2 Rationale for Society and Culture in the Stage 6 Curriculum

The central concern of Society and Culture Stage 6 is the interaction of persons, societies, cultures, environments and time.

Society and Culture draws on cross-disciplinary concepts and social research methodologies from anthropology, communication, cultural studies, media studies, philosophy, psychology, social ecology and sociology.

Society and Culture has direct relevance to the immediate needs of students and to their future lives by enabling students to develop understanding of:

• themselves
• their own society and culture
• the societies and cultures of others.

Students are provided with the necessary concepts, skills, competencies and knowledge to encourage a process of independent thinking that may be used to explain patterns of behaviour, solve problems and actively contribute to local, national and global levels of society.

Society and Culture is a conceptually based course that promotes students' awareness of the cultural continuities and changes within societies and cultures. It provides them with skills to critically analyse complementary and contrasting viewpoints about people, societies, cultures and environments, and their interactions across time. Society and Culture promotes an awareness of the nature of power and authority, gender, technology and facilitates intercultural understanding.

The emphasis on individual study and group work within Society and Culture encourages students to manage their own learning, as well as providing experience of working within teams. In allowing students to work in areas of direct relevance to their lives, Society and Culture contributes greatly to the ethos of lifelong learning, while providing opportunities to acquire a range of skills to support such learning.

The study of Society and Culture prepares students for adult life by developing qualities associated with effective citizenship. In so doing, it forms a basis for moving towards a more just society through positive participation in community life and, social and cultural literacy.

4 Aim

The aim of Society and Culture Stage 6 is to develop a student's knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes essential to achieving social and cultural literacy by examining the interactions between persons, societies, cultures and environments across time.

5 Objectives

Through the study of Society and Culture Stage 6, students will develop:

knowledge and understanding about:

- personal, social and cultural identity
- cultures shared by members of societies
- interactions of persons, societies, cultures and environments across time
- continuity and change, personal and social futures and strategies for change
- the role of power, authority, gender and technology in societies and cultures
- the methodologies of social and cultural research;

skills to:

- apply and evaluate social and cultural research
- investigate and engage in effective evaluation, analysis and synthesis of information from a variety of sources
- communicate information, ideas and issues in appropriate forms to different audiences in a variety of contexts;

informed and responsible values and attitudes towards:

- a just society
- intercultural understanding
- informed and active citizenship
- ethical research practices
- lifelong learning.

6   Course Structure

There are two courses in the Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus:

Preliminary Course

(120 indicative hours)

- The Social and Cultural World   (20% of course time)
- Personal and Social Identity   (40% of course time)
- Intercultural Communication   (40% of course time)

HSC Course

(120 indicative hours)

Core

- Personal Interest Project   (30% of course time)
- Social and Cultural Continuity and Change   (30% of course time)

Depth Studies   (40% of course time)

TWO to be chosen from the following:

- Popular Culture
- Belief Systems
- Equality and Difference
- Work and Leisure

7.2 Key Competencies

Society and Culture provides a powerful context within which to develop general competencies considered essential for the acquisition of effective, higher-order skills for further education, work and everyday life.
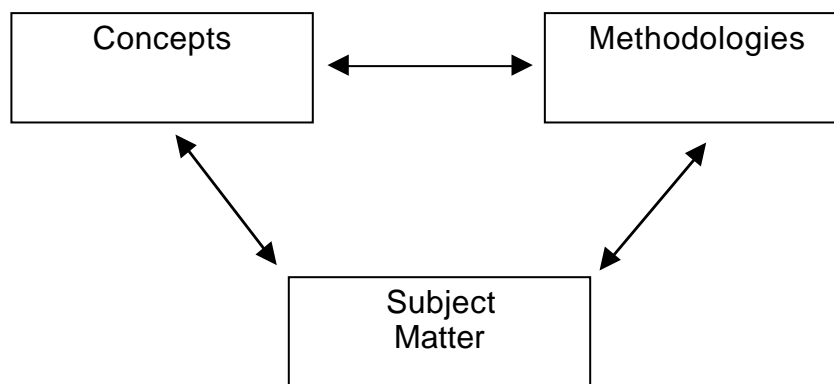
Key competencies are embedded in the Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus to enhance student learning. The key competencies of collecting, analysing and organising information and communicating ideas and information, reflect core processes of inquiry and are explicit in the objectives and outcomes of the syllabus. The other key competencies are developed through the methodologies of the syllabus and through classroom pedagogy.

