills in students.

Section 1.5 Conclusion

The development of a unified national curriculum for history has been a tumultuous journey. The development of the curriculum has been significantly influenced by the process of globalisation and the influence of IGOs, MNCs, and MNOs on the conceptualisation of the aims of school education in the twenty-first century. The *Australian Curriculum: History* sets out to constitute a world-class history curriculum that prepares students for life and work in the twenty-first century in order to help students most effectively compete in the global economy (ACARA, 2016h). There is a need to critically explore the *Australian Curriculum: History* to determine if it achieves these aims when compared to the research on historical thinking and twenty-first century skills.

CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

An increasing body of scholarly work explores the epistemological basis for what is taught in school classrooms. Traditional knowledge areas, such as history, are increasingly being articulated in new and more sophisticated ways as researchers better understand their 'knowledge-in-use structures' (VanSledright, 2009). Increasingly, researchers are also concerned with how the school curriculum helps to prepare students for their economic future in the twenty-first century economy. This research into twenty-first century skills seeks to better articulate the skills and concepts that will best prepare students for their future lives.

Section 2.1 Introduction

Peter Seixas, director of the Historical Thinking Project, poses the question: 'What should students know and be able to do when they are finished their years of school history? Surely the accumulation of facts-to-be-remembered is not an adequate answer to the question' (Seixas, 2006, p. 1). Seixas' argument rings doubly true when you consider the place of history within a curriculum framework that has the stated aim of preparing students for life and work in the twenty-first century. Recent research has led to a much clearer articulation of the disciplinary basis of school history education (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 1996, 2006, 2017; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008; VanSledright, 2004, 2009; Wineburg, 1999, 2001, 2007). From the 1980s history education researchers have sought to articulate the philosophical and disciplinary concepts that have come to encompass 'historical thinking' and the disciplinary view of school history education (Lee, 1983; Lévesque, 2008).

Parallel to this has been the development of frameworks that articulate twenty-first century skills. These frameworks have been developed from within Australia (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002; Finn, 1991; Mayer, 1992) and overseas (Binkley et al., 2012; International Society for Technology in Education, 2007; North Central Regional Educational Laboratory & Metiri Group, 2003; OECD, 2005; Partnership for Twenty-first Century Learning, 2007). The desire to fully

prepare students for life and work in the twenty-first century has led to a concerted push to include these competencies in school curricula. There also exists an interplay between the concepts for historical thinking, which builds upon the research of Bruner (1960) and Schwab (1978), and the work-competencies of twenty-first century skills (Binkley et al., 2012; Greenstein, 2012; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

This literature review seeks to elaborate the following:
- Disciplines and the curriculum
- Historical thinking
- Twenty-first century skills.

Section 2.2 Disciplines and the Curriculum

Research into school curriculum design in the 1960s and 1970s, beginning with the work of Jerome Bruner, argues that curriculum design should be determined by the structures of the academic disciplines; students should be led to discover the principles of these disciplines (Bruner, 1960). This initial argument was expanded upon in the work of Phenix (1964) and Hirst (1974) in what became known as the 'discipline thesis' of school curriculum design. The discipline thesis argues that knowledge is most logically categorised into several discrete areas, or disciplines, that can be used to structure school curricula. Phenix argues that knowledge should be categorised into the following 'realms of meaning': *symbolics*, *empirics*, *esthetics*, *synnoetics*, *ethics*, and *synoptics* (Phenix, 1964). In debate with Phenix, Hirst proposes his own 'forms of knowledge' which includes: *mathematics*, *the physical sciences*, *history and the human sciences*, *religious study*, *literature and the fine arts*, and *philosophy* (Hirst, 1974). This discipline-centric view of curriculum development is supported by Schwab (1978) and Marsh and Willis (2003) who argue that curriculum should focus on the methods of teaching for these disciplines. Marsh and Willis (2003) argue that subject matter has its own inherent organising principles that have developed over time and these principles should not be violated. Schwab argued that to teach without consideration of these organising principles was a 'corruption of the discipline' (Schwab, 1978, p. 243). These theories of discipline-

centric curriculum development have been embraced and promoted by a large group of researchers within the curriculum studies literature.

While a discipline-based curriculum structure is the prevailing orthodoxy in school curriculum development, significant research exists in the related field of 'integrated' or 'interdisciplinary' curriculum. Integrated curriculum theory grows from the work of John Dewy and Francis Parker in the 1890s and early 1900s. Advocates of curriculum integration claim that it allows teachers to address important issues that cannot always be neatly packaged into subjects, develops wider views among students, and reduces redundancy of knowledge (Case, 1991). Growing out from curriculum integration theory is the advocacy for what are known as 'interdisciplinary skills' (Jacobs, 1989). Jacobs, while acknowledging the inherent structure of disciplines, argues that interdisciplinary linkages are needed in order to most effectively prepare students for a world where knowledge is not so neatly divided into discipline areas. This viewpoint is supported by many within the literature (Beane, 1997; Shriner, Schlee, & Libler, 2010). The twenty-first century skills debate has drawn heavily from the integrated and interdisciplinary skills research with its focus on competencies that transcend the boundaries of the disciplines in school curricula. This research has had a significant impact on the development of school curricula across the globe as educational jurisdictions seek to better prepare students for life and work in the twenty-first century.

Section 2.3 Historical Thinking

> I try to show that historical thinking, in its deepest forms, is neither a natural process nor something that springs automatically from psychological development.
>
> (Wineburg, 2001, p. 7)

Recent research relating to historical thinking and its place in school curricula has grown out of the debates surrounding discipline-based pedagogy in the 1970s and 1980s. Since these initial debates there has been a reconceptualisation of what constitutes understanding in school history classrooms (Counsell, 1999). Seixas and Morton (2013) argue that historical thinking is the process that historians go through to interpret the evidence of the past. Lévesque (2008) concurs with this interpretation when he argues

that historical thinking involves an understanding of how knowledge has been constructed over time. van Drie and van Boxtel (2008) differ slightly by adopting the term 'historical reasoning', which they argue focuses on the cognitive activity undertaken by students in formulating an informed response to inquiry into the past. Each of these articulations emphasise that historical thinking involves not just the memorisation of past historical events but it includes the ability to interpret and understand information from the past in a structured form.

There are different regional traditions to disciplinary thinking in history that have grown out of long-held academic beliefs regarding the purpose and aims of the subject (Seixas, 2017). The UK tradition of historical thinking was articulated by Lee (1983) and Lomas (1990) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Lee and Ashby (2000) in their major research project (CHATA) fully articulated and popularised the idea of procedural concepts in the teaching and learning of history. The Canadian tradition can be seen as a refinement of the UK tradition of procedural concepts in the highly influential framework of the Historical Thinking Project (Historical Thinking Project, 2014; Seixas & Morton, 2013). This project consists of six concepts that bear a strong resemblance to the procedural concepts of the UK tradition but are intended to be regarded more as problems and persistent issues that demand comprehension and accommodation (Seixas, 2017). The US tradition focuses much more on the activity of students in the interrogation of primary sources. Sam Wineburg stands as the preeminent advocate of this tradition within the literature and his work frames much of the discourse of historical thinking in the US context (Reisman, 2012; Seixas, 2017; Wineburg, 2001; Wineburg, Martin, & Monte-Sano, 2013). These traditions have led to the articulation of different frameworks within the research on historical thinking.

The Schools Council History Project, founded in 1972, began a critical examination of history education in the UK. Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby, building upon this work, argue that it is necessary to distinguish between substantive history and what they term 'second-order or procedural ideas' (Lee & Ashby, 2000). They argue that substantive history constitutes the content of history while concepts such as 'evidence, explanation, change, and accounts are ideas that provide our understanding of history as a discipline

or form of knowledge' (Lee, 1983, p. 199). Christine Counsell argues that it is vital to focus on these procedural concepts and 'ways of knowing' in order for the teaching of history to retain its disciplinary integrity and to resist the importation of generic skills that have no basis in the discipline (Counsell, 2011, p. 220). Counsell's view is of particular interest when you consider the relationship between the disciplinary structures of history and the generic twenty-first century skills that sit at the heart of this project. Stéphane Lévesque, writing from the Canadian tradition, builds upon Lee and Ashby's research when he writes about the difference between the substantive and the procedural concepts that underpin the disciplinary structures of teaching history. Lévesque argues that history educators need to understand the difference between substantive knowledge, 'It is what historical knowledge is *about* – the "content" of history' and procedural knowledge, 'the concepts and vocabulary that provide, "the structural basis for the discipline"' (Lévesque, 2008, pp. 29-30). Lévesque poses a series of questions about persistent issues that draw from the Historical Thinking Project, rather than arguing for a specific model of historical thinking. Lévesque is careful to point out that substantive and procedural concepts are not a simple dichotomy of content as opposed to skills; it is necessary for students to have a firm command of the substantive information of the past as they engage with the procedural concepts. Lévesque states that progression and development of a student's historical thinking happens simultaneously within each of these domains of knowledge, they cannot be developed independently of each other. Lévesque also points to the need for students to develop narrative competence to make sense of the past (Lévesque, 2017). He argues that little research has been conducted on student construction of narrative with the research literature focusing on student recall of substantive knowledge. Lévesque argues that the research literature has tended to reduce the discourse to a dichotomy between exploring a narrative and teaching historical thinking concepts (Lévesque, 2016).

Peter Seixas and the Historical Thinking Project have developed a prominent framework that outlines six concepts that are necessary for the development of historical thinking. These six concepts are: *establish historical significance*; *use primary source evidence*; *identify continuity and change*; *analyse cause and consequence*; *take historical perspectives*; and *understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations*

(Historical Thinking Project, 2014). Seixas argues that these concepts, when taken together, provide the structure that shapes the practice of teaching history. The six historical thinking concepts build upon earlier work by Seixas where he argued that a history curriculum based upon these concepts can work to promote student's ability to develop a meaningful and critical historical understanding based on evidence presented in a formal school setting (Seixas, 1996). John Whitehouse draws upon the work of Jannet van Drie and Carla van Boxtel to modify Seixas' model with two additional concepts; *ask historical questions*, and *construct historical arguments,* in order to more accurately represent the processes of the discipline (van Boxtel & van Drie, 2008; Whitehouse, 2015b). In 2017, Seixas returned to the argument he made in 1996 that the concepts are best understood as problems and persistent issues for history students to grapple with in the classroom rather than as silos through which students view and interpret the past (Seixas, 1996, 2017). In his revised model, Seixas attempts to address criticism of the Historical Thinking Project that the concepts are presented as independent of each other and do not reflect the dynamic interrelationship of past, present, and future. Seixas explores the interrelationship between the concepts and how viewing them as problems and persistent issues to be grappled with when investigating the past build connections between them (Seixas, 2017). In a similar manner to Lévesque, Seixas explores the problem of establishing narrative consensus and exploring how students can integrate the evaluation of competing narratives into their historical inquiry (Seixas, 2016).

Wineburg (1999, 2001, 2007) argues that the study of history is far more than just what happened in the past and he argues that historical thinking is intended to have students make choices, balance opinions, and challenge assumptions about the past. Bruce Lesh states that Wineburg's research demonstrates that while students and historians approach evidence differently, students can be taught how to apply evidence in response to a historical question (Lesh, 2011). Wineberg's research, coming from the American tradition, focuses on the reading of historical texts and argues that historians have been 'uncharacteristically tight-lipped' about the process for gaining an understanding of the views contained within historical texts (Wineburg, 2001, p. 63). He argues that school curricula rarely address strategies to gain understanding and comprehension of historical texts and that students often lack the strategies to understand an author's intentions in

writing historical texts. Furthermore, Wineburg argues that many of the disciplinary aspects of historical texts are intentionally omitted when they are adapted for school use and this presents a distorted view of the process of gaining understanding using the disciplinary structures of history (Wineburg, 2001).

In order to help address this perceived deficit of disciplinary structure in the reading of historical texts, Wineburg argues for a structured approach to the reading of primary source historical texts. In his approach, he 'distilled three discrete heuristics that historians applied while reading historical texts: *sourcing* (considering the document's source and purpose), *contextualization* (placing the document in a temporal and special context), and *corroboration* (comparing the accounts of multiple sources against each other)' (Reisman, 2012, p. 87). This approach, he argues, helps differentiate the reading of historical texts from other discipline areas within the curriculum. Wineburg's model focuses heavily on the use of historical texts, their relationship to the disciplinary structures of history, and their use within the school classroom. Wineburg and the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) have adapted this research to make it more applicable to evaluation of online sources. This work argues that students need to be taught to read sources 'laterally', as opposed to reading a source in isolation, and seek corroborating evidence from a broader range of material (Breakstone, McGrew, Ortega, Smith, & Wineburg, 2018). VanSledright (2004), building on Wineburg's earlier research, focuses on the interrogation of primary source material as sitting at the heart of his model of historical thinking. He proposes four cognitive acts that he sees as central to thinking historically, these include: *identification* (knowing the attributes of a source), *attribution* (locating the author within their historical context), *judging perspective* (assessing the author's social, cultural, and political position), and *reliability assessment* (corroborating the source) (VanSledright, 2004). VanSledright argues that this process can be applied to students as young as seven and, with support from a skilled educator, students can learn to engage in historical inquiry.

Janet van Drie and Carla van Boxtel, using the term 'historical reasoning', argue for a conceptualisation of history education as an active reasoning into the past in response to a historical question, rather than the passive receipt of information (van Boxtel, van Drie,

& Stoel, 2015; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). They argue that the term 'historical thinking' is imprecise and their model differs from that of Seixas and others by arguing that students use the information they gain in their study of the past to interpret present and past phenomena (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). Their framework for historical reasoning comprises six components: *asking historical questions*; *using sources*; *contextualisation*; *argumentation*; *using substantive concepts*; and *using meta-concepts* (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). van Drie and van Boxtel's model of historical reasoning differs from Seixas' model of historical thinking with its emphasis on the student act of reasoning using all aspects of the model rather than the more siloed method of historical interpretation in Seixas' model; a criticism Seixas' sought to address in a 2017 article where he returned to the idea of the concepts as problems and persistent issues for students to address (Seixas, 2017). The Seixas, van Drie, and van Boxtel models are not mutually exclusive of each other. Whitehouse (2015b) argues that both models advocate for a history classroom that places students in direct contact with primary source material, placing these traces of the past at the centre of student investigation.

The National Curriculum Board History Shape Paper (2009), setting out the terms for the curriculum writers, specifically describes historical study as inquiry based. The paper outlines a world-class history curriculum in which historical study is understood as a process in which students develop understanding by asking questions and using evidence in the construction of an argument. The paper draws upon much of the historical thinking literature in its outline for the curriculum.

Section 2.4 Twenty-First Century Skills

> The future is not what it used to be.
>
> (Riding & Graves, 1937, p. 170)

Within the twenty-first century skills research it is generally acknowledged that the skills that are referred to are not, necessarily, new or innovative (Griffin et al., 2012). Rather, it is the prominence of certain skills that are of particular importance in the changing economy and, consequently, the prominence that the development of these skills should have in school curricula. Rotherham and Willingham (2009), refering to the imporance

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of these skills, state 'the extent which changes to the economy and the world mean that collective and individual success depends on having such skills' (p. 16). In justifying the importance of these twenty-first century skills Binkley et al. (2012) states that the decline in the use of manual labour and routine skills means that educational systems need to focus much more heavily on the skills of communication, sharing, and the use of information to solve complex problems. In this regard, the twenty-first century skills literature can be seen to relate to the broader globalisation literature and the shift to what is known as the 'knowledge economy' (Rizvi, 2014; Rizvi & Lingard, 2000; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Anderson (2008) supports this viewpoint by arguing that the push for twenty-first century skills over the past decade have been driven by what educators have understood as implications of the changing economy for teaching and learning.

