The theme The Big Questions supports intercultural learning in a number of ways. Before we can begin to understand others we must know ourselves. This is of course an open-ended, lifelong process, but in learning to be self-reflective in our younger years we begin to develop the strategies we will need to review our lives at crucial moments in our futures.

As we explore and interact with people of other cultures the ‘who’ (identity) and ‘why’ (meaning and purpose) of our lives will be challenged by the ‘who’ and ‘why’ of others. What we have always taken to be ‘given’ is called into question by a different ‘given’.

In encountering others who see the world differently we learn that there are many ways to ‘read’ the world. Our beliefs and values will lead us to construct the world in a particular way, but this way of seeing is not necessarily shared by other people we encounter.

Our understanding of our identity and the meaning of our lives are dynamic and can be enriched and expanded by our encounters with others. We need to develop a disposition of respect, understanding, humility, fairness and tolerance to be able to grow through such encounters. If we are unyielding, dogmatic and lacking tolerance we will become ‘petrified’ and as others around us grow and expand we will shrink into a limited existence.

Students will be asked to consider questions such as the following.

- Who am I?
- How do I find/create meaning for my life?
- How has my identity been shaped?
- What are the most significant influences in making me ‘me’?
- What groups do I belong to – by choice, by birth?
- Can I change or revise my identity?
- How do my beliefs shape the person I am?
- Does understanding who I am mean that I can better influence who I will become?
- Who are the important people in my life?
- Who am I like?
- Who shares my values?
- Who has different values?
Links to the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools* (2005)

Students will explore, consider, enact and reflect on values as they:
- work constructively and collaboratively to learn about significant values of inclusion; freedom, respect and responsibility
- demonstrate empathy to others as they learn more about the personal impact of intolerance, exclusion and loss of freedom
- develop a growing confidence in articulating personal beliefs as these relate to the nature of boundaries in their own lives and the lives of others
- develop resilience and act with integrity through acceptance of difference and cultural diversity.

**Preparation**

View and read through the descriptions for each digital resource in the theme.
Read through the activities and note the particular learning strategies that have been built into these.
Be mindful that students might need to view each resource several times.

Please note: Thirty-five film clips on *World of Values* are linked from the *australianscreen online* website. Be aware that links within the frames containing these film clips take you out of the *World of Values* website.

**A note about activities**

All of the values clarification activities are built around whole class, small group, partner or individual tasks. Use your professional judgement regarding the advice given here. Choose the most appropriate grouping for each task depending on the particular needs of your students.

**A note about the learning pathway**

*World of Values* is a flexible resource. The learning pathway tool allows teachers to create a personalised PDF-based version of selected content. See the Help feature on the *World of Values* website.

**A note on dialogue**

The challenging content of many of the digital resources and the accompanying values clarification activities necessitates that students engage in exploratory dialogue whereby they are given time to debrief, to work through their thoughts and feelings, and to reflect on what they have learned. You may find that students generate many of their own questions throughout their exploration of *The Big Questions* and that you need to be flexible around your planning for these to be shared and considered.

**A note about personal experience**

Many of the activities relate the values clarification to the personal lives of students. This is important because personal experience helps students to connect an abstract value to a concrete experience. However, students may find the connection to their experience in families, their friendship groups, and their positive self-image, for example, challenging. Your guidance and support through these times will be necessary.

**A note on working with sensitive material**

There are many topics in the digital resources that may be personally confronting for some students, and potentially cause discomfort and distress. If you are aware of specific areas that may cause concern for particular students, try to let them know in advance that you will be looking at the topic in class. Generally, you could let all students know beforehand what is coming up and suggest that if they feel uncomfortable about participating in the discussion they let you know and you can discuss strategies with them.
Involve students in setting ground rules for the discussions. It is important to emphasise the need for respect, confidentiality, sensitivity and the recognition of diversity in people’s backgrounds and experiences. The classroom must be a safe and secure environment for discussions that will arise in the course of examining such materials as you will find in this collection.

