



Exploring historical consciousness with Australian school children

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ABSTRACT: The study explores the development of historical consciousness in Australian school children (from Year 6 to Year 12). Historical consciousness can be seen, in part, as the ability to construct divergent ideas about the past based on evidence that rejects the paradigm of history as a fixed set of events. This research considers how students in Australia learn and construct concepts of historical consciousness and analyses these findings in relation to national survey of historical consciousness. This paper reports on emergent themes from the survey data of Australian school students.

KEYWORDS: Historical consciousness, historical thinking, globalisation, historical pedagogy

Why is historical consciousness important?

Historical consciousness anchors us temporally and philosophically to the past, present, and future (Rüsen, 2005). Historical consciousness shapes our identity, cultural and collective narratives, and moral values. Understanding how historical consciousness is formed in school students through second order concepts such as historical thinking is an important question about how we develop and interpret historical discourses in our current globalised world.

Globally, the issues of radicalisation, polarisation, and intolerance are deep concerns for educators (Sjøen & Jore, 2019). Unlocking social stratification, inequality and social injustice enables young people to become skilled, aware and flexible citizens to deal with current and future issues of globalisation, sustainability and conflict. The Australian History Curriculum (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority-ACARA, 2012) is a key component in delivering this form of global awareness and critical thinking. In Australia, a national history curriculum defines whose stories are to be told and what history is of significance to future generations. Understanding how historical consciousness develops in Australian school students is the next step. It will enable us to learn how students can develop empathy and more willingness to accept differing perspectives and trans-national stories.

What is historical consciousness?

Historical consciousness locates us in time, place, and space to historical events and informs our present perspectives and sense of agency. Historical consciousness re-defines the positioning of history as a grand narrative and enables us to shift our interpretation of a

phenomenon to a temporal moment furnished with evidence and minutiae from the past to an action or perspective that resonates with our contemporary world. According to Sexias (2012), historical consciousness is based upon a dynamic context that is layered with human motivation, agency, individual and collective ideologies and actions. It is multi-factorial and complex, and recognises current and past perspectives. Wineburg et al. (2007), define historical consciousness as a shared historical understanding that is built upon social frameworks, cultural memory, and rituals. The connection between school, communities, cultural beliefs and representations, and families is critical in generating “lived history” (Wineburg, et al., 2007, p. 44.) and historical consciousness.

Historical consciousness encompasses personal and collective significance and develops empathetic understanding. In German the term historical consciousness *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is constructed as a coalescence of divergent political, critical, ideological, aesthetic and cultural perspectives. These views are informed by the works of Jörn Rüsen (1993; 2004; 2005) and Hans-Jürgen Pandel (1987). Such perspectives identify the importance of understanding real historical phenomena, as opposed to popular or hybrid accounts, and emphasize the cognitive and psychological dimensions of historical agency. Historical consciousness recognizes diverse perspectives and experiences and denies the centrality of causation and universal agency. It identifies instances of oppression, cultural or racial barriers, ambiguous motivation, and flawed ideological viewpoints. Adolescents’ historical consciousness in Finland has resulted in actions of reconciliation and reparation for transgenerational historical phenomenon (Löfström & Myyry, 2017). From 2015 global multi-generational protests about *Black Lives Matter* is a form of historical consciousness about structural habitual racism and social injustice (Maraj, Prasad & Roundtree, 2018). Historical consciousness leads to social awareness and transformation.

Global historical consciousness is needed to recognise diversity and increase students’ awareness of others and inter-cultural understanding (Kölbl & Konrad, 2015). Intercultural understanding is promoted through students’ historical consciousness of difference. Intercultural competence is a critical skill needed for today’s globalised and compressed world. New technologies, trade exchanges, social media and travel enable people from heterogeneous places and spaces to see, speak, touch, inhabit and absorb another’s cultural landscape. Cultural diversity is complex, nuanced, historically, and geographically situated.

Historical consciousness includes the following intercultural and temporal dimensions;

- temporal and societal intersection of the past with the present (Duquette, 2011);
- contesting presentism (Sexias, 2017);
- understanding historical agency (Colley, 2015);
- contextual empathetic understanding (Rantala, Manninem & van den Berg, 2015), and
- understanding how historical narratives inform cultural, national, gendered and personal identities (Alphen & Carretero, 2015)..