The overriding emphasis in the twenty-first century skills movement on skills that serve economic interests has, however, drawn criticism from some. Ananiadou and Claro (2009) state that the dominant narrative in the twenty-first century skills discourse has been framed around an economic imperative to prepare students for the needs of the economy. They believe that this overlooks the broader aims of education in developing all human abilities, rather than just those that can serve the economic agenda of the day. Young (2008), writing within what has become known as the 'Powerful Knowledge' paradigm, concurs when he argues that certain kinds of knowledge take students beyond the bounds of their own experience and provide them with new ways to view the world that they would not otherwise gain through lived experience. He states that 'knowledge that takes people beyond their experience has historically been expressed largely in disciplinary or subject forms.' (Young, 2008, p. 10). It is argued that the increased focus on the economic imperatives of school curriculum development is a response to a common set of external pressures on educational systems that have very different educational traditions (Yates & Young, 2010). There is also a strong critique of 'the ways vocational rhetorics and cross-subject patchworks are imported into curriculum structures with little regard for the sometimes conflicting epistemological or pedagogical substance they assume' (Yates & Collins, 2010, p. 90). The 'Powerful Knowledge' discourse provides a powerful critique of much of the driving imperative of twenty-first century skills and their raison d'être within school curriculum.

Charles Fadel and Bernie Trilling stand as two of the preeminent researchers on twenty-first century skills. They argue that the world has changed fundamentally in the last few decades and that the role of education has also changed. They state that while the skills are not new, the way in which they are learned and implemented in schools is rapidly shifting (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). They also argue that the emerging hyper-connectedness of global society is breeding new problems and challenges that the current education system is ill-suited to address (Fadel, Trilling, & Bialik, 2015). As technology increasingly replaces jobs previously performed by human labour the education system needs to skill students to be productive in a society where routine manual labour will increasingly be automatised. Their research shows that while jobs that rely on the repetitive performance of manual action is decreasing, jobs that rely on skills that are non-routine and analytical in nature are increasing (Fadel et al., 2015; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Chris Dede supports Fadel and Trilling's argument in the need for the development of twenty-first century skills in school curricula. He also emphases the growing importance of skills that support students work in the knowledge economy as being essential for all, rather than a minority (Dede, 2010).

Laura Greenstein's matrix of prominent twenty-first century skill models (see Table 1) demonstrates that there is significant alignment between the different frameworks. The level of alignment indicates that the skills regarded as necessary for success in the twenty-first century, building upon from the work of Fadel et al. (2015), Dede (2010), Rotherham and Willingham (2009), and others are broadly accepted and understood in the research. Greenstein identifies the common elements amongst the models, categorising them as relating to *thinking*, *acting*, and *living in the world* and then placing the skills into relevant sub-categories according to what it asks students to do (Greenstein, 2012). Of particular note is that some models date back to the 1940s, '70s, and '80s, supporting the view that these skills are not necessarily new, but their prominence and how they are expressed within the curriculum has taken on new importance in response to the forces of rapid globalisation.

Table 1 Matrix of prominent twenty-first century skill frameworks

Source / Skill	Partnership for 21 Century Skills 2004	ATC21S University of Melbourne 2010	Centre for Public Education, Craig Jerald 2009	OECD 2009	enGauge-Metiri Group 2003	Costa and Kallick: Habits of Mind 1980s	Robert Sternberg Triarchic Intelligence 1970s	Edward Glaser Critical Thinking 1941
THINKING Critical and higher level	Critical thinking AND problem solving	Critical thinking	Critical thinking		Higher-order thinking and sound reasoning		Analytical	Knowing how to think critically
THINKING Problem solving		Problem solving and decision making	Problem solving	Problem solving	Producing real-world products	Questioning and posing problems	Problem solving	Recognize and solve problems Appraise evidence and evaluate arguments
THINKING Creativity		Creativity	Creativity		Creativity, curiosity	Creating, imagining, innovating	Creative: Synthesize existing knowledge	
THINKING Metacognition		Metacognition Learning to learn	Thinking about thinking			Metacognition Applying past knowledge to new situations		Making inferences Render accurate judgements
ACTING Communication and collaboration	Communication AND collaboration	Communication and collaboration	Collaboration	Communication AND collaboration	Communication, collaboration, interpersonal skills	Listening with understanding Communicating clearly Thinking independently		Comprehend and use language with accuracy / clarity
ACTING ICT	Digital and visual literacy	Information literacy	Applied literacy	Searching, electing, evaluating, and organizing Interpreting info	Digital and visual literacy			Gather pertinent information Interpret data
	Information media, and technology literacy	ICT	ICT	Functional and applied ICT	Technology skills			
ACTING Flexibility and initiative	Flexibility Initiative Self-direction	Flexible Self-directed	Adaption to change Self-sufficiency	Restructuring and developing new goals	Adaptability Self-direction	Thinking flexibility Self-awareness		
LIVING IN THE WORLD Global understanding	Global skills	Citizenship Global understanding	Global skills		Global awareness Multicultural literacy			
LIVING IN THE WORLD Civic	Civic literacy	Citizenship	Civic engagement	Civic and social engagement	Personal, social, and civic responsibility			
LIVING IN THE WORLD Leadership and responsibility	Leadership and responsibility	Personal and social responsibility	Personal responsibility	Ethical and social impact Responsibility	Self-direction Social and civic responsibility			
LIVING IN THE WORLD College and career readiness	Productivity and accountability	Life and career skills			Plan Prioritize High productivity	Continuous learning Accuracy and precision Past to present	Practical / Applied	

Note. Reproduced from Greenstein (2012, pp. 22-23)

The two prominent frameworks that have influenced the creation of the General Capabilities in the *Australian Curriculum* have been the ATC21S framework and the P21 framework. These two frameworks have significant similarities in their identification of key skills of thinking, acting, and living in the world. The only significant difference lies in their articulation of problem solving, creativity, and metacognition. The ATC21S framework includes these discreet skills as necessary for success in the twenty-first century while the P21 framework does not. The Australian Curriculum draws upon these frameworks in its articulation of the General Capabilities, the articulation of twenty-first century skills within the curriculum.

As has been previously mentioned, the importance of developing these twenty-first century skills are not universally supported. Greenlaw (2011, p. 1) states that the metanarrative of 'salvation through technology' is unbalanced and places too much emphasis on the manipulation of information. Greenlaw takes issue with the deprecation of direct instruction in favour of interactive exchange in the twenty-first century skills metanarrative and argues that students need more than a few guiding questions to navigate the massive amount of information that is available to them in the internet age. He disagrees with the assumption that traditional approaches are overly content-driven compared to what is proposed by the twenty-first century skills proponents and that the twenty-first century skills meta-narrative places far too much faith in technology to overcome and address the challenges facing the modern economy and political order. The importance of twenty-first century skills, it can be seen, is not universally accepted either in its overall importance or the prominence that many researchers ascribe to it in curriculum development. It remains a contested space in the discourse of curriculum development and the importance that these skills should have in influencing curriculum design decisions.

Despite these challenges the twenty-first century skills movement has had a significant influence on curriculum development across the globe. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills organisation identifies several US state curricula that attempt to integrate twenty-first century skills (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2009). The New Zealand national curriculum identifies five key competencies that draw upon twenty-first century

skill themes (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2016). Furthermore, Canadian educational jurisdictions are beginning to explicitly integrate twenty-first century skills into their provincial curricula (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). The twenty-first century skills movement is having a direct impact on the design of school curricula across the globe.

Section 2.5 Conclusion

> There is a growing recognition by educators and policymakers that questions of historical reasoning carry implications that go well beyond the curricular borders of history.
>
> (Wineburg, 2001, p. 51)

The disciplinary structures of history seem well suited to embrace the changes in curricula being brought about by the increased emphasis on twenty-first century skills. Historical thinking synergises with many of the key twenty-first century skills and can compensate for many of the perceived shortcomings that some argue would be generated by focusing on them in the classroom (Greenlaw, 2011; Sawchuk, 2009). Wineburg (2001, p. 52) states that 'At its heart, historical understanding is an interdisciplinary enterprise, and nothing less than a multidisciplinary approach will approximate its complexity. In this regard, present efforts suggest that the future will be richer than the past'. Lévesque (2008) argues for the inherent connections between the disciplinary study of history and twenty-first century skills in his work *Thinking Historically, Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century*. As the education system grapples with the endless stream of information that the twenty-first century presents to students, more research is needed to ascertain how historical thinking can equip students with the strategies needed to navigate the increasingly complex information landscape. The dual educational approaches of historical thinking and twenty-first century skills provide a lens through which to view the *Australian Curriculum: History* and the extent to which it reflects the research in meeting its goal of being a world-class curriculum that prepares students for the challenges of living and working in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 3
Method

This project aims to analyse and explore the *Australian Curriculum: History* and the extent to which it achieves its goal of constituting a world-class history curriculum that prepares students for the challenges of the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2016h). This project specifically focuses on how the curriculum articulates the dual frameworks of historical thinking and twenty-first century skills and the extent to which they support the curriculum in achieving its stated goals. The *Australian Curriculum: History* is an existing text and therefore it constitutes a pre-existing construction of reality that can be analysed through a document content analysis method (Bryman, 2012; Rapley, 2007; Rapley & Jenkings, 2010). This research project, therefore, is nonreactive in nature (Neumen, 2014; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 2000). The literature review in Chapter 2 offers an in-depth review of the literature and provides a lens through which to view the curriculum documents. The research model is deductive in that it compares the data to the known literature.

The research approach for this project is based on the research design framework of Creswell (2009). Using this framework, the project is constructed in the following manner:
1. Philosophical worldview – Interpretivist
2. Research design – Mixed method
3. Research method – Document content analysis.

Section 3.1 Philosophical Worldview

In seeking to understand how the curriculum represents historical thinking and twenty-first century skills this project falls within the interpretivist paradigm as its underlying philosophical worldview. The interpretivist paradigm, originating from the work of Max Weber (1864–1920), is chiefly concerned with understanding social action. As a subset of the broad interpretivist worldview this project adopts a hermeneutic interpretation of the curriculum in that it is concerned with the interpretation of the text (Neumen, 2014, p. 101). In this respect, it is concerned with how the text has interpreted and applied the

research in its context and how accurately it reflects the prevailing views of the research community.

Section 3.2 Method: Document Content Analysis

The use of document content analysis as outlined by practitioners such as Eisner (1988) in this project provides an opportunity to carefully examine and analyse documentary evidence of societal and organisational communications in the form of the explicit curriculum. Because the documents constitute a pre-existing construction of reality it allows this project to analyse organisational communication in a nonreactive manner (Bryman, 2012; Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, & Okely, 2006; Neumen, 2014; Rapley, 2007). In conducting this analysis this project, using documentary evidence, is able to 'establish a coding frame and apply that coding frame to the document to count the number of times particular words, phrases, or themes are used' (Rapley & Jenkings, 2010, p. 381). The coding frame outlines the main themes and issues and the relationship between them. The use of document content analysis generates consistent empirical data from the curriculum that can be objectively compared to the research. Furthermore, this project will collect both numerical and descriptive data about the use of historical thinking and twenty-first century skills in the curriculum. The generation of numerical data, in addition to the use of descriptive examples in the text of the curriculum, makes this project mixed-method in its methodological approach.

In undertaking document content analysis, the researcher engages with the document within a specific local context (Rapley, 2007). This is particularly true in this project as the researcher, a practicing educator, brings many pre-existing social, political, and educational constructs into the analysis of the existing curriculum. This can, however, offer a unique perspective on the curriculum as a 'document-in-use' (Rapley, 2007) and generate insights into how the document is interpreted and understood by an individual for whom it was specifically intended.

Sampling

The sampling method is confined by the research question in that it is solely concerned with the *Australian Curriculum: History* text for the generation of original data. Version 8.3 of the curriculum was endorsed and approved on 18 September 2015 by the Education Council and this version significantly restructured aspects of the curriculum, particularly in the primary years of schooling (Foundation–Year 6/7). Version 8.3 of the *Australian Curriculum*, for implementation in 2016/17, is the version of the curriculum that will be analysed in this project. The researcher will extract the concepts and skills of historical thinking and twenty-first century skills from the curriculum, code them, and compare the emerging themes against the research. This will be achieved by breaking down the curriculum into manageable segments for analysis, illustrated in Tables 5 and 6.

Curriculum Organisation: History

Version 8.3 of the *Australian Curriculum: History* is divided into two different organisation structures depending on the year level. In the primary years (Foundation–Year 6/7) the history curriculum has been folded into a broad 'Humanities and Social Sciences' learning area with more generic and interdisciplinary goals. In the secondary years of the curriculum (Year 7–Year 10) history has retained its place as a discrete, stand-alone learning area with a discipline-specific rationale and goals. Within both structures twenty-first century skills are integrated into the learning area through 'General Capabilities', which are embedded into the discipline areas.

Table 2 Australian Curriculum: History discipline structure and sequencing

	Foundation – Year 2		Years 3 – 4		Years 5 – 6/7		Years 7 – 10	
History	Humanities and Social Sciences	General Capabilities	Humanities and Social Sciences	General Capabilities	Humanities and Social Sciences	General Capabilities	History	General Capabilities
Geography							Geography	
Civics and Citizenship	N/A						Civics and Citizenship	
Economics and Business	N/A		N/A				Economics and Business	

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The Foundation–Year 6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences learning area is organised into two strands: discipline specific *Knowledge and understanding* strands and a generic *Inquiry and skills* strand that is common across the disciplines within the learning area.

The discipline specific *Knowledge and understanding* strands aims to encompass the knowledge and understanding necessary for students to succeed within the respective disciplines. The curriculum claims that 'Each of the four [discipline specific] sub-strands in the Humanities and Social Sciences has its own way of thinking. The *Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences* focuses on developing students' ability to apply concepts of disciplinary thinking' (ACARA, 2016b). The curriculum claims that each of the four sub-strands are underpinned by concepts of disciplinary thinking. The concepts of historical thinking that the curriculum outlines for Foundation–Year 6/7 include: *sources*, *continuity and change*, *cause and effect*, *significance*, *perspectives*, *empathy*, and *contestability* (ACARA, 2016b). Furthermore, the curriculum also states that it promotes specific concepts of interdisciplinary thinking within the Humanities and Social Sciences key learning area. These seven interdisciplinary concepts are outlined as including: *significance*, *continuity and change*, *cause and effect*, *place and space*, *interconnections*, *roles, rights and responsibilities*, and *perspectives and action* (ACARA, 2016b). All the stated concepts, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, are said to exist within the *Knowledge and understanding* sub-strand.

The *Inquiry and skills* strand has been re-written in version 8.3 of the curriculum, differing significantly from earlier versions at the Foundation–Year 6/7 level. The key learning area—rather than having discipline specific skills strands—has adopted a generic and interdisciplinary approach. The curriculum divides the *Inquiry and skills* strand into five sub-strands: *questioning*, *researching*, *analysing*, *evaluating and reflecting*, and *communicating*. The curriculum makes no reference to disciplinary skills constituting any part of the *Inquiry and skills* strand.

In Foundation–Year 6/7, the curriculum substantive content is designed around generic themes for each year level.

Table 3 Australian Curriculum: History F–6/7 Themes

Humanities and Social Sciences: Foundation–Year 6/7	
Foundation	My personal world
Year 1	How my world is different from the past and can change in the future
Year 2	Our past and present connection to people and places
Year 3	Diverse communities and places and the contributions people make
Year 4	How people, places and environments interact, past and present
Year 5	Australian communities – their past, present and possible futures
Year 6	Australia in the past and present and its connections in a diverse world
Year 7	Sustainable past, present, futures

In Year 7–Year 10 the curriculum places history as a stand-alone learning area with specific historical focuses for each year level. Within this part of the curriculum it divides the learning area into two strands; *Historical knowledge and understanding* and *Historical skills*. In the *Historical knowledge and understanding* strand at the Year 7– Year 10 level the concepts for the development of historical thinking are: *evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, perspectives, empathy,* and *contestability*. In the *Inquiry and skills* strand it outlines the skills as foundational to the process of historical inquiry as including: *chronology, terms and concepts, historical questions and research, analysis and use of sources, perspectives and interpretation,* and *explanation and communication* (ACARA, 2016g).

In the Year 7–Year 10 curriculum the substantive concepts are organised around a specific time period for each year level.