Make sure that students know what support is available if the discussion does create discomfort or distress. You could compile a list of useful contacts and phone numbers. It would be wise to let the people who are concerned with student welfare (for example, counsellor, year level coordinator) know that you will be addressing complex issues that may be challenging for some students.

Resources that provide support for teachers dealing with personal, emotive issues can be found in the MindMatters materials. See www.mindmatters.edu.au

**Getting started**
In Getting started, students are introduced to the theme and a set of values. They explore prior knowledge and preconceptions, and research the definitions of values, to focus on the issues they will be examining.

Ask students to open a WordFile or a notebook to record their thoughts and feelings throughout the activities.

**Notes on activities**
Think about the big questions: Ask students to create mind maps to explore their associations with meaning and identity. They can use both words and pictures for this activity. You may need to prompt students by brainstorming as a class. Students will need to keep their mind maps for a later task.

**Useful resources:**

Values gallery: This activity is an initial values clarification task that will be built upon and extended in the Bringing it together section of the theme. You begin by asking students to define the values they will explore. You may wish to record their definitions on a large sheet of paper, as students will be returning to this activity. You may decide that this task is too challenging for some and so conduct this as a whole class activity.

**Tuning in**
**Three digital curriculum resources**
In Tuning in, teachers engage students with key values underpinning the general theme, and elicit students’ prior knowledge, personal experiences, feelings and beliefs. Teachers stimulate students’ thinking and encourage openness to the new learning experiences in which they will be involved.

**My brilliant career – I want to be a writer**
The film clip shows Sybylla Melvyn and Harry Beecham in a paddock at the Melvyn farm discussing the topic of Harry’s marriage. Sybylla, who encourages Harry to marry her sister Gertie, is hurrying away as Harry blurts out a proposal to her. Sybylla looks back at Harry, her face a mixture of regret and sadness. In the next shot Sybylla, sitting on a tree stump, tries to make Harry understand her reasons for refusing him.

In the film, Sybylla makes a radical decision in choosing a career and independence over marriage. In the late 1890s, women were often forced through economic necessity into menial work or work associated with nurturing, such as nannying, nursing or teaching; they were not otherwise expected to have careers beyond being wives and mothers. However, in this period in Australia, first-wave feminists were campaigning for the rights of women to have a profession as well as to be educated and to vote.
**Values spotlight**

*I want to be a writer* explores the conflict that can arise between personal aspirations and societal expectations. Sometimes the way that we want to make meaning in our lives (for Sybylla to be a writer) is at odds with what is considered ‘normal’ and acceptable (in this case for Sybylla to be a wife and mother). The importance of honesty, respect, doing your best and tolerance in the formation of one’s identity is highlighted here.

**Notes on activities**

The Tuning in activities for *I want to be a writer* are designed to introduce students to the conflict that often exists between the expectations for our futures from those around us and our community in general, and what might be our heart’s desire. Students are asked to consider their personal goals and the expectations that may exist for their futures. Personal integrity is the key value under consideration.

These activities are designed to raise awareness. Deeper reflection will take place in the Discovering section.

**Alicia – God is love**

This film clip shows a neurosurgeon speaking about Alicia Liley, and the part that modern medicine played in her recovery. In 1988 Alicia (who was then known as Jane), an 18-year-old drama student, had a near-fatal car accident that left her in a coma for eight weeks. Doctors told her family it was unlikely that she would ever recover from a vegetative state, but after coming out of the coma and 10 months of rehabilitation, Alicia left hospital able to walk, talk and write, and soon after acquired her driver’s licence.

In separate sequences Alicia, her father and her mother describe how they believe the family’s collective faith helped Alicia pull through, even after the doctors warned that her chances of survival were slim. The clip includes a re-enactment of the family gathered around Alicia’s hospital bed and ends with still photographs of a recovering Alicia. This experience has had an effect on Alicia’s sense of identity. She believes that her recovery indicates that ‘there is a purpose for my life’ and in 1994 she founded Soul Theatre in Melbourne, a company designed to ‘break down prejudices against the misunderstood, disadvantaged and disenfranchised’. Alicia also campaigns to raise awareness within the community of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), which was the reason she participated in this documentary.

