



*Hunter Community Languages is funded by the NSW Government to support the NSW Community Languages Schools Program, which is administered by the NSW Department of Education*

# Using Concepts with Big Questions for Deep Learning in CLSs

## Welcome!

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With Kara Matheson

Education Officer

NSW Community Languages Schools Program

Hunter Community Languages

<https://www.hptacl.org/>



# Acknowledgment of Country

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*I acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of the land on which I work, the Pambalong Clan of the Awabakal people.*

*Today we come together from lands far and wide that have been cared for by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for over sixty thousand years.*

*Let us pay our respects to Elders past and present.*



# Kara Matheson

with Newcastle Bangla School



- Education Officer, Hunter Community Languages
- 20 years F/T permanent Japanese/ESOL teacher Sydney TAFE
- NESA accredited Proficient Teacher
- Developed Japanese language program for country high school
- Home educated 3 daughters for 8 years using Natural Learning
- Taught mindfulness and Nonviolent Communication to children and teens 10+ years
- Regenerative farmer with husband, Jim

Let's gently sway from side to side  
or shake  
for 30 seconds  
to help our attention to settle



In Today's session I will:

1

Talk about moves in contemporary education to make language classes about much more than teaching language and culture

2

Share how using 'concepts' and 'Big Questions' can address these moves and challenge learners of diverse skill levels in the CLS context

3

See examples of how to make these a part of CLS lessons

# NESA Curriculum Review

## NESA: NSW Education Standards Authority

- In May 2018 the New South Wales (NSW) Government announced a comprehensive review of the school curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12
- to '*ensure that the NSW education system is properly preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century*'
- the first major review of the entire NSW school curriculum since 1989
- the Review found strong community support for change

# Chapter 6. Design Principles

## Learning with understanding

*"Essential to school learning is the development of increasingly deep understandings of core concepts and principles."* (p67)

## Emotional engagement

*"Curiosity, discovery, wonder and passion should be motivators and features of learning for every student throughout their school years."* (p71)

## NURTURING WONDER AND IGNITING PASSION

Designs for a new school curriculum

## NSW CURRICULUM REVIEW

April 2020

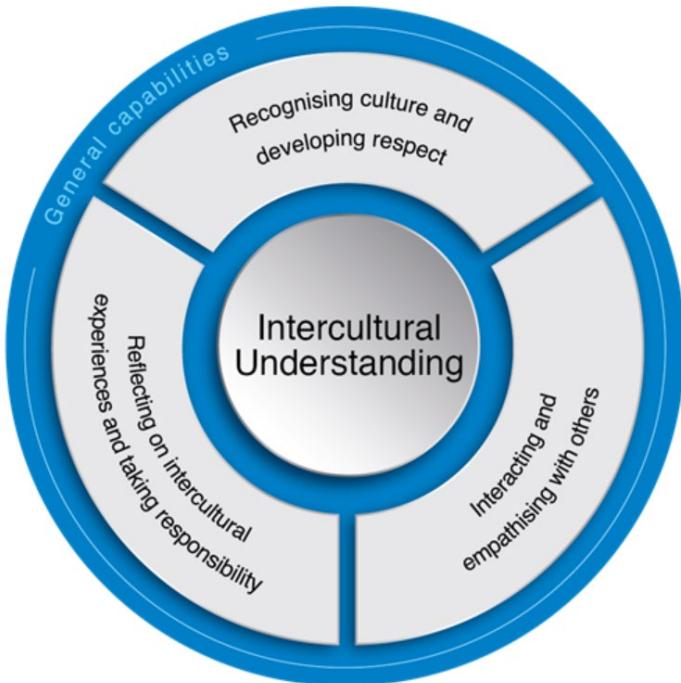
<https://www.nswcurriculumreform.nesa.nsw.edu.au>

# Consistent messages from the review

Students want authentic learning with real-world application.

Parents/carers want an education system that meets the needs of their children.