Table 4 Australian Curriculum: History 7–10 Themes

History: Year 7–Year 10	
Year 7	The ancient world
Year 8	The ancient to the modern world
Year 9	The making of the modern world
Year 10	The modern world and Australia

Curriculum organisation: General Capabilities

General Capabilities, the curriculum's articulation of twenty-first century skills, are designed to be embedded into the curriculum 'where they offer opportunities to add depth' (ACARA, 2016c). General Capabilities comprise seven identified capabilities: *Literacy*, *Numeracy*, *ICT Capability*, *Critical and Creative Thinking*, *Personal and Social Capability*, *Ethical Understanding*, and *Intercultural Understanding*.

Each capability is broken down into elements and each element into sub-elements. These sub-elements have learning continua with specific descriptors which have been integrated into the curriculum as appropriate. The curriculum states that 'In the Australian Curriculum, the General Capabilities are addressed through the content of the learning areas. General capabilities are identified where they are developed or applied in the content descriptions' (ACARA, 2016c). In order to achieve this, the curriculum labels each content descriptor with icons to represent when a General Capability has been identified as being appropriate for that content descriptor. By clicking on an icon, the curriculum does offer some examples of how you could address these General Capabilities in the class but, as with the content elaborations, these serve as suggestions and do not form part of the mandated curriculum

Section 3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

This project will analyse the *Australian Curriculum: History* to generate data about the frequency of use and context in which historical thinking and twenty-first century skills have been used within the curriculum document. This project will then compare this data to the research to evaluate the curriculum's consistency with its stated goals building on

the Melbourne Declaration and articulated in the introductory statements in the curriculum documents. This project will use the six-step data analysis and interpretation framework developed by Creswell (2009) to guide this process.

Step 1: Organise and prepare the data for analysis

The *Australian Curriculum: History* will first be coded as an entire document; including all overview statements, year level/band descriptions, content descriptions, and achievement standards. These elements constitute the mandated curriculum; the content elaborations will not be coded as these are not regarded as part of the mandated curriculum and exist merely as examples of how the content descriptors could be addressed in the classroom. The curriculum document will then be broken into strands that will be analysed with the assistance of the data analysis software NVivo to assist with the generation of comparable data and to identify trends in a timely and consistent manner. NVivo will assist in organising and coding the data using Holsti's unit labels of 'item unit', 'context unit' and 'single word unit' (Holsti, 1969, pp. 116–119). Because of the differing structures between the F–6/7 and the 7–10 history curriculum they will be analysed separately; each being broken into the *Knowledge and understanding*, *Inquiry and skills*, and *Achievement standards* strands, mirroring the division within the curriculum itself. Furthermore, as General Capabilities are intended to be integrated into the history curriculum where they can add depth, it is necessary to analyse them according to the context in which they are used. General Capabilities and their place within the *Australian Curriculum: History* are, therefore, analysed in context. The single word units are based on coding categories of historical thinking and twenty-first century skills.

Table 5 Coding Unit Labels

Holsti (1969) Unit labels for coding and analysis	
Item Unit	1. *Australian Curriculum: History* (Whole); includes overview statements, year level/band descriptions, content descriptions, and achievement standards. 2. HASS F–6/7 *Knowledge and Understanding (History)* strand 3. HASS F–6/7 *Inquiry and skills* strand 4. HASS F–6/7 *Achievement Standards (History)* 5. History 7–10 *Historical Knowledge and Understanding* strand 6. History 7–10 *Historical Skills* strand 7. History 7–10 *Achievement Standards*
Context Unit	Historical Thinking in Content Descriptors General Capabilities in Content Descriptors
Single Word Unit	Historical Thinking twenty-first Century Skills

Step 2: Read though all the data

An initial reading of the document aims to gain a general sense of the emerging themes of the *Australian Curriculum: History* (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). This initial reading allows the researcher to develop a general interpretative understanding of the document. Additionally, it allows the researcher to gain insight into how the document has generally responded to the emerging themes within the research and the extent to which the document achieves its aims of constituting a world-class curriculum that helps prepares students for the challenges of the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2016h).

Step 3: Coding the data

The analysis of the *Australian Curriculum: History* will examine how words, meaning, concepts, and themes associated with historical thinking and twenty-first century skills are expressed in the document. The document, therefore, will be open-coded using NVivo allowing the researcher to breakdown data units into single items or short data sequences

that can be categorised, examined, compared, and analysed to identify historical thinking and twenty-first century skills within the document. Coding categories are established by using the concepts and skills articulated by the curriculum writers themselves. These categories will also be compared to the research as outlined in Chapter 2 and analysed for the extent to which they reflect current research. The coding of the document begins with a 'start list of codes' (Miles & Huberman, 1994); two parent codes, 'historical thinking concepts' and 'twenty-first century skills', and child nodes allow for sub-categorisation underneath the parent codes. The nodes are as follows:

Table 6 Coding Nodes

Parent Node	**Child Nodes**
Historical thinking concepts	Sources/Evidence
	Continuity and Change
	Cause and Effect
	Significance
	Perspectives
	Empathy
	Contestability
Twenty-first century skills	Literacy
	Numeracy
	ICT
	Critical and Creative Thinking
	Personal and Social
	Ethical Understanding
	Intercultural Understanding

Step 4: Generate descriptions using the coding process

The *Australian Curriculum: History*, using the analytical codes, can then be analysed to generate original data regarding its articulation of historical thinking and twenty-first century skills. By generating discrete data, it allows patterns to emerge and the ability to analyse contexts. The analysis phase relies on four basic guiding principles: 1) ask the data explicit questions about twenty-first century skills and historical thinking; 2) analyse

data minutely; 3) frequently interrupt coding to write theoretical notes; and 4) never assume analytical relevance of any traditional variable until data shows it to be relevant (Strauss, 1987).

The questions asked of the data were:

1. What theoretical or philosophical groundings of historical thinking are explicitly evident in the *Australian Curriculum: History*?
2. What theoretical or philosophical groundings of twenty-first century skills are explicitly evident in the *Australian Curriculum: History*?

The data will be collected by first graphing the frequency of different categories used within the document. Secondly, an analysis of the data for keywords and phrases will be undertaken. Finally, an analysis of the contextual use of the General Capabilities and historical thinking concepts will be undertaken.

Step 5: Representation of the descriptions and themes

The data collected by the document analysis of the *Australian Curriculum: History* will be represented graphically and interpretatively. The graphical analysis allows for a quantitative analysis of the frequency of keywords and phrases within the document. The contextual analysis can be used to establish if emerging themes are consistent with the theoretical and philosophical aims of the curriculum. Patterns can then be identified and evaluated against the stated aims of the curriculum and the research.

Step 6: Interpretation of the findings

By undertaking a qualitative interpretative analysis of the data and the document we can generate descriptive information on the articulation of historical thinking and twenty-first century skills within the document. This qualitative analysis assists in the exploration of the curriculum and the extent to which it achieves its stated aims. Furthermore, it allows for a comparison of the emerging themes of the curriculum to the research and an exploration as to their consistency with each other.

Section 3.4 Validity and Reliability

Establishing the validity and reliability of the research findings is of paramount importance, particularly when a key criticism of the document content analysis method is the subjectivity of the researcher in the coding of the documents (Neumen, 2014). To overcome this weakness, the researcher's subjectivity must be dutifully acknowledged and addressed in the design of the project. According to O'Toole and Beckett (2013), researcher subjectivity can be addressed though the consideration of: *credibility*, the believability of the findings; *resonance*, the echoes of commonality with other data beyond the project; *plausibility*, the ability of the findings to not be immediately contradicted by contrary data; and *transferability*, the ability for the findings to be useful in other contexts beyond the project (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013, p. 31-32). In addressing these concerns this project seeks to generate and compare empirical data—in addition to detailed descriptions—from the curriculum to compare to the curriculum's stated goals and the research. In this regard, it establishes itself as a credible and plausible study where rigorous coding schemes are used to generate data that is deductively analysed to establish if the curriculum achieves its goals. It resonates with other research conducted on curricula in this area and can be easily generalised to explore how other curriculum documents in other contexts have approached the aim of creating curricula to prepare students for the twenty-first century.

Limitations

Document content analysis contains a number of inherent limitations that this project avoids. Bailey (1994) summaries the inherent disadvantages of document content analysis as: bias; selective survival; incompleteness; lack of availability; sampling bias; limited to verbal behaviour; lack of a standard format; coding difficulties; and that the data must be adjusted for comparability over time. As this project constitutes 'Research about policy' (Blackmore & Lauder, 2005, p. 100) it avoids the limitations that Bailey outlines. Analysing the document in question—the curriculum—is easily accessible, cost effective, non-reactive, in that it remains static thought-out the research, and stable; making document content analysis the ideal method for this project. This research is primarily directed at the teacher and curriculum writers. It seeks to address concerns that have a direct bearing on the classroom setting and how the curriculum is enacted.

Section 3.5 Importance of the Study

The *Australian Curriculum: History* was intended to be a world-class curriculum that prepares students for the challenges of the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2016h). To be initially implemented in 2013, with a major revision published in October 2015, this project is timely in analysing the extent to which the current version of the curriculum is consistent with its original aims and the research. As the neo-liberal economic imperative is increasingly pushing for the education system to prepare students for life and work in the twenty-first century economy, this project is significant in taking a critical approach to how this has been attempted in the Australian context and how it relates to trends in international research. In this regard, this project is very significant with strong implications for future revision of the curriculum by policymakers and curriculum writers both nationally and internationally.

Section 3.6 Conclusion

This project aims to analyse the extent to which the *Australian Curriculum: History* is consistent with its aim of constituting a world-class curriculum that prepares students for life and work in the twenty-first century (ACARA, 2016h). At its core, the researcher seeks to explore the extent to which the curriculum articulates historical thinking and twenty-first century skills within the document and its consistency with the research. The findings of this project will provide valuable insight for future revisions of the curriculum. This project differentiates itself from previous studies of the *Australian Curriculum: History*, particularly Martin (2012), by its focus on the articulation of twenty-first century skills in addition to historical thinking in the curriculum in the 8th version of the curriculum that followed the substantial revisions to the curriculum commissioned in 2013. It builds upon earlier work by Martin (2012) by exploring how changes in version 8.3 have further affected the articulation of the research in the curriculum.

CHAPTER 4
Historical Thinking: Analysis and Discussion

Section 4.1 Introduction

The *Australian Curriculum: History* is envisioned to be 'world class' and to 'prepare students for the demands of the 21st century' (ACARA, 2016h). This analysis will evaluate the extent to which the curriculum achieves this aim, specifically how it reflects the research on historical thinking. The ACARA curriculum emphasises that the study of history has its 'own methods and procedures… It is interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking' (ACARA, 2016g). The nature of the methods and procedures of a history curriculum have been outlined in the literature review. The research on historical thinking in school curricula is very established. Lee (1983) began the process of applying the principles of the Phenix/Hirst debate to the study of history and organising it around substantive and procedural concepts. This analysis is concerned with how the procedural concepts, as the underlying basis for historical thinking, are articulated in the *Australian Curriculum: History* in order to address the key research questions for this thesis.

With the rewriting of the *Australian Curriculum: History* for version 8.3, published in October 2015, the aims of history education are split between the integrated F–6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences learning area and the 7–10 history learning area. The primary years of the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area expresses its aims in general terms with no reference to the disciplinary structures of history, falling afoul of what Counsell (2011) calls the 'genericism' of history skills. The secondary years of the curriculum expresses its aims in specific terms with direct references to historical thinking concepts such as 'continuity and change', 'significance' and others identified by Seixas (1996, 2006) and the Historical Thinking Project. This divergence in aims between the primary and secondary years reduces the focus of the curriculum in articulating the historical thinking concepts that should be deeply embedded in the history curriculum. These structures have been outlined by Seixas (1996, 2006, 2017) and others as identified in the literature review.

Significantly, the *Australian Curriculum: History* does not provide a uniform explanation and definitions of each of the concepts they state forms the basis of historical thinking. Instead, the curriculum has one explanatory document for the primary years of schooling and a separate document for the secondary years of schooling. The lack of a unified definition and explanation of how historical thinking has been conceptualised by the curriculum writers presents challenges when attempting to explain how it has been articulated in the curriculum. This lack of cohesion significantly undermines the curriculum's claim to be 'world-class' by failing to properly articulate how the scholarly research has been interpreted in the local context.

This analysis of historical thinking will illustrate the degree to which it is present in the *Australian Curriculum: History*. Each historical thinking concept, as identified by the curriculum writers, will be analysed individually to interpret its frequency and the context in which it has been used in the curriculum. This analysis will enable the exploration of the curriculum and how effectively it articulates historical thinking. The curriculum has been purposely analysed without the inclusion of the content elaborations, as they do not form part of the mandated curriculum and are intended to exist merely as examples of ways that the curriculum might possibly be addressed by teachers.

The following question is asked of the curriculum to illuminate historical thinking: What foundations for historical thinking are explicitly evident in the *Australian Curriculum: History*? These findings will generate data to help answer the key research questions.

Section 4.2 Findings and Discussion of Historical Thinking

Australian Curriculum: History (F–10)

Initially, the entire *Australian Curriculum: History* is analysed and coded for the inclusion of the concepts for the development of historical thinking, as identified by the curriculum writers. This general data helps to address the key research questions. These concepts are taken from the Historical Thinking Project and the work of Seixas (1996, 2006) which has been outlined in the literature review. This coding includes all overview

statements for the year levels from F–10, the *Historical Knowledge and Understanding* strand, the *Historical Inquiry and Skills* strand, and the achievement standards.

Figure 1 presents the image of a fragmented curriculum; the historical thinking concepts have not been embedded into the curriculum with any regards to equity and explicit decisions have been made by curriculum writers to emphasise some concepts, such as perspectives and significance, to the exclusion of others, such as contestability and empathy.
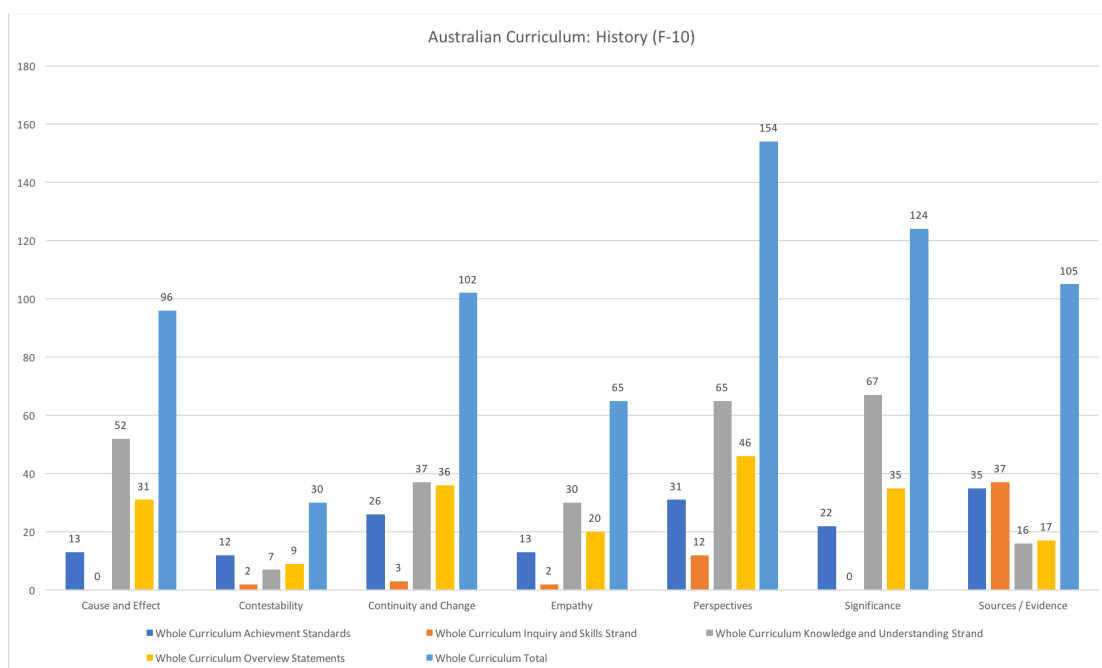
Figure 1 Historical Thinking Concepts: F–10 Curriculum

Most of the concepts have been articulated in the *historical knowledge and understanding* strand of the curriculum, with the exception of 'sources/evidence'. This division of the curriculum between the two strands, *historical knowledge and understanding* and *historical skills*, is at odds with the research and the division between substantive and procedural concepts as articulated by Lee (1983). The lack of delineation between the substantive and the procedural raises important questions regarding the fundamental assumptions the curriculum designers made regarding how historical thinking should be regarded. This decision seems at odds with the work of Lee (1983) and Seixas (1996, 2006), as identified in the literature review, and reinforces the argument Whitehouse

(2011) notes the curriculum writers' interpretation of the research is a 'source of concern' (p. 85).