**Values spotlight**

*God is love* suggests that a shared vision is a powerful instrument. When Alicia’s family gather round her bed to pray and concentrate their thoughts and energies, we see love, commitment, determination, faith and humility in action.

**Notes on activities**

The clip *Alicia: God is love* is potentially contentious. The very open and honest expressions of faith of Alicia and her father may evoke derogatory comments about religious belief. You may need to remind students that we all possess a set of personal beliefs that we have our reasons for subscribing to. Any discussion of religious belief needs to be conducted in a way so that students:

- feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings
- are mindful of the language they use to express their ideas
- are aware of the potential harm to others if they personalise their comments.
Hin Gee and family, 1908
This formal black-and-white studio photograph of Hin Gee, his wife Go and their four children was taken in 1908 and used for identification purposes when the family left Australia to visit China. The photograph is signed in ink and stamped by Sydney Customs and Immigration. The original photograph was attached to the back of a certificate exempting 26-year-old Mrs Go Gee from having to sit a dictation test, providing she returned to Australia within three years. The dictation test established by the Immigration Act, 1901 could be used to control and/or prevent the entry of non-English speaking people to Australia. Because of these, and previous state-based immigration restrictions, a family group like this was exceptionally rare. For example, in 1901 there were around 29,000 men of Chinese descent in Australia, but only 500 Chinese women.

After the gold rush, many Chinese miners stayed in Australia and went into business, a number of them becoming prosperous and able to sponsor wives and other family members. Although many Chinese chose not to adopt Western ways, preferring to live in ‘Chinatowns’ where they could live close together both to foster a sense of community and to provide a defence against outside hostility, this photograph shows a well-dressed and prosperous Chinese family wearing Western clothing.

Values spotlight
This photograph of Hin Gee and his family highlights the complexity of our understanding of identity when living in a culture other than our culture of origin. The family’s affluent western dress is indicative of their desire to do their best and achieve inclusion in Australian society.

Notes on activities
An understanding of a person or group’s cultural values is necessarily influenced by the historic or sociocultural context. There is a focus on personal family background in these activities. You will need to be sensitive to those students for whom this area may be problematic.

Some excellent resources on photo essays can be found at:
www.thephotoessay.com/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photo_essay
www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/depression/photoessay.htm
www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html
Discovering

Seven digital curriculum resources

In the Discovering section, teachers support students to explore values, text and context in a deeper way, to think about and clarify the values underpinning each digital curriculum resource, and to create concrete records of the experiences and information gathered.

Notes on activities

Depending on your cohort of students, the discussion around the first and last activities could prove challenging, especially given the media coverage that has been given to Muslim people in Australia.

The following article may be a useful addition to the discussion: www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/16/2218608.htm

After students examine the article, hold a class discussion around the following questions.

- What do you think about the perspective offered here?
- What impact has it had on your attitudes?

Some further references around Muslim women’s clothing and identity can be found at:


Islam on parade – On being young and Muslim in Australia

Waleed Aly and Susan Carland, a Muslim husband and wife in Australia, are trying to break down barriers by speaking to non-Muslims about Islam and Muslims in Australia. The 2001 census found that there were about 281,000 Muslims in Australia, comprising about 1.5 per cent of the total population. Muslims in Australia come from approximately 70 different countries and ethnic groups and are linguistically and culturally diverse. Most non-Muslim Australians have had little exposure to Muslims or Islamic practices, apart from media coverage that has tended to focus on events such as sexual assault, race riots and the 11 September 2001 and Bali terrorist attacks.

Aly and Carland believe that since the terrorist attacks there has been a backlash against Muslims within the wider Australian community. This has led them to try to promote a better understanding of their religion, and the two regularly speak to community groups. In this film clip Aly has been invited to address an Australian Labor Party branch meeting, while Carland speaks at a function held by the Rotary Club, a community service group. These speaking engagements suggest that there is a willingness within non-Muslim Australia to learn about Muslim culture.