According to Rüsen (2004) there are four types of historical consciousness that can be detected in students’ understanding.

Four types of historical consciousness

Traditional Historical consciousness provides a framework for traditions, rituals and norms. The connection with tradition reinforces values and acts of commemoration and continuity. These practices provide connections with the past, a sense of belonging and a moral

framework that humanity shares (Rüsen, 2004). Exemplary historical consciousness creates principles or conditions that inform present and future changes. History is conceptualised as a means of instructing future actions or inactions. It presents moral and value lessons from the past form part of a historical pattern for replication and acts as an exemplar for present and future generations (Rüsen, 2004). Critical historical consciousness evaluates the past actions or decisions as ideologically, ethically or morally unsound or unjust, and layers a new interpretation informed by present paradigms. The approach is evidenced by the introduction of a counter-narrative or explanation (Rüsen, 2004). Genetic historical consciousness uses historical acts and stories as a lens to detect representations or interpretations of the events. An example of this form is the normative and significant discourse of history from below that has emerged in the late the Twentieth Century. In this genetic construction, what was radical, disturbing, or negative is re-cast with modern sensibilities and possibilities (Rüsen, 2004).

	Traditional	Exemplary	Critical	Genetic
Experience of time	Repetition of an obligatory form of life	Representing general rules of conduct or value systems.	Problematizing actual forms of life and value systems.	Change of alien forms of life into proper ones.
Patterns of historical significance	Permanence of an obligatory life form in temporal change	Timeless rules of social life, timeless validity of values.	Break of patterns of historical significance by denying their validity.	Developments in which forms of life change in order to maintain their permanence.
Orientation of external life	Affirmation of pre-given orders by consent about valid common life.	Relating to peculiar situations to regularities of what happened and what should occur.	Delimitation of one's own standpoint against pre-given obligations.	Acceptance of different standpoints within a comprising perspective of common development.
Orientation of internal life	Internalization of pre-given life forms by limitation-role taking.	Relating to self-concepts to general rules and principles-role legitimization by generalization.	Self-reliance by refutation of obligations from outside-role making.	Change and transformation of self concepts as necessary conditions of permanence and self reliance-balance of roles.
Relation to moral values	Morality is dictated by obligatory orders, moral validity as unquestionable stability by tradition.	Morality is the generality of obligation in values and value systems.	Breaking the moral power of values by denying their validity.	Temporalizing of morality; chances of further development become a condition of morality.
Relation to moral reasoning	The reason of values is their effective pre-giveness, enabling consent in oral	Arguing by generalization, referring to regularities and principles.	Establishing value criticism and ideology critique as important strategies of moral discourses.	Temporal change becomes decisive argument for the validity of moral values.

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Table 1: Four types of historical consciousness (Rüsen, 2004).

These aspects of historical consciousness enable us to critically interpret our own bias, temporal, cultural, national and societal positionality to understand issues of contemporary and historic concern such as racism, inequality, political instability and power (Epstein, 2000). Internationally within history education the importance of historical consciousness has become increasingly recognised (Almarza, 2011; Barton & McCully, 2004; Epstein, 2009). Yet evidence about how historical consciousness can be pedagogically developed in education settings and specifically in school classrooms is limited (Segall, Trofanenko, Schmitt, 2015).

What is historical thinking?

In contrast, historical thinking is a second order concept that comprises elements of inquiry. Students conceive historical questions about causation, time links, consequences and evidence, and appreciate that gender, race, temporality, personal circumstance, economic, political or social status should be considered as a valid part of the interpretation (Kölbl & Konrad, 2015). Reisman suggests that historical thinking is the “ability to reason about written text” (2015, p. 52). The written text according to Lévesque, (2005) could include aspects of heritage or memory history or contemporary or present significance (Sexias & Morton, 2013). Students need to access personal heritage to connect with meta-narratives and disciplinary history (Reisman, 2015). It is a point of cognitive and affective transfer of historical thinking to disciplinary or narrative nationalistic history. Such forms of historical thinking focus students on the multiple identities and nuances of historical reality. It can inflate or conflate historical objectivity as students connect the past with present phenomena. Nonetheless it can provide a way for students to openly interrogate and critically analyse the past.

