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Early childhood HASS matters: An investigation of early childhood staff and their transition to the new Western Australian Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum in 2017

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Abstract

Changes to education policies and the creation of new curricula in Western Australia (WA), such as the new WA Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum in 2017, may place external pressure on teachers as they transition from existing to new curricula. The aim of this interpretivist study was to investigate the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum in 2017. The experiences and perspectives of the school leaders and teachers in Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two (PP to Y2) in two Perth metropolitan independent schools was explored. The preparation undertaken by the early childhood teachers and leaders, and the opportunities and challenges faced by the participants that facilitated or inhibited the transition to the new HASS Curriculum in 2017 was also studied. Three key themes that emerged from the results includes the need for; supportive and effective leadership, appropriate professional learning, time to understand the new content and to source suitable resources for teaching and assessing the new WA HASS Curriculum effectively.

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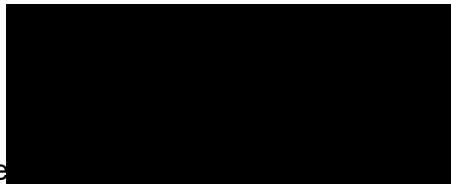
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research investigated the transition to the new Western Australia (WA) Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum from 2016 to 2017 in an early childhood context. The transition was explored through the experiences and perspectives of early childhood staff in two independent schools in the Perth metropolitan area. For the purpose of this study, the research focused on the school principals and Pre-primary to Year Two (PP to Y2) teachers.

In 2008, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA), a statutory authority, was tasked with implementing a new federally mandated curriculum in all WA schools (SCSA, 2014a). The HASS Curriculum comprised of four subjects: History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business. However, from PP to Y2, HASS only covered History and Geography. The HASS learning area is defined by SCSA as the examination of human behaviours and their interactions in a social, cultural, environmental and political context. The principal aims and rationale of the HASS curriculum was to produce active, informed citizens who are prepared for 21st century challenges (SCSA, 2014d). Humanities and Social Sciences focuses on historical and contemporary local and global contexts, and considers opportunities and challenges for the future (SCSA, 2014d).

Historically, Humanities and Social Sciences was developed at the end of the 19th century and utilises a holistic approach to citizenship education. Since the inception of social sciences education, an integrated, project approach has been adopted that still continues today (Reynolds, 2014). The new WA HASS curriculum from PP to Y2 comprises of two subjects (history and geography); each containing two interrelated strands: Knowledge and Understanding and HASS Inquiry Skills. The Knowledge and Understanding strand includes the key concepts and content to be taught for each subject. HASS Skills are common to both subjects and are taught discretely or as part of an inquiry approach (SCSA, 2014e).

Between 2009 and 2015, as the national HASS curriculum was developed, SCSA was responsible for the adoption and adaptation of content in order to reflect a WA context (Chapman, Wright & Pascoe, 2016). At the end of 2015, SCSA informed all school principals that the new WA HASS Curriculum was ready for implementation. In order to prepare teachers for the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum, 2016 was designated as the year for schools to familiarise themselves with this learning area (SCSA, 2015c). This study

explored the perspectives and experiences of early childhood staff as they transitioned to the new HASS Curriculum in 2017.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Formation of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in 2008 was the result of national policy changes and an unprecedented move by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to create the first national curriculum for all Australian states and territories. This initiative brought about a powershift, whereby states and territories no longer had full control of curriculum decisions (Dao, 2017). Since inception in 2012, the *Western Australian Currlculum and Assessment Outline*, henceforth referred to as the WA Curriculum, has been an approved alternative to the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2015). However, tensions between federal and state curriculum authorities over implementation of the WA Curriculum resulted in WA schools teaching two mandated curricula for the HASS learning area - the *WA Curriculum for History and the* original State *WA Curriculum Framework for the Teaching of Society and Environment (S&E)* between 2012 and 2016. Having two humanities curricula caused frustration for school principals and teachers, and led to some schools making a conscious decision to teach one or the other (Chapman, Wright & Pascoe, 2016). At the end of 2015, SCSA informed principals that the new WA HASS curriculum would be implemented in 2017. Schools were given one year (2016) to familiarise themselves with the new HASS Curriculum content (SCSA, 2015c), a relatively short timeframe for principals and teachers to become familiar with, understand and prepare to teach the content. Access to the WA HASS curriculum was only available online and teachers had one year to review and develop suitable resources, learning experiences and assessment tasks, which may have compromised a smooth transition. It is this problem that prompted the current study.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The aims of the study were to:

- Investigate the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2 in two Perth metropolitan independent schools in 2017;
- Investigate the preparation undertaken for the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum by the school and individuals in 2016; and
- To explore the opportunities and/or challenges that facilitated or inhibited the implementation of the new WA HASS Curriculum.

1.3 Research Questions

The principal research question was:

How did the early childhood staff in two Western Australian primary schools transition to the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2017?

The guiding questions were:

1. What preparation was undertaken by early childhood teachers in 2016 to become familiar with the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum?
2. What opportunities and/or challenges did early childhood staff face with planning, teaching and assessing the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2016 and 2017?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study address the paucity of research on HASS in an early childhood context. This research is expected to provide a broader understanding of the preparedness required for transitioning and implementing new curricula. Investigating the opportunities and challenges experienced by teaching staff in Pre-primary to Year Two (PP to Y2) will provide new ways of thinking about supporting the facilitation of new curricula.

1.5 Overview of the Study

The thesis opens with an introductory chapter that includes five sections: a statement of the problem; the aims of the study; the research questions; significance of the study; and an overview of the thesis. Chapter two provides a contextual background for the study, including a brief history of early childhood education in WA; contemporary early childhood education research; the recent Australian early childhood education reform agenda; and the Australian national early childhood development strategy. This is followed by a brief history of HASS education in WA. Finally, since the WA HASS Curriculum has two interrelated strands, an integrated approach, inquiry-based teaching method is also outlined.

Chapter Three presents an overview of the literature related to the study. The chapter begins with the evolution of the new WA HASS Curriculum and common teaching strategies used to teach HASS in PP to Y2 classrooms. Leadership styles are also explored, including early childhood leadership and three leadership styles – transformational, laissez-faire and collaborative. As leadership exerts significant influence on schools and teachers, the research related to decision-making by school leaders, such as timetabling, assessment and reporting have also been examined. The final sections of the literature review are

related to research on teacher preparation for curriculum change. Finally, a conceptual framework is provided as a pictorial representation of this research project.

Chapter four presents the research design and theoretical framework for the study, followed by a description of the methodology used for data collection and the data analysis process adopted for this qualitative study. Chapter five presents the results from the data collected at the two participating case-study schools. Chapter six, the discussion chapter, identifies the key themes that emerged from the data analysis; and finally, chapter seven presents recommendations for future research related to the key themes.

Chapter 2: Contextual Background to the Research

This chapter provides the contextual background of the study, commencing with a brief outline of early childhood education in WA. This is followed by pertinent early childhood reforms that had a direct effect on WA teachers in PP to Y2. Due to the many changes in content, structure and title over the years, the following section gives an overview of the evolution in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) learning area in Western Australia. Finally, as the new WA HASS curriculum embodies skills characterised by an integrated, inquiry-based teaching approach, information about this teaching strategy is also provided.

2.1 A Brief History of Early Childhood Education in Western Australia

This section provides a brief history of early childhood education, from European settlement to the present day, and looks at how this education sector is understood in WA. As this research occurred in two WA schools, it is important to familiarise the reader. The information also highlights the growing status of early childhood education and outlines how this sector has changed over time. It is important to note that the terminology used for the compulsory early years of schooling in WA is different from other Australian states and territories. Pre-primary is the first year of compulsory schooling and caters for children turning five on or before June 30 (Department of Education, 2015a).

Unlike New South Wales and Victoria, European settlement in WA did not start as a penal colony. Colonisation in WA was predominantly made up of the English middle class who wanted to access education for their children. The emergence of early childhood education in WA was considerably slower than the higher year levels of primary and secondary education. It was not until James Pollitt Walton (1848 - 1935) was appointed as the WA Chief Inspector of Schools from 1890 to 1912 that the importance of early childhood education was recognised. Walton was a champion of early childhood education, and from the time of his appointment, was concerned about the low standards of Year One and Two classes (then termed infant classes) as compared with European countries and other Australian states. During Walton's tenure he improved infant classes by ensuring a focus on children's physical and social development (Fletcher, 1982).

Cyril Jackson succeeded Walton in 1896 in a newly created position with the title of Western Australian Inspector-General of Education. Like Walton, Jackson also understood the importance of the early years. Education programs in the lower primary years were based on German educator, Friedrich Froebel's (1782-1852) approach. In the early

childhood classes, Jackson (1898) emphasised the importance of playing, drawing and physical activity as essential elements of learning (Fletcher, 1982).

During the early 20th century, Lillian de Lissa (1885-1967) oversaw the establishment of community and private kindergartens in WA (Towns, 2014). In these classes the curriculum moved away from an educational focus on reading, writing and arithmetic to a syllabus that promoted children's developmental domains: physical, social, emotional and cognitive (Press and Wong, 2013). World War II (1939-1945) severely disrupted the early childhood movement in WA and the rest of the country, but resurged after the war (Towns, 2014).

It is difficult to locate documented evidence of early childhood education in Western Australian schools during the 1950s and 1960s. However, in the 1970s, the early years of schooling came under the control of the Western Australian Education Department. Community-based organisations also provided private kindergartens. During this time, five year olds were able to attend a class called "kindergarten" at their local government primary school, equivalent to today's pre-primary year in Western Australia for children turning five on or before June 30. Children attended two half days per week. While pre-primary education was offered to all families in WA, it was not compulsory (S. Pollard [early childhood teacher], personal communication, February 8, 2018).

In the 1980s, the hours of attendance at pre-primary schools gradually increased to four half days but remained optional. During this era, the pre-primary syllabus continued to be based on children's full development, but introduced a prescribed curriculum including English; Mathematics; Social Studies (History and Geography); and Arts and Science (S. Pollard, personal communication, February 8, 2018).

By the mid-1990s pre-primary children were attending four full days a week and attendance was still not compulsory. The prescribed curriculum changed to an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) system, based on the premise that teaching and learning programs are constructed around knowledge about children's development; their social, emotional, linguistic, creative, physical and cognitive ways of knowing (Western Australian Curriculum Council, 1998). The change to an OBE system affected early childhood teachers, especially those who were less experienced, as the curriculum was considered ambiguous and it was difficult to understand exactly what content should be taught in each year level (Berlach & McNaught, 2007).

A significant change in the WA schooling sector occurred in 2001, when school-age enrolments changed from calendar year to children born before June 30 (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development [MCEECDYA], 2009). Attendance for pre-primary children turning five on or before June 30 changed to full-time, and in 2013, pre-primary became the first compulsory year of schooling in WA (Department of Education, 2015a). These changes coincided with increased understanding of the importance of quality preschool programs emanating from national and international research. Today, early year schooling in WA schools is defined as kindergarten to year two. Compulsory early years schooling include PP to Y2.

The following literature review provides an outline of early childhood education research and relevant reforms.

2.2 Contemporary National and International Early Childhood Education Research

Early childhood education in Australia has risen in status over the last two centuries due to an evolving understanding of the importance of this phase of learning in child development. This section explains the benefits of quality early childhood programs and pertinent reforms that transformed early childhood education.

Contemporary research placed a spotlight on the importance of quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for children's wellbeing and educational advancement (Centre for Social & Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology (CSER), 2008; Eggum-Wilkens et al., 2014; Heckman, 2017). In Australia, ECEC caters for children from birth to eight years. Major policy reforms in the Australian ECEC sector have affected teachers both positively and negatively. The focus of this study was on teachers in PP to Y2 in two WA schools, to whom these reforms also applied. The following section describes these reforms and the effect they had on teachers in the compulsory early years of school.

Many of the reforms in ECEC resulted from emerging evidence of brain development during the first years of life. Neuroscience research found that approximately 85 to 90% of brain development occurs in the first five years of life. In the early years, children develop communication skills, social and emotional development, physical growth and cognitive development (Pascoe & Brennan, 2017). ECEC is one of many stages in a child's journey of lifelong learning and success, and it is therefore crucial to ensure quality care and education at this time for establishing the foundations of future success at school and beyond.

Theorists, researchers and early childhood leaders have long recognised the importance of early childhood programs. In 1997 a major longitudinal study, known as the Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE) was conducted in the United Kingdom (UK). The aim of that study was to investigate the effectiveness and impact of early childhood education. Formal early childhood education in the UK generally occurs after a child's third birthday; however, some children from disadvantaged areas can attend after their second birthday. Children are eligible to attend two to three years of pre-school in the UK before their first compulsory year of education in the term after their fifth birthday (Siraj-Blatchford, Sammons, Taggart, Sylva & Melhuish, 2015). In the EPPSE project, more than 3 000 children were assessed at the start of pre-school and monitored throughout their school career at ages six, seven, ten, eleven and sixteen. A sample of children who did not participate in a pre-school program were also assessed as a control group for the study (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2015). One significant finding from the EPPSE study was that children who attended a preschool program were more likely to succeed in school (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2015).

In 2009, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) collected data on the developmental health and wellbeing of all children in every state and territory starting school in the first compulsory year (Pascoe & Brennan, 2017). The AEDC collects data across five domains of development every three years, including a) physical health and wellbeing; b) social competence; c) emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills; d) communication skills; and e) general knowledge. The AEDC found quality early childhood education a reliable predictor of later numeracy and literacy outcomes for children in school (Pascoe & Brennan, 2017). Consistent with international research, the AEDC also discovered that children who attend quality early childhood programs are considerably less likely to be developmentally vulnerable at school entry compared with those who did not attend similar programs (Pascoe & Brennan, 2017).

Not only do effective early childhood programs enhance child development and school success, they also have the capacity to expand children's social competence and sense of self. Children are innately connected to family, culture and community, and through positive relationships with these connections, children develop interests and construct their own identities and understanding of the world in which they live (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009). The Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum in the compulsory early years of schooling is also aimed at developing children's identity and knowledge of their families, community and connection to

the world by investigating their heritage, culture, relatives and traditions (SCSA, 2014d). One can therefore conclude that quality ECEC programs begin to build an understanding of these factors in children, and develop their capacity to achieve the outcomes of the WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2.

2.2.1 Australian Early Childhood Education Reform Agenda

This section illustrates how contemporary national and international research influenced the new reform agenda undertaken by the Australian government and led to a number of changes in education policies. The ECEC reforms not only increased the significance of this stage of a child's life, but also increased the status of ECEC professionals.

Australia's involvement and participation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as well as independent research and government initiatives, has led to national education reform for the improvement of children's participation and educational outcomes (Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008). In 1992, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the highest intergovernmental forum in Australia, was established. The COAG Education Council, with representation from education ministers in each Australian state and territory, provides a forum for strategic policy on school education in the early years and beyond. In the COAG Education Council, members are able to share information and resources to address issues of national significance (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011).

The COAG Education Council designed a rigorous and comprehensive framework for performance reporting, designed to achieve outcomes identified as significant. For example, ensuring schools promote inclusion, especially for Indigenous Australians and those identified as vulnerable; enabling successful transition through school; and improving numeracy and literacy standards in schools (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). Although these aims are of national importance, further discussions and commitment to improving ECEC provisions in Australia are required to maintain progress and prepare young children for future success.

In 2005, the OECD reported Australia's investment in early childhood education ranked 30th amongst participating OECD countries in their national gross domestic product (GDP) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). In 2009, the OECD Education at a Glance Report disclosed Australia's investment of $4 252 per student (for pre-primary children three years and over) was still below the average expenditure of $5 260 by other OECD countries

(OECD, 2009). In response to the OECD report, the Australian government committed to a nationwide investment of $970 million in early childhood education through a national partnership with the COAG Education Council. The purpose of this investment was to ensure universal access to quality, play-based early childhood programs delivered by trained early childhood teachers in a diversity of settings across Australia (COAG, 2009). However, a 2011 Report on Government Services (RoGS) found the proportion of funds allocated to WA early childhood education in the school sector was subsumed by other expenses, such as school utilities, office staff, professional learning and libraries. Subsequently, the inappropriate distribution of funds in WA has impacted on teachers' budgets and resourcing in the early years of school and their capacity to ensure universal access (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision [SCRGSP], 2011).

2.2.2 Australian National Early Childhood Development Strategy

In 2008, COAG education ministers signed the "Melbourne Declaration for Educational Goals for Young Australians", henceforth known as The Declaration. The Declaration established a direction for Australian schools, including a focus on learning and development in early childhood education (MCEETYA, 2008). It outlined two goals for children to achieve success in school, goal two stating: "all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8). There is an obvious alignment between goal two and the rationale and aims of the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum for early childhood education. For example, the rationale of the WA HASS Curriculum is to develop the capacity of students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills and become active and informed citizens in the 21st century, in addition to an understanding of the world in which they live (SCSA, 2014d).

Implementation of the National Quality Framework (NQF) was a significant ECEC reform in Australia resulting from the Declaration. In 2009, the COAG Education Council agreed to design the NQF for improved education and developmental outcomes for children from birth to eight years in all education and care services across Australia (Australian Children's Educational & Care Quality Authority, [ACECQA], 2018). The NQF for ECEC embodied two key components: a) a national learning framework for early childhood teachers – *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia* (EYLF); and b) the National Quality Standard (NQS and ACECQA, 2018).

Created in 2009, the EYLF was the first mandated learning framework for ECEC and emerged as a catalyst for change. The theoretical underpinnings of the EYLF draws on a

range of perspectives, as it is argued that the pedagogical approaches of early childhood teachers is broad and varied (DEEWR, 2009). The educational outcomes of the EYLF refer to children from birth to five years who attend any ECEC service, including school-based kindergartens in Western Australia. The principles and practices of the EYLF continue into the first three years of compulsory education (PP to Y2) to inform and guide early childhood teachers' practice (DEEWR, 2009). The impact of mandating the EYLF in the early years of school meant that early childhood teachers had to comply with two mandated curricula, the EYLF and the WA Curriculum, a significant challenge, since both documents advocated opposing approaches. Whilst the EYLF promotes a holistic approach through play-based and intentional teaching, the WA Curriculum uses a more formal, didactic approach to a prescribed curriculum (Jay & Knaus, 2018).

Despite opposing views with regard to what constitutes best practice in the early years of schooling, O'Neill (2011) believed that careful planning and specific education goals can turn play-based learning into an effective vehicle for achieving the prescribed outcomes of the WA Curriculum while also meeting the requirements of both mandated curricula. O'Neill (2012) stressed the need for teachers in all year levels to employ a range of pedagogical approaches and effective teaching strategies. As far as implementation of the new HASS Curriculum in the early years is concerned, teachers are able to deliver an authentic and beneficial HASS program through an exploratory, play-based approach (SCSA, 2014e).

The second component of the NQF is the NQS, created in 2012 to replace separate Australian state and territory accreditation bodies that oversaw the quality of all children's services. Development of the NQS was informed by national and international research on best practice and high quality care in ECEC (ACECQA, 2018). Comprising seven quality areas, 15 standards and 40 elements, the purpose of the NQS was to provide a high national benchmark for ECEC in Australia. In 2012, the WA Education Minister at the time, Peter Collier, mandated the NQS in the early years of schooling in WA by 2015. At first this directive caused concerns for early childhood teachers because there was not a lot of guidance on how the NQS would work in schools, since the settings, pedagogical approaches and outcomes were significantly different from other ECEC settings (Jay & Knaus, 2018). However, in 2014, the WA Department of Education began to provide support for school leaders and teachers to become more confident with the NQS, starting with an investment of $2.5 million for NQS training for all primary government school leaders. Between 2015 and 2017 a further $3.2 million was invested to deliver additional NQS

professional learning and ensure continued improvement in early childhood programs in schools (Department of Education, 2018).

In conclusion, the ECEC reforms of the NQF, NQS and EYLF reinforced the importance of the early years and raised the professional profile of early childhood teachers. Although these reforms have proved challenging for early childhood teachers in WA schools, they also highlight the requirements for young children to develop particular skills and knowledge for future success.

2.3 A Brief History of Humanities and Social Science in Western Australia

In recent years, the WA HASS Curriculum has undergone significant changes. Currently, HASS Curriculum subjects include history, geography, civics and citizenship, economics and business. Since this investigation examined the transition to the new HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2, it should be noted that the HASS Curriculum subjects in this age group only includes history and geography. A brief history of these two subjects and their evolution over time follows.

When James Pollitt Walton was employed as the Western Australian Chief Inspector of Schools from 1890-1912, geography was part of the syllabus, along with reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic and needlework, and was taught to all children in the aforementioned infant classes. History was added to the curriculum (Fletcher, 1982) after Cyril Jackson succeeded Walton in 1896. Despite having been part of the curriculum during the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, little is known about the content and structure of history and geography. As illustrated in Figure 1, name changes have exacerbated the confusion when referring to this learning area, requiring further explanation and clarification.
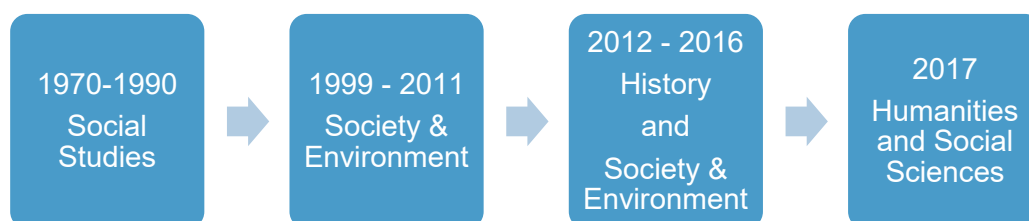
Figure 1: Name Changes to Social Science Education in WA

Between 1970 and 1990, history and geography were combined in the Social Studies Curriculum in the early years of school from PP to Y2 (Education Department of Western Australia, 1983). The introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in 1999 saw Social

Studies, which catered for children from kindergarten to Year 10, become known as Society and Environment (S & E). S & E comprised eight strands or subject areas: Investigation; Communication and Participation (ICP); Place and Space; Resources; Culture; Time; Continuity and Change; and Natural and Social Systems (Western Australia, Curriculum Council, 2005).

OBE encountered significant opposition from teachers, families and the community. There was a prevailing sense of ambiguity with regard to the curriculum documents and articulation of students' achievements against the outcome statements. Teachers were frustrated and public opinion was unfavourable, however, the WA Department of Education and Training persisted until calls for a national curriculum gained more traction (Berlach, 2004). In 2008, all Australian Education Ministers agreed to one quality national curriculum to ensure access for all children to an education that will better prepare them for participation in an increasingly evolving world (ACARA, 2010). Subsequently, the WA Education Minister agreed to phase out OBE in favour of a national curriculum.

In 2012, SCSA mandated the new WA Curriculum for teaching English, Mathematics, Science and History, an approved alternative to the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2015). Initially the history curriculum replaced the Time, Continuity and Change strand in S & E, but between 2012 and 2016, early childhood teachers in WA pre-primary, Year One and Year Two classrooms were expected to refer to two separately mandated curricula: the WA Curriculum for the history content and the Western Australian Curriculum Framework (WACF) for S & E.

Table 1: *Humanities and Social Sciences Timeline in Western Australia 2011-2017*

Year	WA Mandated Curriculum(s)	
2011	**WACF** – PP to Y2: Society and Environment (S & E)	
2012 - 2016	**WA Curriculum** – History	**WACF:** S & E
2017	**WA Curriculum and Assessment Outline** - Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)	

The new WA HASS Curriculum was made available to teachers in 2016 to familiarise themselves with the content before full implementation in 2017 (SCSA, 2015c). In 2017, the new HASS curriculum replaced History and S & E, and as shown in Table 1, is still the currently mandated curriculum in WA for children in pre-primary to year ten (SCSA, 2015c).

From PP to Y2, each HASS subject comprises two interrelated strands: Knowledge and Understanding, and Humanities and Social Sciences Inquiry Skills. The descriptors for both strands set out the content expected to be taught by educators in each school year using an integrated approach. The Knowledge and Understanding strand includes the key concepts and content to be taught for each subject. HASS Skills are common to both subjects and taught discretely or as part of an inquiry approach (SCSA, 2014e).

In summary, HASS has undergone many changes in content and structure. Decades of research and education reforms have informed the changes to humanities and social sciences in early childhood education. The next section provides information about the inquiry-based teaching approach, which, as previously explained, has been used to teach the HASS Skills strand in the new WA HASS Curriculum.

2.4 Inquiry-Based Teaching

Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand (original source unknown).

The following section of this thesis provides an overview of inquiry-based teaching (IBT) and the theoretical basis of this pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. Inquiry-based teaching (IBT) is a pedagogical approach, child-directed and teacher-led, for authentic and meaningful attainment of knowledge (Katz, 2007). Children are naturally curious and have a keen disposition to explore and investigate their world. IBT is a strategy used by teachers to engage and intrinsically motivate their students by responding to children's needs and interests (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), 2006). IBT involves extensive exploration and investigation into matters of interest to children, and is negotiated with teachers and other stakeholders to create meaningful experiences and tasks (QCAA, 2006).

IBT involves tapping into children's interests and curiosities by providing well-planned and meaningful investigations that will provide them with the skills required to research and acquire new knowledge now and in the future. The aim of IBT is to harness and instil motivation for life-long learning (Murdoch, 2015). The rationale behind IBT is to acquire transferable skills, such as asking relevant questions, the ability to critically analyse sources of information and effectively communicate the findings to others (Murdoch, 2015).

An inquiry-based teaching approach has the ability to not only create active and informed citizens, but also to address the seven General Capabilities (GC) of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline, namely, literacy, numeracy, information and

communication technology (ICT) capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding (SCSA, 2014c). IBT is an integrative approach; the very nature of the inquiry enables students to use and further develop literacy and numeracy skills through investigation and apply new knowledge. Through IBT, students also improve their information and communication (ICT) skills, critical and creative thinking skills, build their personal and social capability and gain ethical and intercultural understanding (Catling, Willy & Butler, 2013; Reynolds, 2014).