Values spotlight

On being young and Muslim in Australia challenges us to think beyond stereotypes and withhold judgement about who and what people are until we’ve given them an opportunity to speak for themselves. We are reminded of the need to show others respect and everyone’s right to freedom and a fair go.
Winners – On loan: Why was I adopted?
This film clip shows Lindy (Mai) walking along a beach with the man she now knows to be her birth father. He explains how she came to be given up by her Vietnamese mother and later adopted. Lindy and her adoptive family together with her birth father, Le, are later shown in the family’s living room, where Le shows Lindy photographs of members of her Vietnamese family. Lindy’s adoptive mother is concerned that Le might want to take Lindy away as he had not signed the adoption papers. Lindy seems torn between her feelings towards her adoptive mother and father and her feelings towards her birth father.

This is a fictional story based on fact. The character Lindy could have come to Australia as part of Operation Babylift, a strategy to rescue children who had apparently been abandoned during the final phase of the Vietnam War. In April 1975, when Saigon was under fierce attack from the advancing North Vietnamese forces, many thousands of South Vietnamese sought assistance from the USA to leave Vietnam. Humanitarian groups in Vietnam advocated an emergency airlift for children in their care. At least 2,000 children were flown to the USA and approximately 1,300 children were sent to Canada, Europe and Australia.

Values spotlight
Why was I adopted? explores how our origins are of vital importance to our sense of meaning and identity in life. The values of freedom and honesty are portrayed as essential to personal growth but these may not be free of pain and conflict.

Notes on activities
It is vital that you check to see if any of your students are adopted before working on these activities. Discuss with them the sorts of issues and discussions that will come up and find out whether they wish to be a part of them or not. It would be a good idea to speak with the key welfare person in your school to ensure that appropriate support services can be identified in case they are needed.

A good resource for storyboarding:
http://accad.osu.edu/womenandtech/Storyboard%20Resource/

Tombstone unveiling – Ceremony day
In Torres Strait Islander culture the tombstone-unveiling ceremony is a huge event, marking the end of the mourning period. The event, which honours the life of the deceased and acknowledges that they have reached their final resting place, is celebrated and shared with the whole community. It is up to the family to decide when they are ready to publicly unveil the tombstone, but the ceremony usually takes place about 12 months after the body is interred.

This film clip shows preparations for a ceremony. The tombstone-unveiling ceremony is coordinated by a Mariget, an Elder who is an in-law of the deceased person’s family. The Mariget can be either a man or a woman. Members of the family decorate the grave site, and the deceased’s daughters cover the tombstone with colourful fabrics. Men and women are also shown preparing for the feast that will follow the unveiling, with the men tending the earth oven. Narrator Helen Anu, speaking Yumiplatok, says that people will come from the surrounding islands to celebrate the life of the deceased. The involvement of the community in the tombstone-unveiling ceremony is indicative of the strong kinship ties among Torres Strait Islanders. Extended families are central to the Islanders’ sense of identity, providing a framework that ensures resources are shared and that sets out obligations to kin.

Values spotlight
Ceremony day highlights the way that ritual can help us to make sense of challenging events in our lives – in this case death. The way in which this Torres Strait Islander community deals with death and grief underscores the values of compassion, respect and shared responsibility.
Notes on activities
Please be aware that this resource may contain references to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people who may have passed away.

Initially this clip may not seem to be too challenging. However, it leads to a consideration of how we deal with the inescapable reality of death. This is not an area that many of us feel comfortable talking about and yet is something that we must all face. Make sure that you know about any recent bereavements experienced by students in your class. You may seek the guidance of the key welfare person in your school in handling this material.

There is a specific Mind Matters resource dealing with loss and grief. This can be downloaded at: www.mindmatters.edu.au/resources_and_downloads/mindmatters/loss_and_grief.html

Simple resources on rituals around death can be found at:
www.beliefnet.com/story/78/story_7894_1.html
www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/highlights/000913_death.shtml

My Mother India – Cultural outsiders
My Mother India is an autobiographical documentary in which members of a family share their memories of events that have shaped their family history. Director Safina Uberoi traces her parents’ history. Her Australian mother married a Sikh and moved to India. There they brought up their three children and survived the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. When Safina moves to Australia she gains a new understanding of her mother Patricia. In India, Patricia describes how her perspective is now ‘Indian’ to the point where she is surprised to see a fair skinned face in the mirror. The autobiography features family photos, historical footage and interviews with the family, particularly with Uberoi’s mother, Patricia.