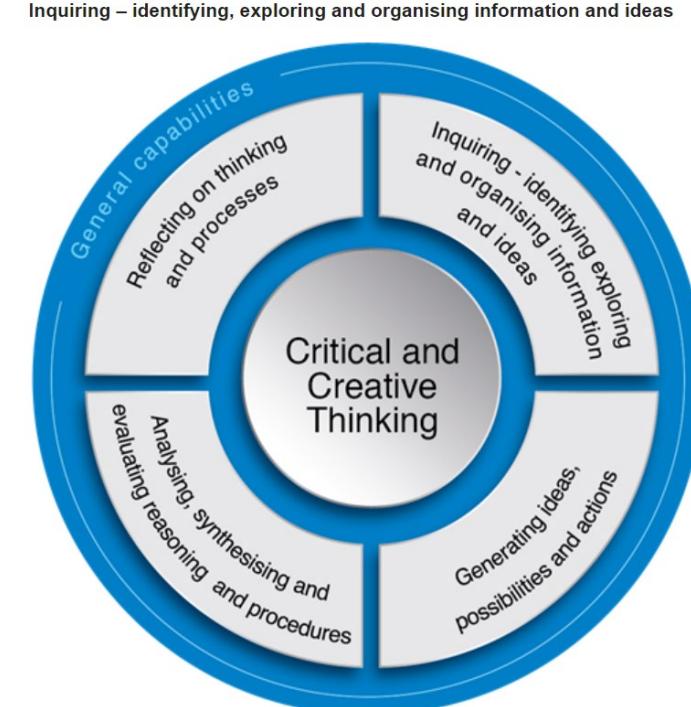
Employers want young workers to have strong foundations in literacy and numeracy, and also **social and emotional skills, like teamwork and communication.**



Organising elements for Intercultural Understanding



Organising elements for Personal and Social Capability



Organising elements for Critical and Creative Thinking

# ACARA General Capabilities (core concepts)

ACARA: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

## Intercultural Understanding - Recognising culture and developing respect

- investigate culture and cultural identity
- explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices
- develop respect for cultural diversity

## Personal and Social Capability

### **Self-awareness**

- understand themselves as learners
- develop reflective practice

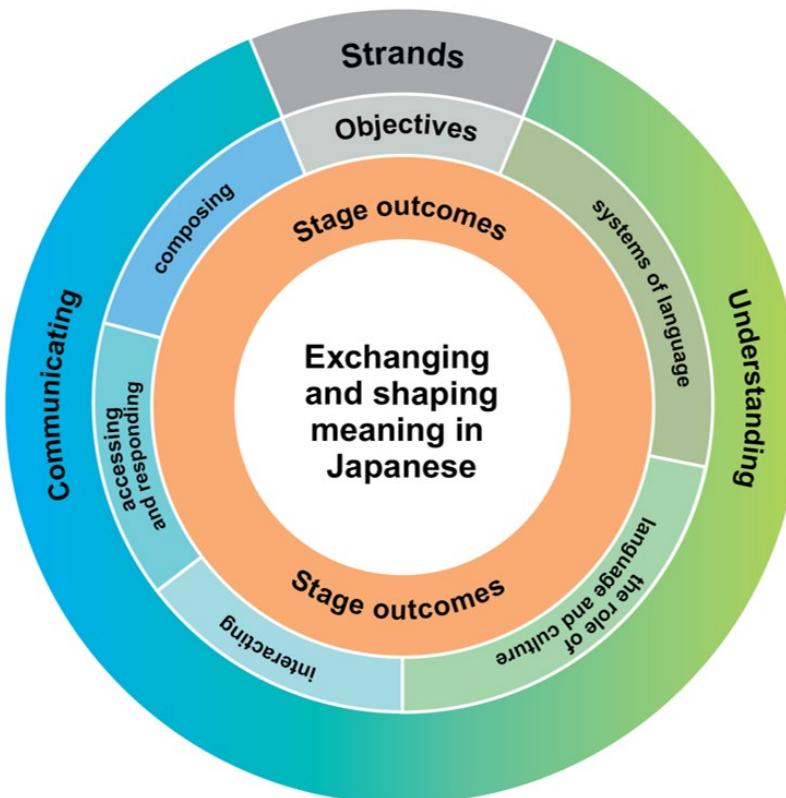
### **Social awareness**

- appreciate diverse perspectives
- understand relationships

## Critical and Creative Thinking - Generating ideas, possibilities and actions

- imagine possibilities and connect ideas
- consider alternatives
- seek solutions and put ideas into action

# NSW Languages Syllabuses



## Learning Across the Curriculum Icons

Learning across the curriculum content, including the cross-curriculum priorities, general capabilities and other areas identified as important learning for all students, is incorporated and identified by icons in the syllabus.