2.4.1 Theoretical Basis of the Inquiry-Based Teaching Approach

Inquiry-based teaching is a well-established pedagogical approach that supports an integrated, holistic curriculum. Its premise lies in the constructivist and social constructivist philosophies, situated between teacher-led and child-centred or child-directed teaching and learning (Hill, Stremmel, & Fu, 2005).

Many theorists' views of teaching and learning espouse the benefits of inquiry learning and play-based education. For example, educational theorists John Dewey, Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner, who advocated a constructivist approach to teaching and learning, viewed investigative play as a product of assimilation and recognised that high value play and investigation leads to intellectual development (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016).

According to Dewey, the context of the learning must be meaningful, relevant and necessary to children, since they learn best through direct experience and cultivation of their natural curiosities about the world in which they live. While knowledge is acquired through everyday experiences, inquiry can arise from doubt or cognitive dissonance, and when coupled with reflection, leads to meaning making and understanding (Reynolds, 2014).

Piaget observed children learn through action, exploration, experimentation and problem solving. They apply their knowledge through practice and repetition until they achieve mastery, and as they mature, move from concrete to abstract reasoning (Hill et al., 2005). From a social constructivist perspective, children's interests, cultural perspectives and needs must also be taken into account when providing meaningful learning opportunities in educational approaches such as inquiry-based learning (Hill et al., 2005; Briggs & Hansen, 2012).

A study conducted by Beneke and Ostrosky (2015), titled *Effects of the Project Approach on Preschoolers with Diverse Needs,* found when children engage in project work there is a more common focus, increased motivation, and more opportunities for

conversation through joint planning, discussion, investigation and construction. During this mixed-method study, the qualitative data collected mid-way through the investigation revealed positive changes in the play and behaviour of all six participants' students in early childhood settings following introduction of project work (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2015).

In WA, SCSA views education in the early years as a time for children to not only develop the foundations for academic success, but also to enhance their social and emotional development. With this support children acquire and build strong relationships; work collaboratively with others; partake in problem solving and academic risk taking; and develop their sense of agency and self worth (SCSA, 2015c).

In the early years of schooling, SCSA recommends a holistic curriculum that provides experiences which integrate knowledge and understandings, as well as developing skills and values across all learning areas (SCSA, 2015c). SCSA also acknowledges the need for an emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes; however, recommended this be achieved through a holistic approach to learning where key ideas and concepts in a range of learning areas are presented in phase-appropriate ways (SCSA, 2015c).

Although the national curriculum is pedagogically free, an integrated, inquiry approach is a possibility for teaching the WA HASS Curriculum. HASS Inquiry Skills are developed through teacher-directed and student-centred learning experiences. Through inquiry, students have an opportunity to pose questions, investigate a variety of sources and analyse their findings with increasing initiative and expertise in order to communicate their findings to others (SCSA, 2014e).

For an inquiry-based curriculum to be employed effectively early childhood teachers need a broad subject-knowledge base to provide challenging experiences that promote high-level thinking skills. Hedges and Cullen (2005) believed there is a place for subject knowledge in early childhood education when considered from a sociocultural perspective. They acknowledged successful teaching and learning occurs when teachers' subject knowledge contributes to effective, age-appropriate pedagogical strategies that create more meaningful learning experiences for children (Hedges & Cullen, 2005). Early childhood teachers have a responsibility to the children they teach, and by possessing a broad subject knowledge base, can create opportunities to extend learning and foster a love of learning (Pramling Samuelsson, & Kaga, 2008).

2.5 Summary

The information in this chapter presented a contextual background for the study. The information covered a brief history of early childhood education in WA, contemporary early childhood education reforms, a brief history of HASS education in WA, an outline of the new WA HASS Curriculum and finally, an brief overview of inquiry-based teaching as an approach for addressing the WA HASS Inquiry Skills. The following chapter presents an overview of the literature reviewed for this study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the literature review is presented in four key areas. Firstly, the evolution of the WA HASS Curriculum is examined with reference to the research on draft curricula. The second key area focuses on early childhood teaching strategies for the HASS Curriculum in an early childhood context, such as play-based learning, inquiry-based teaching and integration. The third covers recent research related to leadership styles in the compulsory early years of schooling, PP to Y2, with particular attention to research on leadership approaches that can help or hinder teachers' abilities to implement new curricula. Reference is also made to research regarding leadership decisions, such as timetabling, budget, assessment and reporting. Finally, the importance of teacher preparation for curriculum change is discussed, for example, professional learning, unpacking and understanding new curriculum documents, collaboration and the importance of sound content knowledge.

3.2 Evolution of the Western Australian HASS Curriculum

Since inception the Australian Curriculum has evolved through many stages. Each stage produced a number of draft documents created for consultation, discussion and improvement through rewrites and updates. The Australian Curriculum was created in 2008, after all Australian Education Ministers agreed that a high-class curriculum was required to increase the educational outcomes of all students and better prepare future generations for an ever changing and increasingly globalised world (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011). However, Luke's (2010) early review of the draft Australian Curriculum questioned whether this new national curriculum would in fact lead to preparing students for 21st century challenges and expectations. Luke (2010) was concerned that the curriculum did not take into account current research related to effective pedagogical practices and creating autonomous learners. Nevertheless, it was hoped that the new Australian Curriculum would "up the intellectual ante and educational bar" (Luke, 2010, p. 7) in Australian schools.

HASS was one of the learning areas included in the Australian Curriculum. During establishment, the subject areas (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business) were designed as separate curricula. However, in 2014, after receiving feedback to a study conducted by ACARA, it was decided to combine these subjects and create one HASS Curriculum learning area in order to mitigate concerns about an overcrowded curriculum (ACARA, 2015). The respondents were generally supportive of

the HASS Curriculum redesign, however, requested improvements to the inquiry, skills and year level descriptions that support opportunities for integration in order to meet all the HASS outcomes (ACARA, 2015).

Prior to ACARA's decision to combine HASS subjects, a number of studies had investigated the draft history and geography curriculum documents. Green, Reitano and Dixon's (2010) report on the first draft of the history learning area in the Australian Curriculum found a shortage of guidance for teachers related to new and unfamiliar terminology, as well as the structure of the history curriculum strands. They also found some inadequacies when comparing the history content to the New South Wales Human Society and Its Environment syllabus, better known as HSIE. The researchers believed these inadequacies would lead to confusion and uncertainty around the content and implementation of the subject matter (Green et al., 2010). However, Hollis and Ybarlucea's (2015) review of the draft geography curriculum in the early years of education found the document offered an organised way of exploring concepts such as place and space at a personal level in the curriculum strands (Hollis & Ybarlucea, 2015). Nevertheless, various geography associations in Australia raised concerns about certain inclusions and exclusions in the geography curriculum (Maude, 2014).

Seven concepts are studied in the geography strand: place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change. Maude (2014) proposed the definitions of these concepts posed a major issue and believed there was still a way to go with academic geography. However, Maude's (2014) review concluded that the geography curriculum was fundamentally sound, with a strong conceptual foundation and emphasis on geographical knowledge and skills that can be applied in a variety of interesting ways.

Similarly, Casinader (2016) investigated the future of geography in Australian primary schools. This multiple case study included semi-structured interviews and document analysis involving three schools. The focus of the project was on the attitudes of the social science teachers and school leadership involved in teaching geography. The findings raised concerns about the lack of rich content knowledge in the geography curriculum and sound pedagogical knowledge for the subject. Merging these subjects to create the HASS Curriculum had the potential to further exacerbate the situation (Casinader, 2016).

In 2015, ACARA conducted mixed method research on the changes to various draft documents for learning areas in the Australian Curriculum F-10 (Foundation to Year 10), with the aim of addressing issues such as overcrowding in the primary years. Quantitative data were collected via eight online surveys, while qualitative data were derived from both written

submissions to ACARA and a space provided for comments in the online survey (ACARA, 2015). The quantitative data elicited 271 responses from teachers and educational leaders across eight online surveys. In addition, 24 written submissions were received from state and territory education authorities, professional teacher associations, schools and individuals (ACARA, 2015). Opinions were varied about the draft changes to content descriptions and achievement standards (ACARA, 2015).

Respondents were supportive of the curriculum redesign for the HASS Curriculum from Foundation to year six, however, requested increased clarity with regard to inquiry and skills, year level descriptions and key inquiry questions (ACARA, 2015). They also highlighted concerns about overcrowding the curriculum, but acknowledged that the combined HASS curriculum provided a more practical view of curriculum delivery in the primary years (ACARA, 2015). Although the use of one statement for the proposed achievement standard in HASS was considered unwieldy, there was general agreement that one, rather than four separate statements, would address the issue of overcrowding (ACARA, 2015). One way of mitigating overcrowding was to integrate the learning content in the WA HASS Curriculum and other learning areas. The following section presents an overview of the literature related to an integrated teaching approach.

3.3 Integrated Teaching Research

An integrated teaching approach has the ability to address issues and challenges related to teaching a large curriculum, where an excess of content and skills is required to be taught to students in the primary years of schooling (Boyle & Bragg 2008). Since the HASS Curriculum comprises two integrated strands, an examination of the recent educational research on this strategy is relevant to understand the advantages and implications of an integrated teaching approach.

A review of the Australian Curriculum (Australian Government Department of Education, 2011) highlighted an excessive amount of content in the learning areas taught in the primary school years and raised concerns about an overcrowded curriculum. The reviewers reported the lack of integration of subjects, especially in the HASS Curriculum, had exacerbated the issue of overcrowding and increased the workload for teachers (Australian Government Department of Education, 2011). The WA Curriculum, an approved alternative to the Australian Curriculum, posed the same issues and challenges for teachers. The Australian Primary Principal Association (APPA) responded to the review of the Australian Curriculum with a call for ACARA to address pedagogy as well as curriculum

content. The APPA believed ACARA needed to provide further guidance with regard to implementing an integrated, holistic approach (APPA, 2014).

Integrated teaching is referred to by several terms, such as cross-curriculum, interdisciplinary, blended learning and multi-disciplinary integration. The Department of Education and Training, WA (2011) promotes integrated learning for laying the future foundations of learning by building on children's prior knowledge and learning experiences. In the early years, children's learning is integrated and experiential by nature, until they reach formal schooling where the curriculum is organised into learning areas (Department of Education and Training, Western Australia, 2011). Supporting integration in the early years of schooling assists children to be socially competent by providing opportunities for collaborative learning experiences. Setting up learning spaces with appropriately resourced materials also ensures children have enough time for deeper learning and completion of activities (Department of Education and Training, Western Australia, 2011).

The professional demands of planning, teaching and assessment pose significant challenges for teachers. The assumption that teachers can seamlessly make connections between concepts and subject areas is questionable, because successful integration depends on teachers' knowledge, personal motivation and epistemological commitment (Parker, Heywood & Jolley, 2011). A small-scale mixed method study by Parker et al. (2011) investigated the perceptions of postgraduate pre-service teachers who were studying a primary school education specialisation. Out of 112 participant responses to a questionnaire in the initial phase of the study, 92% claimed a positive view of cross-curricula integration. While 14% of respondents professed to have substantial experience in integration, 75% stated they had no experience with this teaching strategy. The second phase of the study involved ten participants from the first phase and entailed a three-hour workshop "in which art and science were combined to incorporate the interdisciplinary dimension of linking two subjects to develop conceptual insight into the properties of materials" (Parker et al., 2011). The workshop was followed by a focus group discussion with the ten participants, from which the researchers identified three key themes. The first theme related to student motivation and intrinsic appeal, based on the notion that cross curricula approaches have the capacity to be more engaging due to increased relevance of the topics and links to real-life situations. The second theme was meaningful learning, which follows the ability of teachers to make connections between the subjects and real-life situations. The final theme related to developing criticality. Participants' responses revealed although they believed a cross-curricula approach was beneficial, it is more problematic than teaching subjects discretely. A cross-curricula approach places more complex demands on teachers'

pedagogical beliefs and content knowledge, which, through critical reflection and experience, can build teachers' capacity for successful implementation of an integrated approach to teaching and learning (Parker et al., 2011).

Catling's (2017) investigation examined the factors that constitute high-quality teaching in primary humanities across the United Kingdom through a review of UK school inspectorate reports. Analysis of these reports led Catling (2017) to conclude that the most effective humanities curricula are based on subject and cross-subject connections; and most effective teachers make learning visible, are flexible and enthusiastic, and display a commitment to teaching humanities subjects. Access to a wide variety of resources and sources was also deemed an important aspect for successful integration of humanities learning experiences (Catling, 2017).

As suggested by Hinde (2005), the social sciences struggle for visibility in schools. In WA schooling from PP to Y2, teachers currently need to address 83 outcomes, and according to Hinde (2005) there is simply not enough time to teach the humanities in an overcrowded curriculum. Her study also identified the issue of overcrowded curricula and she recommended integrated learning areas as a solution for teachers. Integration is not a new phenomenon, and as with the theoretical position of this investigation, has its roots in a social constructivist paradigm. Dewey (1859-1952) established the idea of an integrated curriculum in the 1890's and early 1900's as a vital element for effective pedagogy (Hinde, 2005). Parker (2005, cited in Hinde, 2005) described integration as a curriculum approach that purposefully draws together knowledge, perspectives and methods of inquiry from more than one discipline to develop a more powerful understanding of a central idea, issue, person or event. The purpose is not to eliminate individual disciplines but to use them in combination (p. 106).

Hinde's (2005) statement supports the analysis of The Rose Review of the English primary curriculum. In that review, Duncan (2010) proposed opening up curriculum programs to embrace a richer, more spacious curriculum that allowed greater scope for new, more flexible forms of teaching and learning.

Whilst there is support for an integrative approach to teaching and learning in the literature, Scoffam had an opposing view of integrated learning areas. In his qualitative study, Scoffham (2013) claimed the participating teachers found integration difficult to manage and suggested this approach takes time to develop and nurture. However, Hinde (2005) argued that the effectiveness of integration, as well as the more traditional, segregated approach, relies entirely on the expertise and content knowledge of the teacher.

Parker (2005) supported this view of effective integration and claimed that knowing when and how to separate or integrate topics is a major feature of skilful teaching (cited in Hinde, 2005).

As previously mentioned, an integrated teaching approach has the ability to meet the outcomes of an overcrowded curriculum, like the WA Curriculum and Assessment Outline. Not only is an integrated approach recommended for teaching the two interrelated strands of Knowledge and Understanding and HASS Skills in the WA HASS Curriculum, it is also an inquiry-based teaching approach to HASS Skills for a deeper understanding of the content. The following section examines current research into the inquiry-based teaching approach.

3.4 Inquiry-Based Teaching Research

Inquiry-based teaching (IBT) is a major strategy in the new WA HASS Curriculum for HASS Skills and has gained popularity in primary school classes (Preston, Harvie, & Wallace, 2015). Preston et al. (2015) discovered a paucity of research on inquiry approaches in the humanities learning area, but did find research related to IBT in other learning areas, such as science. With the increased importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in Australian schools, the research pertaining to these subjects has expanded (Garnett & Blagaich, 2016).

Preston et al. (2015) conducted mixed method research focused on pre-service teachers' knowledge and confidence in using IBT in a HASS lesson. The research was conducted with fourth-year pre-service teachers at a university in Victoria, Australia. Data were collected via two surveys and a number of assessment tasks after the participants had attended a series of lectures and workshops. Pre-service teachers were presented with a five-week simulation of a HASS geography concept in a fictional place, where the assessment task required immersing them in an inquiry approach to gain further insights. The purpose of the surveys; one before the simulation and one at its conclusion, was to examine pre-service teachers' conceptions and perceptions of the IBT approach. The findings from the second survey indicated an improvement in pre-service teachers' confidence in inquiry pedagogy, with 93% of respondents providing a positive response to the survey questions. Participants' written responses showed the five-week simulation had helped them to understand inquiry pedagogy and gain confidence using this approach. However, the researchers acknowledged that increased confidence is not necessarily linked to improved professional practice (Preston et al., 2015) and recommended further research and instruction to verify claims of success.

Although IBT is gaining popularity and features in the WA Science, HASS and Technology curricula, there are a number of challenges related to this teaching strategy. In a longitudinal, iterative research project by Edelson, Gordin and Pea (2011), the researchers reported that inquiry pedagogy can provide a valuable context for students to develop skills, such as questioning, research and application for understanding science concepts. IBT also provides opportunities for active, rather than passive learning. The researchers identified five key factors for successful implementation. The first was motivation; necessary for students to engage in an inquiry. The second was accessibility of investigative techniques, that is, students require training and opportunities to develop inquiry skills. The third factor was linked to students' background knowledge of the concepts presented to them in order to formulate questions, conduct research and analyse their findings, thereby developing their knowledge and understanding. The fourth factor was managing extended activities. If students are unable to organise their work they cannot engage in open-ended inquiry or achieve the potential for inquiry-based learning. The final factor related to the practical constraints of the learning context. For example, teachers need to be realistic about the restrictions imposed on them, such as timetabling, lack of resources and the learning environment (Edelson et al., 2011).

In their efforts to address these factors the researchers designed a software program with a variety of strategies for teachers, including creating meaningful problems that matter to students; staging activities that introduce students to inquiry-based learning techniques; and bridging activities to close the gap between students' knowledge and what they need to learn. Other strategies included embedding information sources to provide students with the necessary links and resources required for investigation, and record-keeping tools to organise their findings and assist with analysis (Edelson et al., 2011). The research that was conducted with the software found many of the teacher participants had difficulty accessing and using it, and Edelson et al., (2011) subsequently determined that further research was necessary to overcome these issues with the IBT software.

Hollingsworth and Vandermass-Peeler (2017) also conducted a mixed method study investigating preschool teachers' efficacy and pedagogical inquiry knowledge for teaching science in an early childhood context. The first part of their investigation entailed a survey to determine early childhood teachers' efficacy for teaching science using inquiry strategies. Fifty-one teachers completed the survey. Of these, 25% demonstrated knowledge of most steps in the inquiry process, 27% demonstrated some knowledge of the steps and 47% indicated no understanding of IBT strategies (Hollingsworth & Vandermass-Peeler, 2017). The second part of the study entailed a small group of early childhood teachers attending an

intensive workshop on IBT strategies in order to provide them with the knowledge and skills to successfully implement IBT. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers after they had implemented an inquiry approach in their classrooms, with the aim of determining their daily practices, knowledge of IBT processes, and ability to teach inquiry in science and other learning areas. The findings revealed the early childhood teachers provided many opportunities for investigation in their classes; however, there was no evidence of a full inquiry cycle. As a result, the researchers concluded that additional professional learning and support were required to ensure teachers' understanding and implementation of integrated, mature inquiries in future classroom activities (Hollingsworth & Vandermass-Peeler, 2017).

Pozuelos, González and de León (2010) found similar results in their qualitative research comprised of case studies in two primary schools in Spain. The aim of the project was to discover the perceptions, obstacles and facilitative influences that impacted on teachers' attempts to introduce an inquiry-based teaching approach with their students (Pozuelos et al., 2010). One of the difficulties encountered was a lack of time for creating suitable materials and resources to deal with inquiries in their classrooms. Other impediments included fixed timetabling in the schools, and the directive for teachers to teach specific subject content across each year level. Participants' lack of familiarity with IBT strategies was also a significant impediment; the researchers concluding that with little experience in IBT it was unlikely this teaching strategy would be adopted when there are "concomitant feelings of risk-taking and uncertainty" (Pozuelos et al., p. 138). Another obstacle identified in the research related to educational policies. Participants explained that despite the support of verifiable research and initiatives, educational authorities were not inclined to promote educational change in the classroom. They determined that further research was necessary to address the issues raised; in particular, the hierarchical relationships that influence teachers' professional learning of IBT pedagogies (Pozuelos et al., 2010).

Educational researchers at a Taiwanese university also conducted research on IBT strategies, however, this was conducted with primary students in the sixth grade. The aim of the study was to explore how these students developed the necessary inquiry skills to provide explanations for the phenomena they investigated (Wu, & Hsieh, 2006). The researchers devised a series of inquiry-based learning experiences with four specific inquiry skills deemed most relevant to students' construction of knowledge. Extensive qualitative data were collected from 58 students in two classes. The results showed significant improvements in students' inquiry skills after they had participated in the inquiry-based

experiences, however, their competency levels across these skills varied. For example, students demonstrated significant progress in their questioning and research inquiry skills, but less improvement in analysing and explaining the data they had collected. The researchers concluded that more scaffolding from teachers and more knowledgeable others were required for students to develop inquiry skills such as formulating questions, researching, evaluating data and communicating their understandings and new knowledge (Wu & Hsieh, 2006).

A number of teaching approaches are used in the compulsory early years of schooling. Having examined an integrated teaching approach and IBT, the following section looks at play-based pedagogical practices recommended by the Department of Education and Training, Western Australia (2011) for these year levels and embedded in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009).

3.5 Play-Based Teaching in Pre-Primary to Year Two Classrooms

Play-based learning in early childhood education has the capacity to build children's knowledge base. Discourse during play assists knowledge construction and an ability to create complex ideas for assisting cognitive processes. The foundations of critical thinking and metacognition are developed through play, dialogue, participation and investigation, and such a pedagogical approach guides children towards deeper understanding as well as fostering their disposition for learning (Hedges & Cullen, 2012). Since the content of the HASS Curriculum in the compulsory early years of schooling (PP to Y2) relates to the child, their relationships and their world, play-based learning provides another medium for deeper learning and understanding through opportunities to actively engage with people, the environment and artefacts (SCSA, 2014e). The following section outlines the current research on a universal teaching approach in early childhood education known as play-based teaching.

There is a plethora of research about the benefits and implications of play-based pedagogy in early childhood education. The Australian Early Years Learning Framework: Belonging, Being, Becoming (DDEWR, 2009) espouses the benefits of play for developing problem-solving skills, questioning, critical thinking and engagement for building new understandings. Early childhood teachers can employ a number of strategies to promote play, but the learning environment must be supportive, stimulating and inviting to actively engage all children. A balance of play-based experiences, led by the educator as well as the child, has the capacity to provide early childhood teachers with deeper insights into

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children's knowledge about themselves, their connections and the world they live in (DEEWR, 2009).

Recent research and education initiatives in early childhood education in the United Kingdom led to an investigation within the Learners, Learning and Teaching Network in Scotland. The aim of the study was to examine the experiences and perspectives of six Year One primary school classes that were child-centred and play-focused. It is important to note that in Scotland play-based pedagogy is commonly referred to as Active Learning (Martlew, Stephen & Ellis, 2011). Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with the teachers in six Year One classes. In addition, teachers were invited to share assessment data they had gathered, such as artefacts, photographs, classroom observations and programmed experiences. Targeted observations in the classroom were also undertaken on four separate occasions during the year (Martlew et al., 2011). The findings from the study indicated that all six teachers demonstrated a positive disposition to Active Learning in their classrooms. The early childhood teachers believed the children were more actively engaged and able to learn at a faster rate; they also found the play-based approach encouraged independence and confidence in the children.

Despite these positive outcomes, the teachers in the study articulated a number of challenges that came with an Active Learning approach. One concern related to authentic evidence of children's learning, especially after moving away from worksheets and workbooks. To overcome this problem, teachers devised other methods and sources for assessment, such as photographs, creating big books and constructing student-learning journals (Martlew et al., 2011). Another challenge was the organisation of the school day. Teachers found it difficult to address subject-specific content and outcomes without a structured timetable. However, they gradually came to realise that reorganising the timetable and adjusting their thinking about structured lesson times in fact allowed more time for teachers to interact with students and provide a variety of integrated experiences that also addressed the prescribed content and outcomes (Martlew et al., 2011).

The researchers acknowledged that an Active Learning approach could present difficulties for early childhood teachers who were more familiar with a structured approach, and expressed concerns about accountability and meeting school targets. However, they also believed these difficulties could be overcome by enhancing teachers' own self-efficacy and trusting their own knowledge of child development and the ways in which young children learn. Martlew et al. (2011) concluded there was a need for further research in this field to

determine the effects of an Active Learning approach on children's learning in the early years of schooling and its impact on future primary school success.

Jay and Knaus (2018) found similar challenges for early childhood teachers in adopting a play-based teaching approach. These researchers investigated current issues impacting lower primary school teachers' pedagogy and practice in relation to the use of a play-based approach for engaging children in learning (Jay & Knaus, 2018). The participants were from one metropolitan WA school and included seven part-time or full-time teachers of a Year One or Year Two class, as well as the principal and deputy principal. A qualitative case study methodology was used to describe and interpret participants' views and experiences of embedding a play-based learning approach in the WA Curriculum.

In this investigation, Jay and Knaus (2018) identified supports and challenges in implementing a play-based learning approach in Year One and Two classrooms. Supportive measures, such as "teacher mentorship; the formation of collaborative year level teams… [and] weekly collaborative team meetings" (p.123) were strong features of the school culture. Several challenges were also identified. The first related to the availability and use of resources in a play-based approach. Many participants stated that acquiring suitable resources for this approach required additional time for sourcing, managing, creating, storing and organising. Teachers also reported spending their own money on resources that were not available to them. The second challenge identified the time required to implement a play-based approach. Some participants claimed that, unlike more structured lessons, play-based learning activities took more time to organise and implement (Jay and Knaus, 2018).

The third challenge included factors such as environment, the curriculum and reporting requirements. The lack of available space in traditional classrooms is a potential issue for implementing play-based activities. Setting up "play" areas in the classrooms, such as dramatic play learning centres, requires a significant amount of room that may not be available. Increased noise as a result of engaging in play-based activities can also affect surrounding classrooms and prove to be disturbance for teachers (Jay & Knaus, 2018). An overcrowded curriculum and the pressure of assessment requirements were two other factors identified by the Year One and Two teachers when trying to embed a play-based approach. The teachers met to discuss and address these problems based on suggestions from the Australian Primary Principals Association 2014 position paper. They considered a variety of approaches that met the mandated curriculum content while also taking into consideration the rights of the child, their development and well-being – factors that would enable them to engage in a play-based learning program (Jay & Knaus, 2018). In the

compulsory early years of schooling, the WA HASS Curriculum advises teachers to provide a range of experiences and hands-on resources, such as an integrated, play-based teaching approach to help alleviate the issue of a full curriculum (SCSA, 2014e).