Sources / evidence

The *Australian Curriculum: History* provides two different articulations of this central concept of historical thinking. In the explanatory document for the primary years it states the final concept as 'sources' while in the secondary years of the curriculum it states it as 'evidence'. Furthermore, the glossary of the curriculum does not provide a single definition for 'sources', instead providing a definition for 'primary sources' and another for 'secondary sources'. This is extremely problematic and can be attributed to the significant revisions of the primary years for version 8.3 of the *Australian Curriculum*.

The *Australian Curriculum: History* defines primary sources as 'objects and documents created or written during the time being investigated, for example, during an event or very soon after' (ACARA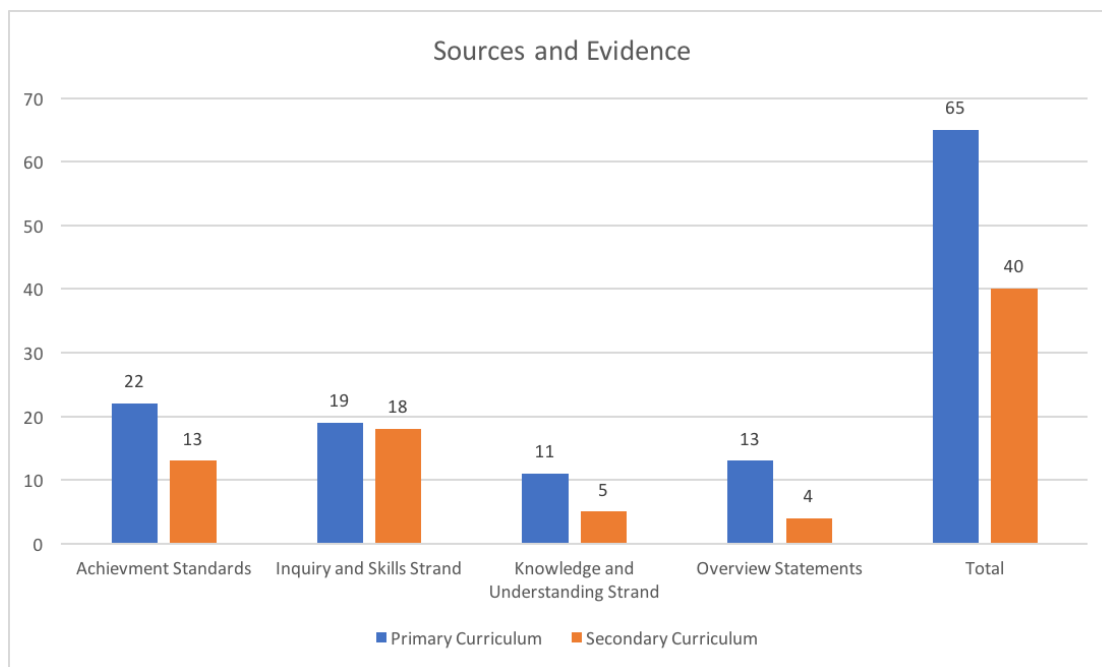, 2016e). The *Australian Curriculum: History* defines secondary sources as 'accounts about the past that were created after the time being investigated, and which often use or refer to primary sources and present a particular interpretation' (ACARA, 2016e). The *Australian Curriculum: History* defines evidence as 'what can be learnt from a historical source to help construct a historical narrative' (ACARA, 2016e). These multiple definitions obscure the clear articulation of this historical thinking concept for teachers, worsened by the primary and secondary explanatory documents which present substantially different articulations.

The primary explanatory document states that 'sources' are 'anything that has been left behind by the past, which provides us with information that can add to our knowledge of the past' (ACARA, 2016i). It also describes the difference between primary and secondary sources but provides no direction as to the active process a student is meant to undertake to develop their understanding of this concept. While the other concepts in the primary explanatory document do articulate some of the research in terms of what students are intended to be able to do, especially Seixas (2006), this concept does not. In contrast to this, the secondary explanatory document lists 'evidence' as the concept for students to develop their understanding of. It states that 'evidence is what can be learnt

from a historical source to help construct a narrative, to support a hypothesis or to prove or disprove a conclusion' (ACARA, 2016g). It also goes on to explain how students are to develop their understanding of this concept, which the primary document does not. The secondary explanatory document more accurately reflects the research for this concept and provides specific guidance to teachers as to how students should develop their understanding of this historical thinking concept.

Figure 2 shows us how this concept has been articulated across the curriculum but this analysis is undermined by the competing articulations of this concept in the primary and the secondary years of schooling.

Figure 2 Australian Curriculum: History – Sources and Evidence breakdown

Unlike the other historical thinking concepts, it is articulated in both the skills strand and the knowledge and understanding strand of the curriculum. The lack of congruence for the articulation of the historical thinking concepts undermines their clear articulation within the curriculum. Figure 2 also shows us that this concept appears in the primary years much more frequently than the secondary years.

At the primary level this concept has not been articulated with coherence. For example, despite the curriculum's stated intention of primary students examining 'sources' and not 'evidence' in the Foundation knowledge and understanding strand it states that students will 'look at evidence of the past' (ACARA, 2016f). This indicates that the primary years have not been written with a clear understanding of the difference between 'sources' and 'evidence' with the terms seemingly used interchangeably throughout the primary years. Several other examples of students being asked to 'evaluate evidence to draw conclusions' and 'analyse information or sources for evidence' exist in the primary years. This lack of coherence undermines the curriculum and its stated aim of being 'world-class'.

At the secondary level, we also see a willingness to use the terms 'source' and 'evidence' interchangeably. Like the primary years, the secondary years fail to coherently articulate its concept of 'evidence' with the majority of the content descriptors and achievement standards referencing 'sources'. Statements such as 'examine sources to compare different points of view' and 'analyse sources' (ACARA, 2016d) are scattered throughout the secondary achievement standards. Furthermore, the secondary skills strand only references 'evidence' once with all other references to this concept using the term 'source'. This concept lacks any coherence and fails to reflect the research to any significant degree in either the primary or the secondary years in the curriculum. The curriculum fails to draw upon much of the research regarding the analysis and use of sources, particularly Wineburg (2001, 2007) and VanSledright (2004) or the work of van Drie and van Boxtel (2008) as outlined in the literature review. The failure to make use of any significant research from the US tradition, which primarily deals with the use of primary source evidence, significantly undermines the curriculum's claim to be world-class by only utilising a narrow selection of the research as identified in the literature review.

Cause and effect

The *Australian Curriculum: History* defines cause and effect as 'used by historians to identify chains of events and developments over time, short-term and long-term' (ACARA, 2016e). The curriculum has modified Seixas' original articulation of this

concept by dropping the verb component, changing 'analyse cause and consequence' to 'cause and effect'. Dropping the verb component is unfortunate as it deprives students of agency. It is at odds with the Shape Paper which presents procedural concepts as enablers of historical inquiry. Within the ACARA explanatory documents for the concept we see a primary focus on causation; this is true in both the primary and secondary explanatory documents.

When the curriculum is analysed and broken down we see that the 'effects' element of this concept to be the more dominant of 'cause and effect', particularly at the secondary level (see Figure 3).
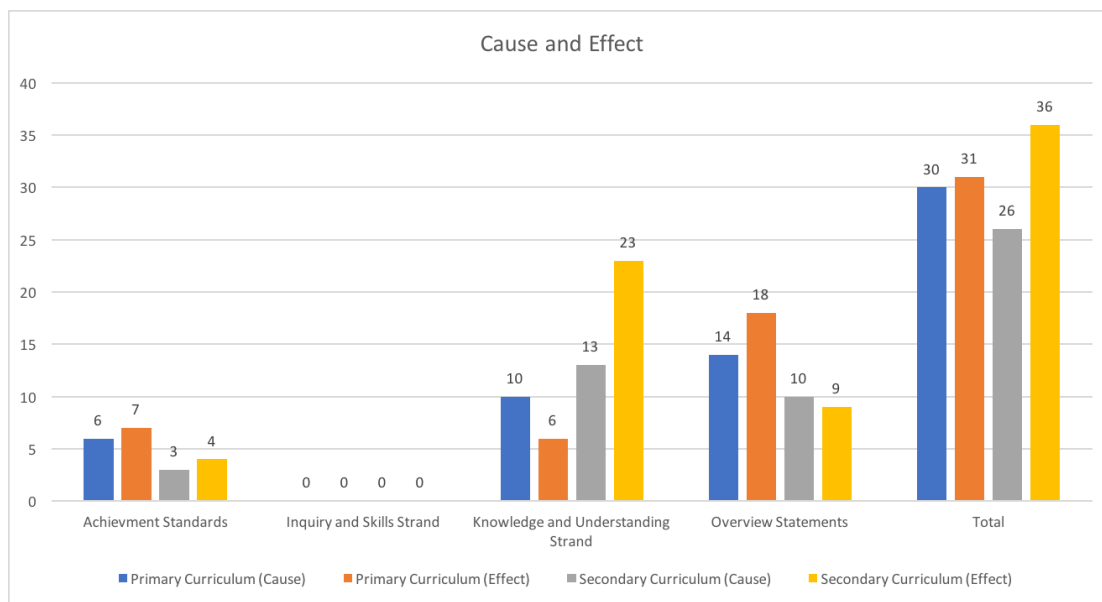
Figure 3 Australian Curriculum: History – Cause and Effect breakdown

This disjuncture between the articulation of the concept in the explanatory documents, the frequency of its use in the curriculum itself, and how it is articulated in the research demonstrates a lack of congruence within the curriculum and does not reflect the prevailing research literature.

We also see a disjuncture in the articulation of this concept between the content descriptors and the achievement standards for the curriculum. For example, in Year 8 a content descriptor asks students to study 'The immediate and long-term effects of the

conquest of the Aztecs …' (ACARA, 2016d) while the Achievement Standard for Year 8 asks students to be assessed on how they 'explain the causes and effects of events and developments' (ACARA, 2016d). The achievement standard seems to align much closer to Seixas' research by its inclusion of the verb component. This inclusion, however, is not made anywhere else in the curriculum and seems to exist in isolation within the achievement standard, demonstrating a lack of congruence in how the curriculum articulates the concept.
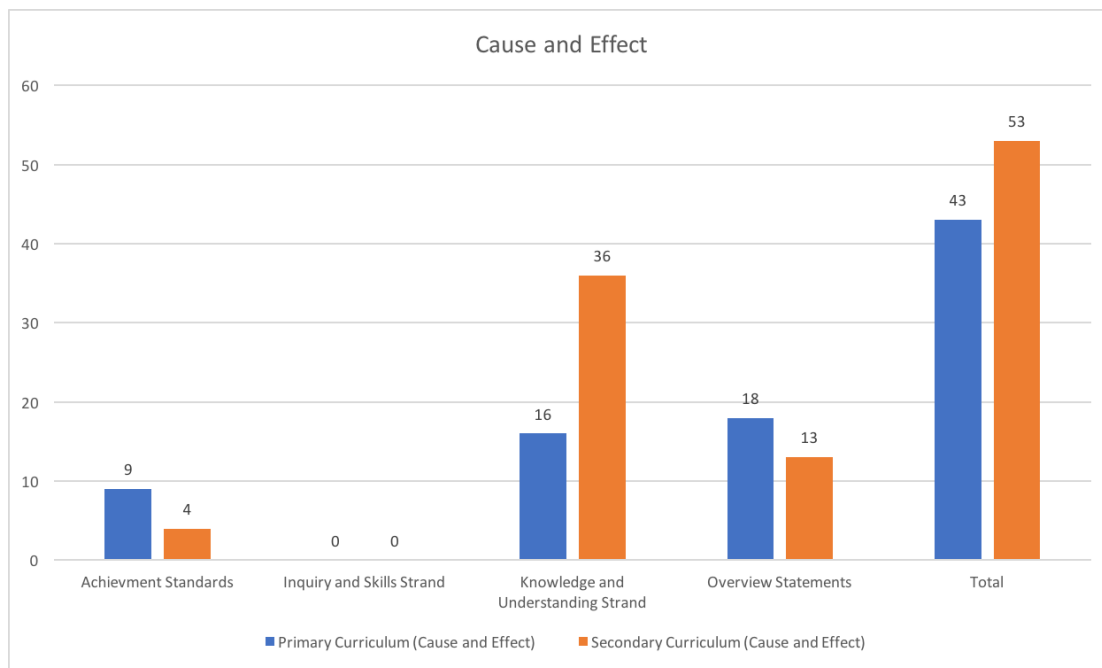
Figure 4 Australian Curriculum: History – Cause and effect primary/secondary breakdown

Cause and consequence are key concepts for historical thinking. They are difficult concepts for students to understand and it is important for clarity about the aims of student understanding for both causation and consequence within the curriculum. The *Australian Curriculum: History* does not use the term 'consequence', the accepted terminology in historical research, instead opting for 'effect' which has a much more scientific connotation and may reflect a desire for consistency across learning areas within the curriculum. This also reflects a weakness in the curriculum for what Counsell (2011) terms 'genericism' of language and skills, resulting in the breaking down of disciplinary integrity and what Schwab (1978) warns is a 'corruption of the discipline' (p. 243). The

curriculum needs to adopt a much clearer articulation of this concept that is based on the disciplinary principles of historical inquiry, beginning with the terminology being used. A greater degree of congruence is also needed for how this concept is expressed in the content descriptors and the achievement standards, reflecting the research and placing agency for developing understanding back with students, as Seixas intended originally with 'analyse cause and consequence'.

Contestability

The *Australian Curriculum: History* glossary defines contestability as 'an inescapable characteristic of history that occurs when particular interpretations about the past are open to debate, for example, as a result of a lack of evidence or different perspectives' (ACARA, 2016e). The *Australian Curriculum: History* states that this concept is only evident at the secondary level but the analysis of the curriculum in Figure 5 indicates that elements are present in the primary years of the curriculum in fragmented forms. In rewriting the primary years of the curriculum to be more cross-disciplinary the concept of contestability has become blurred with similar concepts from other learning areas also covered by the F–6/7 HASS Learning Area. For example, the F–6/7 achievement standards contain statements such as 'identify past events and developments that have been interpreted in different ways' and 'students recognise that people have different perceptions of places, events and issues' (ACARA, 2016f). These statements, when viewed through the lens of this research, would seem to clearly indicate a desire for students to develop their understanding of the historical concept of contestability, despite the stated intention that this concept was not introduced until the secondary years of schooling. The lack of alignment between the curriculum and its own aims is very evident in its articulation of this concept and demonstrates a lack of disciplinary integrity. At the secondary level, references to contestability are often described as the identification of different views of the past and the evidence used to support them. Statements such as 'They explain different interpretations of the past' and 'recognise the evidence used to support these interpretations' (ACARA, 2016d) are used but they fail to explicitly link to the concept of contestability, leaving the concepts articulation in the curriculum documents opaque.
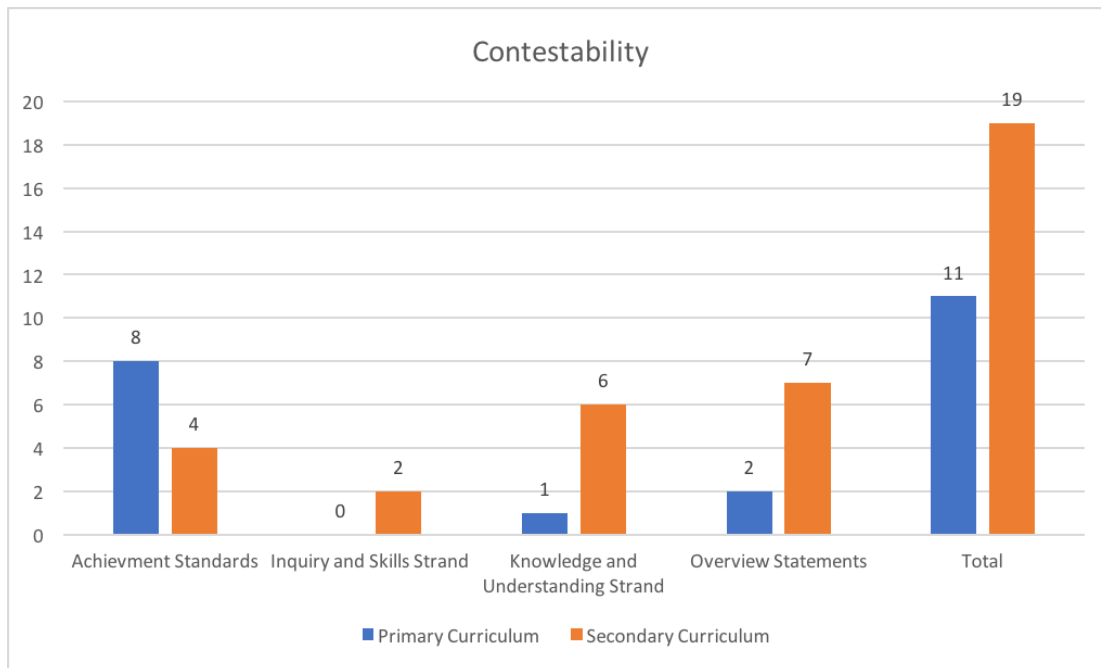
Figure 5 Australian Curriculum: History – Contestability primary/secondary breakdown

The concept of contestability does not appear as a discrete concept in the Historical Thinking Project model, nor in any of the other significant models of historical thinking identified in the literature review. It is, however, widely acknowledged as a significant aspect of historical inquiry into the past as an interpretative discipline (Taylor & Young, 2003). Whitehouse (2008) argues that contestability is inherent to the discipline. To articulate this as a discrete concept represents a misunderstanding of the nature of historical thinking as outlined in the literature review and the contestable nature of all aspects of historical knowledge.