Values spotlight
Cultural outsiders takes us beyond thinking about identity as an exterior attribute, to looking at how we think about ourselves from the inside. It suggests that living in cross-cultural contexts enriches our sense of identity as we focus on what is at the centre of our selves, and on understanding, tolerance and inclusion.

Notes on activities
The following resources will provide useful additional material for discussion and reflection around the impact of mixed race on a person’s sense of identity:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ8WXxrN0TI
www.cbc.ca/news/background/mixedblessings/
www.inheritanceproject.org.uk/

Rosie – Reunited
The film clip shows Rosie describing the effects on her life of being removed from her Indigenous family by the Western Australian Child Welfare Department in 1961 and made a ward of the state at the age of two. The children were placed in a variety of institutions in the misguided belief that their welfare was best served by this practice. These children are referred to as the Stolen Generations. In Indigenous Australian cultures, an individual’s identity is based on family, kinship ties and a connection to the land where the person was born. The clip highlights the ongoing emotional effects that separation from family has on children.

Rosie is packing her bag to move out of the welfare house, and a young woman who is to take over her room is introduced to her. The young girl has the same last name as hers. Rosie asks her if she ever stayed at the Kellys’. The girl says yes, and Rosie is reunited with her sister Beverley. The two girls go in search of their birth mother, but Rosie tells us that building a relationship with her natural mother has been difficult.

Values spotlight
Reunited highlights the importance of our bonds with our birth parents in establishing a secure identity for the rest of our lives. The values of reconciliation, integrity, honesty with self and others and doing your best despite difficulty are lived out in Rosie’s life.
Notes on activities

Please be aware that this resource may contain references to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people who may have passed away.

This clip is emotionally compelling. Within the context of the Stolen Generations, the activities discuss the need for children to have family influences and parental contact in order to develop secure identities. It is vital that you take into consideration any of your students who are separated from one or both parents for any reason. You may want to steer the discussions so that the positive aspects of many different family arrangements is stressed. It would be a good idea to speak with the key welfare person in your school to ensure that appropriate support services can be identified in case they are needed.

Students may need to be provided with material about the Stolen Generations. The following sites provide rich resources.


The clip opens with Lisa discussing how her parents never kissed or hugged her, or her siblings, when they were growing up. Lisa's brother Chris and mother Mabel are also interviewed. They reflect on cultural aspects of expressions of love and affection and share some of their early experiences.

Values spotlight

Chinese emotion examines the intercultural disquiet and confusion experienced by the Wang children. They grew up in a predominantly Anglo-Celtic Australia where emotional attachment is demonstrated through physical gestures of affection. In their home, however, they were raised according to Chinese culture which reflects the Confucian values of obedience, discipline, and family obligation.

Notes on activities

It may be necessary to provide some additional material about Confucian values. The following sites contain useful information.

www.trinity.edu/rnadeau/FYS/Tu%20Wei-ming.htm
www.religioustolerance.org/confuciu.htm

Some additional reading about living between two cultures can be found at:

www.helium.com/knowledge/60436-living-between-two-cultures

Reunion – Chinese emotion

This film clip shows scenes from filmmaker Lisa Wang’s home movie of her parents and herself, and her brothers and sister growing up in Melbourne in the 1950s. David Wang (1920–78) and wife Mabel established a successful business shortly after coming to Melbourne in 1948. They were pioneers in importing from Asian countries. The Wangs achieved success, owning a house in Toorak, sending their four children to leading private schools and gaining acceptance from so-called ‘Establishment Melbourne’. His spectacular success in business and in public life led to speculation in 1976 that he would become Melbourne’s mayor.
Quakers: Seeking the light within – The Friends’ School

The Friends’ School in Hobart, Tasmania, (founded in 1887) is the only Quaker school in the southern hemisphere. This coeducational prekindergarten to year 12 school has an enrolment of more than 1,200, making it the largest Quaker school in the world. Although few of the teachers or students are Quakers themselves, the school claims to uphold Quaker values. George Fox (1624-91), the founder of the Religious Society of Friends whose members are known as Quakers, taught that the responsibility for ministry lies with each individual rather than being mediated by a minister of religion. Every person must bear testimony to the values of peace, truth, integrity, equality and simplicity in the way they live their lives.