Internationally, historical thinking is aligned to historical reasoning using evidence and inquiry approaches. Van Drie and van Boxtel (2008) suggest that we should be developing students’ questioning skills to include causal, textual and intellectual opportunities. This type of approach considers that students need procedural concepts and skills to examine historical texts and substantive understanding. The pedagogical challenges in developing historical reasoning are evident and require further investigation.

Teaching students to think historically requires at times a deviation from the official historical script. This approach enables students to detect the texture, weft and weave of different patches and snippets of sources, and analyse the quality, richness and effects of certain actions or events. It enables students to see the individual and collective nature of history. Sources for historical thinking should reflect this pedagogical goal and include history from below, not just from above, with official sources and written records. This position encompasses a broad range of material from artefacts, visual, and oral sources. Since 2012 with the introduction of the Australian History Curriculum this pedagogical approach has become normalised within Australian classrooms from School Year 6 to School Year 12. Students are given opportunities to inquire about the past and understand perspectives and evidence. This is the basis for authentic historical inquiry.

What is historical inquiry?

Inquiry learning is a model of pedagogy that enables learners to critically engage in authentic and complex experiences, actively discuss, interpret and develop their own position, see and

understand other perspectives, insist and look for evidence of behaviours or meaning, and interrogate culture (Levy, Thomas, Drago & Rex, 2013). Using inquiry approaches in history, students are able to exchange ideas, learn collaboratively, and seek new knowledge that has a clear relevance for them (Barton & Levstik, 2011; Levstik, 2000). Students learn from the world that they are immersed in, and make temporal, spatial, and historical connections. Inquiry in this context is generative and critical (Lipman, 2003). The knowledge is not imparted but constructed and actively critiqued. Inquiry-based history teaching has been used in Australian schools and encourages students to interpret evidence and apply source analysis skills to their understandings of the past.

Australian curriculum context

The Australian History Curriculum was one of the important educational outcomes of The Melbourne Declaration on Goals for Young Australians (2008) that elevated the significance of history and historical thinking within the national landscape. The Melbourne Declaration (2008) designed a national Australian curricula that enabled young learners to respond to their globalized, technology rich and diverse world and framed the contemporary rationale for the Australian History Curriculum. More recently, the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (2019) determined that education was transformative. The imperative is the development of the intellectual, socio-cultural, aesthetic, spiritual and moral wellbeing of all young Australians. The Mparntwe Declaration (2019) acknowledged the significance of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander continuum with Australia's past, present and future. These educational policies frame much of the curricular architecture within the Australia. The Australian History Curriculum and is predicated on these policies and uses historical concepts such as contestability, perspectives, empathy, significance, agency, change and continuity to deliver these imperatives. The Australian History Curriculum content is focused on broad national, international and temporal discourses of change and continuity. Within this current Australian History Curriculum is the deliberate attention on the development of historical procedural knowledge or historical thinking skills. Students are exposed to historical language of time, source analysis, and evidence from the early years of schooling. The content is structured to include family, local and community history in the primary years of schooling from ages 5 to 12 years and more national, ancient and modern world history in the secondary years of schooling from ages 12-18 years. History is taught across all compulsory years of schooling (Foundation or Kindergarten to School Year 10 (ages 5-16 years). A continuum of historical skills and concepts has been created from the foundation year (called by various names such as Kindergarten in New South Wales, Preparatory in Queensland, Foundations in South Australia) to Year 10 (when students are typically 15 or 16 years old). Students use second order concepts such as historical thinking to interpret the past using sources, evidence and artefacts. The following table identifies the topics of study within the Australian History Curriculum (2012) from Foundation to School Year 10.

Are we there yet?