Continuity and change

The *Australian Curriculum: History* glossary defines continuity and change as 'both evident in any given period of time and apply to the material and immaterial world, continuities being aspects of the past that remain(ed) the same over certain periods of time' (ACARA, 2016e). As with the other concepts analysed so far it fails to include the verb component that was present in the Historical Thinking Project model.

Figure 6 demonstrates that this concept has been haphazardly implemented in the curriculum with the concept far more prevalent in the achievement standards in the primary years of the curriculum than the secondary years.
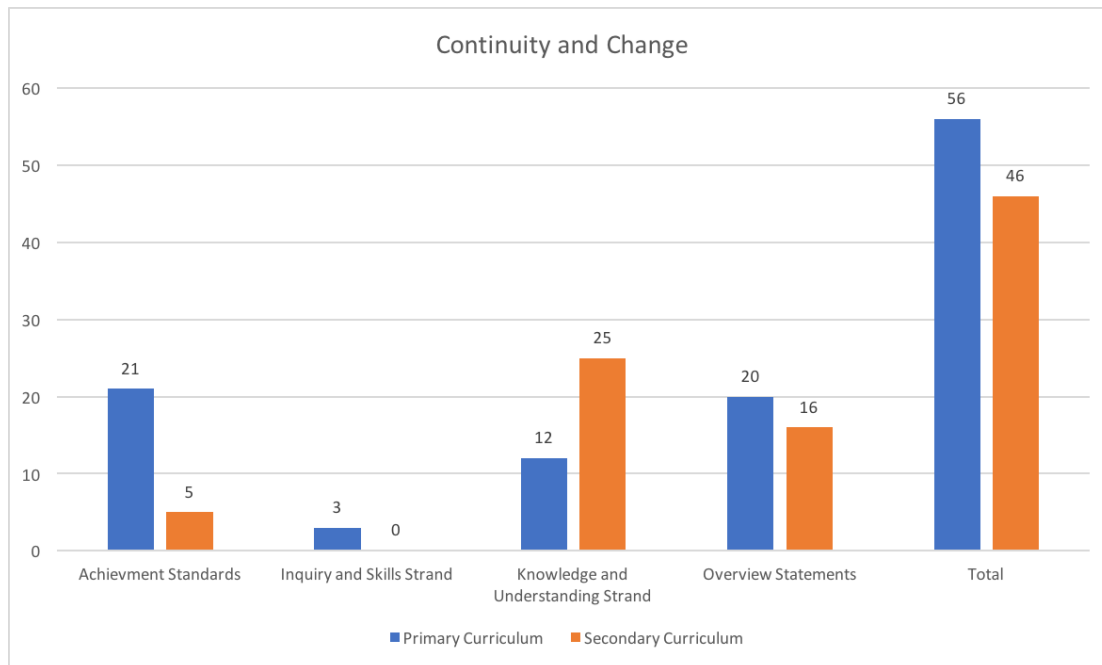
Figure 6 Australian Curriculum: History – Continuity and Change primary/secondary breakdown

Conversely, the concept is more prevalent in the knowledge and understanding strand at the secondary level than at the primary level.

When we break down the concept into its component parts, continuity and change, we see further evidence that the concept has not been articulated with any regard to clarity or balance within the curriculum. Figure 7 shows us that the change element of the concept is the more dominant of the two at both the primary and the secondary level. In the secondary years of the curriculum, the knowledge and understanding strand barely articulates continuity as a concept to be studied by students, almost completely focusing on that of change.
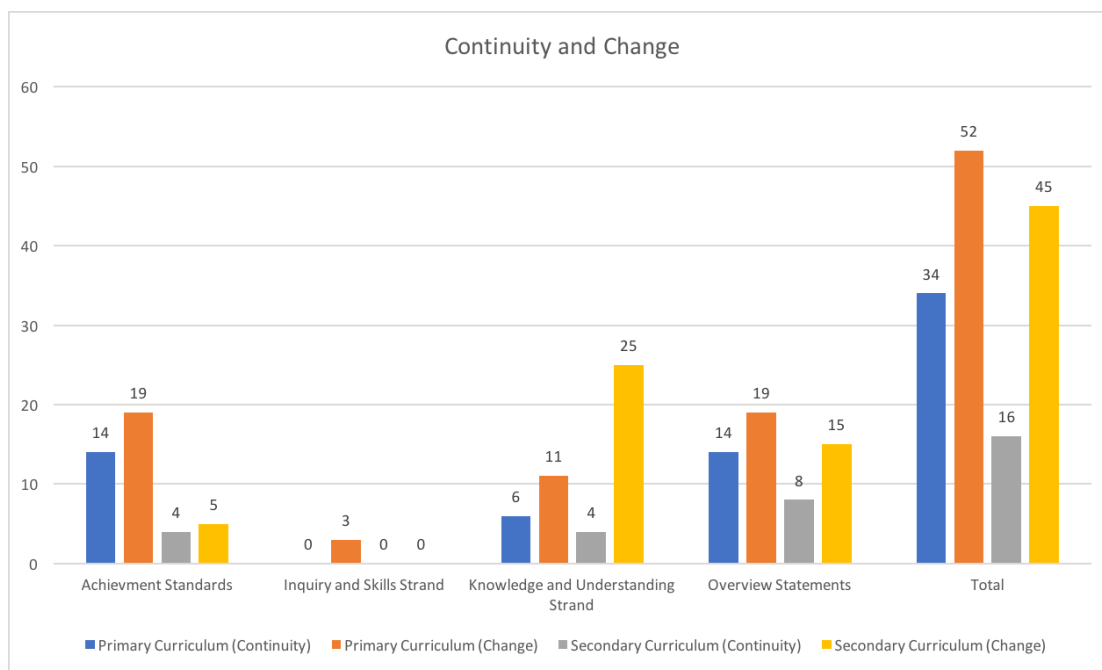
Figure 7 Australian Curriculum: History – Continuity and Change breakdown

Furthermore, many of the statements relating to continuity and change are also generic in nature. These generic articulations of continuity and change include, 'suggest reasons for continuity and change over time' and 'how and why their community has changed' (ACARA, 2016d). Also, we do not find many statements specifically regarding continuity, with the primary achievement standards only mentioning it in combination with change and nowhere in isolation. This is despite change being mentioned specifically in many other places throughout the curriculum. This would indicate an under-emphasis on developing student understanding of continuity in the curriculum at all levels.

Counsell (2010) argues that this concept is much more difficult to articulate than cause and consequence, which has a much more established pedagogical tradition. Both the primary and the secondary explanatory documents reflect Seixas' work with both articulating that change occurs at different rates, continuity and change can happen simultaneously, and that it is more than just a series of events (Seixas, 1996, 2006; Seixas & Morton, 2013). This also reflects Lee (2005) who argues that change is a process, rather than a single event. Despite the explanatory documents reflecting the literature, these understandings do not flow into the curriculum itself. The content descriptors and achievement standards fail to articulate the concept as a problem to be understood, failing

to reflect the curriculum's own explanatory documents. The concepts are presented as content to be acquired and regurgitated and are a 'content imperative rather than a conceptual demand' (Counsell, 2010, p. 110).

Empathy

The *Australian Curriculum: History* glossary defines empathy as 'engaging with past thoughts and feelings through a historical inquiry' (ACARA, 2016e). This does not relate to any of the key historical concepts outlined in the Historical Thinking Project. The primary and secondary explanatory documents for the curriculum state that this concept is primarily related to student identification with the thoughts, feeling, and motivations of historical actors (ACARA, 2016g, 2016i). This indicates some cross-over with the concept of 'perspectives', which asks students to examine the view-points of historical actors. Indeed, when coding the curriculum many content descriptors and elements of the achievement standards seemed to fit both concepts as defined by the explanatory documents for the *Australian Curriculum: History*.

Figure 8 shows us that this concept is articulated with relative equity between the primary years and secondary years curriculum documents. There are, however, two statements in the secondary skills strand that asks students to 'identify and describe points of view…' and multiple statements in the achievement standards that asks students to identify and explain the motivations of individuals in the past. The inclusion of the verb components asking students to 'identify and describe', missing in the explanatory documents, continues to point to a lack of congruence in how the historical thinking concepts are being articulated in the curriculum documents and the explanatory documents from conceptualisation to execution.
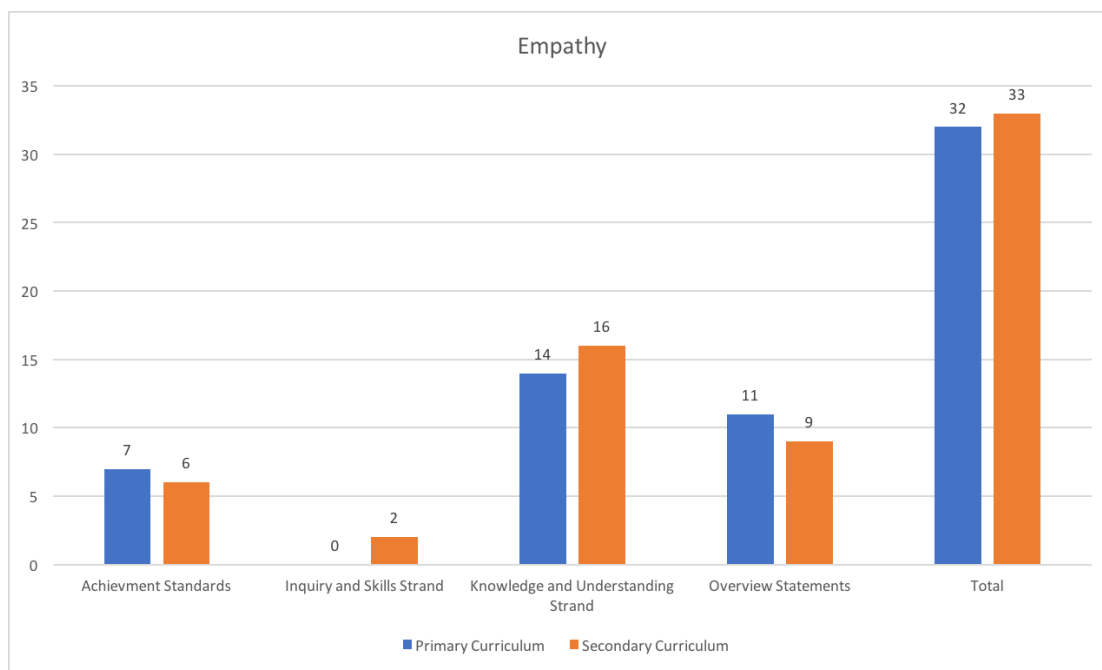
Figure 8 Australian Curriculum: History – Empathy breakdown

This concept fails to reflect the research with the curriculum fundamentally misrepresenting this concept. Seixas (1996) specifically warns against conceptualising historical empathy as an affective exercise where students identify elements of common thought with historical actors. The curriculum writers failed to take account of Lee (1983) who argues that historical empathy is an achievement based on the study of evidence, not a process as part of a historical inquiry. Lee and Ashby (1987) also argue that historical empathy involves students recognising the differences between present thought and those under study, the more students are able to follow radically different thought processes, the higher level they have achieved. The curriculum fails to understand and represent the research and that students must be able to understand historical actors' experiences in context (Endacott & Sturtz, 2015).

Perspectives

The *Australian Curriculum: History* glossary defines perspectives as:

> A world view or set of ideas or beliefs that guide actions. Perspectives draw on a person's or group's age, gender experiences, cultural or religious background, ideologies and/or intellectual contexts, which influence their world view and inform their opinions, values, and actions. Two types of perspectives can be

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considered: those 'of' people, and perspectives 'on' events and phenomena of the past and present (ACARA, 2016e).

There are significant opportunities for confusion between the perspectives of people from the past and the concept of empathy, pointing to a lack of clarity regarding the difference between the concept of empathy and that of the perspective of people from the past. If the verb components had not been removed from the historical thinking concepts then a clearer understanding of the concept would have been much easier to achieve. This lack of clarity between these concepts undermines their articulation within the curriculum documents.

In Figure 9 we see a similar pattern to previous concepts: the achievement standards and overview statements for the primary years of the curriculum show much more frequent mention of this concept than the secondary but this is reversed when we examine the knowledge and understanding strand.
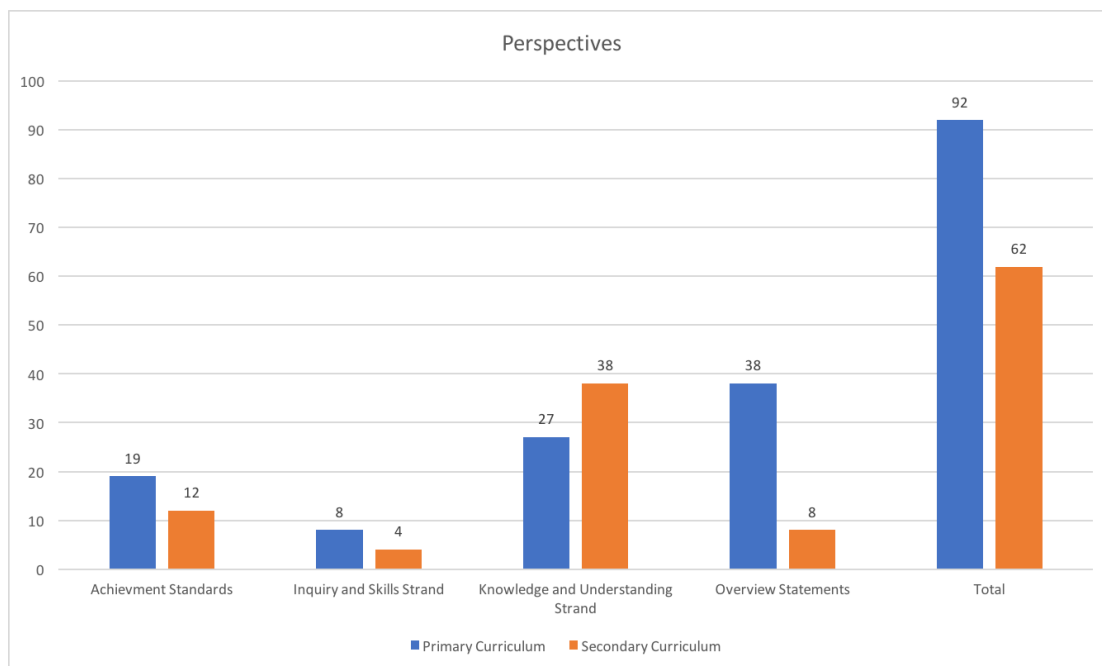
Figure 9 Australian Curriculum: History – Perspectives breakdown

As with the other concepts, the interdisciplinary nature of the re-written primary years of the curriculum can be seen to have undermined a clear and equitable articulation of this concept across all the years of schooling.