### Cross-curriculum priorities

- 🕒 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- 🌐 Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- 🌿 Sustainability

### General capabilities

- 💡 Critical and creative thinking
- ⚖️ Ethical understanding
- 💻 Information and communication technology capability
- 🌐 Intercultural understanding
- 📚 Literacy
- 🔢 Numeracy
- 🤝 Personal and social capability

### Other learning across the curriculum areas

- ⚖️ Civics and citizenship
- ✳️ Difference and diversity
- ✳️ Work and enterprise



That's A LOT!

# How to plan lessons to address these things?

[www.hptacls.org](http://www.hptacls.org)

## Lesson design

- Concept-Based Design, modelling lessons with the concepts Place and Change
- Task-Based Language Teaching
- Writing Scope & Sequence, Units of Work and Lesson Plans

## Lesson delivery

- Questions – How to ask the right kind of questions to support learning
- Checking for Understanding
- Giving effective Feedback

## Wellbeing

- Cognitive wellbeing – help students to feel motivated and to keep trying!
- Social wellbeing – Using Circle Time to build positive relationships

Address Core  
Concepts and  
related Big  
Questions in CLS  
education

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# Concepts are:

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- Universal – in every culture and language
- Timeless – in the past, now, and in the future
- Abstract – an idea, not a concrete thing
- The building blocks of thought

Examples in CLSs: Language; Culture; Effort; Belonging; Identity; Relationships; Celebration

# Big Questions

*The secret to engaging lessons may be as simple as asking learners good questions and then giving them the opportunity to find the answers.*

[Jeffrey D. Wilhelm](#)