After analysis of the data collected, Jay and Knaus (2018) made a number of recommendations for embedding play-based learning in the WA Curriculum in Year One and Two classrooms, for example, providing appropriate resources, adequate time and space for implementing a play-based approach. They also suggested opportunities for teachers to visit other classrooms and schools for collaborative discussion of strategies and ideas. Finally, engaging in professional learning and reflective practice on embedding a play-based approach in the early years of school were also recommended (Jay & Knaus, 2018).

Nolan and Paatsch's (2018) research in a Catholic school in Victoria, Australia, found comparable findings to Jay and Knaus' (2018) study. Their investigation looked at the implementation of a play-based approach to learning in two foundation (pre-primary) classrooms. Nationally, the foundation year is the first formal year of schooling in Australia (ACARA, 2016). The researchers employed a qualitative approach to collect data via group interviews with the two foundation teachers in the school and the Early Years Coordinator on three separate occasions during the year. Two 2-hour long observations in the classrooms, and photographs of the resources and planning documents supplemented the interview data (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018).

Like Jay and Knaus (2018), Nolan and Paatsch (2018) highlighted the need for foundation teachers to adapt their teaching practices and learning environments. For example, room organisation was an ongoing challenge and required the foundation teachers to consider the available space to meet the aims of their play-based learning programs. The availability of resources was another barrier; participants stated they needed more time and funds to gather suitable resources for successful implementation of their play-based learning programs (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018).

Physical resources were not the only difficulties faced by participants; professional identity, accountability and legitimisation within the wider school circle also created tensions for foundation teachers. With regard to accountability, both teachers reported struggling with the need to meet the mandated curriculum outcomes, whilst simultaneously providing a play-based program. Oftentimes the foundation teachers appeared to view the learning that occurred in play as separate from the learning that occurred in other planned activities (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018). They also expressed feeling a need to justify their play-based approach to colleagues, and were of the view that higher-grade teachers did not understand

or appreciate the legitimate learning that occurred. They believed there was a lack of respect for implementing this pedagogical approach. To try and overcome this, the Early Years Coordinator stated they did not use the word "play" in order to avoid any misunderstandings; instead, the term "discovery learning" was used to legitimise a play-based approach (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018). Misconceptions regarding the value of play were also present in Martlew et al's (2011) investigation in Scotland, where the term "Active Learning" was coined to strengthen perceptions of this approach.

Due to the rationale and aims of the new WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2, a play-based approach could be viewed as a legitimate approach for addressing the HASS content and skills. By providing hands-on resources and experiences with a variety of sources, such as dramatic play centres, old toys, puzzles, blocks etc., young students can actively engage in experiences for a deeper understanding.

Early childhood teachers encounter many opposing views and pressures regarding effective and appropriate pedagogical approaches. The research reviewed in this section on a play-based teaching approach demonstrates that, despite acknowledging the benefits of this strategy, early childhood practitioners face significant challenges with implementation.

3.6 Teacher Preparation for New Curricula

Modifications to education reforms and curricula signal an expected commitment from school leaders and teachers to read, interpret and understand how these changes will affect their planning, assessment and reporting practices. The following section reviews the research on the types of preparation undertaken by teachers to understand and implement new curriculum reforms.

3.6.1 Professional Learning for Curriculum Change

In an increasingly digital world, access to mandated curricula and education policies in Australia is now entirely online. School leaders and teachers are responsible for interpreting and implementing currently mandated educational requirements (ACARA, 2015). Effective school leaders provide assistance to teachers through discussion, collaboration and professional learning to understand the rationale, aims and outcomes of new curriculum documents (AITSL, 2017).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) states professional learning is an essential component for teachers' understanding of curriculum reforms (2017). Professional learning also supports teachers in adopting effective teaching strategies for successful curriculum implementation (AITSL, 2017). Henderson's (2012)

mixed method study, undertaken with secondary social science pre-service teachers at Queensland University of Technology investigated the preparation of pre-service teachers for curriculum change. The study found access to quality professional learning crucial, especially for novice teachers, to navigate continual curriculum changes. The research concluded that novice teachers' experiences are varied, and access to exceptional professional learning can help guide the implementation of new curricula.

Unfortunately, opportunities for quality professional learning are not always assured. After investigating the three WA education sector websites in 2016, namely the Western Australian Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools (AISWA) and the Department of Education WA, it appeared that access to professional learning opportunities for the WA HASS curriculum were scarce. AISWA provided two workshops on the HASS curriculum in 2016, both open to members and non-members, as well as some workshops in regional areas. AISWA also made available Curriculum Consultants for members to contact for support (AISWA, n.d). The Geographical Association of Western Australia (GAWA) and the History Teachers' Association of Western Australia (HTWA) also provided professional learning, however, these workshops pertained to their specialised subjects. It should also be noted that both associations offered their members digital resources to assist with understanding curriculum content.

Constant changes to the curriculum can be challenging for teachers and school leaders. Dilkes, Cunningham and Gray's (2014) intuitive inquiry investigated the notion of "curriculum fatigue" due to the number of education reforms and curriculum changes experienced by WA teachers. The study found there was a need for increased support and better management of curriculum change to avoid eroding teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction. They recommended support, such as professional learning, to provide teachers with the knowledge they needed for successful implementation.

In 2015, Harte and Reitano conducted a mixed method research project that investigated the confidence of pre-service teachers in Queensland to teach geographical content knowledge, and their ability to teach the proposed geographical skills in the HASS Curriculum. The researchers found intense engagement in professional learning and microteaching increased pre-service teachers' confidence to teach the subject (Hart & Reitano, 2015).

McCormick and Ayres (2009) investigated teacher self-efficacy and occupational stress related to curriculum reform and also recommended professional learning to assist teachers with effective implementation of new curricula. They proposed a staged approach

to implementing new curricula, whereby school leaders and teachers had an opportunity to unpack the curriculum through collaboration and consultation for deeper understanding of the new requirements (McCormick & Ayres, 2009).

3.7 A Collaborative Approach to Curriculum Change

Although existing research highlights the importance of engaging in professional learning to comprehend new curricula, Graham (2007) believed a collaborative approach was equally important for clearer understanding. Individual commitment and engagement in a collaborative process allows teachers, leaders and schools to create an environment that supports change. As previously stated, the new WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2 includes two subject areas (history and geography) as well as two strands (Knowledge and Understanding and HASS Skills). In such a complex learning area, collaboration can help support teachers to better understand the curriculum.

Voogt, Pieters and Handelzalts (2016) also proposed a collaborative approach for successful understanding of the content and requirements of new curriculum documents. Through collaboration, teachers develop a sense of agency or ownership of the change, and have an opportunity to discuss, practice and develop a vision for implementing new curricula in their classrooms (Voogt, Pieters and Handelzalts, 2016).

School leaders and teachers can be successful contributors to change through collaboration, innovation and commitment. Adamson and Yin (2008) believed collaboration provides a safe environment for unpacking new curricula through an open forum, in addition to a supportive environment that encourages risk taking and growth for assisting understanding of new curriculum materials (Adamson & Yin, 2008).

Professional learning communities (PLC) in schools have recently gained popularity as an effective collaborative approach for school leaders and teachers to meet their professional obligations. AITSL (2017) described PLCs as a collaborative approach for sharing ideas and ongoing critical reflection of teaching practices in line with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). In a mixed method study conducted by Schaap and de Bruijn (2016) a PLC is defined as generally facilitated by the school principal and comprised of teachers and leaders in the school. The rationale for creating a PLC is to address significant school policies and practices. Findings from the study suggest commitment from school leaders and teachers requires reflective dialogue and ownership for a PLC to flourish (Schaap & de Bruijn, 2016).

In conclusion, both professional learning and collaboration are emphasised as essential elements for preparing teachers to implement new curricula. The research also highlighted the impact of school leadership through the provision of professional learning and collaboration within the school community.

The following section highlights the roles and responsibilities of primary school leaders and how they can best serve early childhood teachers from PP to Y2 in WA schools.

3.8 Effective School Leadership in the Compulsory Early Years: Pre-Primary to Year Two

When implementing new curricula, school leaders make decisions that can directly affect teachers and students. School leaders have a responsibility to be knowledgeable about changes to education policies and curricula and support their teachers' understanding of the requirements and expectations (Teaching Australia, 2007). Waniganayake and Semann (2011) believed effective school leaders should possess a strong sense of themselves and have an ability to demonstrate sound knowledge of "best practice" in the various phases of schooling, including early childhood pedagogy. Effective leaders work with teachers to design appropriate programs that not only meet mandated requirements, but also the needs of every child (Rodd, 2006).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) outlines the necessary components for effective leadership. Since 2011, AITSL has provided a statement that Australian school principals are expected to understand, know and carry out, whilst ensuring their leadership has a positive overall effect on their school communities. The Leadership Standard is applicable to all principals and is based on four requirements: vision and values; knowledge and understandings; personal qualities; and interpersonal skills (AITSL, 2017). School principals can adopt a number of styles or leadership approaches. The following section outlines leadership in early childhood settings, providing a description of the four leadership styles available to school principals, and the roles and responsibilities of primary school leaders in making decisions.

3.8.1 A Recent Review of School Leadership in Australian Schools

A recent review panel, chaired by David Gonski AC, was tasked to write a report for the *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*. Established in 2017, the panel examined the evidence and made recommendations for using school funding to improve student outcomes and the overall performance of schools. The report has colloquially become known as Gonski 2.0, a title coined by the Australian media in reference to the initial *Review of Funding for Schooling,* also chaired by Gonski in 2010.

The reference to Gonski 2.0 in this thesis is necessary due to the findings and recommendations suggested by the review panel for empowering and supporting Australian school leaders (Department of Education and Training, 2018).

In the 21st century, the role of school leaders is to inspire the entire school community. It is important for school leaders to continually strive to understand and enhance their impact on their schools (AITSL, 2014). The principal has responsibility for lead teachers in a number of areas, including the enactment of new learning areas, such as the WA HASS Curriculum. Gonski et al. (Department of Education and Training, 2018, p. xiv) made the following recommendations for effective leadership:

> Provide school leaders with access to a variety of professional learning opportunities appropriate to their career stage and development needs and recognise and harness the skills and experience of high-performing principals by enabling them to share their expertise across schools and throughout the system.

The findings and recommendations of Gonski 2.0 could be viewed as timely, particularly in relation to school leaders' effective support of early childhood staff with the implementation of new curricula. For example, leaders with a thorough understanding of the new WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2 could potentially provide early childhood teachers with the necessary support and guidance to successfully enact this new learning area.

3.8.2 Early Childhood Leadership in Schools

The early years of schooling in WA include kindergarten to year two. These years span half the primary years, which is why primary school leaders play a critical role in supporting early childhood teachers in these groups. While early childhood teachers have expertise and knowledge of child development and appropriate early childhood pedagogy, the school principal is responsible for ensuring continuity and cohesiveness in the educational programs across these years as well as the early years within their whole-school plans (O'Neill, 2011). O'Neill (2011) believed that neglecting the integration of an early years' perspective in whole-school planning deprives the school of essential input from early childhood teachers who provide the "critical building blocks for student success in the later years" (p. 4). To ensure children receive access to quality education it is necessary to consider learning spaces, resources, classroom budgets and staff culture, and school leaders can work collaboratively with teachers to ensure these provisions are met. Early childhood teachers are tasked with being strong advocates for children and families in their

classrooms and for all stakeholders in the school community. By adopting effective strategies, leaders can help build competent staff who are able to achieve good educational outcomes for all students (AITSL, 2017).

Campbell-Evans, Stamopolous and Maloney (2014) claimed that building leadership capacity has become a fundamental concern within the early childhood sector. Since the latest Australian educational reforms were introduced to raise educational standards and improve the quality of early childhood education, Campbell-Evans et al., (2014) identified a need for changes in tertiary training to build early childhood leadership capacity in school settings (p. 42). A small qualitative study by Campbell-Evans et al. (2014) investigated building leadership capacity in early childhood education. The study involved eight experienced early childhood teachers working in urban WA schools and enrolled in a postgraduate leadership unit at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. Participants were tasked with developing an action research project to explore leadership issues within an area of their work with families and communities. They identified three qualities that effective leaders need to possess: trustworthiness, approachability and empathy. Two key challenges emerged from the data, namely school infrastructure and building genuine and authentic partnerships with families and the community (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014). With regard to authentic partnerships, participants highlighted engaging parents and the community that go beyond being a mere "classroom helper". However, building relationships and authentic communication channels to encourage parent participation has proven difficult. Lack of time and the high expectations of parents were identified as problematic (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014). The second key challenge was related to school infrastructure and identified a lack of opportunities and support for early childhood teachers to assume leadership roles. In most cases, the leadership roles in the participants' schools were held by teachers in the upper primary school years, and as a result, rather than focusing on leadership roles they remained focused on the classroom and building relationships within (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014).

This study led the researchers to conclude that a redesign of tertiary early education courses was necessary to acknowledge the changing landscape of early childhood education in Australia. Early childhood teachers needed to recognise that leadership should not just be defined by authority and positional power, but should become an integral part of their own professional identity and responsibility (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014). The second recommendation was for early childhood university pre-service teachers to acquire an understanding of the multi-disciplinary role of the teaching profession, to provide them with

the experience and skills required to work with parents, staff and other professionals, and foster a clear understanding of leadership (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014).

3.8.3 Leadership Styles

AITSL (2017) defined the school principal as the lead educator, responsible for the development of children and young people so that they can become "successful learners, confident creative individuals and active informed citizens" (MCEETYA, 2008). Cunningham (2014) stated that decision-making is a key role of educational leaders in a "complex structural organisation such as school" (p 11). Cunningham (2014) explained that power and control were evident in every decision enacted by school leaders. The following section presents an overview of the literature and provides a description of three leadership styles: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire; and discusses the influence of leadership approaches on decision making and leaders' abilities to support teachers from PP to Y2.

3.8.3.1 The Transformational School Leader

Researchers argue that transformational leadership can instigate positive change in schools by valuing and listening to teaching and non-teaching staff. Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe and Aelterman (2008) asserted a transformational leader has the capacity to motivate and inspire teachers by creating conditions that motivate teachers to learn and improve their practice.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2007) conducted a quantitative study on the direct and indirect effect of transformational leadership on large-scale reform in the United Kingdom (UK). These researchers hypothesised that transformational leaders have a shared fundamental goal of fostering teacher capacity for increased commitment and greater productivity in their schools, and believed this capacity has a direct effect on teachers' classroom practices (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2007). Data were collected via surveys sent to 500 primary schools throughout the UK. The survey questions related to motivation, classroom practice, work settings, student achievement and teacher capacity. The findings showed school leadership styles greatly influence a teacher's capacity to instigate change in their classroom practices. The researchers concluded that a transformational approach is likely to have a greater influence than other leadership styles on changing teacher practices for the improvement of student achievement, increasing teacher motivation and generating a more effective work environment (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2007).

McCarley, Peters and Decman (2016) conducted quantitative research on transformational leadership in schools. Like Leithwood and Jantzi (2007), McCarley et al., (2016) believed transformational leadership has a greater capacity to influence educational

change, organisational improvement and promote a positive school culture. The participants consisted of teachers in five large urban high schools in Texas, United States of America. The results from the surveys indicated a direct correlation between transformational leadership and a supportive, engaged school climate.

As demonstrated, a number of studies have recommended transformational leadership for instigating change, promoting and supporting teachers' work and improving academic outcomes for students. However, other studies on the same leadership approach uncovered opposing views. For example, Currie and Lockett's (2007) mixed method study of secondary schools in England sought to gain an in-depth understanding of leadership within schools. Using quantitative and qualitative measures involving school principals and deputy principals, the researchers found transformational leadership driven by policy-makers rather than school leaders can prove ineffective. Currie and Lockett (2007) acknowledged the rise of transformational leadership in England, but believed it had been instigated by policy makers in response to low-performing public services, such as education. In describing a transformational leadership approach, Currie and Lockett (2007) provided a summary of Bryman's (1992) component of this leadership style:

> The… (transformational) leader develops a vision and in doing so, engenders pride, respect and trust. They then motivate staff by creating high expectations, modelling appropriate behaviour, using symbols to focus efforts and providing personal attention to followers by giving respect and responsibility. Finally, the leader maintains a continuous challenge to followers by espousing new ideas and approaches (p. 343).

According to the researchers, transformational leaders produce a more entrepreneurial variant, with a managerial, top-down approach when driven by policy makers rather than school leaders. Currie and Lockett (2007) found when this occurs, policy-makers disregard professional values, including collaboration and respect within the organisation, as well as commitment from professionals to ensure greater social equity and inclusivity. They therefore proposed that effective principals adopt an individualised, rather than a politically motivated leadership approach that addresses both internal and external stakeholders, and act accordingly for the betterment of the whole school community.

3.8.3.2 The Transactional School Leader

Transactional leadership in education can be described as a contract between the school leaders and staff members. The process of transactional leadership occurs when

teaching staff are moved to perform their roles as agreed upon with the principal in exchange for reward or an avoidance of punishment

A review of recent literature on transactional leaders revealed frequent comparisons with transformational leaders. MacNeill, Silcox and Boyd (2018) claimed that with the passage of time, leaders who subscribe solely to a transactional approach are now viewed as tawdry. They argued that a pure, transformational approach is not necessarily an appropriate substitute and proposed a mix of transformational and transactional approaches for most effective leadership.

Similar views are also evident in Avci's (2015) large-scale quantitative study in Istanbul, Turkey. This study investigated a mix of transformational and transactional leadership approaches by exploring teachers' perceptions of both approaches and the variances in their viewpoints depending on their seniority in the school, gender and educational status (Avci, 2015). The findings showed a high level of both positive transformational and transactional leadership characteristics. The researchers concluded that the personal characteristics of transformational leaders can positively instigate change, enhance teachers' self-efficacy, and ultimately improve educational outcomes for students (Avci, 2015).

In 2006, Nguni, Sleegers and Denessen conducted a mixed method study on the effect of transformational and transactional leaders on teachers' job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour in Tanzanian primary schools. A total of 545 teachers from 70 primary schools responded to a questionnaire covering four themes: leadership, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational leadership behaviour. Ten teachers from the 70 participating schools were randomly selected for further data collection over a period of one year. Results from the large-scale investigation found, with the exception of commitment to stay in an organisation, all other factors responded positively to a transformational leadership approach (Nguni, Sleegers & Denessen, 2006).

3.8.3.3 The Laissez-Faire School Leader

Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, and Hetland (2007) defined a laissez-faire leadership style as a more passive approach than either transformational or transactional leaders, where decisions are either avoided or significantly delayed. According to these researchers, laissez-faire leaders tend to be less involved with teacher decisions and make little or no attempt to motivate their staff. Skogstad et al. (2007) conducted a large-scale survey in Norway to investigate the assumption that a laissez-faire leadership approach can

be destructive in schools and lead to workplace stressors such as bullying and psychological stress. Results from the survey supported this assumption, particularly in relation to workplace bullying. The researchers concluded that a laissez-faire leadership approach is counterproductive and usually associated with more stressful workplaces and higher incidences of interpersonal conflicts (Skogstad et al., 2007).

Barnett, Marsh and Craven (2005) conducted quantitative research to test whether a laissez-faire leadership style is indeed ineffective. A total of 458 participants from 52 schools in New South Wales, Australia, were involved in the research. Data were collected via a survey aimed at uncovering the leadership styles of school principals, and revealed that a laissez-faire approach is not always harmful. Barnett et al. (2005) concluded that although an absent or laissez-faire principal who delays decision-making may prove frustrating for teachers, it is a fallacy that all aspects of the school learning environment are negatively impacted by this leadership style.

3.8.4 Leadership Decisions: School Timetabling

Education reform and curriculum changes are not the only issues faced by teachers. The time allocated to teaching the HASS learning area can also prove challenging to successfully deliver the required content. SCSA (2016a) stipulated a notional time allocation for each learning area, based on a 25-hour week, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: SCSA Notional Time Allocation for Each Learning Area (Pre-primary - Year 2)

Learning Area	Hours per week PP-Year 2
HASS	**2**
English & Mathematics	6
Science	2
Health & Physical Education	2
Languages	0-2
Technologies	2
The Arts	2
Unallocated time	2-4
Total	**25**

Ordinarily, school leaders ultimately make decisions about timetabling for each learning area. As illustrated in Table 2, the HASS learning area in the compulsory early years of schooling has a recommended time allocation of two hours per school week. While there is no research on time allocations for the HASS learning areas, other learning areas have been investigated.

Barwood, Cunningham and Penney's (2016) mixed-method research on the WA Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum investigated lower secondary HPE teachers' understanding of the delivery of health in lower secondary public schools. The study found time allocation was one of the factors influencing teaching in this area, particularly health education. Administrative influences, priorities in individual school plans, as well as organisation of the timetable also influenced the teaching of health. The researchers described the subject of health as the 25th period in a 25-hour school timetable, and argued that this learning area was viewed as the least valuable, despite the important topics covered (Barwood, et al., 2016).

The time allocation for the WA HASS curriculum also points to it being a neglected subject. Ditchburn (2015) argued the lack of time allocated to the HASS learning area made thorough investigation of all the content challenging. Furthermore, teachers may resort to pedagogical practices that facilitate speed rather than promoting creativity, investigation and genuine student participation (Ditchburn, 2015).

Growing concerns from educators in North Carolina about the marginalisation of the HASS learning area (known there as social studies) in the elementary education system led to an investigation by Rock, Heafner, O'Connor, Passe, Oldendorf, Good and Byrd (2006). The aim of the Rock et al., (2006) study was to identify issues related to teaching social studies, such as how decisions are made regarding instructional time and the barriers to teaching the social studies curriculum. The findings from the mixed method, longitudinal study proposed the solution for these issues lay in the assessment of content and knowledge, and recommended curriculum integration to combat the lack of time allocated to this subject. Improved teacher education for interpreting the curriculum successfully was also an important factor (Rock et al., 2006). In view of the lack of time allocated to the new WA HASS Curriculum, integration could be the solution for providing more time to address the content and skills in this area.

Leadership decisions can also impact teachers' preparation for new curricula and effective implementation. Providing quality professional learning and creating a collaborative culture are two methods that can assist teachers. The following section provides an overview of research pertaining to these methods.

3.8.5 Leadership Decisions: Assessment and Reporting

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) stipulate mandated principles for assessment and minimum reporting requirements (SCSA, 2016b). From PP to Y2, the SCSA policy specified that assessment and reporting decisions made by principals

may impact teaching practices. In the pre-primary year, student achievements in English and mathematics are reported according to SCSA achievement descriptors, but SCSA letter grades (A to E) are not used. In years one and two all subject areas are reported and schools may use the SCSA letter grades (SCSA, 2016b). It is evident from these requirements that reporting the HASS learning area in pre-primary is left up to school leaders, and the use of letter grades in years one and two is dependent on the decision of principals in Western Australian schools.

Numerous education reforms over the last thirty years have also required changes in leadership roles. Earl and Fullan (2003) claimed rather than relying on implied knowledge to formulate and implement plans, leaders find themselves in the "nexus of accountability and improvement, trying to make sense of the role…assessment…data can and should play in school leadership" (p. 383). Assessment data and reporting are driven by society and their perceptions of what is important for students' future success. Due to increased numbers of standardised tests both internally and externally, many school leaders find themselves under pressure for their schools to perform well. In a review of international education reforms and research, Earl and Fullan (2003) concluded school leaders have no time for experimenting with new fads (Earl & Fullan, 2003).

3.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework can be defined as a system of concepts, expectations, beliefs, assumptions and theories, which support and inform research, and is a crucial part of the design (Robson, 2011). Miles and Huberman (1994) described the conceptual framework as a visual representation that "explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors, concepts or variables, and the presumed relationships among them" (p. 18). The conceptual framework presented in Figure 2 was created to inform this research project and provides a diagraphic representation of the study, aimed at investigating the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2 in two WA metropolitan primary schools.

The first component of the conceptual framework is the subject of the study, that is, the new WA HASS Curriculum for PP to Y2. Connected to this is Preparation of Early Childhood Staff, including school leaders and teachers in PP to Y2 classrooms, undertaken in preparation for full implementation of the new HASS Curriculum. On either side of Preparation are two areas; one examines opportunities and the other, challenges faced by PP to Y2 teachers and school leaders when implementing the new WA HASS Curriculum. Opportunities and Challenges have two-directional arrows leading back to Preparation, due

to the influence of these factors on Early Childhood Staff Preparation. Preparation then leads to the final aspect of the conceptual framework, which is, transitioning to the new WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2 in 2017.