The confusion between the concept of perspective and empathy can be seen in such statements as 'develop their understanding that people lived differently in the past' (ACARA, 2016f) from the primary knowledge and understanding strand. This statement does not seem to clearly identify which historical concept it applies to, perspective or empathy, and is illustrative of the confusion that can develop when these concepts have not been clearly defined at the conceptual stage of the curriculum writing process.

Significance

The *Australian Curriculum: History* glossary defines significance as 'pertaining to events, periods, developments, perspectives and ideas of the past, which are regarded as having important consequences, duration and relevance to the present, from the point of view of society or ordinary people which contextualised to larger events' (ACARA, 2016e). The concept is clearly articulated in both the primary and the secondary explanatory documents and draws upon much of the Historical Thinking Project and Seixas' work in articulating what students are expected be able to do to develop this concept. The lack of the verb component, as with the other concepts, does detract from understanding this concept as an active process undertaken by students.

Figure 10 further demonstrates the ongoing trend of the primary years of the curriculum articulating this concept much more in the overview statements and the achievement standards but not the secondary years of the curriculum in the knowledge and understanding strand.
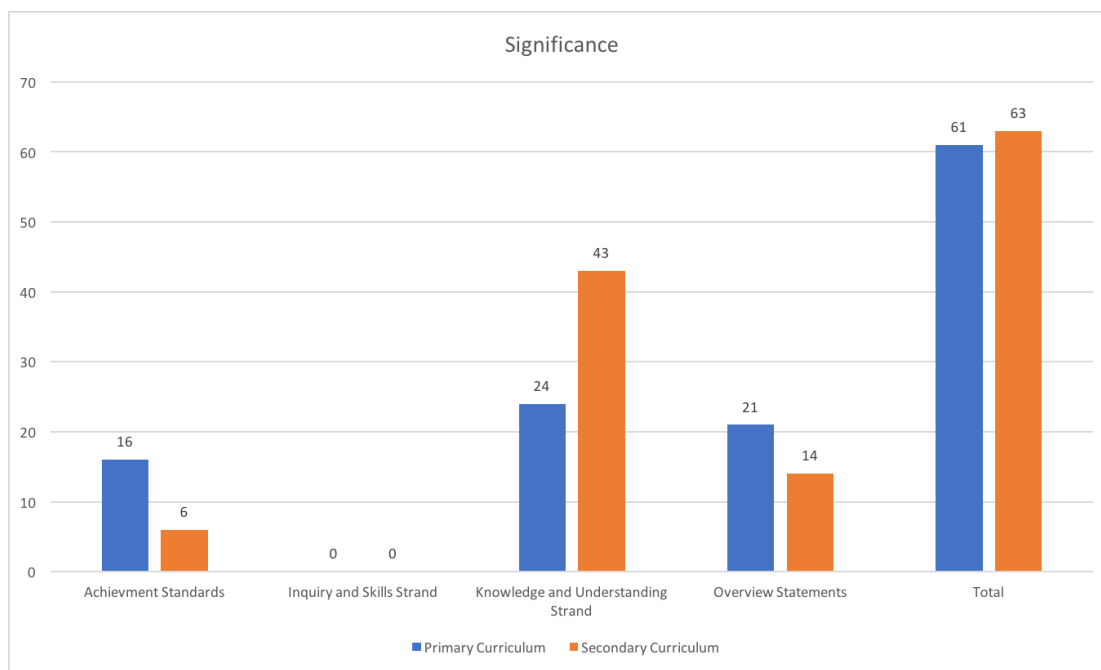
Figure 10 Australian Curriculum: History – Significance breakdown

No clear reasons exist for this difference and demonstrates a lack of consistency in both how and where the concepts have been articulated within the curriculum between the primary and the secondary documents. This inconsistency can be attributed to the significant revisions of the primary years of the curriculum for version 8.3. The curriculum includes statements such as 'explain the significance of these events and developments over the short and long term' and 'explain the significance of events and developments from a range of perspectives' (ACARA, 2016d). Statements such as this demonstrate an understanding that the nature of significance can change over the short- and long-term and differs based on the perspective you adopt and that significance is ascribed.

This historical thinking concept can be seen to fairly and accurately reflect the research, both in its explanation in the explanatory documents and within the curriculum itself. This concept draws heavily on Seixas (2006) and multiple parts of the curriculum ask students to move beyond simplistic articulations of this concept into more nuanced understandings of historical significance as a problem to be grappled with when conducting a historical investigation.

Section 4.3 Conclusions

The *Australian Curriculum: History's* articulation of the research on historical thinking demonstrates a lack of coherence, congruence or clarity. The rewriting of the primary years of the curriculum for version 8.3 of the *Australian Curriculum* has created a disjuncture between the articulation of these concepts at the primary and the secondary levels, particularly the concept of 'sources/evidence', a foundational concept for the study of history at any level. The lack of a unified explanatory document for historical thinking from F–10 is emblematic of this lack of coherence and has led to a curriculum that does not substantially reflect the research at either the primary or the secondary level. The removal of the verb component from the Historical Thinking Project's research demonstrates a lack of understanding by the curriculum writers of history as an active process undertaken by students and the constructivist nature of Seixas' research. Significantly, the curriculum also fails to include any significant reference to the historical thinking research of the US tradition as outlined in the literature review. This is most clearly reflected in the articulation of the 'sources/evidence' concept and indicated that the curriculum writers confined themselves to articulating the historical thinking research most closely associated with the Canadian tradition and the work of the Historical Thinking Project. This supports previous analysis of the *Australian Curriculum: History* in regard to its articulation of the procedural concepts that embody historical thinking (Hart, 2015; Martin, 2012; Whitehouse, 2011). Version 8.3 of the curriculum has failed to address earlier criticism and, in many cases, further deviates from the research in its articulation of historical thinking in the document. This analysis demonstrates that the *Australian Curriculum: History* does not faithfully reflect the research on historical thinking.

CHAPTER 5
Twenty-First Century Skills: Analysis and Discussion

Section 5.1 Introduction

The *Australian Curriculum: History* was intended to play a central element in a curriculum that would 'prepare students for the 21st century' (ACARA, 2016h). In order to achieve this, the curriculum aims to embed twenty-first century skills into the curriculum in the form of seven 'General Capabilities' and analysing how these capabilities have been expressed in the curriculum will generate data to address the key research questions of this thesis. The introductory documents to the General Capabilities state that they 'play a significant role in the Australian Curriculum in equipping young Australians to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century' (ACARA, 2016c). Furthermore, it states that 'the general capabilities are addressed through the content of the learning areas' (ACARA, 2016c), as such an analysis of the content of the learning area for history can ascertain the extent to which this is the case.

The General Capabilities are divided into seven areas: *Literacy*, *Numeracy*, *ICT Capability*, *Critical and Creative Thinking*, *Personal and Social Capability*, *Ethical Understanding*, and *Intercultural Understanding*. These twenty-first century skills are intended to reflect the research and articulate the specific skills and dispositions that students will need to be successful in life and work in the twenty-first century. The *Australian Curriculum* provides specific explanations and definitions of each of the General Capabilities in addition to advice as to how these capabilities can be addressed in each learning area, in regard to the *Australian Curriculum: History* it only provides learning area advice for the whole Humanities and Social Sciences learning area and not for the specific history disciplinary area. The lack of specific advice for the history curriculum is unfortunate as the advice for the generic Humanities and Social Sciences area does not link to the disciplinary structures of history and how the General Capabilities are intended to interact with them.

As with historical thinking the curriculum has been analysed without the inclusion of the content elaborations as these do not constitute the mandated curriculum and exist only to

provide examples of how the content may be addressed by teachers. The curriculum tags each content descriptor in the *knowledge and understanding* strand and the *inquiry and skills* strand with General Capabilities that the curriculum writers believe relate to the learning area content. These tags, however, do not necessarily reflect the content of the curriculum but rather the elaborations, which do not form part of the mandated curriculum. As such, this analysis will code the content descriptors exclusively, without referring to the tagging already undertaken, to generate original data as to the extent of the inclusion of twenty-first century skills in the history curriculum, as defined by the General Capabilities.

The following question is asked of the curriculum to illuminate the twenty-first century skills in the *Australian Curriculum: History*: What twenty-first century skills are evident (implicitly or explicitly) in the *Australian Curriculum: History*?

Section 5.2 Findings and Discussion of Twenty-First Century Skills

Australian Curriculum: History (F–10)

The *Australian Curriculum: History* contains all of the General Capabilities that constitute the embedded twenty-first century skills. As the General Capabilities are intended to be embedded where appropriate, the history curriculum emphasise some of the capabilities more than others. Figure 11 demonstrates that the history curriculum emphasises the acquisition of *Literacy*, *Personal and Social Capability*, *Ethical Understanding*, and *Intercultural Understanding*. The choice of these skills raises the question of what is absent from the curriculum's articulation of twenty-first century skills. Recent research into twenty-first century skills and history education has raised civic online reasoning as a key element necessary for success in the twenty-first century. These skills, however, are not articulated in any aspect of the General Capabilities that constitute the curriculum's articulation of twenty-first century skills. This absence raises serious concerns about the ability of the curriculum to represent a 'world class' document. Furthermore, the *ICT Capability* is by far the least referenced of the capabilities within the whole curriculum.
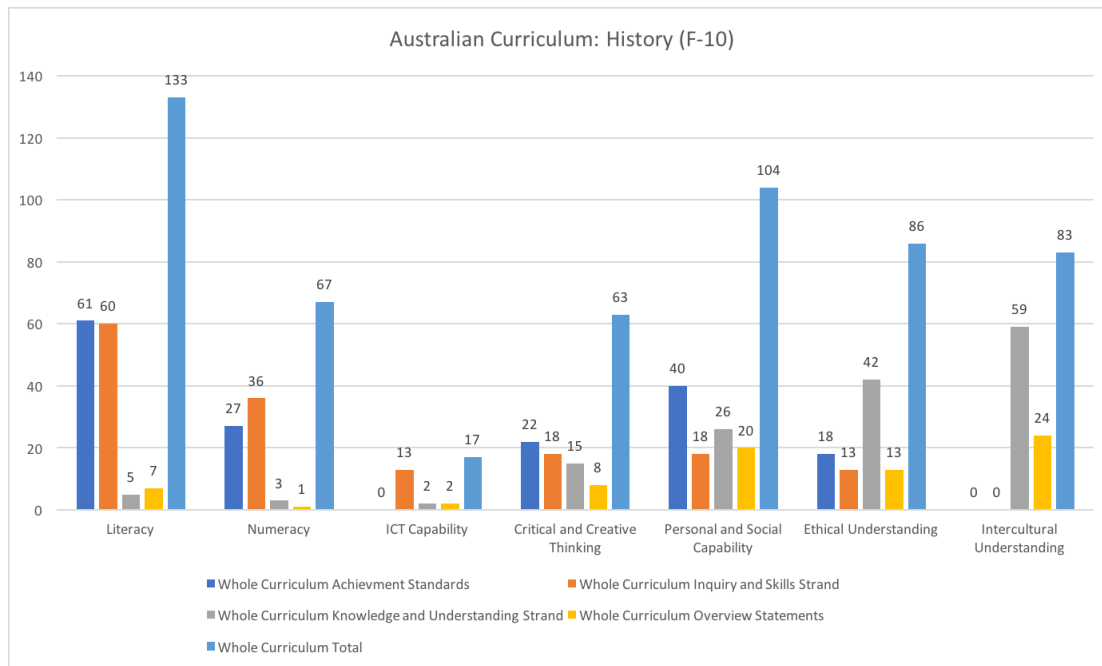
Figure 11 Australian Curriculum: History – F–10 General Capabilities Overview

Literacy

The *Australian Curriculum* defines 'Literacy' as the development of 'the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society' (ACARA, 2016a). This capabiliy does not appear in the twenty-first century skill frameworks outlined in the literature review in this manner. Its prominance in the *Australian Curriculum: History*, as a General Capability, raises questions regarding how the curriculum reflects the research literature. The ACARA description of this capability does not indicate it has been based on a twenty-first century skill framework, but rather a general understanding of literacy as a key skill for students to develop.

Figures 11 and 12 demonstrate that this capability is deeply embedded in the *Australian Curriculum: History*. Mainly appearing in the achievement standards and the skills strand of the curriculum.
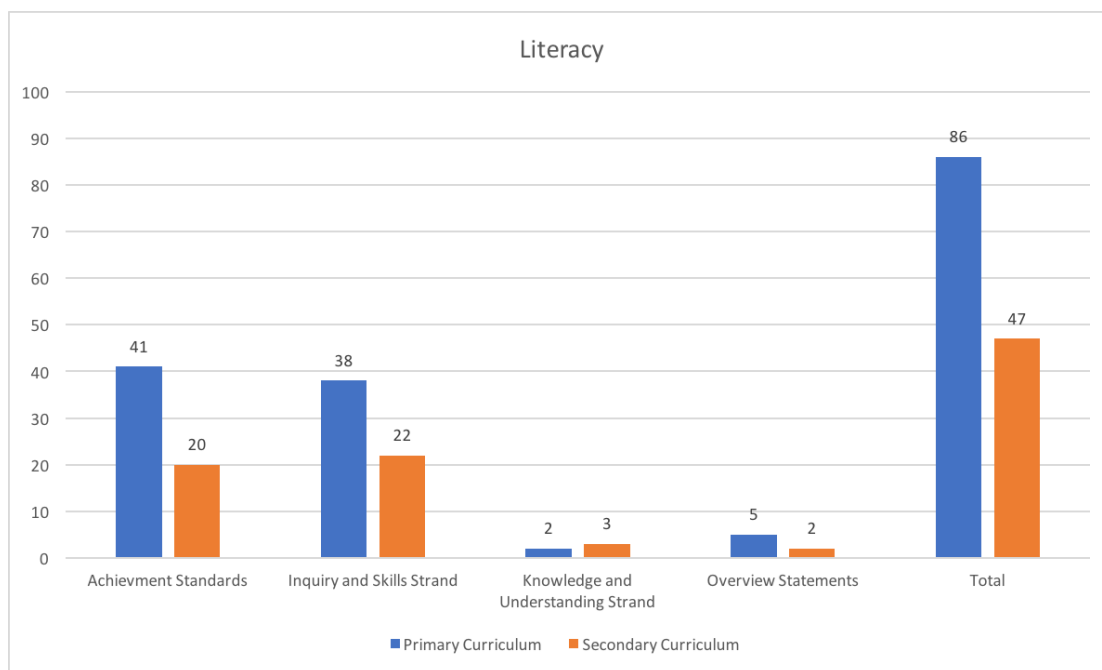
Figure 12 Australian Curriculum: History – Literacy

This capability is more prevalent in the primary years of the curriculum but retains a dominant position within the secondary years of the curriculum. The statements on literacy within the *Australian Curriculum: History* focus on the decoding of information within historical sources and the communication of findings to an audience. Statements such as 'students identify and explain different points of view in sources' and 'use historical terms and concepts' (ACARA, 2016a) are frequently used in the secondary years of the curriculum and represent a desire to understand the purpose and information contained within historical sources and the ways of communicating using the language of the disciplinary study of history. The primary years of the curriculum focuses on the understanding of narrative and the identification of information in sources. Students are asked to 'locate information from observations and sources provided' and 'develop a narrative about the past' (ACARA, 2016a). This contrasts to the secondary years of the curriculum which focuses more on the understanding of purpose and perspective within sources. Statements in the secondary years of the curriculum include 'examine sources to explain points of view' and 'students analyse sources to identify motivations, values and attitudes' (ACARA, 2016a).