Students work as individuals and as members of groups to conduct social and cultural research and through this, the key competencies, planning and organising activities and working with others in teams, are developed. When students plan their research or analyse statistical evidence, they are developing the key competency using mathematical ideas and techniques. During investigations, students will need to use appropriate information technologies and so develop the key competency of using technology.

Finally, the exploration of issues and investigation of the nature of social and cultural research contributes towards the students' development of the key competency solving problems.

8   Content

8.1   Features of Preliminary and HSC Content

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        ┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
        │     Concepts     │◄──────────────────►│   Methodologies  │
        └──────────────────┘                    └──────────────────┘
                  ▲                                        ▲
                  │                                        │
                  │                                        │
                  ▼                                        ▼
                       ┌──────────────────┐
                       │     Subject      │
                       │     Matter       │
                       └──────────────────┘
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Society and Culture integrates subject matter, concepts and methodologies.

Concepts provide tools for organising and understanding subject matter. They provide a common core of ideas that spiral through the course. The fundamental course concepts are persons, society, culture, environment and time.

Persons

Every person is a unique individual, but each develops in a social setting in which they are influenced by, and interact with, other persons. The process of communication is one of these fundamental interactions.

Society

Society is made up of people, groups, networks, institutions, organisations and systems. These aspects of society may include local, national and international patterns of relationships. People belong to informal and formal groups, and within and between these groups there are patterns of interactions.

Culture

Culture refers to the knowledge, ways of thinking, feeling and behaving that give each society its coherence and its distinctive way of life. Culture is demonstrated by the beliefs, customs, values, laws, arts, technology and artefacts people generate and use as they interpret meaning from their world and solve present and future problems.

Environment

Every society is located in a particular physical setting. The attitudes and values people have in regard to their environment greatly affect interactions between the person, society, culture, and environment. Environments present societies with both opportunities and restraints.

Time

Every person, society and environment is located in time and is changing through time. Our perceptions of time as past, present and future are also important for social enquiry and action. These perceptions draw on past events that influence our present. They need not, however, determine our future. We can perceive a range of possible futures that can assist our decision-making.

There is a dynamic interaction between the five fundamental concepts that is illustrated by the fundamental concepts diagram.
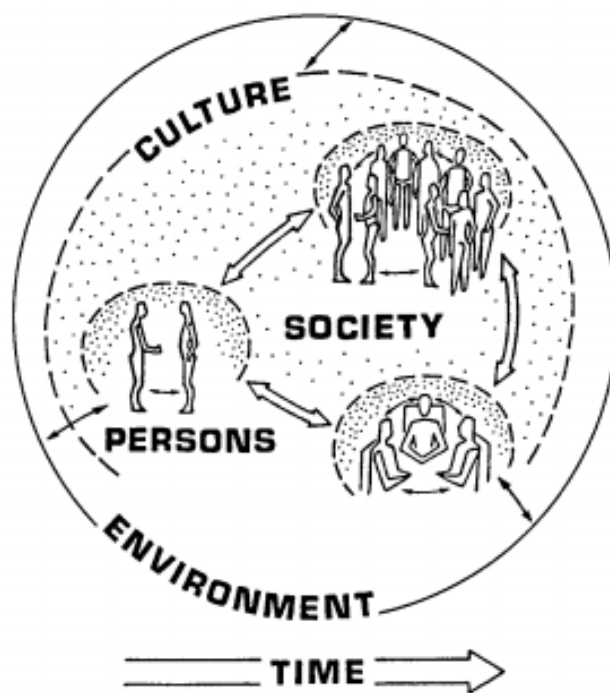

Fundamental Concepts Diagram

None of the fundamental course concepts can be studied in isolation. Their interactive nature is encapsulated by the fundamental concepts diagram. An understanding of this interaction underpins all core and depth studies throughout both the Preliminary and the HSC courses.