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┌────────────────────────────────┐
│  Transition to the new Western │
│   Australian HASS Curriculum   │
│                                │
│     Pre-primary to Year 2      │
│            In 2017             │
└────────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐
    │  Early Childhood │
    │ Staff Preparation│
    └──────────────────┘
     ↙        │        ↘
┌─────────────┐ │ ┌──────────────┐
│     The     │ │ │     The      │
│Opportunities│ ▼ │  Challenges  │
└─────────────┘   └──────────────┘
      ┌────────────────────────┐
      │   Transition to the new│
      │ Western Australian HASS│
      │   Curriculum in 2017   │
      │                        │
      │   Pre-primary to Year 2│
      └────────────────────────┘
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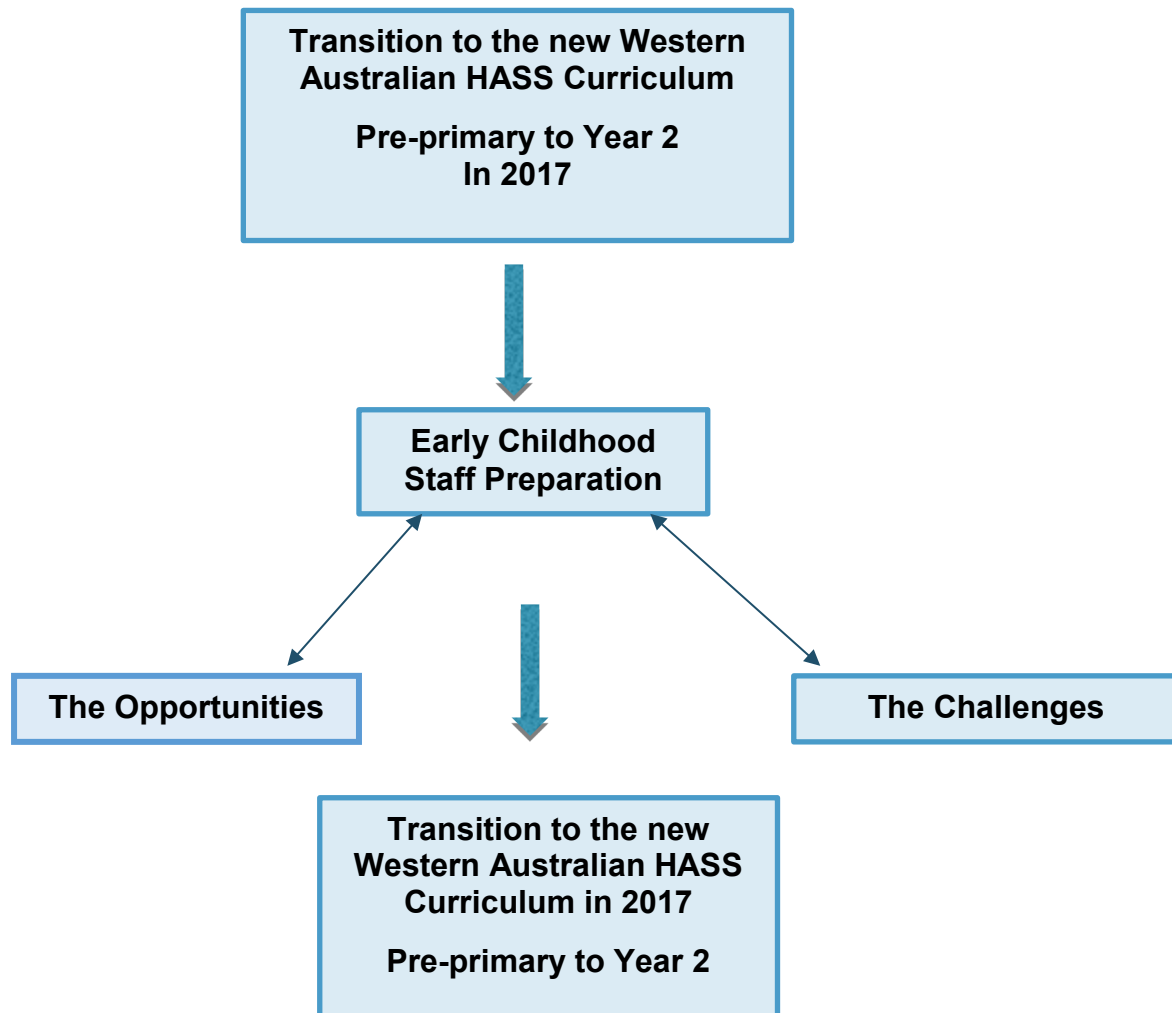
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter examined the factors and research in relation to how the early childhood staff transitioned to the new WA HASS Curriculum in the early years of school. A brief historical overview of the HASS Curriculum and early childhood education was presented as background information for the reader's understanding of the context and purpose of this research project. Research related to issues that may impact successful implementation of education reforms and new curricula was also presented. From an examination of the

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literature, teacher preparation and leadership decisions emerged as two factors that influence early childhood teachers and their ability to successfully implement change. The lack of empirical research on the HASS learning area in an early childhood context highlights the need for this study, aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the requirements for transitioning to a new curriculum. This thesis provides evidence-based research to help teachers modify their practice where necessary in order to successfully implement change. The following chapter describes the research methodology used in this research project.

Chapter 4: Research Design

4.1 Introduction

An interpretive research paradigm was chosen to answer the questions that directed this inquiry in order to gain an understanding of the true nature of the two case-study schools. The following sections present the research questions, theoretical framework, an overview of the case study design utilised in this research, information about the participants, the methods employed for data collection and analysis of the results, ethical considerations and finally, the limitations of the study.

Principal Research Question:

How did the early childhood staff from two Western Australian primary schools transition to the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2017?

Guiding Questions:

1. What preparation was undertaken by early childhood teachers to become familiar with the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2016?
2. What opportunities and/or challenges did early childhood staff face with planning, teaching and assessing the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2016 and 2017?

4.2 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides the structure for a research study and forms the basis for choosing the research methods. In choosing a particular paradigm, the researcher's "beliefs about the nature of reality and humanity (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology), and how that knowledge may be gained (the methodology)" (p 99) need to be identified. Tuli (2010) purported that the theoretical framework for most qualitative research views the world as constructed, interpreted and experienced by people, their interactions with others and wider social systems. This researcher's epistemological position aligns with social constructivism, and the ontological stance sits within an interpretivist theoretical paradigm. Two case studies were selected as the methodology for acquiring knowledge about the participants with regard to their implementation of the new WA HASS Curriculum in 2017. The nature of a case study as a social construct (Creswell, 2012) supports the interpretivist paradigm and the social constructivist position of the researcher.

The epistemological view of the researcher in an interpretivist paradigm asserts that people cannot be separated from their knowledge; therefore, there is a clear link between the researcher's epistemological position of social constructivism and the research framework (Dudovskiy, 2018). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) defined social constructivism as an active, rather than a passive process, whereby individuals seek meaning in their social lives. Social constructivism emphasises the social nature of learning, embedded in individuals' sociocultural interactions and contexts. In employing a social contructivistists position, the researcher needs to consider the participants' social interactions and understand they will have multiple views of their world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

The interpretivist paradigm is a qualitative approach requiring the researcher to consider the everyday activities and interactions of the individuals involved, as well as the context, in order to negotiate and interpret meaning from the phenomena under study (O'Donoghue, 2007; Creswell, 2012). According to Dudovskiy (2018), the interpretivist researcher's ontological stance is based on meanings and understandings on social and experiential levels. In this study, the researcher's aim was to seek a better understanding of a phenomenon through firsthand experience, collection of data, critical analysis and interpretation of the participants' relationships with the phenomena (Tuli, 2010). The ontological position of the researcher in qualitative research is that there is no absolute truth, and human experience is not easily quantifiable (Hammersley & Campbell, 2012; Newby, 2010). The focus of interpretivist research is to acquire an understanding of the social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in natural settings, and to interpret the data in order to make meaning (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010).

The researcher's motivation for using an interpretivist approach was to create a structure for framing the research questions and design methods that guided this study. As previously stated, this research investigated how early childhood staff transitioned to the new HASS Curriculum in PP to Y2 classrooms in 2017, and examined the perspectives and experiences of the teachers and school leaders at two WA metropolitan primary schools. Therefore, an interpretivist paradigm was selected as the most appropriate theroretical approach to assist examination and understanding of the participants' subjective experiences by contextualising the multiple realities presented.

O'Donoghue (2007) theorised that the individual and society are inseparable units, and a thorough understanding of one is not possible without a thorough understanding of the other. In consideration of this view, the interpretivist examines the meanings that people

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make in relation to a phenomenon in the context they are placed (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; O'Donoghue, 2007; Creswell, 2012). In this particular study the "people" included the school leaders and PP to Y2 teachers. The context or "society" was the primary school where education is compulsory for the stated year levels in this study, while the "central phenomenon" was the experiences of participating early childhood teachers with regard to transitioning to the new HASS curriculum in 2017.

The teachers' perspectives and explanations of the methods they employed for transitioning to the new HASS Curriculum were explored as part of their shared experiences and construction of knowledge. The interpretivist theoretical framework was also used as a guide for exploring the literature related to the proposed phenomenon, for reviewing and interpreting the data collected, presenting the findings and providing recommendations for future research. The following chapter provides the background contextual information for this study.

4.3 Research Design

A case study was selected as the most effective approach due to the nature of this context-related inquiry, and therefore required a methodology that focused on the situation presented. A case study is a qualitative approach and includes in-depth analyses of one or more occasions, contexts, teaching programs, individuals, social groups, communities or other confined systems in their natural environment (McMillan, 2008). The two case studies in this inquiry enabled comparisons and allowed the researcher to explore the practices, perspectives and experiences of the school leaders and early childhood teachers in two WA independent primary schools.

Yin (2009) suggested that case study enables the researcher to carefully plan, systematically collect data and closely study the relationships between the context, participants and phenomena being investigated. Yin (2009) further explained that case study can provide the researcher with a tool for examining "real people in real situations" (cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 376) in order to present their experiences more clearly than simply providing numerical data.

In this interpretivist case study, conceptual categories were developed to examine the implementation of the new WA HASS Curriculum from PP to Y2 (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Using case study methodology, the researcher sought a comprehensive understanding of the cases by collecting multiple forms of data (Creswell, 2012). An advantage of case study methodology is the social nature of the inquiry. The researcher in the case study site acquires an understanding of the identified phenomena by studying a

culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2007; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018), aligned with the social constructivist nature of this investigation.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

As stipulated by the policies and procedures for conducting research at Edith Cowan University, an ethics application was submitted and approved to ensure the integrity and professionalism of the role of the researcher and the work generated. On approval the project was assigned number code 17491 by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University. In compliance with the conditions of approval, pseudonyms were used to ensure the anonymity of participants. The schools have also been deidentified to protect the school community and stakeholders.

The letters and consent forms included a section acknowledging the right of participants to withdraw at any time during the study, as well as assuring participants and schools they would remain anonymous at all times (see Appendices 1 – 4). Consent was obtained from the principals and early childhood teachers in the Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two classrooms, as well as the school leaders and other staff working in the early years in August and September 2017, after which interviews were organised.

Participants were provided with assurance that they could withdraw from the project at any time during the study. All documentation was safeguarded in a locked, password-protected computer file to ensure confidentiality. The data collected were treated with the strictest confidence. After analysis of the data, it is archived for five years at Edith Cowan University and only the researcher will have access to the material. Provided there is no further use for the data, all the information will be destroyed at the end of the five-year period. The data may only be accessed again if the researcher requires the information for further research. The following section provides contextual information about the participants in the two schools involved in this research project.

4.5 Contextual Information and Research Participants

The participants in this study were from two independent mainstream schools in the Perth metropolitan area; both schools were members of the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) and affiliated with a Christian denomination. They included the teachers in PP to Y2, as well as the school principals. The reason for selecting teachers in these year groups was due to the lack of research on the early years of schooling in the field of humanities education. The researcher acknowledges the plethora of research on these year groups, however, it is generally related to other learning areas such as literacy, numeracy and most recently, STEM. Although the early years of schooling in WA

includes Kindergarten to Year 2, the Kindergarten year group has been excluded as the EC teachers in this year group do not follow The WA Curriculum. Therefore only PP to Year 2 will be examined.

4.5.1 Contextual Information and Participants– School A

School A was an independent, co-educational school affiliated with the Catholic faith. The school was located in the outer northern suburbs of Perth, Western Australia, comprising 20 staff and 100 students, 5% of whom were Indigenous and 27% identified as English as an Additional Language Dialect (EALD). The school was established in 2012 as a kindergarten to year three school with 24 students. In 2014 the school established a playgroup, which is situated off campus. The school was expanding by a year level each year, and at the time of this research, students were enrolled from kindergarten through to year eight.

4.5.2 Contextual Information and Participants – School B

School B was founded in the 1990s as an independent, co-educational school catering for students from kindergarten to year 12. It was affiliated with a different Christian faith than School A. The primary school comprised 14 class groups from kindergarten to year six, supported by specialist teachers in visual art, music, physical education, library and religious studies. The school was located just north of the Perth central business district and had 60 staff and 420 students, with no Indigenous students and 80% EALD students. The following section outlines the methods used for collecting the data.

4.6 Data Collection

Qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews and artefacts related to the HASS Curriculum, such as planning and assessment documents and photographs of the resources used to teach HASS in Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two. Focus group interviews in qualitative research serve to stimulate discussion and share the construction of knowledge (William & Katz, 2013). Krueger and Casey (2001) recommended focus group questions be developed directly from the main research question(s), and be open-ended and unstructured to allow participants to answer in a variety of ways.

A semi-structured interview format was chosen for this inquiry as it allowed the flexibility to deeply explore the phenomena with participants. The interviews examined particular aspects and provided further understanding of the responses during the focus group discussion (see Appendices 5 and 6 for the semi-structured interview questions).

Data collection took place at the participating schools in August and September 2017. Permission was granted to audio record the sessions, which were subsequently transcribed to assist the researcher's analysis. The focus group interviews were approximately one hour in duration, while the one-on-one interviews ran for 20 to 30 minutes.

Prior to the start of the semi structured, one-on-one interviews with the principals and focus groups, participants were asked to complete a short preliminary questionnaire to obtain information about their qualifications, roles in the school, and years of teaching experience (see appendix 5). Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the principals were immediately followed by focus group semi-structured interviews with Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers in schools A and B. The focus group provided insights into the shared perspectives of this cultural group (Creswell, 2012), and the semi-structured interviews allowed for further clarification of responses that cannot be achieved via a survey or collection of written responses (Creswell, 2012).

Following the focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews were conducted over the following days. This sequence enabled the researcher to listen and record some initial ideas and formulate questions for each of the Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers in the participating schools. Creswell (2012) argued that one-on-one interviews allow interviewees to speak more freely and without judgement from colleagues. Another advantage of the one-on-one interviews was obtaining interviewees' perspectives on the HASS learning area and how this subject would be incorporated into their own classroom practice (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2002).

Table 3: *Overview of Data Collection Methods*

Methods	Data Collected
Semi-structured focus group interviews	- Focus group interviews with the Pre-Primary, Year One and Year Two teachers at Schools A and B. - All interviews audio recorded and transcribed.
One-on-one interviews	- One school leader from each case study school. - Pre-primary, Years One and Two teachers at School A and B. - All interviews audio recorded and transcribed.
Document Analysis	- HASS Curriculum whole-school planning documents. - Pre-primary to Year Two HASS Curriculum planning and assessment documents. - Photographs of HASS resources.

A secondary source of data, in the form of artefacts provided by principals and early childhood teachers who participated in the study, was also used. These included photographs of assessment pieces, planning documents and school plans for the HASS Curriculum (see Appendix 6). These secondary sources provided additional verification of the data and added further depth to the participants' responses, as well as guiding the discussions and explanations during the interviews (Kervin, Vialle, Howard, Herrington, & Okley, 2015). Table 3 above provides an overview of the data collection methods used to answer the research questions.

4.7 Data Analysis

For the purpose of this interpretive inquiry a thematic analysis was applied to identify, analyse and report on the themes that emerged from the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated thematic analysis "is a widely-used qualitative analytic method" (p. 2) applied to social research data. Thematic analysis is not directly linked to any pre-determined theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and therefore works with the interpretive research paradigm of this inquiry. The data analyses in the next sections follow the six-phase thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Phase One: Process of Familiarisation with the Data Collected

Phase one involved transcribing and reading the data and making notes of initial ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After audio recording participants' feedback during the one-on-one semi structured focus group and individual interviews, the first task for the researcher was to personally transcribe all the interviews undertaken with the school principals and Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers at the participating schools. The process was time consuming, but personally transcribing the interviews allowed the researcher to familiarise with the participants' responses. The artefacts, made up of school programs, photographs of resources, assessments and whole-school plans, were examined independently and in conjunction with the transcribed data to clarify and support the interview responses.

Phase Two: Generating initial codes

The researcher commenced phase two by coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After discussing an analysis of the data with the researcher's supervisors, the responses related to each of the three research questions were organised into a collection of tables. The process of generating codes enabled the researcher to establish commonalities, variances and patterns in the data. Merriam (1998) described the process of data analysis in

qualitative case studies as a process of meaning-making by consolidating, interpreting and understanding what people have said, in addition to what the researcher has seen or read (cited in Yazan, 2015).

Phase Three: Searching for Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) described this phase as a collation of codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. Collating the codes into themes was achieved by creating a series of mind maps, once again accomplished through discussions and a brainstorming session with the researcher's supervisors. A thorough knowledge of the participants' responses, gained from transcribing the audio recorded, semi-structured focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews, allowed the researcher to respond to questions posed by her supervisors and assisted in clarifying the participants' feedback. Using the mind maps, the researcher tabled results and lined these up against the three research questions. Once the table had been created a number of themes began to emerge, and from the analysis the researcher was able to review the literature for commonalities and differences.

Phase Four: Reviewing Themes

Phase four involved checking the themes and generating a thematic map of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This detailed brainstorm and mind map allowed the researcher to utilise member audits with her supervisors to review the data and themes. In this process, collaboration aligned with the social constructivist nature of the inquiry, whereby knowledge and understanding were constructed.

Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes

Ongoing analysis took place throughout the process to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story of the data collected. This enabled the researcher, in consultation with her supervisors, to generate clear definitions and names for each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Naming and defining the themes allowed the researcher to cross-reference the literature and search for current and updated research to improve her understanding of the themes.

Phase Six: Producing the Report

Braun and Clarke (2006) defined the final phase of thematic analysis as an opportunity for final examination of both the data and the literature, and generating a report on the results. This was achieved by selecting vivid, compelling extracts, conducting a final analysis of the selected extracts, relating the analysis back to the research questions and the literature, and producing a scholarly report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.8 Credibility of the Research

Credibility was attained by developing rapport and gaining the trust of the research participants through engagement with aspects of the study's setting, as well as conversing and developing relationships with them. These actions assisted in understanding and co-constructing meaning.

The action taken by this researcher to achieve credibility in this study included offering participants the option to review their interview transcripts; providing detailed contextual information about the case-study schools and participants; providing a comfortable setting for participants to speak candidly in one-on-one interviews with an assurance of anonymity; and ensuring maximum variation in the data collected. O'Donoghue (2007) defined maximum variation in the data as detailing all the many specifics that give the context its uniqueness. Maximum variation was achieved by interviewing all the teachers in Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two classrooms involved in implementing the new HASS Curriculum. To further ensure credibility the semi-structured interviews remained consistent (see Appendix 5). All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Photographs of the resources used to teach the WA HASS Curriculum, teaching programs, assessment documents and whole-school plans were also collected to support the participants' responses. This process of triangulation assisted with strengthening the validity of the project by analysing, cross checking and validating all the data collected (Merriam, 1995; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005; O'Donoghue, 2007).

4.9 Limitations of the Study

Seeking participants for this investigation was challenging. Many independent member schools of AISWA in the Perth metropolitan area were approached to participate. AISWA is a not-for-profit organisation, established in 1962 to support and promote independent schools in WA (AISWA, n.d). Feedback from schools that declined to participate indicated they had experienced a high demand for their involvement in various research projects, and this had evidently resulted in undue stress and extra pressure on teachers' already heavy workload.

One reason for choosing AISWA schools rather than publically funded government schools was associated with difficulties obtaining additional ethics clearance from the WA Department of Education in a timely manner. The Education Department imposes strict guidelines and protocols for conducting research in government schools in order to protect the students, teachers and other stakeholders. The length of the process and potential delays became evident after discussions with a representative from the WA Department of

Education involved in ethics approvals. Since this was a small preliminary study for which ethics approval had already been granted by Edith Cowan University, it was decided to approach independent schools to negate the need for further approvals, as school leaders in independent schools are able to provide approval for conducting research in their schools.

After referrals from colleagues, the researcher was introduced to the principals of two independent schools in the Perth metropolitan area. Letters of introduction (Appendix 1) were sent to the principals outlining the aims and rationale of the project, along with letters to the early childhood teacher participants (Appendix 3) and consent forms for all participants (Appendices 2 and 4). Both schools were members of AISWA and situated in the Perth metropolitan area. They were affiliated with different Christian denominations and both schools strived for academic excellence in a nurturing environment with a focus on the welfare and development of the whole child. School A was founded in 2012 and was still in development, while School B had been established for over 25 years. The following chapter provides information about each participating school. All references to the school and participants have been deidentified to preserve anonymity, and pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the participants.

4.10 Summary

In this chapter the research design and theoretical framework were presented to justify the use of an interpretive research paradigm with two case-study schools. The primary and guiding questions, ethics approval, contextual information about the participating schools and research participants, methods of data collection and data analysis, credibility and limitations of the study were also outlined. The following chapter presents the results of the research in both case study schools.

Chapter 5:
Results from the two case study schools

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the two case-study schools with regard to their transition to the new Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum (HASS). It commences with a contextual analysis of the two participating schools and teachers. The research was conducted with the school leaders and early childhood teachers in PP to Y2 at two independent schools in the Perth metropolitan area. The data collected provided deep insights into their experiences of the transition to the new HASS Curriculum in 2017 in an early childhood context.

Two schools were chosen to participate in this study in order to compare similarities and differences in their approach to the transition. Preparing for the new HASS Curriculum and identification of the challenges faced by the participants were also investigated. Please note that pseudonyms have been used for all participants in schools A and B to protect their identity – this can be seen in Figures 5 and 6. Images have also been used to depict examples of HASS resources, assessments and experiences.

5.2 Contextual Information on the Case Study Schools

A case study was selected for this preliminary investigation of the new HASS Curriculum and Early Childhood staff's perceptions and experiences of their transition to the new HASS Curriculum in 2017. Two independent Perth metropolitan schools were chosen as the case study sites for investigating the early childhood context. Both schools were members of the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA) and affiliated with a Christian denomination; and both strived for academic excellence in a nurturing environment with a focus on the welfare and development of the whole child.

School A was founded in 2012 and still developing as an educational institution. To ensure anonymity, the schools have been deidentified and pseudonyms used to protect the identity of participants. The early childhood teachers in School A are referred to as ECA 1, ECA 2, ECA 3 and ECA 4 ('A' represents School A). ECA 1 only participated in the focus group semi-structured interview in her role as early childhood leader. A one-on-one interview was not conducted with ECA 1 as she teaches in the kindergarten year, and since

this year group utilised the WA Kindergarten Curriculum rather than the WA Curriculum, there was no designated HASS Learning Area. The participants in School A had varying levels of experience and qualifications, as shown in Table 4. It is also worth noting that the principal had 15 years of teaching experience; the last two of those as principal.

Table 4: *School A Participants' Experience and Qualifications*

Participants	Number of years teaching	Number of years teaching at School A	Current Position in the school	Highest qualifications
Principal A	15	2	Principal	Master of Arts Graduate Diploma Education
ECA 1	25	5	EC Leader and Kindergarten teacher	Bachelor of Arts (ECE)
ECA 2	1	8 months	Pre-primary (PP) teacher	Bachelor of Education (EC)
ECA 3	1	1	Year One (Y1) teacher	Bachelor of Education (primary)
ECA 4	5	5	Year Two (Y2) teacher	Bachelor of Education (EC)

School B was an independent, co-educational school catering for students from kindergarten to year 12 founded in the 1990s. The participants in School B had different levels of experience and qualifications, as shown in Table 5. The principal of School B had over 40 years teaching experience, eight of those as principal in his current role. The early childhood teachers have been identified as ECB 1, ECB 2, ECB 3 and ECB 4 ('B' represents School B). The main difference between the two participating schools was the length of time they had been operating and the amount of resources available to staff.

The next section describes the results that emerged from the semi-structured focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews and documents collected. The documents included School B's HASS rationale, planning policies, time allocated to the HASS Curriculum, and the teachers' understanding of the content and skills in the new HASS Curriculum. The data presented in this section is aligned with the primary and guiding research questions.

Table 5: *School B Participants' Experience and Qualifications*

Participants	Number of years teaching	Number of years teaching at School B	Current Position in the school	Highest qualifications
Head of Primary School – Principal B	40	8	Head of Primary	Bachelor of Education (Primary)
ECB 1	8	8	Pre-Primary (PP)	Bachelor of Education (EC)
ECB 2	9	9	Pre-primary (PP)	Bachelor of Education (EC)
ECB 3	12	10	Year One (Y1)	Master of Education (Primary)
ECB4	6	5	Year Two (Y2)	Master of Education (Primary)

5.3 Preparing for the Transition to the New HASS Curriculum

This section aligns with the first guiding question and relates to the preparation undertaken for transitioning to the new HASS Curriculum in 2016 and 2017. Early childhood staff at both case-study schools were asked what professional learning they had undertaken, both internally and externally. Principal A had not attended any formal professional learning related to the new HASS Curriculum and no in-house training had been provided. Principal A stated: "as the school is still in its infancy I am wearing many hats. I'm principal, deputy principal, first-aid officer and there is just not the time to attend professional learning (PL) as well'. Principal A encouraged his teachers to attend PL sessions and thought the year three teacher had attended a HASS PL but couldn't be certain. He recognised the importance of PL:

> Professional learning is highly encouraged and professional learning through AISWA, as a member is very cheap for our staff to attend. But of course, for their teacher registration they have to attend these things and record their hours. So if they approach me I don't think I've ever said no.

In the semi-structured focus group interview with School A the EC staff were asked about PL, to which ECA 2 replied: "is there even such a thing as HASS PL?" Laughter and agreement amongst the EC teachers indicated they were not aware that it existed.

Questions about studying how to teach the Society and Environment learning area (the social sciences curriculum prior to the new WA HASS Curriculum) elicited this response from ECA 2: "I can't really remember much about it". ECA 2 recalled doing "lots of Civics and Citizenship at uni, which we don't even do in Year One". EC teachers stated that the school currently focused on English, mathematics and STEM. ECA 2 clarified: "we're actually always getting pushed into STEM at the moment. If there's any PL then it's on that". When asked about the PL offered through AISWA, ECA 1 replied: "we've had a few people from AISWA before but I don't think there's a whole lot of PLs on at the moment though".