Given the significant literacy requirements of the disciplinary study of history it is unsurprising to see such a significant focus on this capability in the *Australian Curriculum: History*. The historical thinking research supports this focus with Lévesque (2008) and van Drie and van Boxtel (2008) including the requirements of literacy within their research. Jerald (2009) states that this skill is most aptly conceptualised in the twenty-first century as the ability to interpret a variety of documents. The lack of reference to the US tradition of historical thinking—which is heavily focused on reading sources as outlined in the literature review—in the curriculum is concerning given its focus on the skills of literacy and primary source document analysis (Wineburg et al., 2013; Wineburg & Reisman, 2014).

Numeracy

The *Australian Curriculum* defines 'Numeracy' as the development of 'the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across other learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly' (ACARA, 2016a). As with 'Literacy', this capability is not drawn from any specific twenty-first century skill framework identified in the literature review and reflects a more generic approach to work-ready capabilities than the twenty-first century skills frameworks,

Figures 11 and 13 demonstrate that this capability is almost wholly contained within the primary years of the curriculum, supporting the claim that version 8.3 of the curriculum has a higher degree of focus on literacy and numeracy within the primary years of the curriculum.
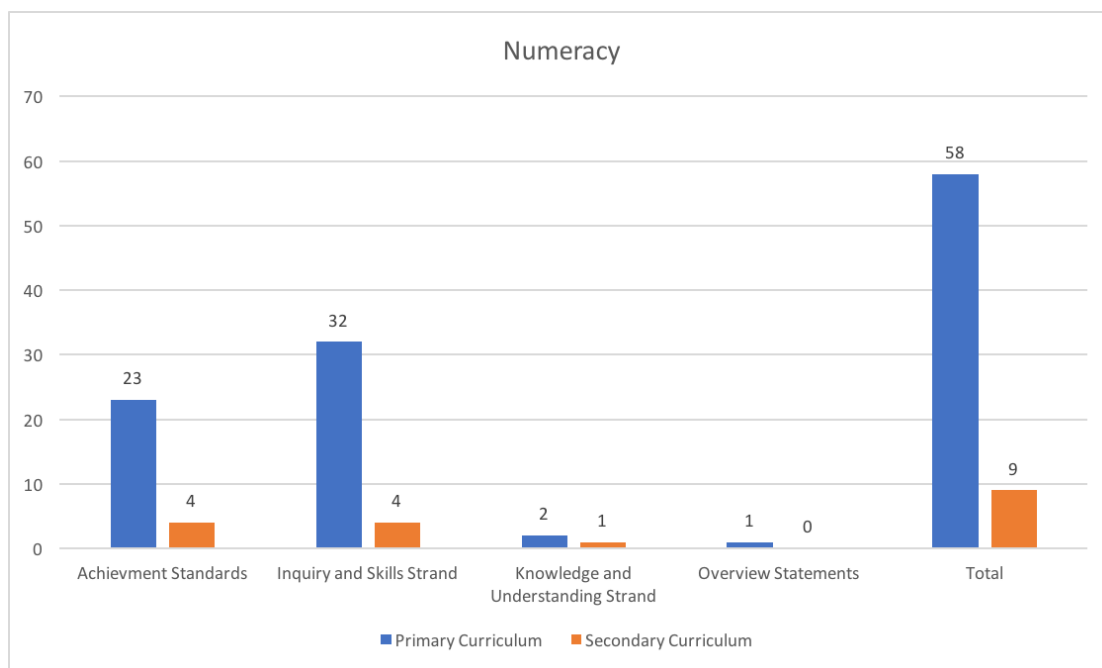
Figure 13 Australian Curriculum: History – Numeracy

The statements regarding Numeracy in the primary years of school in the *Australian Curriculum: History* are wholly related to the sequencing of time and the analysis of data for patterns. Statements include 'sequence personal and family event in order…' and 'They interpret data and information to identify and describe distributions and simple patterns…' (ACARA, 2016a). The focus on data and identifying patterns is found within the shared inquiry and skills strand and does not continue into the secondary years of the curriculum, a result of no longer sharing this strand with the geography learning area and its focus on the interpretation of data and patterns.

The statements on numeracy in the secondary years of the curriculum are related to the sequencing of events within a chronological framework, usually through the use of timelines. Secondary students are asked to 'sequence events within a chronological framework' (ACARA, 2016a), a very narrow view of the interactions between the disciplinary study of history and the development of numeracy capabilities in students.

The skill of numeracy is not, however, identified in any of the significant models of twenty-first century skills outlined in the literature review. The inclusion of this skill as a 'General Capability' seems to be related to more traditional conceptualisations of

foundational skills for students (i.e. literacy and numeracy) than in the articulation of the research basis for twenty-first century skills in the curriculum.

ICT Capability

The *Australian Curriculum* defines 'ICT Capability' as the development of skills to 'use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school' (ACARA, 2016a).

This capability is the least common in the *Australian Curriculum: History* and is found almost exclusively within the inquiry and skills strand of the curriculum, see Figures 11 and 14.
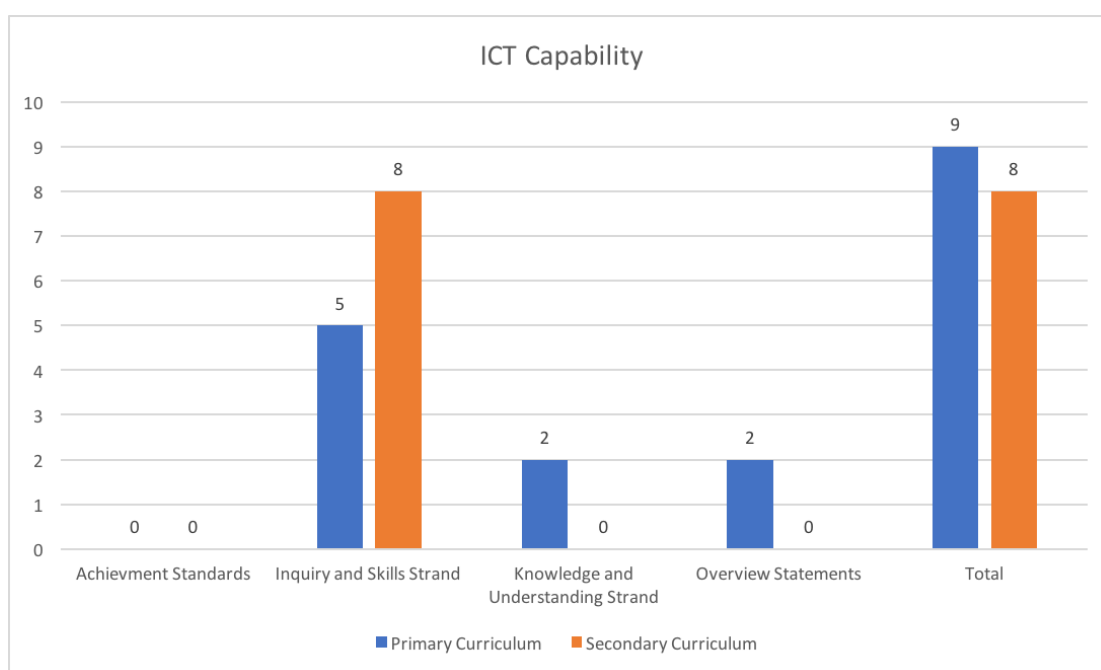
Figure 14 Australian Curriculum: History – ICT Capability

The statements on ICT capability with the *Australian Curriculum: History* are concerned with the identification and location of sources using ICT tools and the presentation of findings using ICT tools. Statements include 'Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods' and 'Present ideas, findings, viewpoints and conclusions in a range of texts and modes that incorporate source materials, digital and non-digital

representations…' (ACARA, 2016a). These statements are generic in nature and reflect the General Capability advice document for Humanities and Social Sciences, which also states that this capability is mainly concerned with the location of information and the presentation of key findings. This would seem to be a limited view of the role that the disciplinary study of history can play in developing ICT Capabilities, as reflected by its limited inclusion within the *Australian Curriculum: History*.

The twenty-first century skills research focuses heavily on ICT as a core aspect of their models. The ACCI and BCA (2002) report specifically highlighted the increasingly important role that technology was playing in the creation and dissemination of products and that ICT capabilities was of vital importance. This view is supported by Jerald (2009) who argues for the increasing importance of ICT skills in both professional and personal lives. Given this importance it is disappointing that the curriculum writers confined themselves to expressing this skill in such a limited form in the *Australian Curriculum: History*.

Critical and Creative Thinking

The *Australian Curriculum* defines 'Critical and Creative Thinking' as the development of skills to 'generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems' (ACARA, 2016a). The General Capabilities explanatory document for Humanities and Social Sciences further states that 'Students develop critical thinking by learning to develop and clarify investigative questions, and to question sources and assess reliability when selecting information from sources' and 'students learn discipline-specific ways of thinking, including interpreting the past from incomplete documentation, developing an argument using evidence, interpreting and analysing economic data and/or information, and systems thinking to inform predictions and propose solutions' (ACARA, 2016a). This capability was the most nebulous to code in the *Australian Curriculum: History*; the tagging undertaken by ACARA resulted in almost every content descriptor in the *Australian Curriculum: History* tagged with this General Capability. This project relied on the definition as outlined in the explanatory documents for Humanities and Social Sciences to code the curriculum. In these documents, it states that Critical and Creative Thinking is concerned

with 'the value and process of developing creative questions and the importance of speculation' (ACARA, 2016a).

Figure 15 demonstrates a much more limited articulation of this General Capability in the *Australian Curriculum: History* than indicated by the ACARA tagging of the curriculum.
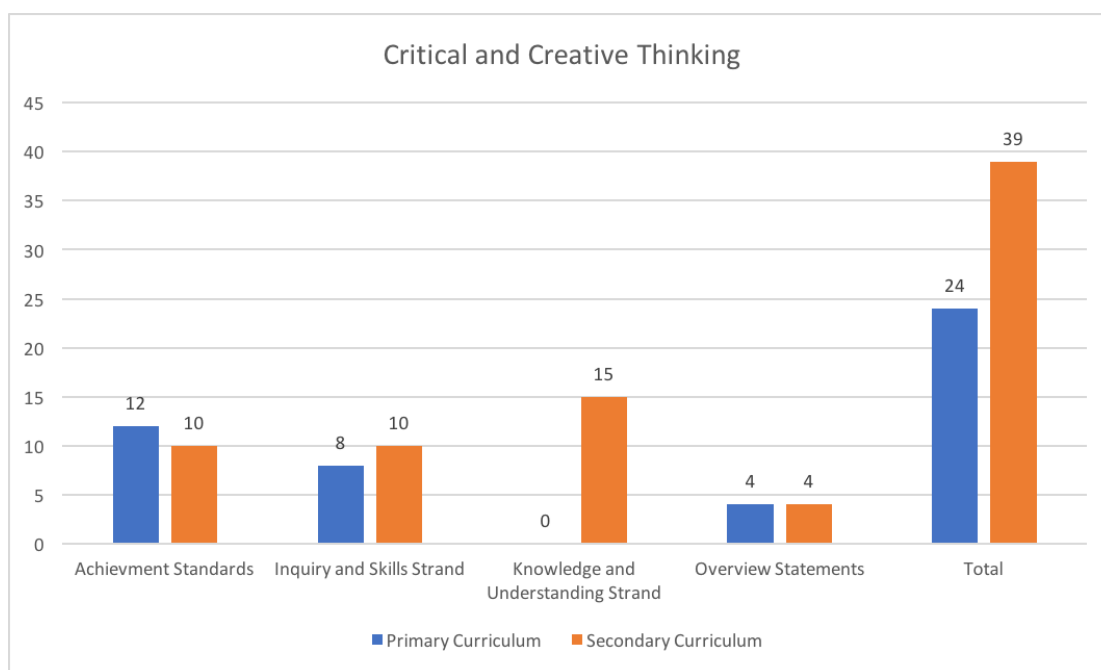
Figure 15 Australian Curriculum: History – Critical and Creative Thinking

Many of the statements coded to this capability in the curriculum refer to students needing to 'develop questions to frame a historical inquiry' or variations of this (ACARA, 2016a). Many of the content descriptors that had been tagged with this capability seemed to have no link to how Critical and Creative Thinking is explained in the General Capability explanatory documents.

This skill is identified as crucially important for entry level employees in the research, supporting the very significant attention paid to this capability in the *Australian Curriculum: History* (Jerald, 2009). This skill is also given high prominence by the ATC21S organisation in their model as outlined by Binkley et al. (2012). The combination of critical thinking and creativity is noteworthy as these two skills are not combined in any of the prominent twenty-first century skills frameworks and are

generally noted to be separate and discrete skill-sets in the different twenty-first century skill frameworks identified in the literature review. Significant opportunities for the articulation of this capability would seem to exist in the history curriculum as the disciplinary structures of history articulate significant critical thinking aims, particularly through the construction of argument and the uses of sources as evidence to support student reasoning (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008; Whitehouse, 2015b).

Personal and Social Capability

The *Australian Curriculum* defines 'Personal and Social Capability' as the development of skills to 'understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively' (ACARA, 2016a). The explanatory document for Humanities and Social Sciences elaborates on the purpose of this capability in history when it states that 'Through historical, geographic, civic and economic inquiry, collaboration and reflective practice, students develop an appreciation of the insights and perspectives of others, past and present; and an understanding of what informs their personal identity and sense of belonging, including place and their cultural and national heritage' (ACARA, 2016a).

Figure 16 demonstrates that this capability is embedded into the primary years of the curriculum, especially at the beginning years of schooling.
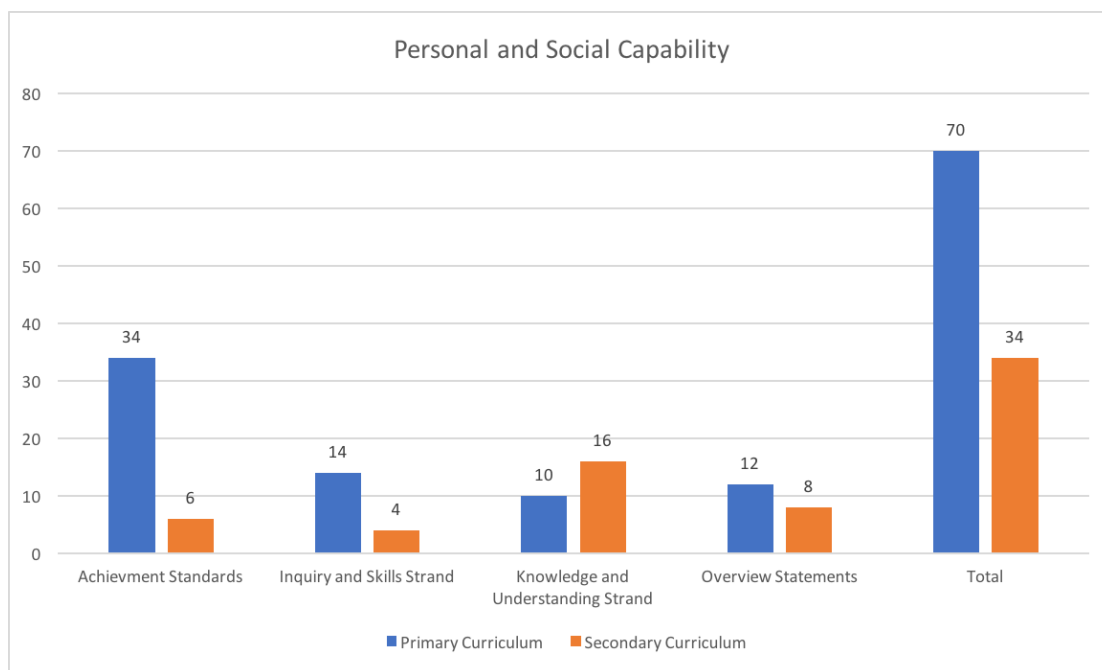
Figure 16 Australian Curriculum: History – Personal and Social Capability

Statements in the curriculum at the early years of schooling include 'By the end of Foundation Year, students identify important events in their own lives and recognise why some places are special to people' and 'They explain how and why people participate in and contribute to their communities' (ACARA, 2016a). There is a significant focus on understanding why people value different aspects of their past and why they choose to commemorate these events. As the curriculum progresses into the upper primary and secondary year levels the comments linked to the Personal and Social Capability become more concerned with understanding the motivations and beliefs of people in the past.