Currently, the emergence and detection of historical consciousness within an Australian context is an important area for debate and further research. Within the Australian History Curriculum students are immersed in personal and local community history and then are extended to interpret people's connections with important national and global events. Commemorative history is initiated in the primary years of the curriculum. There is gradual reduction in personal and heritage related histories as students move to the upper years of secondary schooling. In the secondary years of school students are confronted with

controversial and significant events such as Australia’s involvement in conflicts; nation building events such as Federation; contact and Indigenous rights’ movements; and more contemporary social historical phenomena such as environment protests and change. Gender, human rights, equality, race, justice and citizenship concepts such as democracy, liberalism and the rule of law are unavoidable as students’ progress through their schooling years. The construct of progress is captured with topics on industrialization, colonialization, militarism, and social, civic and environmental reform nationally and globally. History in Years 9 and 10 becomes more globalized, connected with Western and Eastern progress, ideas and nationalistic narratives. However, the extent to which students in Australian schools are developing historical consciousness and considering non-linear, divergent and theoretical history is an important question. According to Sexias (2017) the need for young people to understand and interpret their world with relativity about the past and present is critical as knowledge, norms, and experiences are radically and fluidly altering within globalised, technological and culturally diverse world. Traditional norms, knowledge, stories that were bequeathed to successive generations have been shattered. Sexias (2017) contends that historical consciousness in this present context arises “from the radical discontinuity between past, present and future in a modern era of accelerating change....” (p. 60).

School Year	Topics
Foundation Year	Personal World.
Year 1	How my world is different from the past and can change in the future.
Year 2	Our past and present connections to people and places.
Year 3	Diverse communities and places and the contribution people make
Year 4	How people, places and environments interact, past and present.
Year 5	Australian communities – their past, present and possible futures.
Year 6	Australia in the past and present and its connections with a diverse world.
Year 7	Sustainable pasts, present, futures The ancient world.
Year 8	The ancient to the modern world.
Year 9	The making of the modern world.
Year 10	The modern world and Australia.

Table 2: Current Australian Curriculum: History topics F-10 (2012)

Research methods

This study considers how Australian school students may be developing or showing evidence of historical consciousness according to Rösen’s (2004) four categories or stages of historical consciousness. Rösen’s (2004) epistemological framework of four types of historical consciousness informs the research design and data analysis. The purpose of the study is identification of students’ perceptions and understanding of historical consciousness. Survey

methods have been selected as an effective way to gather a purposive sample of students across schools, locations, genders, age groups and school years. Surveys are useful to gather descriptive data from a wide range or cross section of participants and can provide authentic data from participants about their perspective of a phenomena (Kelly, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003). The survey comprises closed demographic questions and open-ended responses for participants to describe their experiences and perspectives. Sample size for the study is an important consideration for validity and generalisability. This study has used purposive or non-random sampling by inviting students to participate from Year 6 to Year 12 in schools across Australia. Data from this sample has been reported qualitatively and focuses on key perspectives of school students exposed to learning the Australian History Curriculum. A sample size of approximately 500 participants is used to validate the analysis, which is above the recommended minimum target of 200 participants (Brace, Kemp, and Snelgar, 2012). The survey responses were collected from school term one to school term three (March-September 2019). This paper reports on the initial themes that have emerged from the survey data.

Online survey of historical consciousness of school children from school year 6 – school year 12

The online survey includes 562 school students, with different cultural, gender, geographic, socio-economic, and age ranges in Australia. The sample is purposively drawn from a cross section of participants who encompass demographic diversity and representativeness and upon completion of the project includes representation of diverse schools across all states and territories in Australia. All participants have been exposed to history in the Australian History Curriculum. De-identified survey responses have been analysed according to the four types of historical consciousness of Rösen (2004):

- What is history to students?
- What stories, experiences, objects or people do they connect with history?
- How does connection with history help them understand their world?
- How important is history in their lives?

The five open-ended survey questions were completed online or in hard copy by students during an allocated in school time. Students were not provided with any stimulus materials and were given 15 -20 minutes to write their responses.

1. Tell us about the history you study at school. What do you like or dislike about learning history at school?
2. What stories, experiences, objects or people do they connect with history?
3. What is the most difficult thing to understand in history?
4. How does history help you to understand your world?
5. How important is it for you to know about history in your life now?

The survey responses include a valid sample across genders, schools, school years, types and year age. It is noted in the survey sample that there are more male students who have responded (63%) and a higher proportion of 14-15 year old students (44.5%). The school types are varied, with more non-government schools represented (60%) including Catholic and other non-government schools. This demographic data should be taken into account in the analysis and findings. The following figures provide an overview of the participants' gender, age, school year and school type.