In School B the EC staff were offered some formal, in-house HASS PL sessions in 2016 and early 2017. Principal B organised a representative from AISWA to deliver a brief PL session to staff on the new HASS Curriculum. The session focused predominantly on HASS Skills and the inquiry approach, rather than the HASS content. When asked whether they found the PL session beneficial, ECB 1 replied:

> Gee, you know it was so long ago. But I remember that the biggest point she made was that the best way to go with teaching HASS was integration if we want to tick all the boxes. (To the group) Remember when she first talked about geography and then she talked about history.

ECB 2 replied: "yes, and we also did a couple of activities and yeah, I know I have the notes somewhere, I'll have to go back and look at those". Unfortunately the PL notes couldn't be located. ECB 1 elaborated:

> When we had that PL on HASS I think we really realised that we need to do more in regards to the humanities and social sciences, because we have been focusing a lot on those mathematical hot spots in that maths area. I mean there's a big focus on Maths and English, and we have also had a huge focus on Science, but when we found out that HASS is also a huge thing we need to do as well, we thought ok well Australia, well that really goes with the HASS theme doesn't it.

Principal B also provided in-house PL by working closely with all the primary school teachers to unpack the HASS Curriculum and create a school-specific HASS "Scope and Sequence" for each year level. The document included the whole-school vision for HASS, as shown in Appendix 6. Early childhood teachers found the in-house PL and whole-school HASS Vision and Scope and Sequence documents helpful.

5.4 Whole-School HASS Rationale

Questions related to the HASS Curriculum rationale at their school were posed to EC staff. Principal A appeared confused and stated: "the rationale for the HASS curriculum is enabling students to become citizens that have a well-grounded understanding of nature and human interaction". Principal A described the aim of the new WA HASS Curriculum: "is to investigate the history or study of man, to see where we have come from and to develop an appreciation for life". When the same question was asked of School A early childhood teachers during the semi-structured focus group interview, they claimed there wasn't a specific whole-school rationale for the HASS Curriculum and were guided by the aims and rationale of the WA HASS Curriculum for their respective year groups. In School A, ECA 2 articulated her understanding of the overall HASS rationale and aims in the early years of schooling: "more about them and their families and their immediate environment and surroundings". It therefore appears that activities and lesson experiences related to the HASS Curriculum were focused on the children, their families and the community.

At School B, a whole-school HASS rationale was originated by the principal (see Appendix 6). The document was created after discussion with all the teachers at School B in the latter half of 2016. The process involved the principal and all the primary school teachers reviewing the new HASS Curriculum and collaboratively unpacking the learning area to gain a better understanding of the requirements in all four HASS subjects: history, geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business. Thereafter, principal B designed a simplified HASS Scope and Sequence as part of the whole-school rationale for each year level as a supplementary guide for the teachers.

5.5 Understanding the HASS Content

Although the Principal at School A was uncertain about the specific HASS Curriculum content and skills, he was aware that only history and geography were taught from PP to Y2. On the other hand, School B was very familiar with HASS Knowledge and Understanding after unpacking the new HASS Curriculum and designing a school-based Scope and Sequence. Principal B (Head of primary at School B) understood that the focus of HASS in PP to Y2 related to the students, their families and the community. Principal B also had a good understanding of HASS Skills after unpacking the curriculum:

> The school advocates an inquiry process in their teaching and learning
> wherever possible, and the children have the ability to practice posing
> questions, and going off to find the answers, either individually or in small
> groups. Because the criteria has been established (with regards to the

common assessment task), the children are aware of what they need to do to achieve a B or a C.

Principal B said: "it is important to embed the HASS skills into the concepts and topics". There was also an emphasis on teaching the children to take notes, develop Internet, idea and keyboard skills, as well as presenting their findings.

5.6 Early Childhood HASS Planning and Assessment Policies

All the teachers at School A were required to provide a rationale for their programs, explaining the reasons for their choice of content and skills, the resources they used, and the relevant outcomes related to the WA Curriculum. School A did not have a set planning policy for addressing the HASS Curriculum. Principal A said: "there is no set policy or school vision for HASS. I mean our school vision statement is to set the academic bar high and academic excellence is stated on our website". The teachers submitted all their programs to Principal A for review at the beginning of each semester, produced a yearly overview and designed detailed programs each term.

On the other hand, School B did have a structured planning policy for the HASS Curriculum, as illustrated in Appendix 6. In PP to Y2 only geography and history were taught. The EC teachers at School B had been instructed to integrate HASS Skills into the history and geography content using an inquiry-based teaching approach. Principal B stated that HASS was a tight, content-heavy curriculum and therefore needed to be integrated into other learning areas to ensure students met the proposed achievement standards by the end of the year. School B had a whole-school policy for the HASS Curriculum that included formal teaching each week in addition to integrated content with other learning areas wherever possible. Principal B explained: "integration of all learning areas should occur wherever possible and teachers will be guided by the school's Scope and Sequence for programming and planning documents".

This policy suggests a cooperative venture between Principal B and the EC teachers. Participants at School B worked closely with one another and with school leaders when developing programs, assessments and whole-school planning policies. Collaborative "cell groups" were tasked with more specific planning and programming, and included the Kindergarten, Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers.

School B had an extensive assessment program with a variety of formative and common summative assessment tasks that directed future planning and teaching. A common assessment task maintained consistency in teaching and assessment, where the

same content and skills were taught to a group of students across a year level. Common assessment tasks also enabled a moderation process for comparing and determining students' results. Common assessment tasks shared the same format and were administered in a consistent manner (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). At School B, common assessment tasks were developed by the leaders and teachers to ensure continuity for all students. While the participating schools had similarities and differences, both were focused on providing academic excellence in a caring and supportive environment with an emphasis on pastoral care. Each participant was a member of a cell group that made collaborative planning decisions, and teachers were required to plan an integrated, inquiry-based program. Principal B stated:

> Because of the tight curriculum, we encourage the teachers, where possible, to integrate. So they can integrate it into their English program, then do so. If they can combine it with Technology, then do so. There's a big focus as well with HASS, on incorporating it with Technology as much as possible because you really can't treat Technology as a separate entity.

At the beginning of each term, the cell groups established the HASS topics and criteria to be covered. The topics were based on the specified HASS Knowledge and Understanding and HASS Skills for their particular year groups. The teachers submitted all programs to Principal B for review. School B believed that commonality in planning and assessment across the years was important for the students going forward. Principal B stated: "parents like that there is shared aims in each year level and that every child regardless of the teacher they get for that year will be learning similar topics, concepts and skills". At the end of the year, the school leaders and teachers reflected on their teaching practices, planning and assessments, and discussed what worked well in order to make enhancements. These discussions also assisted setting goals for the following year. In 2017, School B's HASS Scope and Sequence specified: "the school Scope and Sequence directs planning and programming in each year level and teachers highlight what content has been taught each term. Supporting planning documents are essential to elaborate on outcomes and outline assessment in HASS".

Asked how prepared the early childhood teachers were for planning and teaching the new HASS Curriculum in 2017, Principal A responded: "I think they're highly proficient in HASS. They are actually outstanding in all disciplines actually. I'm really blessed actually to have very motivated and very competent staff". During the focus group session, ECA 1 at School A said: "I think for us, because the concepts are quite easy to teach it's okay". The

early childhood teachers at School A felt confident with Knowledge and Understanding in their year levels because they were not difficult concepts. However, they were not overly confident with HASS Skills. According to ECA 1: "HASS is the most boring of all the learning areas".

The principal at School B was also asked how prepared early childhood teachers were for planning, teaching and assessing the new HASS Curriculum. He replied:

> If you'd ask me that about science, I'm going to say they're really prepared;
> I think they know what they're doing (in HASS). I would say that the pre-primary
> teachers are extremely well prepared and cater for that area really well and
> they both work so closely together.

At School B, ECB 1 stated: "well it's like with everything, if we're prepped, and we are, then its good". ECB 1 explained further:

> I like to look back at the curriculum and say yep, ok. So I know we have
> to look at the specifics and what they have to achieve by the end of
> their year group. So I just highlight what I need and then you know how
> to plan, and that is helpful.

5.6.1 Time Allocated to Teaching the HASS Curriculum

Principal A reported that two 40-minute sessions a week were allocated to teaching HASS. In the timetable, these had been separated into one session for history and one for geography; the assigned times followed the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA). The SCSA (2016b) Notional Time Allocation Guidelines for the HASS Curriculum recommends two hours per week from pre-primary to year six, based on a 25 hour week.

However, after consulting with School A early childhood teachers in the focus group session, it became evident that HASS was only taught formally once a week, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) was taught in the other designated HASS session. STEM education is an interdisciplinary approach for teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (New South Wales [NSW] Department of Education, 2017). Three of the four early childhood teachers taught history once a week in semester one and geography once a week in semester two. The other early childhood teacher in the focus group (ECA 1) also taught HASS formally once a week and integrated HASS into other learning areas.

In School B, two sessions a week were also allocated to HASS, however, as integration was emphasised, teachers were encouraged to integrate HASS into all subjects wherever possible. Each session in the timetable was 45 minutes long; the assigned times also guided by the SCSA Notional Time Allocation Guidelines (2016b). All early childhood teachers subscribed to these guidelines.

5.6.2 Teaching Strategies

The following sections outline the strategies employed by the early childhood teachers in schools A and B for teaching the new HASS Curriculum. Strategies included play-based learning, inquiry-based teaching and integration.

5.6.2.1 Play-Based Teaching and Learning

Early childhood teachers in School A reported using a play-based approach wherever possible, especially in pre-primary. A play-based approach in education is a context for learning whereby children organise and make sense of their social worlds as they engage actively with people, objects and representations (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009). Year One and Two teachers tended to have more formal lessons due to the amount of curriculum content, so there was little time for incorporating play in the classroom or curriculum.

In School B the early childhood teachers regularly incorporated play-based learning with numerous hands-on resources. The pre-primary teachers stated that play-based learning was the dominant approach used in their classrooms. Every early childhood teacher had a play-based activity centre set up in their classrooms, as illustrated in images one and two. Pre-primary and year two classes had a play-based activity centre and dress ups that complemented geography experiences about the Australian bush. Pre-primary had an Australian bush scene and camping area with several soft toys, a tent and dress ups. The purpose of these play-based activity centres was to enable children to role-play what they were learning in class. Image two depicts a play-based activity centre as a simple tent that added to the geography topic about camping to further explore the outback.

Both pre-primary classes also regularly used the block corner and manipulatives to teach HASS through a play-based learning approach.

Image 1: School B Pre-Primary Play-Based Activity Centre

Image 2: School B Year Two HASS Play-Based Activity Centre

5.6.2.2 Integrated Teaching and Learning

Teachers at School A were cooperative with their knowledge and experience, however, collaborative planning did not occur amongst the early childhood teachers. At the time of this research they were located in temporary classrooms, with a new early childhood block (kindergarten to year two) under construction and due for completion in January 2018. The early childhood teachers believed collaborative planning would occur when they were all located in the same block. Asked whether they knew if their early childhood teachers integrated the new HASS curriculum in other learning areas, Principal A replied: "yes they do

because they've got a STEM on a Wednesday. Wednesday afternoons is STEM for children in years two to six and they rotate around to different classes for different activities". In response to the same question Principal B responded:

> Well, because of the tight curriculum, we encourage the teachers, where possible, to integrate. So they can integrate it into their English program, then do so. If they can combine it with technology, then do so. If there is some way they can combine it even with science, so it becomes hands on, then do it that way as well. But HASS really is a subject that stands alone by itself, so it's hard to incorporate it or integrate it into other learning areas.

At School A, only ECA 1 integrated all subjects to enable her to address all the content. She explained:

> Mine's all integrated, otherwise I just won't get to everything. So this term we're doing time in maths and we're doing…what's the one? Earth Sciences in Science so a lot of it happens in Maths and Science, so that's all integrated. And a couple of projects based on that that links to other concepts in English and HASS as well.

Images 3 and 4 illustrate how ECA 1 integrated mathematics and geography. The children mapped out the requirements of a community using box constructions after viewing pictures of their own community and discussing what people needed to make their community liveable. The box construction city was employed by ECA 1 to allow students to communicate their findings to an audience.
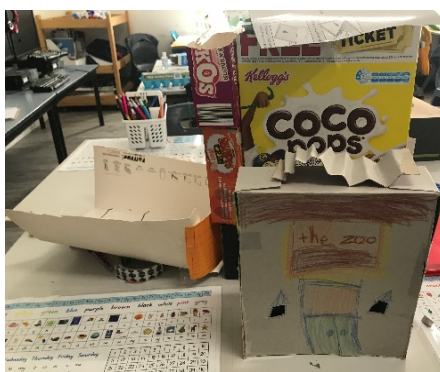
Image 3: School A Year One Designing and Mapping a Community to Communicate their Findings to an Audience

Image 4: School A Year One Designing and Mapping a Community to Communicate their Findings to an Audience.

The other three early childhood teachers at School A kept all subjects separate. They were of the view that integration occurred naturally, yet only assessed HASS concepts through set HASS assessment tasks.

At School B, the early childhood teachers reported embracing integration and believed: "it would be impossible to meet all the achievement standards if they didn't integrate". ECB 1 elaborated:

> There's such a huge connection with the English learning area, like I'm just thinking of the things we've got. We did Dreamtime stories and the kids had to make their own Dreamtime story. And we did Are We There Yet (by Alison Lester), so that's going around Australia, and they had to do a book report, so there's a lot of integration with English.

ECB 3 supported this statement:

> Yes it's good, because it (HASS) is so easy to integrate, you know, you can do anything with it, so that makes it really easy. And I find that I have to do that because of time. Because subjects like Science and HASS can easily be pushed aside, but if you can program it to be integrated then it's very easy to have in your program.

Images 5 and 6 illustrate how teachers integrated HASS into mathematics and English. Image 5 depicts the assessment of students' knowledge on measuring with uniform informal units, in addition to concepts of place and space and the interconnections between

people in Australia. Image 6 shows assessment of students' abilities to represent features of the plot, characters and settings, as well as their understanding of place.
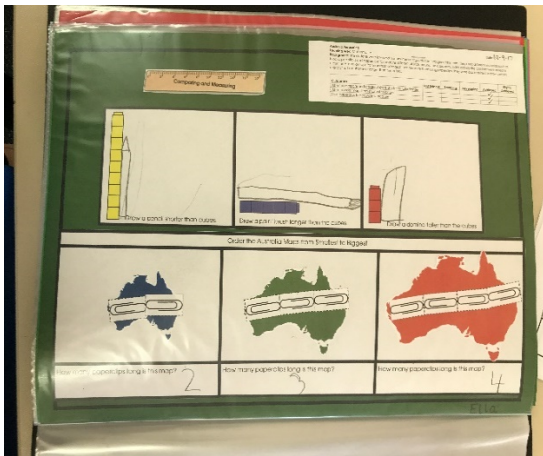
Image 5: Children's Representation of Measuring
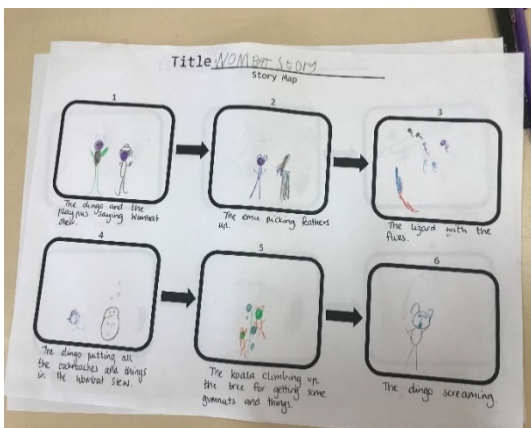
Image 6: Storyboard Representing Characters and Settings

5.6.2.3 Inquiry-Based Teaching and Learning

Inquiry-based teaching is a well-established pedagogical approach that supports an integrated, holistic curriculum. Its premise lies in the constructivist and social constructivist philosophies, situated between teacher-led and child-centred or child-directed teaching and learning (Hill, Stremmel, & Fu, 2005). Asked about HASS Skills and whether the early childhood teachers used an inquiry approach, Principal A replied: "yes we do really encourage that inquiry-based learning". Probed further, Principal A explained students were encouraged to purchase resources from the Scholastic Book Club and many of them

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complemented inquiries. Early childhood teachers at School A said: "use a little bit of inquiry", but generally individualised tasks.

Principal B explained:

> Our process is really the inquiry process now. You know, you pose the questions and the children go off and answer those whether it's individually or in small groups or even in larger groups and the criteria is established so the children know what they have to achieve to get an A, what they have to achieve to get a B, what they have to achieve to get a C.

Although Principal B indicated that inquiry-based teaching was encouraged, the early childhood teachers in School B claimed they only used an inquiry approach when it suited. ECB 4 elaborated: "I think we do a mix of stuff. We do a mix of explicit, we do a mix of inquiry, and we also do a mix of, you know, the incidental learning".

5.7 HASS Resources

This section discusses the resources that were available to early childhood teachers for teaching the HASS learning area. The leaders at schools A and B were asked what resources were available to staff. Principal A reported that each teacher received $2 000 a year for resources, but at that stage, the school did not have a set of resources for teaching the HASS learning area. Principal A explained the school was still new, did not have a library, and teachers gathered their own resources using the funds provided. Each classroom was set up with Smartboard technology, Internet access and paid subscriptions to online resources, such as TeachStarter and Teach This. In addition, each classroom had several personal computers for accessing resources. Principal A stated: "the classrooms are well resourced across all learning areas".

The early childhood teachers at School A claimed available resources were scarce, especially for HASS. They acknowledge having a budget, but said the money was mainly spent on resources for teaching English and mathematics. ECA 1 said the teachers were protective of their resources and reluctant to share. They also tended to spend their own money on many resources or make what they required. An example of resources created by ECA 2 for teaching HASS can be seen in Images 7 to 12. Images 7, 8 and 9 were part of a geography program designed by ECA 2, where she used a class puppet that travelled all over the world and was familiar to the class:

We've just started doing geography, so I wasn't sure how to make it quite interesting for them to learn about the continents and the oceans and that kind of thing and landmarks. So we have a puppet in our class that teaches us maths. So he's gone on a holiday and he's sending us packages every week from different continents (see Image 9). And so, like today, we got a package and then we have to look at all the items. And then they have to decide what continent it's come from, and then we have to map it and then they have to draw a landmark.

Image 7: Postcards Sent from the Class Puppet

Image 8: Example of a Postcard from the Class Puppet

Asked how the children had responded to the experience, ECA 2 said they loved getting the parcels on Tuesday, but:

They want the puppet back, that's the only thing really. They're always looking in the parcel wondering if he's going to be back this week and they're like "When's he coming back?" and I'm like, "Well he's got a few more places to go".

Image 9: Post box Sent to the Children with Artefacts from the Geographical Location the Class Puppet was Visiting

Images 10, 11 and 12 show PowerPoint slides created by ECA 2. She found these useful for teaching HASS concepts that were difficult to explain to her class. Image 10 shows "the location of the major geographical divisions of the world (for example, continents, oceans) in relation to Australia" (SCSA, 2014). Images 11 and 12 relate to "the impact of changing technology on people's lives (for example, at home, work, travel, communication, leisure, toys) and how past technology differs from what is used today (SCSA, 2014).
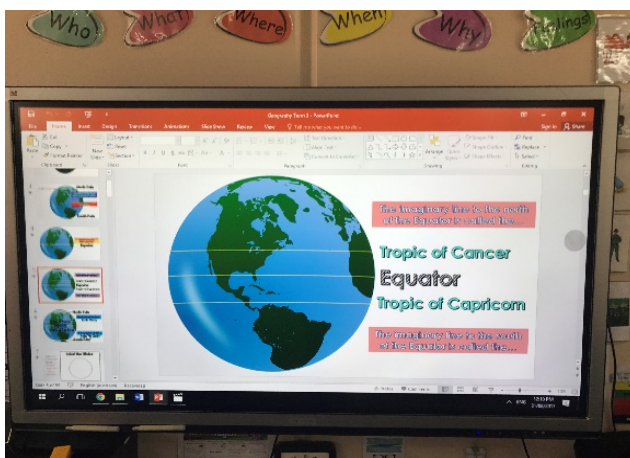
Image 10: Geographical Locations
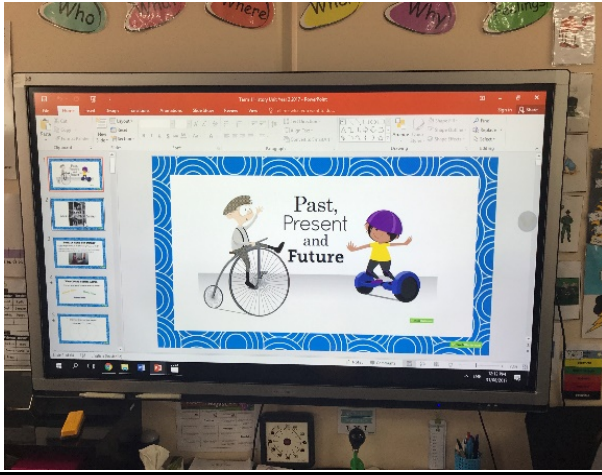
Image 11: Presentation Comparing the Past and the Present
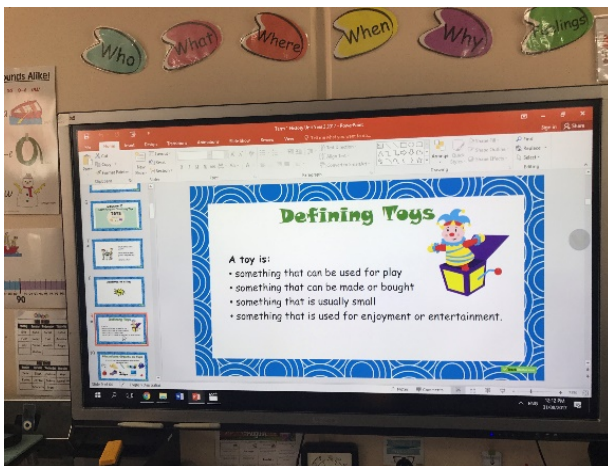
Image 12: Presentation Comparing Toys from the Past and the Present

Early childhood teachers at School A said it was difficult not having a school library. ECA 1, ECA 3 and ECA 4 used the local library for books to use in the classroom. The early childhood teachers also had access to *TeachStarter* and *TeachThis*, for which the school had a paid subscription. There were wooden blocks in pre-primary, and they also shared maps, globes and some dress-ups.

Early childhood teachers at School A also had access to video clips and images from the Internet, personal photographs from the children and their families, books they had purchased and some hands-on resources, like an old typewriter that ECA 3 had bought for teaching HASS. ECA 3 stated she often used storybooks to lead into a topic they were learning about. Image 13, *A Fine Dessert*, by E. Lockhart, is an example of a book used by ECA 3 for teaching about families past and present.
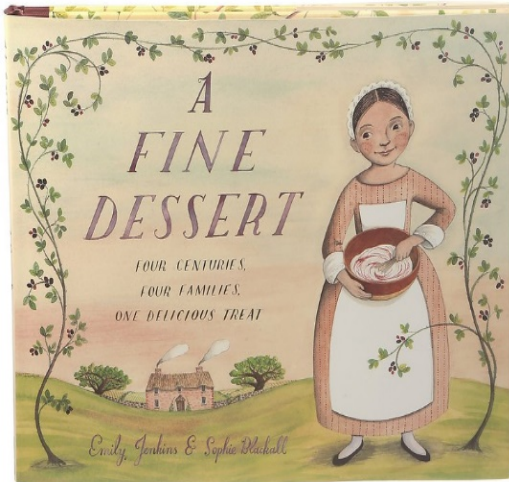
Image 13: A Storybook Used to Teach Children about Families through the Ages

ECA 3 and ECA 4 also accessed resources from the One World Centre (OWC), which provided: "professional learning and resources for early childhood, primary and secondary teachers throughout Western Australia who wish to incorporate global education in their teaching programs" (OWC, 2012).

Principal B talked about the importance of access to many and varied resources and sources of information for programming, planning and teaching:

I think coming from the classroom myself, I think one of the most important things is seeing ideas; being able to go somewhere and look at ideas, to develop a topic, whatever that is, because if you rely on the same thing, time and time again, it becomes rather dry in your presentation. So, it's a matter of trying to bring in as many resources as you can and it might not necessarily be through IT. It may be through using newspapers; it may be through you showing…going on excursions and incorporating that into your plan; it may be through discussion, sharing ideas.

Principal B was keen to bring in as many resources as possible, especially hands-on resources, rather than relying on digital resources. A section of the school library was set aside for HASS resources, yet Principal B confessed: "sadly new HASS resources tend to be neglected in favour of English and mathematics resources". During the focus group interview, early childhood teachers reported nowhere near as much money was spent on HASS as on other learning areas. Principal B asserted that staff were encouraged to notify him if they needed something and just had to ask, and the early childhood teachers confirmed the principal was very obliging when they requested resources.

Principal B advised the primary school had recently purchased new Basal readers, based on family that integrated the HASS history curriculum. Basal readers are short narratives used to teach children reading skills. The approach "employs reading instruction by means of a series of student workbooks accompanied by a teacher's manual" (Nugent, 2013). A review of the HASS Scope and Sequence document showed it included a statement related to HASS resources. The school vision highlighted further development of resources and materials as a priority for 2017. The 2017 HASS budget also made provision for more teacher references, big books and reading materials, in addition to purchasing Black-line masters and storing them in the school library (see Appendix 6). Black-line masters are printable worksheets created by publishers for teachers' use in the classroom. Since these resources are intended to be copied, breach of copyright laws is not a concern (Copyright Agency and contributors 2017). Although new HASS resources had been included in the budget, Principal B reported they had not yet been purchased.