This capability synergises well with the disciplinary study of history and the focus on understanding historical perspectives, as such it is represented strongly in the *Australian Curriculum: History*. This capability features strongly in several of the twenty-first century skill frameworks identified in the literature review, often described in terms of personal 'responsibility' and the relationship between people and their society.

Ethical Understanding

The *Australian Curriculum* defines 'Ethical Understanding' as the development of skills to 'identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values and character traits, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgement' (ACARA, 2016a).

Figure 17 shows us that in the *Australian Curriculum: History* this capability has been implemented in a fragmented way with it being mainly articulated in the Achievement Standards and Inquiry and Skills Strand in the primary years of the curriculum but in the Knowledge and Understanding Strand in the secondary years of the curriculum.
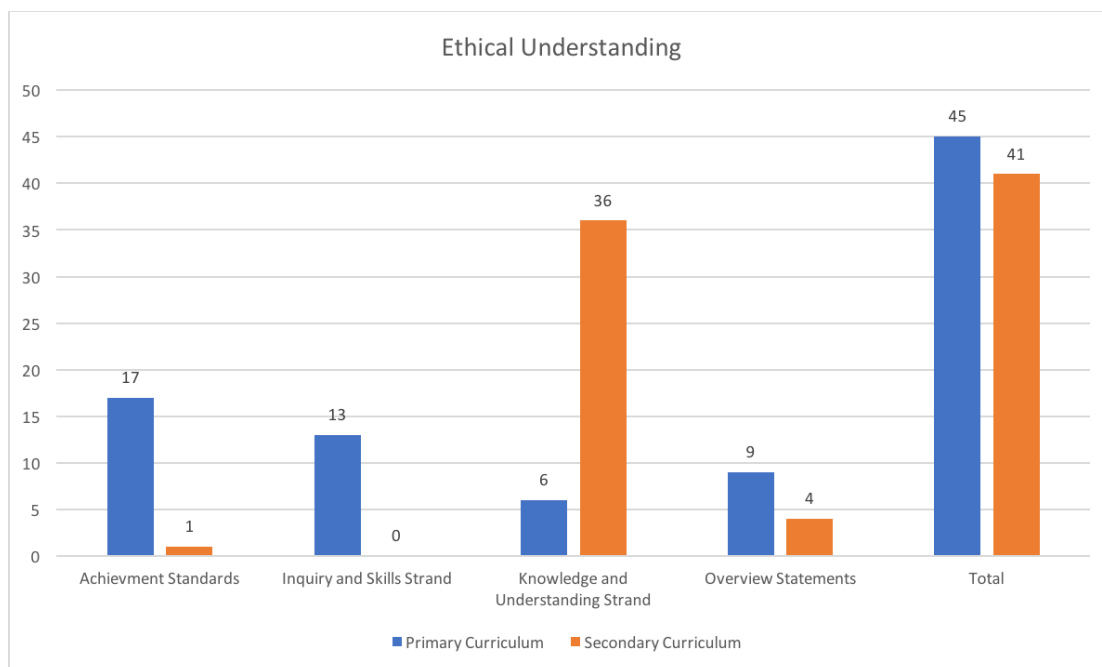
Figure 17 Australian Curriculum: History – Ethical Understanding

Statements in the curriculum regarding Ethical Understanding include students gaining an understanding of how personal values and beliefs have influenced individual's actions in the past with statements such as 'Students explain the significance of individuals and groups and how they were influenced by the beliefs and values of their society' in the secondary years of the curriculum and 'What remains of the past are important to the local community? Why?' in the primary years of the curriculum (ACARA, 2016a). These statements demonstrate a synergy between this capability and the disciplinary structures of history, particularly historical perspectives and the analysis of the motivations of

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individuals in the past and the values and beliefs that influenced the decisions that they took. Forms of this capability appear in different twenty-first century skill models, particularly the OECD (2005) model. In the OECD report, this skill is defined as the ability to reflect on one's values. This skill is not articulated in any significant way in any other model as identified by the literature review.

Intercultural Understanding

The *Australian Curriculum* defines 'Intercultural Understanding' as the development of skills to 'value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others' (ACARA, 2016a). The disciplinary study of history seems well placed to integrate this General Capability into the curriculum.

Figure 18 demonstrates that this capability is most referenced in the secondary years of the curriculum in relation to the study and understanding of different historical cultures.

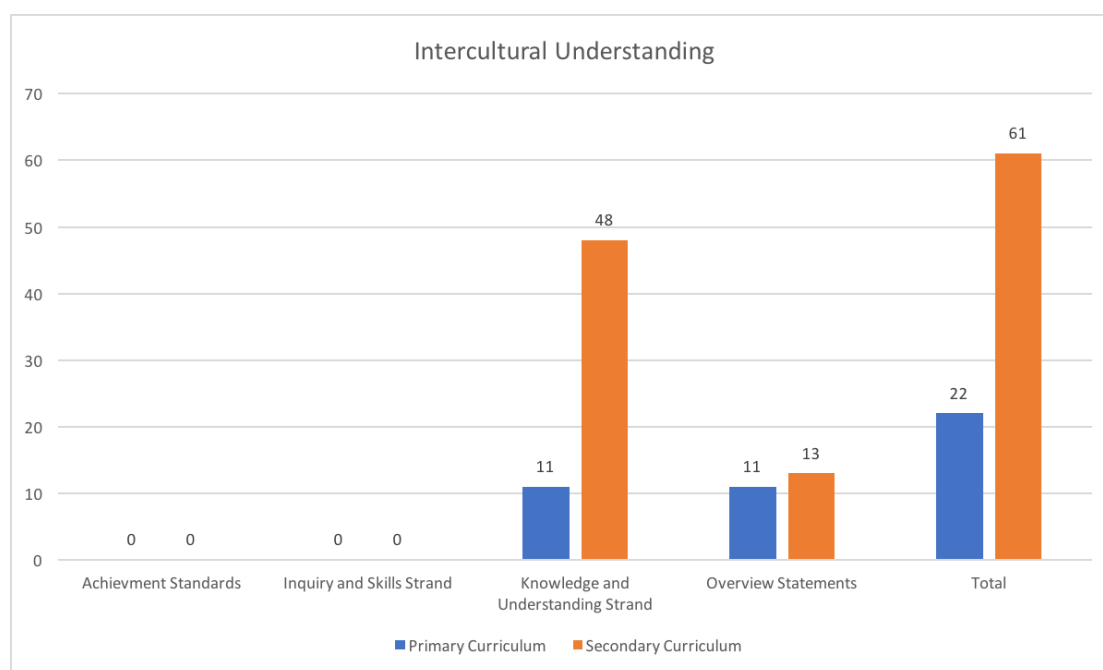*Figure 18 Australian Curriculum: History – Intercultural Understanding*

Statements in the curriculum include 'The importance of Country/Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who belong to a local area' in the primary years of the curriculum and 'Key features (social, cultural, economic, political) of ONE Asian

society at the start of this period' (ACARA, 2016a). The lack of reference to the development of skills to gain understanding of different and diverse cultures is surprising and the *Australian Curriculum: History* only views this capability through the lens of discrete knowledge to be acquired and not as a 'way of thinking' about other cultures, as articulated in several of the twenty-first century skill frameworks identified in the literature review. The models identified in the literature review articulate this skill in different ways, mostly concerning global understanding and civic engagement as opposed to simple cultural knowledge (Greenstein, 2012).

Section 5.3 Conclusion

While the General Capabilities initially seem to be integrated into the *Australian Curriculum: History*, they generally lack specificity and fail to reflect the research on twenty-first century skills. The curriculum writer's failure to include some aspects of the prominent models of twenty-first century skills in the 'General Capabilities', most notably 'problem solving', demonstrates a failure to reflect the research as outlined in the literature review. Furthermore, the General Capabilities fail to integrate with the disciplinary structures of historical thinking within the curriculum. Significant opportunities exist for synergy between these capabilities and the disciplinary structures of history, such as the capability of literacy and the models of historical thinking outlined by Wineburg (2001) and VanSledright (2004), but they go unexplored in the curriculum. The claim that the General Capabilities have been deeply embedded into the learning areas is untenable with little evidence to support this claim. The General Capabilities have not been embedded with any regard to the disciplinary structures of history and, as such, it is difficult to claim that they are effectively helping teachers prepare students for life and work in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

The purpose of this project is to explore the extent to which the *Australian Curriculum: History* achieves its goal of constituting a curriculum that is both 'world class' and 'prepares students for the 21st century' as defined by the research on historical thinking and twenty-first century skills (ACARA, 2016c, 2016g). The key research questions for this thesis ask how historical thinking, twenty-first century skills and preparation for work are articulated in the curriculum document. History was one of the first four learning areas to be written within the complete F–10 curriculum, followed by a curriculum revision in version 8.3 which significantly restructured the primary years of the curriculum, combining history with other Humanities and Social Science learning areas in the primary years of schooling, making the primary years of schooling much more generic and less discipline focused. The *Australian Curriculum: History* claims to represent a disciplinary study with 'its own methods and procedures' (ACARA, 2016g) and to articulate these methods and procedures through the integration of key disciplinary concepts. This project demonstrates that the curriculum fails to reflect the historical thinking research and implements it into the curriculum document in a disjointed manner. The curriculum also claims to 'prepare students for the 21st century' (ACARA, 2016c) through the embedding of twenty-first century skills, called General Capabilities, in the curriculum learning areas. These capabilities are included, but not in ways that synergise with the disciplinary structures of history. The discipline of history allows for a unique contribution to the development twenty-first century skills, specifically capabilities such as 'Literacy' and 'Intercultural Understanding', but this is not developed sufficiently in the explicit curriculum with these capabilities expressed in generic terms with no integration with the disciplinary structures of history. The organisation of the curriculum around the dual strands of 'Historical Knowledge and Understanding' and 'Historical Skills/Inquiry and Skills' has been followed by confusion regarding where and how the historical thinking concepts are articulated within the document. Furthermore, the process of integrating the General Capabilities has been unclear with the tagging process for the content descriptors offering no substantial guidance for how these capabilities should be addressed by educators, particularly the lack of specific advice for how they interact with the disciplinary structures of historical thinking.

The approach adopted by the *Australian Curriculum* is based on the structures of discipline debate, drawing upon the work of Phenix (1964) and Hirst (1974), known as the 'discipline thesis' of school curriculum design. The argument, outlined in the literature review, that knowledge is most logically divided into discrete categories, has had a significant and long-lasting impact on how educational authorities have enacted curriculum design. Following on from these debates has been the research on the epistemological structure of these discipline areas and how best to structure them within school curricula. This research had led to the development of pedagogical approaches to disciplinary thought that have been used to structure school curricula. The research on history education offers substantial guidance for the conceptualisation and articulation of the disciplinary structures of historical study, what VanSledright terms 'knowledge-in-use structures' (2009). The approaches to historical thinking that have gained international prominence, most notably those of Seixas (1996, 2013, 2017); van Drie & van Boxtel (2008); and Wineburg (1999, 2001, 2007), offer rigorous approaches for curriculum designers to use to develop students' ability to conduct a historical inquiry across the compulsory years of schooling. These approaches have grown out of particular regional traditions regarding historical study and emphasise different aspects of historical study. Seixas and the Historical Thinking Project have had one of the most significant impacts on history education in Australia and this research has been used as the basis for the ACARA curriculum during its initial development. ACARA's initial use of Seixas' research has been evaluated by Martin (2012) and Whitehouse (2011) but no substantial exploration of version 8.3 of the *Australian Curriculum: History* has been undertaken since its publication. This project identifies a further deterioration of version 8.3 the curriculum document when compared to the research.

The twenty-first century skills that form the basis of the 'General Capabilities' of the curriculum exist with the stated aim of preparing students with the skills and attributes that are needed for success in the twenty-first century. The skills that the research identifies are expressed in economic terms and are often concerned with the economic needs of the nation-state in the global economy, reflecting an increasing neo-liberal influence on curriculum theory (Patterson, 2015; Zajda, 2010a). These skills have been

championed by many inter-governmental organisations, such as the OECD, and reflect an increasing influence of global actors on national curriculum development. The research describes these skills in relation to the growing interconnectedness of the global economy and the commoditisation of knowledge. These skills have been described as crucial for students' future success in the research with skills such as 'collaboration', 'intercultural understandings', and 'problem solving' identified by researchers as increasingly important in school curricula (Fadel, Trilling & Bialik, 2015; Jerald, 2009). The approach adapted by the *Australian Curriculum: History* is not implemented with sufficient clarity or in a way that provides guidance for educators. No work has been done to explain how the skills that are outlined in the General Capabilities synergise with the disciplinary structures of the curriculum with generic statements recycled and used throughout the document. This is despite the stated goal of embedding these skills 'where appropriate' (National Curriculum Board, 2009b). The revisions of the curriculum undertaken since its initial release have not improved the articulation of these skills with ACARA failing to elaborate on their purpose or fine-tune how they are expressed within the curriculum document.

In order to address the failings identified in this research, there are several recommendations for revisions of the *Australian Curriculum: History*. The reintroduction of the verb components for the historical thinking concepts outlined by Seixas (1996, 2006, 2017) will reintroduce student agency. Furthermore, the articulation of the historical thinking concepts as persistent issues and problems for student understanding will better reflect their articulation in the research as existing to enable historical inquiry by students (Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 1996, 2017; Whitehouse, 2015b). These changes will help to present the concepts as procedural concepts instead of bodies of knowledge. In addition to these changes there must be consistency in the articulation of these concepts across all the years of schooling, which does not occur in the *Australian Curriculum: History* following the substantial curriculum revisions of the primary years in version 8.3. As identified in this research a significant disconnect now exists between the primary and secondary years of schooling regarding how historical thinking concepts are expressed and articulated within the document. Currently the primary years of schooling fall afoul

of what Schwab (1978) terms a 'corruption of the discipline' (p. 243) and Counsell (2011) terms 'genericism' (p. 201).

This project identifies many areas that warrant further research, most notably the relationship between twenty-first century skills and historical thinking. Wineburg (2001) argues that the study of source material in a rigorous history classroom has a key role to play in helping students develop literacy skills, a key twenty-first century skill that is included as General Capability in the *Australian Curriculum: History*. The exposure of students to multiple texts of mixed genre and style plays a key role in promoting these key literacy skills. Further research is also needed on the relationship between historical thinking, civic reasoning, and media literacy, a crucial skill in the modern age as students struggle to navigate the veritable tsunami of information in the digital realm (McGrew, Ortega, Breakstone & Wineburg, 2017). VanSledright (2004) argues that good historical thinkers are careful, critical readers of significant amounts of evidentiary source data, are able to tolerate differing perspectives. and build evidence-based arguments because of the nature of their historical research demands it. Good historical thinkers possess the skills of informed, critical readers who investigate and explore complex arguments presented to them in a critical manner. Critical and creative thinking, information literacy, citizenship and other skills have all been articulated as key skills students must develop to be successful in the twenty-first century (ATC21S, 2012). The relationship between these areas within the school curriculum needs further research. As students progress through their compulsory years of schooling it is not enough for them to accumulate facts about the past, this alone cannot validate the inclusion of history in the curriculum. History serves many purposes but its ability to foster critical and informed citizens is needed in the twenty-first century and the relationship between these two areas within the curriculum warrants further research.

The *Australian Curriculum: History* represents a significant effort over an extended period of time to articulate what Australian history students should know, understand, and be able to do in relation to the disciplinary study of history. Its current incarnation is confusing and is compromised in the differing design structures between the primary and the secondary years of schooling that are a result of the 2014 review and version 8.3 of

the curriculum. Furthermore, the articulation of the twenty-first century skills, intended to be embedded into the learning areas in ways appropriate to the discipline, lacks specificity and guidance for how they are intended to interact with the structures of the discipline of history. The curriculum needs to clearly identify where the disciplinary structures of history enhance the acquisition of twenty-first century skills, such as literacy, in order to claim it has embedded these skills appropriately in the document. Further research into how history education and twenty-first century skills interact with each other will help develop an understanding of how this occurs. This can then be fed back into the curriculum design process in order to produce a history curriculum that is truly world-class and prepares students for life and work in the twenty-first century.

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