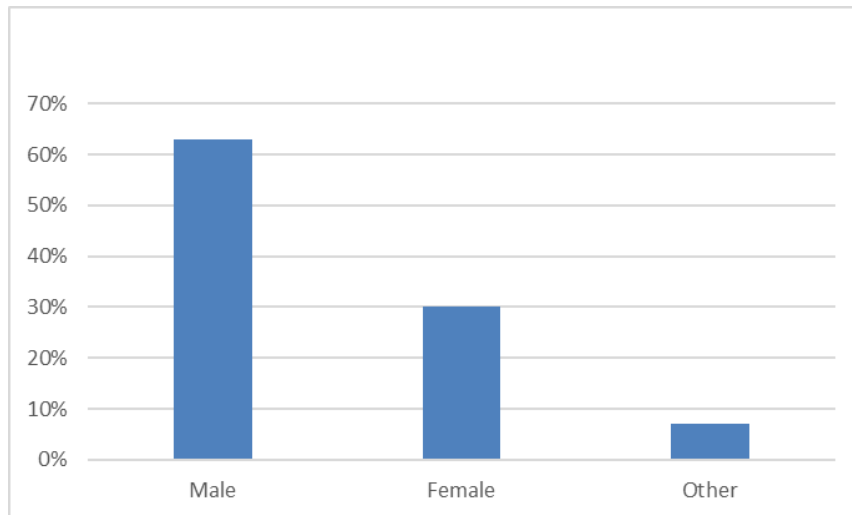


Figure 1: Gender of participants n=562

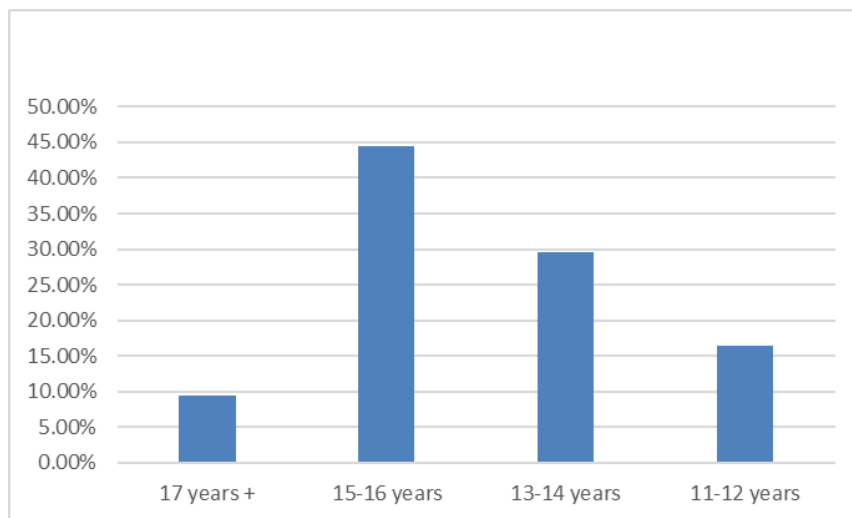


Figure 2: Age range of participants n=562

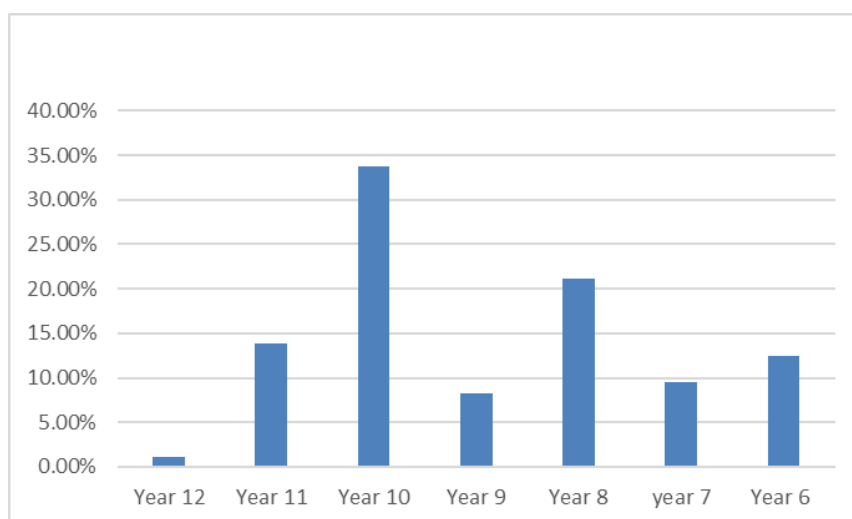


Figure 3: School year of participants n=562

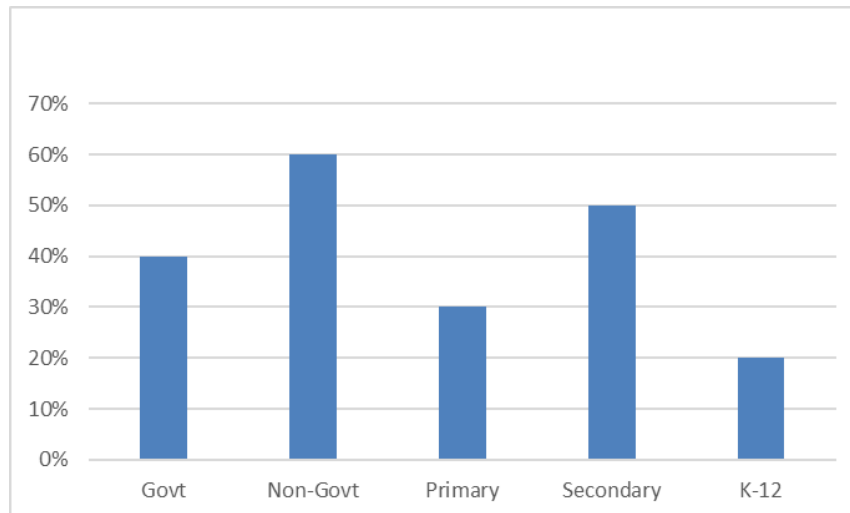


Figure 4: Type of school n=562

What does the data show us?

The following results identify key themes connected to the emergence of historical consciousness and areas where this phenomenon is curiously absent or muted in participant responses.

Tell us about the history you study at school. What do you like or dislike about learning history at school?

Learning about fascinating topics, people and civilisations. Gaining a better understanding of the past (Harry, Year 7).

Students responded to this question with a broad range of divergent comments. Some found that history provided interesting events, people and topics from the past, and others could find “nothing” (Jack, Year 9) to recommend it. Topics with complexity such as the Cold War were identified as significant. The complexity of causation and ‘joining the dots’ (Saad, Year 11) was an area of intrigue for students. The reliability of the past was a key feature, students wanted to know what was “probably true” (Jayden, Year 7). Students also referred to detecting patterns and mistakes from the past. The continuity of society was a focus for some respondents. While the sense of the grand narrative left some craving “multiple perspectives of history” (Jemina, Year 10).

When it is not so epic! (Chelsea, Year 10).