In School B, early childhood teachers used a play-based learning approach with numerous hands-on resources and sources of information, such as the Internet, movie clips, photographs, parent interviews, excursions and incursions. They often used picture books to segue into topics covered in the HASS learning area. ECB 1 and ECB 2 stated that the book *Are we there yet?* by Alison Lester was a favourite in pre-primary, and was used to teach Geography Knowledge and Understanding in the HASS Curriculum (see Image 14). The story is based on the author's holiday around Australia (Lester, 2018). Other resources used by early childhood teachers in School B for teaching HASS included blocks, puzzles (see Image 15), manipulatives and games (see Image 16).
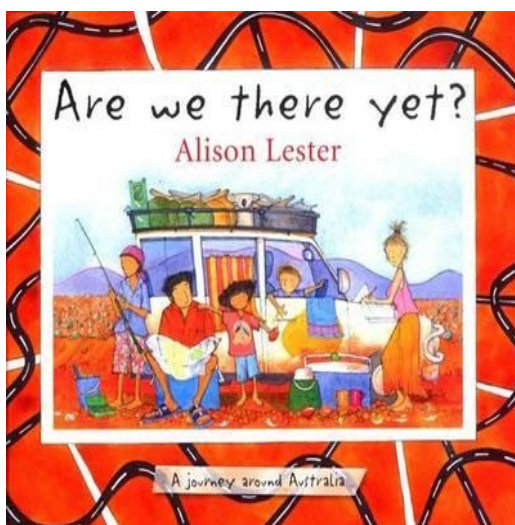
Image 14: Storybook Used to Teach HASS Geography

Image 15: Jigsaw of the World Used to Teach HASS

Image 16: Old and New Card Games for Comparing Resources in the Past and Present

Asked about resources the school would like for teaching the HASS learning area, Principal A replied: "being well resourced is important, especially in the infancy of the school. It's important that parents know that this is a priority". However, when early childhood teachers were asked what they would like to assist them with teaching the HASS Curriculum they said more hands-on resources, a variety of fiction and non-fiction books, maps, globes and a list of Internet sites that were useful for teaching HASS.

Principal B affirmed that purchasing more resources, DVDs, globes, big books, visuals and posters for teaching HASS were a future priority for the school. They would be placed in an allocated area in the library and be available to all staff. Early childhood teachers at School B said the principal was very good about providing resources when they were requested, and access to more fiction and non-fiction books through the library, as well as maps, globes and jigsaws would be beneficial.

5.8 Reporting on the HASS Curriculum

The principals at schools A and B were asked what instructions they had given their early childhood teachers with regard to reporting on the HASS Curriculum. Both had given

instructions for early childhood teachers to allocate a letter grade from A to E for HASS Skills and HASS Knowledge and Understanding, based on the achievement descriptions outlined in the SCSA. The grades were used for reporting students' achievements at the end of semesters one and two (SCSA, 2014). When asked how this decision was determined, both principals indicated it was based on the mandated reporting requirements of the SCSA in 2017. Principal A had decided they would also allocate letter grades for history and geography, rather than just HASS. Principal B had instructed early childhood teachers to also provide information on the students' approach to learning and the effort they had demonstrated in the HASS learning area (see Appendix 6).

5.9 Challenges when Planning, Teaching and Assessing the HASS Curriculum

The remainder of this chapter aligns with the second and final guiding question in this thesis: What challenges do early childhood teachers face when planning, teaching and assessing the new Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum?

5.9.1 Challenges when Planning and Teaching the HASS Curriculum

School A early childhood teachers mentioned it was difficult to find ideas, activities and experiences for the HASS learning area, particularly on the Internet. ECA 2, ECA 3 and ECA 4 reported that ideas for other learning areas were easy to find on the Internet. ECA 3 explained: "the problem is that when you do HASS it's more Australia specific so you can only use Australian resources. You can't just shoehorn American resources like you can for math".

Early childhood teachers at School A also expressed the view that being a new school and not having a library or easy access to resources made planning and teaching the HASS Curriculum more challenging. Collaboration with colleagues was another impediment for HASS planning because their temporary classrooms were quite separate and there were no common areas. The teachers expected the new early childhood block, due for completion at the end of the year, would assist with collaboration and sharing of resources.

Time was one of the biggest challenges for planning and teaching HASS in School A, especially with the emphasis on English, maths, and more recently, STEM subjects. The early childhood teachers mentioned a lot of time was spent on religious instruction, which took time away from the busy curriculum. Other challenges were a lack of resources and the difficulty of coming up with ideas and experiences. ECA 4 elaborated:

> I found it hard this year because I taught Year Ones last year and Year
> Two this year. So I found that the curriculum was quite similar in topics
> between the two year levels and because I have the same class as well,

I found that we've already touched on the past and present and family lives and that sort of thing, but we need to do it again, but in a different way. So I found it hard to teach it in a completely different way that was still engaging for them and making it interesting, so I found that a bit of a challenge.

Space was also a challenge, especially while they were housed in temporary classrooms during construction of the new early childhood block. However, three positive aspects identified by the early childhood teachers at School A for teaching HASS included excursions around the large school grounds, which backs onto a nature reserve, collegial support and parental involvement.

The early childhood teachers at School B also identified a lack of time as a challenge for planning and teaching the HASS Curriculum. ECB 3 stated: "in an already overstuffed, overcrowded curriculum. And normally the term 3 timetable is choc-o-block, we just run out of time".

5.9.2 Challenges when Assessing and Reporting on the HASS Curriculum

The early childhood teachers at School A did not view assessments in HASS overly challenging with regard to the Knowledge and Understanding strand. However, ECA 2 and ECA 3 struggled to accurately assess the HASS Inquiry Skills as there weren't sufficient good examples available on the SCSA website. Early childhood teachers said they used a variety of Blackline Masters, rubrics, Venn diagrams and work samples that were placed in the students' assessment portfolios, as shown in images 17 to 20.
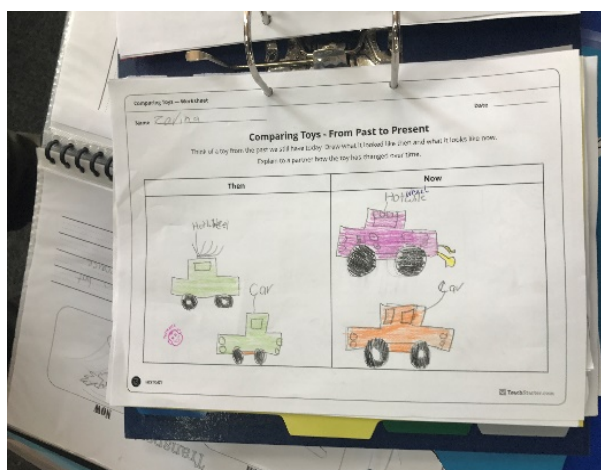
Image 17: School A Year One Assessment Piece Comparing Toys in the Past and Present
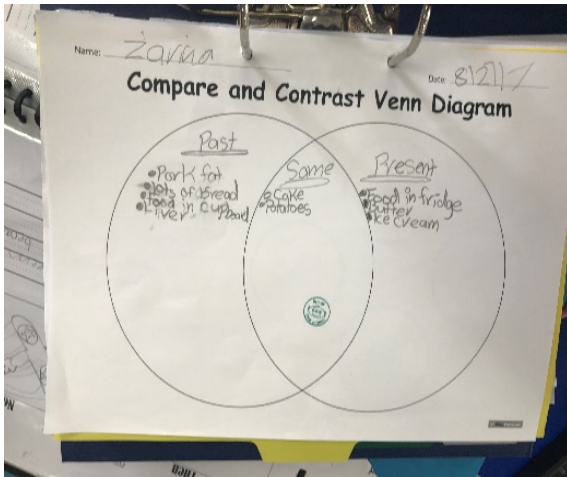
Image 18: School A Year One Assessment Comparing Food Storage in the Past and Present
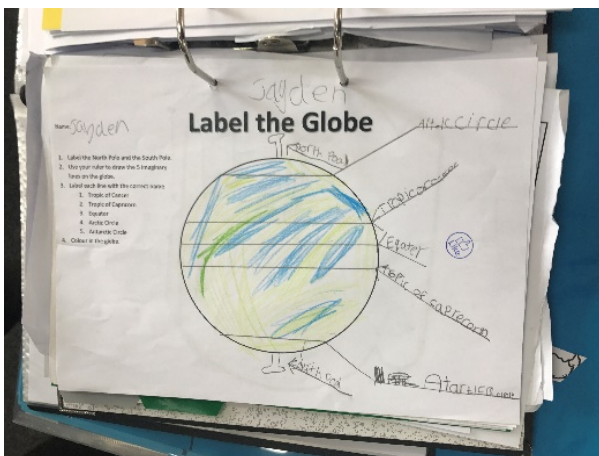
Image 19: School A Year Two Assessment of Child's Ability to Label the Globe
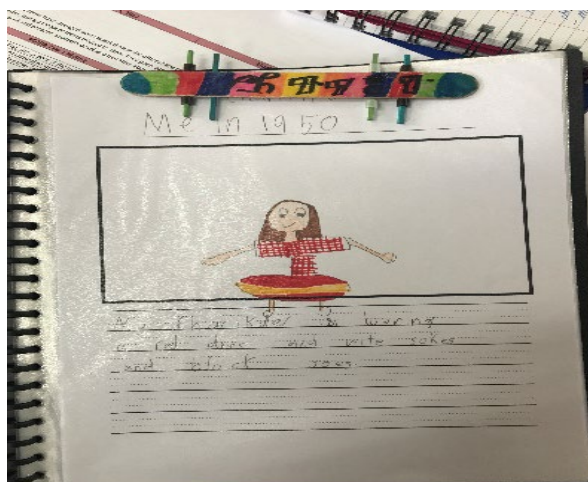
Image 20: School A Year Two Assessment on Living in the Past

Participants at School A found accurate reporting on HASS and allocating a letter grade from A to E challenging. ECA 2 said: "I found it really difficult to report on HASS because there aren't enough exemplars on SCSA and it's hard to differentiate between the grades". At School B, early childhood teachers indicated they did not find assessment of HASS overly challenging. As stated by ECB 4: "the common assessment tasks and collaboration has made assessment and reporting on the HASS Curriculum quite easy'. Images 21 to 28 provide examples from the students' assessment portfolios at School B from PP to Y2.
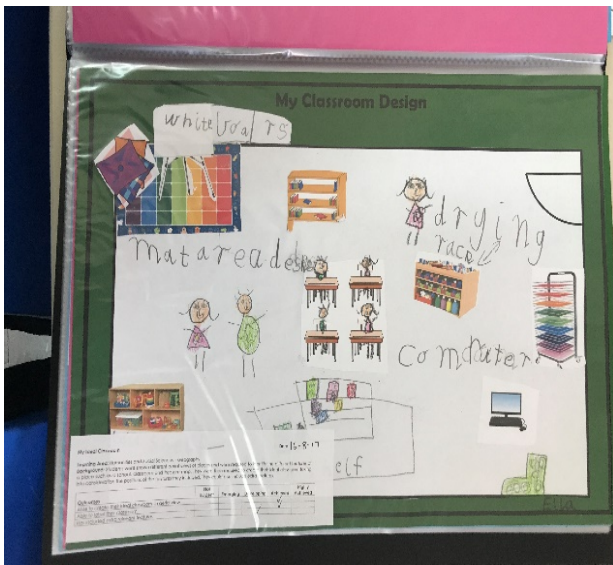
Image 21: School B Pre-Primary HASS Mapping Assessment
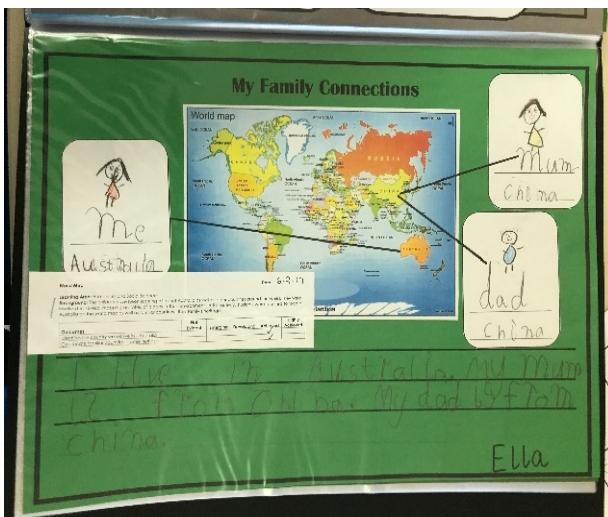
Image 22: School B Pre-Primary HASS Assessment – Where am I from?

Image 23: School B Pre-Primary HASS Assessment Comparing Australia to other Countries
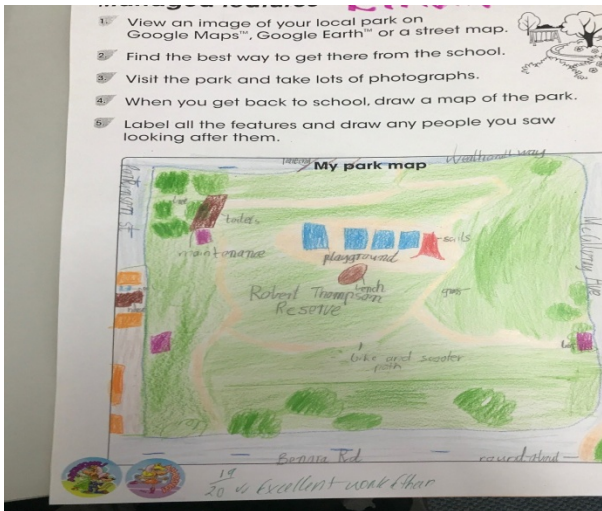
Image 24: School B Year One HASS Assessment of Mapping the Local Park
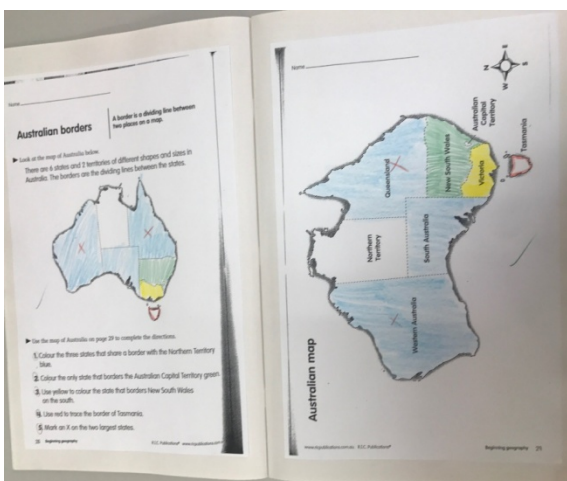
Image 25: School B Year One HASS Assessment of the Australian States and Territories

Image 26: School B Year One HASS Assessment Identifying the Natural, Managed and Constructed Features in a Scene

Image 27: School B Year Two HASS Assessment Describing the World

Image 28: School B Year Two HASS Assessment Describing the Continents

During the semi-structured focus group interviews all the early childhood teachers were asked what they believed would help them with planning, teaching and assessing the new WA HASS Curriculum. At School A there was emphatic agreement between all four early childhood participants that more time was needed. When asked to elaborate, they mentioned more time for teaching the area, as well as resources, especially hands-on resources, useful Internet sites for program ideas, and professional learning.

The early childhood teachers at School B also said more resources would be helpful. ECB 2 said: "it is always great to have access to more resources like books and dress-ups. And lists of available excursions and incursions related to HASS and PL would also be great".

5.10 Concluding Statement

This chapter presented the results from the two case-study schools, investigating the experiences of EC staff as they transitioned to the new HASS Curriculum in an early childhood context. Respondents from the two schools provided oral feedback in interviews and artefacts in the form of documentation related to the HASS Curriculum in their schools and classrooms.

From these results it was evident that very different approaches had been used by the two schools. This led to varying degrees of competency and confidence in their transition to the new HASS Curriculum. Three key factors emerged to provide new insights into transitioning to new learning areas:

1. Preparation for transitioning to the new WA HASS Curriculum;
2. School leadership and prioritisation; and
3. Challenges that may inhibit successful transition to new curricula

These three themes are discussed further in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and discusses the results in relation to the principal and guiding research questions posed in this study. To recap, the aim of this research was to investigate the experiences of early childhood staff in two WA primary schools as they transitioned to the new WA HASS Curriculum in 2017. The research was conducted in two independent primary schools, both located in the Perth metropolitan area and affiliated with a Christian faith.

The research participants included the principals and early childhood teachers from PP to Y2 in each school. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the participants. The principals of schools A and B are referred to as "Principal A and B" respectively. The PP to Y2 teachers in School A are referred to as ECA 1, ECA 2, ECA 3 and ECA 4; and in School B, as ECB 1, ECB 2, ECB 3 and ECB 4. Figures 5 and 6 in chapter five provide further details about the participants.

Data was collected via one-on-one interviews with the principals and semi-structured interview questions in focus groups with PP to Y2 teachers in each school, followed by one-on-one interviews with each participating teacher. Teachers' planning and assessment documents, programs, school plans and assessment outlines, school visions and photographs of practice were also analysed to critically interpret the participants' responses. The data were analysed according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis, as detailed in chapter four.

The conceptual framework (see chapter three) informed this research project and provided the researcher with a diagraphic representation that guided the research process. The principal research question in this investigation sought to explore the preparation of teachers in PP to Y2 for the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum in 2017. To answer this question, the researcher scrutinised the preparation undertaken by school leaders and teachers to familiarise themselves with the new HASS Curriculum, as well as the any challenges early childhood staff experienced when planning, teaching and assessing the new WA HASS Curriculum.

Two guiding questions provided structure for the study and supported the principal research question by facilitating deeper examination of the opportunities and/or challenges encountered by the staff and schools before, during and after the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum in 2016 and 2017. It should be noted that minimal opportunities were

identified during the study, however, a number of challenges were highlighted in participants' responses. The results brought to light the priorities that were considered for the transition in each school.

Three key themes emerged from the analysis of the data. In this chapter, these themes are outlined and cross-referenced to current research and literature. The three key themes were:

1. Preparation for transitioning to the new WA HASS Curriculum, linked to the principal research question and first guiding question;
2. School leadership, linked to the principal research question and first guiding question; and
3. Challenges that may inhibit successful transition to new curricula, related to the second guiding question.

6.2 Preparation for the New Curriculum

This section aligns with the principal research and first guiding question, which emerged from the analysis of the results, namely professional learning, also known as professional development, and teacher knowledge.

The responses of participants at schools A and B in relation to their preparation for the new WA HASS Curriculum in 2017 revealed some similarities and differences. While there was no provision for professional learning at School A, School B did provide opportunities for teaching staff, including one paid session on the new HASS Curriculum, delivered by a representative from AISWA. However, this was a brief session at the beginning of the first term in 2017, and none of the participants could recall any information from the session. In School B, the findings in relation to professional learning and the HASS Curriculum Plan (see Appendix 6) showed the most constructive professional learning was provided by the principal in 2016. This internal professional learning entailed collaborative scrutiny of the new WA HASS Curriculum, a review of the school's existing HASS resources and the additional resources needed, supplemented by a whole-school HASS Curriculum Plan (see Appendix 6). The benefits of these professional learning activities substantiate SCSAs (2014) claim that effective school leaders can provide assistance to teachers through discussion, collaboration and professional learning to understand the rationale, aims and outcomes of new curricula.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) also advocated professional learning for educators to understand curriculum reforms (2014). Professional

learning supports educators in adopting effective teaching strategies for successful curriculum implementation (AITSL, 2011). This is consistent with Henderson's (2012) and Dilkes, Cunningham and Gray's (2014) findings regarding the need for quality professional learning when faced with curriculum change. While the provision of quality professional learning was a significant benefit for the school and its teachers, a number of challenges also surfaced, such as time constraints and a lack of suitable resources.

6.2.1 Teacher Knowledge

This section discusses the importance of teachers' knowledge for successful transitions to new curricula. The aspects of teachers' knowledge that were addressed in relation to the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum included teaching strategies, such as integration, play-based learning and inquiry-based teaching (IBT), as well as WA HASS Curriculum content knowledge.

During the semi-structured interview at School B the principal stated that integration was a whole-school policy, yet he also claimed HASS was more of a standalone subject and difficult to integrate into other learning areas. The teachers at School B said there were many opportunities for integrating HASS. The very nature and organisation of the WA HASS Curriculum aligns with an integrated approach. The two strands were designed for interrelated teaching and incorporation into learning plans, with Knowledge and Understanding providing the content to be explored and HASS Inquiry Skills creating a framework for these investigations (SCSA, 2014).

Hinde (2010) believed HASS was afforded less attention than other learning areas due to the tight curriculum and insufficient time allocation, and suggested integration was essential in an overcrowded curriculum. Hinde's (2005) proposal concurs with the findings of Duncan's (2010) Rose Review of the English Primary Curriculum (Rose, 2006), which recommended widening curriculum programs in order to embrace a richer, more spacious syllabus and allow greater scope for new, more flexible forms of teaching and learning (Duncan, 2010).

6.3 School Leadership

The data established that the principals at both participating schools were responsible for decisions relating to management and administration in their respective schools, including organisation of staff, timetabling, budgets, assessment, reporting and provision of resources and professional learning opportunities. The findings of this study suggest leadership decisions ultimately supported or hindered successful transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum for teachers in PP to Y2.

The literature on leadership styles, presented in the Literature Review (chapter three), supports the results related to leadership in this inquiry. The interviews with participants in schools A and B indicated that two different leadership approaches were employed in the two schools. Principal A had been teaching for 15 years, and his current position, held for the past two years, was his first leadership role. The data from School A revealed a laissez-faire approach by Principal A, that is, someone who avoids decision-making and fulfilling supervisory responsibilities and is more inactive than reactive or proactive (Hartog & Van Muijen, 1997). While the early childhood teachers in School A did not openly criticise the leadership, the teachers' responses in the focus group session and one-on-one interviews indicated a lack of direction and support. For example, teachers stated the budget was insufficient, whereas Principal A was under the impression that the budget was generous. This signalled an incongruous assumption by Principal A, as the teachers disagreed and claimed they were under resourced, which affected their ability to teach HASS effectively. Furthermore, a lack of adequate time for teaching HASS affected the teachers' ability to cover all the content they were expected to teach in the school year and caused them a great deal of frustration.

Another finding that aligned with the literature on laissez-faire leadership relates to professional learning. Principal A did not attend or offer any HASS-related professional learning for his staff. He did, however, state he was happy to allow teachers to attend professional learning if they put in a request. The teachers appeared to be unaware of this concession and laughed when asked about HASS professional learning, exclaiming: "is there such a thing?" In their research, McCarley, Peters and Decman (2016) found laissez-faire leadership ineffective and placed pressure on teachers when implementing new curricula. Instead of actively seeking opportunities for professional learning, either internally or externally, laissez-faire leaders typically wait for suggestions from others (McCarley, Peters & Decman, 2016).

Throughout discussions about the new WA HASS Curriculum it was evident to the researcher that Principal A had minimal understanding. He was unable to articulate accurate knowledge of the content and skills when asked about this new learning area. In the one-on-one interview, Principal A was asked about the rationale for HASS and replied: "the rationale for HASS is to investigate the history, or study of man, to see where we have come from and to develop an appreciation for life". While his response described a general overview of history for older year groups, it did not reflect the history component of the WA HASS Curriculum for PP to Y2. This principal's limited knowledge of the new HASS curriculum reduced his ability to provide the required support and guidance to assist PP to Y2 teachers'

understanding and implementation of the new HASS Curriculum. A further study by Barnett et al. (2005) also found a laissez-faire approach less effective than the more active transactional and transformational styles in supporting teachers' understanding of new curricula.

The feedback from all participants in School A indicated their perceptions of Principal A as a laissez-faire leader. One example of this was the principal's claim that the PP to Y2 teachers were well resourced and knowledgeable about the HASS Curriculum. However, the teachers' responses stood in stark contrast to their principal's assertion, since they believed they were considerably under-resourced. A review of this principal's interview responses suggested he was under significant pressure, possibly due to the relatively recent establishment of the school in 2012 and the extensiveness of his role. Principal A stated he was "deputy principal and first aid officer as well", signifying the pressure he was under to fulfil a multitude of roles. The past two years as principal had been his first leadership position after teaching for fifteen years, and it is likely that he was still getting established. The research conducted by Skogstad et al., (2007) found a laissez-faire leadership approach synonymous with a stressful workplace and higher incidences of interpersonal conflicts, and mirrors the response of ECA 2 regarding the lack of HASS resources at the school, the need to buy or create their own, and teachers' reluctance to share resources for fear of them getting lost or destroyed.

In contrast, the principal at School B was able to clearly articulate his understanding of the new HASS Curriculum. Principal B had more than 40 years teaching experience and had been the primary school leader for eight years. The results identified his leadership approach as transformational, described by Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) as someone who rouses and inspires (transforms) followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. These authors defined transformational leadership as paying attention to the concerns and developmental needs of followers; altering their awareness of issues by encouraging them to view problems in a new way; and able to arouse, excite and inspire followers to put in extra effort to achieve common goals. When asked about his approach to the new HASS Curriculum, Principal B reported he had collaborated with his teachers to unpack the curriculum documents and had acquired a good understanding of this learning area. Following this collaborative process, Principal B had created an alternative HASS Scope and Sequence to the one provided by SCSA (see Appendix 6), thereby supplying a context for the school and simplifying the contents for easy access and enhanced understanding. The Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers found this document useful as it provided additional direction and inspired them to integrate the HASS program in other learning areas.

Principal B's leadership approach reinforces the research conducted by Soini, Pietarinen and Pyhältö (2016) that found success or failure contingent on the quality of the leadership in schools when implementing change, be it curriculum or policy reforms (Soini, et al., 2016). This does not necessarily mean School A failed and School B succeeded in implementing the new HASS Curriculum, but rather illustrates that the lack of direction, support and resources in School A compromised the effectiveness of implementation with regard to planning, teaching and assessing this new learning area.

Barnett, Marsh, and Craven's (2005) investigation of laissez-faire school leaders found evidence in the literature of significant negative effects on a number of school issues. However, in their own quantitative study, these researchers discovered laissez-faire leadership was not always harmful. Aside from causing frustration for teachers, Barnett et al. (2005) found absent or laissez-faire principals, who delayed decision-making, did not necessarily impact all aspects of the learning environment negatively. Although less involved, Principal A was not dismissive or neglectful and spoke highly of his staff and their ability to teach HASS: "I think they're (the participating teachers) highly proficient in HASS. They are actually outstanding in all disciplines actually. I'm really blessed actually to have very motivated and very competent staff". Although the teachers at School A reported there was a need for more resources, time, professional learning and support, all but one said they were confident in their understanding of the requirements for teaching and assessing the new HASS Curriculum.