8.3 Social and Cultural Literacy

Society and Culture is designed to facilitate the development of student's social and cultural literacy. The integration process is reflected in the following diagram:
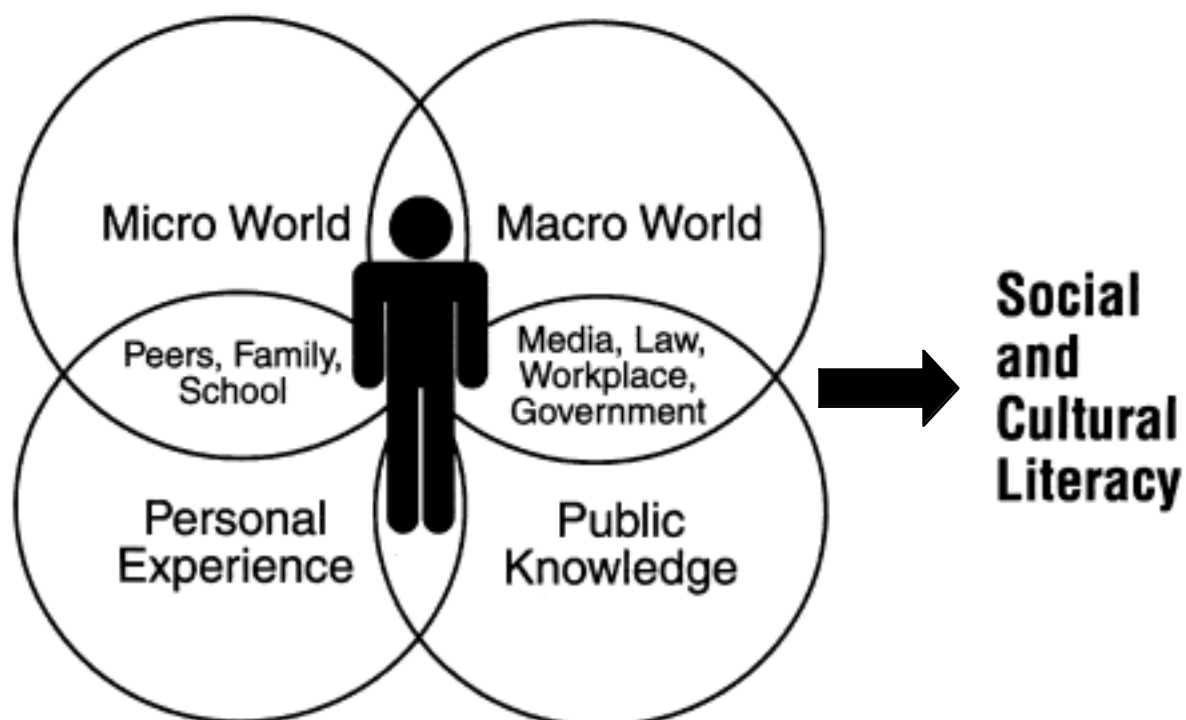
Achieving social and cultural literacy is a developmental process that requires the student to synthesise personal experience and public knowledge of both the micro and macro worlds.

The knowledge and skills demonstrated by the socially and culturally literate person are represented in the diagram below and are directly related to the knowledge and skills outcomes of the course.

The remaining characteristics of the socially and culturally literate person belong to the affective domain of values and attitudes. While values and attitudes objectives are not assessed in this syllabus, their development is considered essential since they reflect the aim of the course and underpin content in both the Preliminary and HSC courses.

The socially and culturally literate person:

Is interested in, observes, and asks questions about, the immediate (micro) and wider (macro) world

Is self aware, with a sense of personal, social and cultural identity

Shows critical discernment towards the media

Shows concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people

Is capable of informed decision-making and takes considered action on social issues

Understands continuity and change and the implications for the future in a global context

Empathises with people of different societies and cultures

Communicates effectively

Researches effectively and ethically