The big question can act like a guiding light

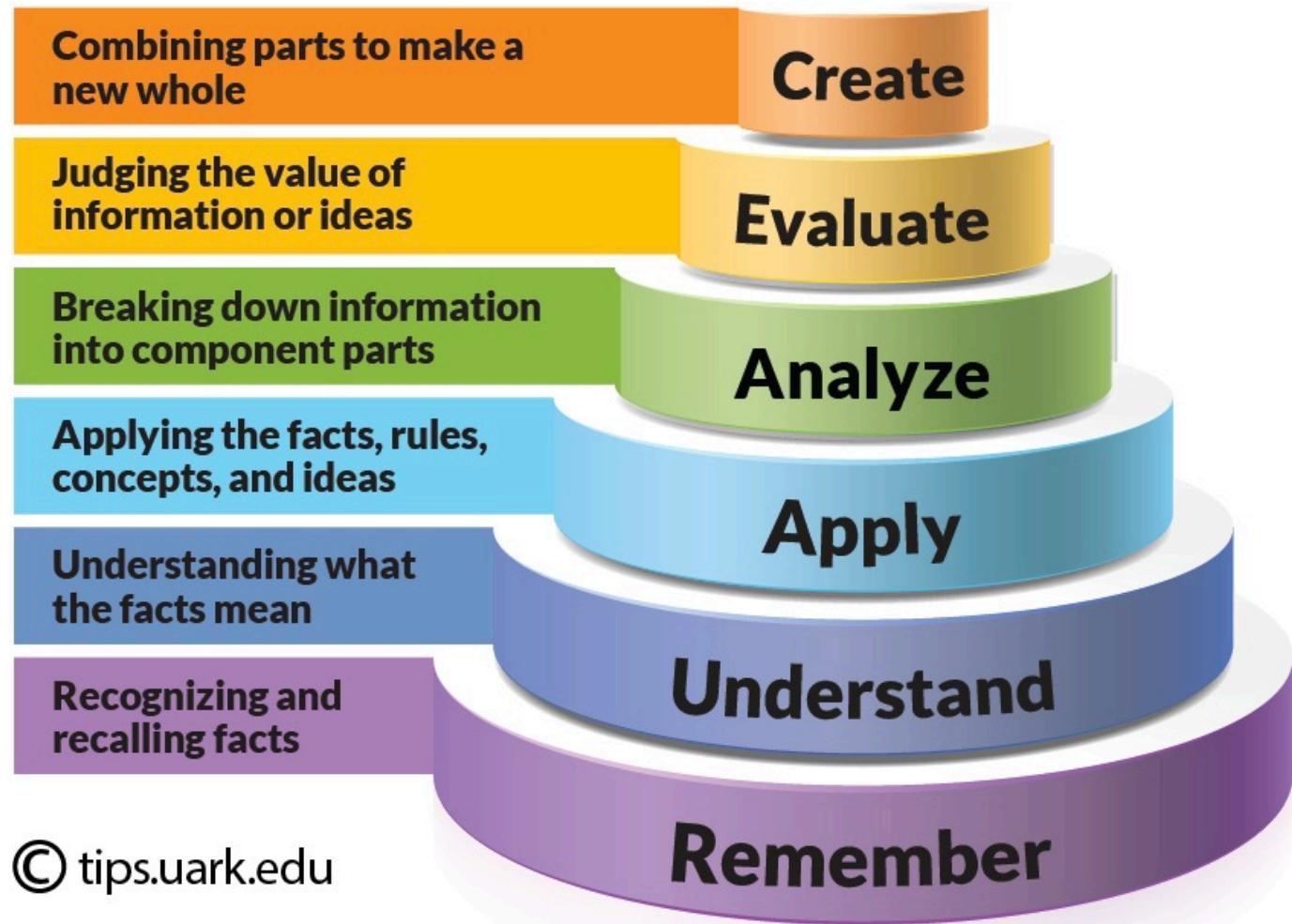
# Features of a Big Question

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- **open-ended** - not easy to find an answer
- there may be **no single "right" answer** to the question (which may be initially frustrating)
- a problem to be investigated and solved
- helps students engage with their existing knowledge
- connects what students learn to the real world, where they can use their new understandings
- helps students move to higher-order thinking = critical and creative thinking

# Thinking skills in CLS classes

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Bring in a  
concept and  
an associated  
Big Question



# Examples of Concepts + Big Questions for CL Schools

“Nurturing wonder”

- Concept: Language

Big question: How does language shape how we think?

- Concept: Change

Big question: How does change affect people in different cultures?

- Concept: Place

Big question: What makes a place special in the heritage country? In Australia?

- Concept: Belonging

Big question: How do we create a class where everyone feels like they belong?  
How does language affect belonging in the heritage country? In Australia?

- Concept: Celebration

Big question: How do people celebrate in the heritage country? In Australia?  
How is language important in celebration in the two countries?

# How to bring these into a CLS class?

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- In the design/planning stage:
  - choose a concept that aligns with the topic or task and then write a Big Question for that concept
- During the lesson:
  - give the concept and Big Question to the students in the lesson orientation (at the beginning) and re-visit through the lesson (if appropriate) and at the end for reflection
- They might emerge during the lesson:
  - Just as language to be learned emerges in task-based language lessons, the concept and question might emerge from the task too



Examples of what this can add to CLS activities & tasks



# Personal and Social Capability: Social awareness

appreciate diverse perspectives  
understand relationships

Concept: friendship

Big questions:

How do friends care for each other?

Does the way friends care for each other look different in different cultures?



# Personal and Social Capability: Self-awareness

understand themselves as learners

Concept: How we learn

Big Questions: What does learning look like in different cultures? What style works for me?

Do I like to learn differently at different times?



# Intercultural Understanding: Recognising culture and developing respect

investigate culture and cultural identity

explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices

develop respect for cultural diversity

Concept: Celebration

Big Question: Why do all cultures celebrate?

Tibetan Community  
of Newcastle



## **Personal and Social Capability**

**Self-awareness**  
understand themselves as learners  
develop reflective practice

**Social awareness**  
appreciate diverse perspectives  
understand relationships

**Concept:** Working together

**Big Question:** How do we welcome everyone's ideas when we work together?

Do people work together differently in different cultures?

# Recap

Concepts and related Big Questions  
can be used to  
deepen students' engagement with core concepts  
in CLS education and  
develop general capabilities such as  
self-awareness, social awareness,  
intercultural understanding,  
critical and creative thinking,

*"preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century"*

[https://nswcurriculumreform.nesa.nsw.edu.au/pdfs/phase-3/final-report/NSW\\_Curriculum\\_Review\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://nswcurriculumreform.nesa.nsw.edu.au/pdfs/phase-3/final-report/NSW_Curriculum_Review_Final_Report.pdf) p.v

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