In the film clip, Peter Jones, who teaches a course on comparative religions, is shown in interview and with his students. Film of Jones’s classroom and the playground, where students douse each other with water in celebration of a Hindu spring festival, accompany his voice-over explaining how he provides students with knowledge of a range of religions. A narrator explains Quaker values and beliefs over footage of a woman meditating.

Values spotlight

*The Friends’ School* shows how the study of comparative religion is one way to look at how people make meaning in their lives. The values of integrity, respect, tolerance and understanding, and a fair go underpin this approach.

Notes on activities

The clip may need to be supported with some additional information on the Quakers. Two sound resources are:

- [www.quakers.org.au](http://www.quakers.org.au/)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/quakers_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/quakers_1.shtml)

Fundamentalism is a term students may have heard bandied about and almost exclusively in relation to certain religions. It is important to ensure that they develop a sound and broad understanding of the term. These sites expand on the brief definition Peter Jones provides:

- [http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/fundam.htm](http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/fundam.htm)
- [www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-europe_islam/fundamentalism_3339.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-europe_islam/fundamentalism_3339.jsp)

To assist in developing student understanding of fundamentalism you could use the vocabulary development tool known as the Frayer model. Details can be found at:

- [www.worksheetworks.com/miscellanea/graphic_organizers/frayer.html](http://www.worksheetworks.com/miscellanea/graphic_organizers/frayer.html)
Bringing it together
In Bringing it together, teachers assist students as they synthesise and compare new knowledge, feelings and beliefs with prior knowledge, experience, feelings and beliefs. In this way, students are able to understand the ‘big ideas’ behind a theme and to make conclusions about what they have learnt. They are able to reflect on their learning, and explore and justify their values in relation to the theme.

Notes on activities
Defining identity and meaning: Return students to the mind maps they created in Getting started. This activity is designed to assist students to synthesise what they have learnt about The Big Questions and to reflect on the values they have explored. You may want them to discuss their revised mind maps in small groups. They could also display these, or add them to an assessment portfolio as evidence of their learning.

Values and actions: You may decide that students need further scaffolding for this task than what has been provided.

It has been suggested that students complete this task with a partner. You may wish to extend this to small groups, or to the whole class.

Important ideas: The key concepts synthesis strategy assists students to draw out and clarify what has had the greatest impact on them in their study of what has been diverse and challenging material.

Further information on this strategy can be found at:
www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Tools/Index.htm

Finish the sentences: This activity aims to personalise students’ learning. An opportunity is then given to gather the responses of all students in the class to provide a detailed overview of the insights developed in the course of studying the unit materials.

Going further
In Going further, teachers help students to apply their new knowledge, skills and attitudes in other contexts, enacting the values and intercultural understanding they have explored, making choices, and developing the belief that they can be active and informed participants in society.

Notes on activities
My questions: For information on how to help students create digital stories, go to Educational uses of Digital Storytelling www.coe.uh.edu/digitalstorytelling/

Digital Storytelling at Montclair State University http://electronicportfolios.org/digistory/

Tech-head stories – Key Digital Storytelling resources http://tech-head.com/dstory.htm

Into the future: Our students live in the here and now, the moment. Ten years is a lifetime away for them. Yet, every moment we are growing into the person we will become. This activity doesn’t ask them to envision the society ten years from now, but rather the person they will be then.

A plan of action: An important feature of values education pedagogy is the encouragement of some form of personal action. It is useful for students to develop an awareness of their own capacity to make small – or significant – changes in their own lives to promote positive change.