On the other hand, Principal B actively supported his Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers, yet they too stated they would have benefited from a more intense professional learning session and additional resources for teaching the new WA HASS Curriculum.

6.3.1 School Leadership and Planning Policies

Another major difference between schools A and B relates to HASS planning policies. Principal A stated there were no set planning procedures for addressing the new HASS Curriculum, while Principal B had established a comprehensive document outlining planning procedures for his school. This had been created in collaboration with the teachers after a number of joint sessions scrutinising the new HASS Curriculum. The final HASS planning document was produced by the principal and included a scope and sequence, budget and vision, as shown in Appendix 6. His HASS Scope and Sequence comprised a whole-school policy for planning and assessment, and included an integrated, inquiry-based teaching approach.

The initiatives of Principal B accord with the findings of Clement's (2014) research on a school-oriented approach to educational change. Clement (2014) concluded that a clear agenda for driving change and a collaborative approach to interpreting mandated changes in new curricula lead to a positive experience for teachers and schools. At School A there was no cohesiveness in planning for the new WA Curriculum, and the PP to Y2 teachers all took a separate approach. Principal A had merely instructed his teachers to use the WA Curriculum and Assessment Outline (SCSA, 2014) and to show him their programs.

6.3.2 School Leadership and Collaboration

The collaborative way in which School B approached the scope and sequence document also extended to planning decisions. Principal B was an advocate of collaboration and teachers were members of cell groups; one comprised of the Kindergarten and Pre-primary teachers, and another, the Year One and Year Two teachers. The participants valued the school's collaborative spirit, which assisted their planning decisions. This finding supports Thompson, Gregg and Niska's (2004) claim that effective leadership plays a significant role in creating a collaborative environment in schools. These authors believed collaboration lies at the heart of professional learning communities and has the ability to enhance student learning.

The collaborative approach in School B was a prominent feature of the school culture. The principal galvanised the values of collaborative working environments by establishing professional learning communities comprised of the teaching staff. The cell groups were made up of smaller collaborative groups aligned with the stages of schooling in Western Australia - in the primary years these phases are early childhood, typically kindergarten to year two; and middle to late childhood from year three to year six. The participants in this study were all connected to either a Kindergarten and Pre-primary cell group, or a Year One and Year Two cell group. They spoke favourably about these collaborative groups and found the cell group meetings provided time for them to converse, plan, share ideas, problem solve and brainstorm for planning and assessment. The cell groups are therefore an opportunity provided to the PP to Y2 teachers at School B, which aligns with the second guiding research question.

In School A the participants found working collaboratively difficult, primarily due to the layout of the school. They acknowledged the benefits of cooperation and hoped this would be established when construction of the new early childhood block was completed. Despite the physical separation, there were nevertheless ways in which the staff at School A could have developed a shared culture and created a productive professional learning community.

As Du Four (2007) explained, professional learning communities do not evolve by joining a specific program or taking a pledge, but ascribe to the concepts of a collaborative approach.

Much of the literature in the field of professional learning espouses the benefits of professional learning communities (PLC). The findings from such studies suggest PLCs should include structural conditions, such as time to talk, physical proximity, interdependent teaching roles, teacher empowerment and school autonomy, as well as social and human conditions for them to be effective (Kruse, Seashore, Louis, & Bryk, 1994). Similar results emerged from Rodd's (2006) research on leadership in which the author suggested a collaborative approach, rather than an autocratic one, may ease the burden for leaders by more even distribution of roles and responsibilities.

6.3.3 School Leadership Decisions and Time Allocation for the HASS Curriculum

Another responsibility of the leaders in schools A and B was determining the amount of time allocated to all learning areas. Eighty minutes were apportioned to HASS in School A and approximately 90 minutes in School B. The SCSA notional teaching time allocation for HASS is 120 minutes based on a 25-hour week (SCSA, 2016a), so both schools fell short of the recommendation. However, Principal B argued that the school's integrated policy and approach to teaching and learning made up for the shortfall.

The responses of School A participants revealed that the principal had replaced one HASS period with STEM, an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning science, technology, engineering and mathematics (New South Wales [NSW] Department of Education, 2017). It appeared that Principal A had misinterpreted the intention of STEM education, and rather than treating it as an additional standalone learning area, implementation should have spanned all possible learning areas (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority [ACARA], 2016).

In School B the teachers reported there was not a huge focus on STEM, particularly in early childhood, yet had received the approval of their principal for their proposal to integrate the STEM philosophy into their everyday practice. The trust shown in these teachers demonstrates effective leadership and reinforces the research of Campbell-Evans et al. (2014), suggesting trustworthiness, approachability and empathy were key ingredients for genuine and authentic partnerships.

6.3.4 School Leadership Decisions, Assessment and Reporting Policies for HASS

Vast differences in assessment decisions were evident in schools A and B. The principal of School A left assessment decisions to the teachers of each year group, whereas

School B had created a wide assortment of formative and summative assessments, in addition to common assessment tasks for ensuring consistency across year levels. The latter allowed for moderation, a method used to attain consistency and comparability in assessment judgments with different assessors, programs and schools (Queensland Curriculum Council, 2002).

The school's reporting policies also influenced teachers' roles and responsibilities. The findings showed similar approaches by schools A and B in this regard. The principals of both schools instructed their Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers to assign letter grades for the HASS learning area, stating the decision was based on the reporting requirements outlined by SCSA (2016a), as follows:

In the Pre-primary year, schools:
- Report student achievement in English and mathematics;
- Are strongly encouraged to report in science;
- May choose to report in other learning areas; and
- Report using achievement descriptors but without letter grades. Include information on the report about the student's *attitude, behaviour* and *effort* in terms other than the five-point scale, which is used as a measure of achievement.

In Years One and Two, schools:
- Report on student achievement in all the learning areas;
- Report using system-based or school-based achievement descriptors and may use letter grades. The achievement descriptors must align with the achievement standards described in the *Outline;* and
- Include information on the report about the student's *attitude, behaviour* and *effort* in terms other than the five-point scale that is used as a measure of achievement.

Although assigning a letter grade to student achievement was not mandatory in pre-primary and optional in years one and two, it was not a requirement. The feedback from teachers at both schools, but particularly School A, showed this was an additional challenge and they would have preferred not to have this added responsibility. Research on leadership decisions indicates that despite meaning well, unless leadership decisions are shared by those within the institution they can be ill fated (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2010; Morrison, 2013).

In conclusion, research on effective leadership demonstrates the importance of strong management for successful implementation of policy reforms. In schools A and B the leadership approaches were vastly different: Principal B applied an effective model that valued and encouraged collaboration with all stakeholders, while Principal A was less effective and did not employ a shared approach. Research suggests a disconnect between school leaders and teachers can lead to unpredictable outcomes when facilitating change in schools (Clement, 2013; Morrison, 2013; Soini, Pietarinen & Pyhältö, 2016).

6.4 Challenges that may Inhibit Successful Transition to New Curricula

The two main challenges uncovered in this study, which aligns with the second guiding research question, were a lack of resources and timetabling decisions. The following sections illustrate that these themes were also highlighted in the literature review.

6.4.1 Time Allocation

As previously mentioned, SCSA (2016b) provides a notional time allocation for each learning area based on a 25-hour week. Two hours are allocated to the HASS Curriculum. However, a review of the timetabling for HASS showed both participating schools fell short of this recommendation. While Principal A reported two 40-minute sessions a week were allocated to HASS in his school, the teachers reported that one of those sessions was forfeited to an integrated STEM class.

At School B, two 45-minute sessions were allocated to HASS, which also fell short of SCSA's recommendation (2016a). The teachers in this school stated a lack of time was challenging "in an already overstuffed, overcrowded curriculum". Principal B acknowledged that: "HASS is a tight curriculum with a lot to cover, therefore it also needs to be integrated into other learning areas to ensure students meet the proposed HASS achievement standards by the end of the year".

These results concurred with Barwood, Cunningham and Penney's (2016) research on the WA Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum, where time allocation was identified as a factor in teaching, particularly the health education strand. Furthermore, Ditchburn (2015) argued that the lack of time allocated to the HASS learning area may prove challenging. This author found teachers were inclined to resort to speed teaching rather than being encouraged to promote a deeper connection and understanding of the content.

6.4.2 School Resources

School A found a lack of suitable resources a significant challenge, not only for teaching HASS, but also other learning areas. While Principal A believed teachers were given a

generous yearly budget of $2 000, the teachers disagreed. During the focus group interview, participants reported the money was mainly spent on resources for teaching English and mathematics.

As the school was still becoming established, there was no school library or collection of common, shared resources for teachers. Each classroom was equipped with an interactive whiteboard for accessing online resources. The school paid for subscriptions to two websites (*TeachStarter* and *TeachThis*), however, the teachers claimed it was difficult to locate suitable HASS resources on these websites.

ECA 3 and ECA 4 stated they accessed resources from the One World Centre (OWC), which offers professional learning and a number of resources for teaching "global education" to early childhood, primary and secondary classes in WA (OWC, 2012). Many of the OWC resources are also suitable for HASS. Pre-primary teachers shared wooden blocks, maps, globes and dress-ups, and to make up the shortfall, had resorted to making and buying their own resources in addition to accessing books from local libraries. However, ECA 1 reported that the teachers were protective of their resources and reluctant to share.

Compared with School A, School B had an assortment of available resources, which is understandable considering the school's long history. The principal and teachers at School B liked using a variety of resources, especially hands-on resources, and many of the HASS resources were stored in the school library. While the principal and teachers at School B acknowledged they had numerous resources for teaching the HASS Curriculum, Principal B admitted: "sadly new HASS resources tend to be neglected in favour of English and mathematics resources". These findings correlate with research conducted by Jay and Knaus (2018) that highlighted the importance of using suitable resources for teaching and learning experiences to support and challenge students in a play-based learning approach in Year One and Two classrooms in Western Australia. The findings of their research showed the availability of resources, or lack thereof, was a challenge for their participants.

Catling's (2017) recent investigation into high quality teaching in primary humanities across the United Kingdom (UK) also highlighted the importance of suitable resources for teaching and learning. The most effective teachers were found to be the ones who made learning visible, were flexible, enthusiastic and demonstrated a commitment to teaching humanities subjects. They also deemed access to a wide variety of resources an essential factor for successful integration of humanities learning experiences (Catling, 2017).

In summary, this chapter presented the findings from this interpretive research project. The four key themes were presented and described in relation to this study, as well

as other national and international research. The next chapter draws the thesis to a close with conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The final chapter of the thesis presents recommendations for teacher practice, school policy decisions and future research on HASS in the compulsory early years of schooling. As well providing an overview and conclusion of this interpretive study.

Since the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ century there has been a proliferation of research on early childhood education. National and international research in this field has highlighted the importance of early childhood education (Campbell-Barr & Bogatić, 2017) and instigated policy changes and curriculum developments in Australia. For the first time there is now a national learning framework for children from birth to five (the Early Years Learning Framework [EYLF], Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, [DEEWR], 2009), as well as a new national curriculum (the Australian Curriculum, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2016) for compulsory school-aged children. Each Australian state and territory has developed an approved version of the Australian Curriculum – in Western Australia this is known as the WA Curriculum and Assessment Outline (SCSA, 2014a).

Policy developments and changes in early childhood education have come about in response to national and international research and Australia's standing in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) education reports, in addition to Australia's results according to international assessment measures, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS*)* and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TiMMS). Many of the findings from studies on early childhood education have been translated into practice by teacher education institutions, government bodies, policy makers, school leaders, teachers and administrators.

While there have been numerous studies related to the field of early childhood education, the main body of work relates to improving practice, literacy and numeracy skills. This thesis addressed the limited research in the humanities and social sciences in the compulsory early years of schooling in Western Australia, particularly Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two. It contributes to the body of knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, by supplementing qualitative studies investigating school leaders' and early childhood teachers' perspectives on the transition to new curricula, such as the new WA Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum. Secondly, the findings will assist school leaders and teachers

to consider alternative, practical strategies for approaching future curriculum changes. In addition, the findings from this interpretive study offers insights for Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers and school leaders into alternative teaching and assessment strategies for the HASS learning area in an early childhood context.

7.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the analysis of the data, as well as the findings and themes that were uncovered in the research. The results have implications for teachers, school leaders, professional bodies and universities when faced with policy changes and implementing new curricula. They are presented under each of the four emergent themes: School leadership; Teacher knowledge; Preparation for new curricula; and Challenges that may inhibit successful transition to new curricula.

Recommendation 1: School Leadership

In view of the results of this research and the increased pressure faced by teachers when transitioning to new curricula, a knowledgeable and proactive leadership approach is essential. School leaders are able to assist PP to Y2 teachers by working collaboratively to unpack curriculum documents, ensure the availability of suitable resources and negotiate timetabling decisions, in addition to assessment and reporting requirements.

Recommendation 2: Teacher Knowledge

Transitioning to any new curriculum requires sound teacher knowledge of the content and effective strategies for teaching the subject matter. This can be achieved through collaboration with all teaching staff and examining the content, skills and achievement standards students are expected to achieve at the end of the school year. Collaboration allows school leaders and teachers to brainstorm ideas, review the resources and develop effective strategies.

Recommendation 3: Preparation for New Curricula

Professional learning is highly recommended for major changes to curricula. Schools and professional organisations have the ability to support curriculum changes by providing a clear vision, financial support, access to quality professional learning, and age-appropriate resources. All these elements contribute to supporting change and ensuring an effective transition.

Recommendation 4: Challenges that may Inhibit Successful Transition

Two challenges were identified by the principals and PP to Y2 teachers in this study. The first was related to the time allocation for teaching the HASS Curriculum. The researcher recommends following the SCSA notional time allocation (2016b) for teaching

HASS, in addition to seeking opportunities for integrating this learning area into other subjects. For example, to implement an inquiry-based strategy for teaching HASS Knowledge and Understanding and HASS Inquiry Skills, teachers can simultaneously address concepts in the English and mathematics curricula. Students can improve their literacy skills by researching sources of information through stages of an inquiry, while mathematics skills, like simple graphing and looking for patterns, can be addressed in the analysis of students' findings. Furthermore, persuasive writing skills can be enhanced when students write up their findings to communicate them to others.

The second challenge identified when teaching the HASS Curriculum was related to resources. It was evident from this research that a lack of suitable resources can frustrate and inhibit creative and effective teaching. The researcher acknowledges that restricted school budgets can impact the availability of resources; however, one inventory of already available resources and another for resources still required could help to raise the awareness of school administrators and facilitate planning of future purchases.

7.2.1 Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this interpretative study signal a need for further research in the HASS curriculum area, particularly in the early years of schooling. Due to the limited scope of this study, further research will provide deeper insights into the actual teaching, assessment and reporting of the WA HASS Curriculum. This learning area is now in its second year of implementation, and expansion of this research could potentially entail investigating professional learning for PP to Y2 teachers, followed by observations of classroom practices, interviews and journal writing by this cohort on their experiences of teaching the WA HASS Curriculum.

7.3 Overview

The aim of this study was to investigate the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum in PP to Y2. The study was conceptualised through the lens of an interpretivist paradigm and from a theoretical position of social constructivism. Case studies were chosen as the qualitative methodology, and data were collected via semi-structured interviews in a focus group, one-on-one interviews with teachers in Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two classes, and a collection of artefacts used to teach and assess this learning area. The data were analysed to address the three research questions in this inquiry:

1. How did early childhood staff from two Western Australian primary schools transition to the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2017?

2. What preparation was undertaken by early childhood teachers to become familiar with the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2016?

3. What challenges did the early childhood staff face with planning, teaching and assessing the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2016 and 2017?

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection, and thematic analysis was used to identify and report the themes that emerged using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. Four central themes related to the research questions were uncovered: School leadership; Teacher knowledge, Preparation for new curricula; and Challenges that may inhibit successful transition to a new curriculum.

The thesis opened with an introductory chapter comprised of five sections: a statement of the problem; aims of the study; the three research questions; significance of the study; and finally, the theoretical framework, utilising an interpretive research paradigm from a social constructivist theoretical perspective.

Chapter two provided contextual background for the study and a brief history of early childhood education in Western Australia. Contemporary early childhood education research was also outlined, as well as the recent early childhood education reform agenda and national early childhood development strategy. In addition, this chapter included a brief history of humanities and social sciences education in Western Australia. Finally, as this learning area has two integrated strands, an overview of inquiry-based education was included.

Chapter three presented a review of the literature related to the HASS Curriculum and associated aspects of this learning area. The chapter commenced with the evolution of the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum, followed by common teaching strategies for HASS in Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two classrooms, including inquiry-based teaching, integrated teaching and play-based education in PP to Y2 classrooms. In addition to early childhood leadership, three leadership styles were also examined, namely transformational, laissez-faire and collaborative. Since leadership has a significant influence on the school, the teachers within the school and on decisions made by school leaders, such as timetabling, assessment and reporting, these factors were also examined. The final sections of the literature review covered existing research on teacher preparation for curriculum change and presented a conceptual framework as a pictorial representation of this project.

Chapter four outlined the research design. The initial sections of this chapter described the qualitative approach adopted for the study and discussed the research

paradigm (interpretivism), the theoretical perspective (social constructivism) and the methodology (case study). Next came detailed information about the case study design; the research participants; data collection, including the semi-structured interview questions in the focus groups and one-on-one interviews; and a collection of artefacts related to the HASS Curriculum. This was followed by an explanation of the data analysis process, derived from Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. The chapter concluded with a statement about the credibility of the study and ethical considerations.

In chapter five the findings from the data collected at the case-study schools were described. Gathered via semi-structured interviews, one-on-one interviews and a collection of artefacts, the data were presented in the form of statements and quotes that reflected participants' responses in one or more of these forums. Artefacts were either reproduced as images embedded in the chapter or as an appendix.

Chapter six, the discussion chapter, highlighted the four key themes that emerged from the data analysis and related them back to each of the three research questions. Each theme was discussed and compared to the literature presented in chapter three. Lastly, the final chapter presented recommendations stemming from the results and a review of the literature.

In conclusion, this study has contributed to an under-researched aspect of curriculum change in the early years of schooling in Western Australia. It examined the perspectives of school leaders, Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two teachers as they transitioned to the new WA HASS Curriculum in two case-study schools. The findings extend our existing knowledge of curriculum change at the school level and the impact of these changes on school leaders and early childhood teachers. It is hoped that the implications, recommendations and directions for future research will provide guidance for those who seek to understand effective strategies for transitioning to new learning areas in the early years of schooling.

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Appendices
Appendix 1: Information Letter to the School Principal

Title of Project: Investigating the transition to new Western Australian Humanities and Social sciences Curriculum in an early childhood context in 2017.

My name is Jane Loxton and I am a postgraduate student in a Master of Education degree at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. You are invited to participate in this research project which is being undertaken as part of the requirements of my degree. The research project has ethics approval from the School of Education and Arts Ethics Sub-Committee.

This research project aims to:

- Investigate the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum in an early child educator's context in one Perth metropolitan independent school;

- Investigate the preparation undertaken by the early childhood staff to prepare for the new HASS Curriculum on a school and individual level.

- To explore the challenges that may inhibit the implementation of the new HASS Curriculum

    The research participants will involve early childhood teachers in Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two classrooms, as well as the school related to the early years. Data collection will include a focus group that will go for approximately one hour, one-on-one semi-structured interviews for approximately 30 minutes and analysis of artefacts such as the Humanities and Social Sciences Rationale and program documents. If your school chooses to participate staff will be asked to do the following:

1. Attend a Focus Group at a time and place convenient to participants, which will be audio recorded by the researcher. This session will take no longer than one hour.

2. Attend an interview at a time and place convenient to you, which will be audio recorded by the researcher. This interview will take no longer than 30 minutes.

3. Provide copies of HASS rationale and programs related to HASS.

    All information collected during the research project will be treated confidentially and will be coded so that participants remain anonymous. Participants providing documentation to the researcher will be asked to remove all identification of the school, teacher, children and family prior. All data collected will be stored securely on ECU premises and may be

accessed again by the researcher at a later date for the purpose of extending this research project for a PhD degree. Once the project has reached completion, all data will be kept for five years and will then be confidentially destroyed. The information will be presented in a written report, in which your identity will not be revealed. You may be sent a summary of the final report on request. I anticipate that there are no associated risks with participating in this project.

Participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time with no penalty for doing so. Please be advised that should a participant withdraw at any time during the project all data relating to them will be destroyed. All paper data will be shredded and all digital data deleted and destroyed, as per ECU policies and procedures. If you would like to take part in the project, please complete the attached consent form and return to me. If you have any questions about the research project or require further information you may contact the following:

Student Researcher: Jane Loxton Email: jlloxto0@our.ecu.edu.au

Supervisor: Dr Christine Cunningham
Email: c.cunningham@ecu.edu.au
Telephone: 08 6304 6807
Supervisor: Dr Marianne Knaus
Email: m.knaus@ecu.edu.au
Telephone: 08 6304 2986

If you have any concerns or complaints and wish to contact an independent person about this research project, you may contact:

Research Ethics Advisor
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: (08) 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Thank you for your time.
Jane Loxton

Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form: Principal

Title of Project: Investigating the transition to the new Western Australian Humanities and Social sciences Curriculum in an early childhood context.

Student Researcher:

Jane Loxton

Email: jlloxto0@our.ecu.edu.au

Research Supervisors:

Dr Christine Cunningham

Telephone: 08 96304 6804

Email: c.cunningham@ecu.edu.au

Dr Marianne Knaus

Telephone: 08 6304 2986

Email: m.knaus@ecu.edu.au

- I have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter
- I have read and understand the information provided
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction
- I am aware that if I have any further questions I can contact the research team
- I understand the project will involve the researcher audio recording an interview with me
- I understand the information provided will be kept confidential and that the identify of participants will not be disclosed without consent
- I understand the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research study for a Master of Education degree, as well as a potential future PhD degree, and I understand how this information will be used
- I understand I am free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty
- I freely agree to participate in the project

Principal: ……………………………………………… Date ....

Principal Signature: …………………………………

Appendix 3: Information Letter to Early Childhood Staff

Title of Project: Investigating the transition to new Western Australian Humanities and Social sciences Curriculum in an early childhood context in 2017.

My name is Jane Loxton and I am a postgraduate student in a Master of Education degree at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. You are invited to participate in this research project which is being undertaken as part of the requirements of my degree. The research project has ethics approval from the School of Education and Arts Ethics Sub-Committee.

This research project aims to:

- Investigate the transition to the new WA HASS Curriculum in an early child educator's context in one Perth metropolitan independent school;

- Investigate the preparation undertaken by the early childhood staff to prepare for the new HASS Curriculum on a school and individual level.

- To explore the challenges that may inhibit the implementation of the new HASS Curriculum

The research participants will involve early childhood teachers in Pre-primary, Year One and Year Two, as well as all leaders connected to these groups. Data collection will include a focus group that will go for approximately one hour, one-on-one semi-structured interviews for approximately 30 minutes and analysis of artefacts such as the Humanities and Social Sciences Rationale and program documents. If you choose to participate you will be asked to do the following:

1. Attend a Focus Group at a time and place convenient to participants, which will be audio recorded by the researcher. This session will take no longer than one hour.
2. Attend an interview at a time and place convenient to you, which will be audio recorded by the researcher. This interview will take no longer than 30 minutes.
3. Provide copies of HASS rationale and programs related to HASS.

All information collected during the research project will be treated confidentially and will be coded so that participants remain anonymous. Participants providing documentation to the researcher will be asked to remove all identification of the school, teacher, children and family prior. All data collected will be stored securely on ECU premises and may be accessed again by the researcher at a later date for the purpose of extending this research

project for a PhD degree. Once the project has reached completion, all data will be kept for five years and will then be confidentially destroyed. The information will be presented in a written report, in which your identity will not be revealed. You may be sent a summary of the final report on request. I anticipate that there are no associated risks with participating in this project.

Participation in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time with no penalty for doing so. Please be advised that should you decide to withdraw at any time during the project all data relating to them will be destroyed. All paper data will be shredded and all digital data deleted and destroyed, as per ECU policies and procedures. If you would like to take part in the project, please complete the attached consent form and return to me. If you have any questions about the research project or require further information you may contact the following:

Student Researcher:
Jane Loxton Email: jlloxto0@our.ecu.edu.au
Supervisor: Dr Christine Cunningham
Email: c.cunningham@ecu.edu.au
Telephone: 08 6304 6807
Supervisor: Dr Marianne Knaus
Email: m.knaus@ecu.edu.au
Telephone: 08 6304 2986

If you have any concerns or complaints and wish to contact an independent person about this research project, you may contact:
Research Ethics Advisor
Edith Cowan University
270 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027
Phone: (08) 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

Thank you for your time.
 Jane Loxton

Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form: Early Childhood Staff

Title of Project: Investigating the transition to the new Australian Humanities and Social sciences Curriculum in an early childhood context.

Student Researcher:

Jane Loxton

Email: jlloxto0@our.ecu.edu.au

Research Supervisors:

Dr Christine Cunningham

Telephone: 08 96304 6804

Email: c.cunningham@ecu.edu.au

Dr Marianne Knaus

Telephone: 08 6304 2986

Email: m.knaus@ecu.edu.au

- I have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter
- I have read and understand the information provided
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction
- I am aware that if I have any further questions I can contact the research team
- I understand the project will involve the researcher audio recording an interview with me
- I understand that the information provided will be kept confidential and that the identify of participants will not be disclosed without consent
- I understand that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research study for a Master of Education degree, as well as a potential future PhD degree, and I understand how this information will be used
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty
- I freely agree to participate in the project

Participant Name: …………………………………..................... Date.………………………

Participant Signature: …………………………………………………

Appendix 5: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Principal Research Question:

How did the early childhood staff in two Western Australian primary schools transition to the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2017?

Guiding Questions to link to/answer the principal research question:

1. What preparation was undertaken by early childhood teachers in 2016 to become familiar with the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum?
2. What opportunities and/or challenges did early childhood staff face with planning, teaching and assessing the new Western Australian HASS Curriculum in 2016 and 2017?

Preliminary questions for the School Principal

How many years have you been teaching?	
How many years have you been at the school?	
What is your current position at the school and how many years have you been in this role?	
What are your highest qualifications?	

Focus Question Prompts for the School Principal

Warm-up Introductory Questions:	1. Please explain your memories of the social sciences when you were at primary school. 2. Please explain the rationale for the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum in the early childhood curriculum.
Guiding Question 1: **What preparation was undertaken by early childhood teachers to become**	3. Did you attend any professional learning for the new HASS curriculum? Please explain what this entailed. 4. What training was provided to the EC staff for the implementation of the new

familiar with the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum?	Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Curriculum for 2017?
	5. How prepared are the EC Educators for teaching the new HASS Curriculum?
	6. What do you believe would help the EC Educators increase their ability to successfully implement the new HASS Curriculum?
Guiding Question 2: **What opportunities or challenges do early childhood teachers face when planning, teaching and assessing the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum?**	7. How many hours per week in the timetable are allocated for teaching HASS in EC? 8. How were the allocated hours for HASS decided? 9. When planning for HASS in EC is there a school wide policy for addressing the HASS content? 10. For example is History taught in one semester and Geography taught in the following semester? 11. What is your understanding of the content for Geography in the early years of education? 12. What is your understanding of the content for History in the early years of education? 13. What is your understanding of the HASS Inquiry Skills in the early years of education? 14. What HASS resources are available for teachers at the school? 15. What HASS resources would you like to see at your school for teaching HASS? 16. When reporting on the HASS Curriculum, have you instructed the EC teachers to allocate a grade, or just a comment?

Preliminary questions for the EC Educators

How many years have you been teaching?	
How many years have you been at this school?	

What is your current position here and how many years have you been in this role?	
What are your highest qualifications?	
What is the best day/time to conduct this interview? The interview will run for approximately 30 minutes and could be conducted during one of your DOTT periods.	

Focus Question Prompts Focus Questions for the EC Educators

Warm-up Introductory Question:	1. Please explain your memories of the social sciences when you were at primary school.
Guiding Question 1: **What preparation was undertaken by early childhood teachers to become familiar with the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum?**	2. Please describe the HASS rationale at your school. 3. How does this rationale relate to your own views of teaching and learning? 4. Did you attend any professional learning for the new HASS curriculum? Please explain what this entailed. 5. What training did the school leaders provide to you for the implementation of the new HASS Curriculum for 2017? 6. How prepared do you feel when teaching the new HASS Curriculum? 7. What do you believe would help you further to successfully implement the new HASS Curriculum?
Guiding Question 2: **What opportunities or challenges do early childhood teachers face when planning, teaching and assessing the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum?**	8. How are the HASS planning decisions made at the school? 9. Is the planning for the HASS Curriculum a collaborative process or done individually? 10. What challenges do you face when planning for HASS? 11. What challenges do you face when teaching HASS?

	12. What strategies do you use when teaching HASS?
	13. How many hours per week do you teach HASS?
	14. Is a play based approached used to teach HASS, and if yes, how? Do you integrate HASS with any other subjects?
	15. What resources are available at the school for teaching the HASS Curriculum?
	16. What resources do you access outside the school for teaching the HASS Curriculum?
	17. What resources would you like to be provide with for teaching HASS?
	18. What challenges do you face when assessing HASS?
	19. What challenges do you face when reporting student achievement in HASS?
	20. Is there anything else you would like to share about the new HASS Curriculum?

Appendix 6: School B Primary School Curriculum Plan

Learning Area: HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES Scope and Sequence
An overview of planning, teaching and assessment in Humanities and Social Science

WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH
There is a whole school approach in all areas of HASS that include:

- Weekly HASS lessons in every class
- Integration where ever possible into specific Learning Areas like English, Technology, The Arts, Mathematics etc.
- Incorporated into homework activities where possible
- Planning using the Scope and Sequence
- Further development of teacher reference and assessment tasks

ALLOCATED TIME:

- Conduct a lesson weekly and/or;
- The lesson may be integrated into another learning area – that is, Technology, English or Mathematics

PLANNING:

- A HASS Scope and Sequence has been compiled for each year level
- The Scope and Sequence is directly related to the SCSA outlines:
- General Capabilities
- Strands:
    - Geography & History – Pre-primary to Year 2
    - Geography, History & Civics & Citizenship – Year 3 to Year 4
    - Geography, History, Civics & Citizenship & Economics and Business Year 5 to Year 6
- Year Level Focus
- Year Level Content
- Skills
    - Questioning & Research
    - Analysing
    - Evaluation
    - Communicating & Reflecting
- The Scope and Sequence directs planning and programming in each year level and teachers highlight what content has been taught each term
- In the timetable Common DOTT has been organised to allow teachers time to plan together where and when necessary
- Supporting planning documents are essential to elaborate on outcomes and outline assessment in HASS

ASSESSMENT:

Ongoing class assessment includes:

- Teacher judgement and anecdotal records
- Summative assessment

- Formative assessment
- Parent/Teacher/Student interviews where student goals are set
- Learning journeys where the students spend time showing their parent/s work they have completed throughout the year

Semester Reports are completed using the following descriptors:

- **A:** The student demonstrates excellent achievement of what is expected at this year level
- **B:** The student demonstrates high achievement of what is expected at this year level
- **C:** The student demonstrates satisfactory achievement of what is expected at this year level
- **D:** The student demonstrates limited achievement of what is expected at this year level
- **E:** The student demonstrates very low achievement of what is expected at this year level

BUDGET:

- Purchase of teacher reference
- Purchase of Big Books, Reading Materials and Assessment Tasks
- Black-line Masters that are stored in the library

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

Professional learning is guided by the Priorities in 2016 and includes:

Review of the Scope and Sequence which incorporates: Geography & History – Pre-primary to Year 2; Geography, History & Civics & Citizenship – Year 3 to Year 4; Geography, History, Civics & Citizenship & Economics and Business Year 5 to Year 6 – which reflects the SCSA documents.

Review of the Semester Report English descriptors with AISWA personnel

PRIORITIES 2017:

History and Social Sciences			
Area of Development	**When**	**Who**	**Assessment/Staff Development**
Complete a common assessment task in Term 2 and Term 4 for levelling/grading purposes	Devise a Common Assessment task for each semester	Establish topics and criteria in Cell Groups Reference: SCSA – Judging Standards	Student work book is essential as evidence & viewed each term by Head of Primary
Further develop resources and materials	Coordinated by Cell Groups Materials for purchase directed to lead teacher	Cell Groups Lead teacher	Discussion and review during Cell Group meetings

Review 2016 – Future Planning
SETTING PRIORITIES FOR 2017
History and Social Science

What are we doing well?	What do we need to improve?	Future priority
CONTENT Content based on the Australian Curriculum Excursions incorporated and related to content Content and Skills covered well Make the connections – example: ANZAC Day Inquiry based lessons Research incorporated Fun Lots of IT evidence **PROGRAMMING:** Content based on the Australian Curriculum Excursions incorporated and related to content Teachers plan to accommodate split levels Thematic approach – Mother's Day, Easter, Christmas Incorporated through language - English	**CONTENT** In Year 5 and 5 a bigger focus on Civics and Economics In ELC focus on celebrations – incorporate the culture of children in class **RESOURCES** Purchase: • Age appropriate DVDs • More globes • More big books related to HASS • More props • More visuals – posters etc.	**CONTENT** Rename HASS Incursions that incorporate History and Geography Consistency of topics – Head of Primary to ensure this happens Mixed grades: Consider splits prior to setting tasks & priorities In mixed grades ensure both year levels are covered No CATS if there is a split class – view workbooks instead **RESOURCES** More resources on Civics and Economics More resources – DVDs, globes, Big Books, visuals, posters Allocated area in the library for 'updated resources'

Cross Curricular: Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders History and Cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

General Capabilities	
Literacy	In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students develop literacy capability as they learn how to build knowledge in relation to historical, geographical, civic and economic information, concepts and ideas. Students progressively learn to use a wide range of informational, persuasive and imaginative texts in multiple modes. These texts include stories, narrative recounts, reports, explanations, arguments, debates, timelines, maps, tables, graphs, images, often supported by references from primary and secondary sources. Students learn to make increasingly sophisticated language and text choices, understanding that language varies according to context, including the nature and stages of their inquiry. They learn to use language features and text structures to comprehend and compose cohesive texts about places, people, events, processes, systems and perspectives of the past, present and future. These include topic-specific vocabulary; appropriate tense verbs; and complex sentences that describe sequential, cause-and-effect and comparative relationships. They recognise how language and images can be used to make and manipulate meaning and evaluate texts for shades of meaning and opinion. Students also participate in debates and discussions, and develop a considered point of view when communicating conclusions and preferred social and environmental futures to a range of audiences.
Numeracy	In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students develop numeracy capability as they apply numeracy skills in relation to historical, geographical, civic and economic inquiries. Students count and measure data and information, construct and interpret tables and graphs, and calculate and interpret statistics in their investigations. Students learn to use scaled timelines, including those involving negative and positive numbers, as well as calendars and dates, to recall information on topics of historical significance and to illustrate the passing of time. They collect data through methods such as surveys and field tests, and construct and interpret maps, models, diagrams and remotely sensed and satellite images, working with numerical concepts of grids, scale, distance, area and projections. Students learn to analyse numerical data to make meaning of the past; to test relationships in patterns and between variables, such as the effects of location and distance; and to draw conclusions. They make predictions and forecast outcomes based on civic, economic and business data and environmental and historical information and represent their findings in numerical and graphical form. Students use numeracy to understand the principles of financial management, and to make informed financial and business decisions. They appreciate the ways numeracy knowledge and skills are used in society and apply these to hypothetical and/or real-life experiences.
ICT	In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students develop ICT capability when they locate, process, analyse, evaluate and communicate historical, geographic, civic and economic information using digital technologies. Students access and use digital technologies, including spatial technologies, as an investigative and creative tool. They seek a range of digital sources of information to resolve inquiry questions or challenges of historical, geographic, civic and economic relevance, being aware of intellectual property. They critically analyse evidence and trends and critique source reliability. Using digital technologies, students present and represent their learning; and collaborate, discuss and debate to co-construct their knowledge. They plan, organise, create, display and communicate data and information digitally using multimodal elements for a variety of reasons and audiences. Students enhance their understanding of ICT by exploring the increasing use of technology and the effects of technologies on people, places and civic and economic activity over time and place. They learn about and have opportunities to use social media to collaborate, communicate, and share information, and build consensus on issues of social, civic, economic and environmental significance, whilst using an awareness of personal security protocols and ethical responsibilities.

Critical and Creative Thinking	In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students develop critical and creative thinking as they investigate historical, geographic, civic and economic concepts and ideas through inquiry-based learning. Students develop critical thinking by learning to develop and clarify investigative questions, and to question sources and assess reliability when selecting information from sources. 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. They learn to think logically when evaluating and using evidence, testing explanations, analysing arguments and making decisions, and when thinking deeply about questions that do not have straightforward answers. Students learn the value and process of developing creative questions and the importance of speculation. They apply concepts and skills to new contexts and learn to develop new interpretations to explain aspects of the past and present that are contested or not well understood. They are encouraged to be curious and imaginative in investigations and fieldwork, and to consider multiple perspectives about issues and events. They imagine alternative futures in response to social, environmental, civic and economic challenges that require problem solving and innovative solutions, proposing appropriate and alternative courses of action and considering the effects on their own lives and the lives of others. In so doing, students develop enterprising behaviours and capabilities and learn to apply decision-making processes including negotiation and conflict-resolution.
Ethical Behaviour	In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students' capacity for ethical understanding is enhanced by the unique contexts offered through historical, geographical, civic and economic inquiry. Students investigate the ways that diverse values and principles have influenced human activity and recognise that examining the nature of evidence deepens their understanding of ethical issues. Students learn about ethical procedures for investigating and working with people and places, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Students critically explore ethical behaviour of people of different times and places that may be the result of differing standards and expectations and changing societal attitudes. They evaluate their findings about consumer choices, and about current geographical issues against the criteria of environmental protection, economic prosperity and social advancement, raising ethical questions about human rights and citizenship. Students discuss and apply ethical concepts such as equality, respect and fairness, and examine shared beliefs and values which support Australian democracy and citizenship. As students develop informed, ethical values and attitudes as they explore different perspectives, ambiguities and ethical considerations related to social and environmental issues, they become aware of their own roles, rights and responsibilities as participants in their social, economic and natural world. They consider the consequences of personal and civic decisions, for individuals, society and other forms of life that share the environment

Personal and Social Competence	In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students' personal and social capability is enhanced as they gain understanding about people, places, processes and phenomena. 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. Inquiry-based learning assists students to develop their capacity for self-management, directing their own learning and providing opportunities to express and reflect on their opinions, beliefs, values and questions appropriately. As students work independently and collaboratively, they are encouraged to develop personal and interpersonal skills, behaviours and dispositions that enable communication, empathy, teamwork, negotiation and conflict resolution to maintain positive relationships. They learn and apply enterprising behaviours and capabilities such as leadership, resilience, goal-setting and advocacy skills and informed, responsible decision-making. In turn, students develop the capacity to achieve desired outcomes peacefully and to make a contribution to their communities and society more broadly.
Intercultural Understanding	In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students develop intercultural understanding as they learn about the diversity of the world's places, peoples and their lives, cultural practices, values, beliefs and ways of knowing. Students learn the importance of understanding their own and others' histories, recognising the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories and cultures and the contribution of Australian migrants. They have opportunities to learn about the historic benefits and challenges of interacting with other countries and cultural groups over time, and come to understand the nature, causes and consequences of cultural interdependence, dispossession and conflict. They learn of Australia's economic and political relationship with other countries and the role of intercultural understanding for the present and future. As students investigate the interconnections between people and the significance that places hold, they learn how various cultural identities, including their own, are shaped. Students come to see the critical role of shared beliefs and values in an evolving Australian identity. They reflect on their own intercultural experiences and explore how people interact across cultural boundaries, considering how factors such as group membership, traditions, customs and religious and cultural practices impact on civic life. They recognise similarities as well as differences within and across cultural groups, recognising the importance of practising empathy and learning to challenge stereotypical or prejudiced representations of social and cultural groups where they exist. They demonstrate respect for cultural diversity and the human rights of all people and learn to facilitate dialogue to understand different perspectives.

Humanities and Social Sciences Scope and Sequence: Pre-primary

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

In Pre-primary, Humanities and Social Sciences consists of Geography and History.

- Civics and Citizenship does not commence until Year 3. The *Early Years Learning Framework* provides opportunities for students to engage in civics and citizenship concepts, such as developing a sense of community; an awareness of diversity; and an understanding of responsibility, respect and fairness.
- Economics and Business does not commence until Year 5. The *Early Years Learning Framework* provides opportunities for students to engage in economics and business concepts, such as exploring natural and processed materials, and consumer decisions.

Strand	Focus	Content	T1	T2	T3	T4
Geography	People live in places	Students gain a sense of location and learn about the globe, as a representation of the Earth, on which places can be located. There is a focus on developing students' curiosity of their personal world, with connections made between the early childhood setting and the local community.				
	The globe as a representation of the Earth on which Australia and other familiar countries can be located					
	The representation of familiar places, such as schools, parks and lakes on a pictorial map					
	The places people live in and belong to (e.g. neighbourhood, suburb, town, rural locality), the familiar features in the local area and why places are important to people (e.g. provides basic needs)					
	The reasons some places are special to people and how they can be looked after, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' places of significance					
History	Personal and family histories	In the context of developing a sense of identity and belonging, students investigate the features of familiar places, why and how places are cared for, and explore what makes a place special. Students engage in stories of the past, particularly in the context of themselves and family. This may include stories from different cultures and other parts of the world. They perceive that the past is different from the present and understand the many ways in which stories of the past can be told. In the early years, students have the opportunity to explore their heritage, background and traditions.				
	Who the people in their family are, where they were born and raised and showing how they are related to each other, using simple family trees					
	The different structures of families and family groups today (e.g. nuclear, only child, large, single parent, extended, blended, adoptive parent, grandparent) and what they have in common					
	How they, their family and friends commemorate past events that are important to them (e.g. birthdays, religious festivals, family reunions, community commemorations).					

	How the stories of families and the past can be communicated and passed down from generation to generation (e.g. photographs, artefacts, books, oral histories, digital media, museums) and how the stories may differ, depending on who is telling them.					

Humanities and Social Sciences Skills: Pre-primary

Questioning and researching	Identify prior knowledge about a topic (e.g. shared discussion, think-pair-share)	• Students have the opportunity to pose and respond to 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where' and 'why' questions. • They collect, sort, represent and record information into simple categories. • Students explore, play and investigate, and communicate their understandings through activities such as writing, painting, constructions or role-plays.	**T** **1**	**T** **2**	**T** **3**	**T** **4**
	Pose and respond to questions about the familiar. Explore a range of sources (e.g. observations, interviews, photographs, print texts, digital sources)					
	Sort and record information and/or data into simple categories (e.g. use graphic organisers, drawings)					
Analysing	Process information and/or data collected (e.g. sequence familiar events, answer questions, discuss observations)					
	Explore points of view (e.g. understand that their point of view may differ from others)					
	Represent information gathered in different formats (e.g.					

	drawings, diagrams, story maps, role-plays)					
Evaluating	Draw conclusions based on discussions of observations (e.g. answer questions, contribute to guided discussions)					
	Participate in decision-making processes (e.g. engage in group discussions, make shared decisions)					
Communicating and reflecting	Share observations and ideas, using everyday language (e.g. oral retell, drawing, role-play)					
	Develop texts (e.g. retell, describe personal stories)					

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARD: At Standard, students pose and respond to questions, and recognise that there are a variety of sources from which information can be collected. They use simple categories to organise information and sequence familiar events. Students explore points of view, represent information in different ways and begin to draw simple conclusions. They share observations and ideas when participating in the decision-making process. Students develop simple oral texts, and reflect on what they have learnt using language, gesture and other non-verbal modes. Students recognise that countries, such as Australia, and familiar places are represented on a globe or a map. They describe the features of places that are familiar to them. Students identify the interconnections that people have with familiar places and recognise why some places are special and need to be looked after. They identify similarities between families and suggest ways that families communicate and commemorate significant stories and events from the past.

Humanities and Social Sciences Scope and Sequence: Year One

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

In Year 1, Humanities and Social Sciences consists of Geography and History.

- Civics and Citizenship does not commence until Year 3. The *Early Years Learning Framework* provides opportunities for students to engage in civics and citizenship concepts, such as developing a sense of community; an awareness of diversity; and an understanding of responsibility, respect and fairness.
- Economics and Business does not commence until Year 5. The *Early Years Learning Framework* provides opportunities for students to engage in economics and business concepts, such as exploring natural and processed materials, and consumer decisions.

Strand	Focus	Content	T1	T2	T3	T4
Geography	Places have distinct features.	In the early years, students have the opportunity to develop an appreciation for both natural and constructed environments as they understand how places are cared for and consider who should provide this care. Their understanding of place is further developed through investigating maps as a visual representation of Earth, as they begin to locate geographical divisions.				
	The location of the equator and the northern and southern hemispheres, including the poles.					
	The natural, managed and constructed features of places, their location on a pictorial map, how they may change over time (e.g. erosion, revegetated areas, planted crops, new buildings) and how they can be cared for.					
	How weather (e.g. rainfall, temperature, sunshine, wind) and seasons vary between places, and the terms used to describe them.					
	The activities (e.g. retailing, recreational, farming, manufacturing, medical, policing, educational, religious) that take place in the local community which create its distinctive features.					
History	Present and past family life.	The concept of continuity and change is extended through exploring how family life has changed or remained the same over time, and how the present is similar to, or different from, the past. The understanding of time as a sequence is developed in the context of the present, past and future.				
	Differences in family sizes, structures and roles today (e.g. work outside the home, domestic chores, child care), and how these have changed or remained the same over time.					
	How the present, past and future are signified by terms indicating time (e.g. 'a long time ago'; 'then and now'; 'now and then'; 'old and new'; 'tomorrow') as well as by dates and changes that may have personal significance (e.g. birthdays, holidays, celebrations, seasons).					
	The differences and similarities between students' daily lives and life during their parents' and grandparents' childhoods (e.g. family traditions, leisure time, communications) and how daily lives have changed.					

Humanities and Social Sciences Skills: Year One

			T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4
Questioning, Researching and Analysing	Reflect on current understanding of a topic (e.g. think-pair-share, brainstorm)	• Students have the opportunity to investigate different ways of collecting information and/or data through sources such as books, people and photos.				
	Pose questions about the familiar and unfamiliar					
	Locate information from a variety of provided sources (e.g. books, television, people, images, plans, internet)	• They learn how narratives can be used to communicate and represent their changing understandings in multiple ways.				
	Process information and/or data collected (e.g. sequence information or events, categorise information, combine information from different sources)					
	Explore points of view (e.g. understand that stories can be told from different perspectives)					
	Represent collected information and/or data in to different formats (e.g. tables, maps, plans)					
Evaluating	Draw conclusions based on information and/or data displayed in pictures, texts and maps					

	(e.g. form categories, make generalisations based on patterns)					
	Participate in decision-making processes (e.g. engage in group discussions, make shared decisions, share views)					
Communicating and Reflecting	Present findings in a range of communication forms, using relevant terms (e.g. written, oral, digital, role-play, graphic)					
	Develop texts, including narratives, that describes an event or place					
	Reflect on learning and respond to findings (e.g. discussing what they have learned)					

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARD: At Standard, students pose and respond to questions, and recognise that there are a variety of sources from which information can be collected. They use simple categories to organise information and sequence familiar events. Students explore points of view, represent information in different ways and begin to draw simple conclusions. They share observations and ideas when participating in the decision-making process. Students develop simple oral texts, and reflect on what they have learnt using language, gesture and other non-verbal modes. Students recognise that countries, such as Australia, and familiar places are represented on a globe or a map. They describe the features of places that are familiar to them. Students identify the interconnections that people have with familiar places and recognise why some places are special and need to be looked after. They identify similarities between families and suggest ways that families communicate and commemorate significant stories and events from the past.

Humanities and Social Sciences Scope and Sequence: Year Two

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

In Year 2, Humanities and Social Sciences consists of Geography and History.

- Civics and Citizenship does not commence until Year 3. The *Early Years Learning Framework* provides opportunities for students to engage in civics and citizenship concepts, such as developing a sense of community; an awareness of diversity; and an understanding of responsibility, respect and fairness.
- Economics and Business does not commence until Year 5. The *Early Years Learning Framework* provides opportunities for students to engage in economics and business concepts, such as exploring natural and processed materials, and consumer decisions.

Strand	Focus	Content	T1	T2	T3	T4
Geography	People are connected to many places.	• The concepts of <u>place</u>, <u>space</u> and <u>interconnection</u> are expanded through exploring the links with people and places, both locally and globally. • The concept of <u>scale</u> is introduced as students explore the hierarchy of <u>scale</u>. • They further develop a mental map of the world and of where they are located in relation to other places.				
	The location of the major geographical divisions of the world (e.g. continents, oceans) in relation to Australia.					
	Local features and places are given names, which have meaning to people, and these places can be defined on a variety of scales, including personal (e.g. home), local (e.g. street, suburb or town), regional (e.g. state) and national (e.g. country).					
	The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain connections to their Country/Place.					
	The connections of people in Australia to other places in Australia, in the Asia region, and across the world (e.g. family connections, trade, travel, special events, natural disasters).					
	The influence of purpose (e.g. shopping, recreation), distance (e.g. location) and accessibility (e.g. technology, transport) on the frequency with which people visit places.					
History	The past in the present	• Students are given the opportunity to develop their historical understanding through the key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy and significance. • These concepts are investigated within the context of exploring the history of their local area and why the past is important to the local				
	The history of a significant person, building, site or part of the natural environment in the local community and what it reveals about the past.					
	The importance today of an historical site (e.g. community building, landmark, war memorial, rock painting, engraving) and why it has heritage significance and cultural value for present					

	generations (e.g. a record of a significant historical event, aesthetic value, reflects the community's identity).	community, and therefore worthy of preservation.				
	The impact of changing technology on people's lives (e.g. at home, work, travel, communication, leisure, toys) and how the technology of the past differs from what is used today.					

Humanities and Social Sciences Skills: Year Two

			T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4
Questioning and Researching	Reflect on current understanding	• Students develop their understanding and application of skills, including questioning and researching, analysing, evaluating, communicating and reflecting. • They apply these skills to their daily learning experiences and to investigate events, developments, issues and phenomena, both historical and contemporary.				
	Pose questions about the					
	Sort and record selected					
Analysing	Identify					
	Process information and/or data collected (e.g. sequence					
	Explore points of view (e.g. understand					
	Represent collected information					
Evaluating	Draw conclusions based on information and/or data					
	Participate in decision-making processes					
Communicating and Reflecting	Present findings in a range of communicatio					
	Develop texts, including					
	Reflect on learning and respond to findings (e.g. discussing what they have learned) (WAHASS25)					

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARD: At Standard, students pose questions, locate, sort and record collected information and/or data from provided sources. They identify and process relevant information and/or data by categorising, sequencing events and exploring points of view. Students use different formats to represent their information, and draw simple conclusions. They participate in decision-making processes by contributing to group discussions. Students share their findings in a range of ways, and develop simple texts using some relevant terms. They reflect on what they have learnt using oral and/or written forms. Students locate major geographical divisions of the world, and describe places at a variety of scales. They describe the interconnections between people and places, and they identify the factors that influence people's connections with others in different

places. Students identify people, sites and parts of the natural environment in their local community that reveal information about the past, and those that have significance today. They identify examples of how technology has changed and its impact on people's lives.