Students in years 6-12 reported history was paradoxically both “boring” and “dry” and some respondents preferred “maths” and “poetry” to “Australian history” or “Japan under the Shoguns” (Casey, Year 7; and Lilly, Year 9, respectively). Students seemed to see history in terms of the past and not as directly relevant to their lives. Students disliked learning timelines, memorising dates; “the minor events I don’t care about” (Tala, Year 8). Minor stuff was apparently, “essay writing and limited time to process information” (Ruby, Year 10). However, students were genuinely engaged with different stories and sources and found some topics more interesting such as “Chinese warfare” (Max, Year 8). Topics such as ‘what sort of nation are we’, that were open-ended and asked for students to judge and assess our sense of democracy were seen to be more interesting. The temporal disconnect with the ancient world

for some students was disconcerting. “The Ancient World is so, so long ago” (Zoe, Year 9), and the connection with their lives was not immediately evident. Adam from Year 10 surmised that he thought learning about history was not a “necessary life skill.” Repetition across year groups was identified as a problem for students. According to Adrian Year 10, “we keep studying the same things about Australia, it would be good to move on”.

What stories, experiences, objects or people do they connect with history?

Memories, photos, books, films! (Charlotte)

Overwhelmingly stories or events that were contemporaneous with the history being studied resonated with students. Stories related to “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders” pasts, and Nazi Germany. Films like, “*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, ancient objects, memories shared and photographs from my culture’s past (as I’m Chinese)” were compelling, (Yun Yin, Year 10). Historical fiction was identified as a useful and engaging source to understand history- “I love to learn about WW2, so I connected with *the Book Thief*” (Sara, Year 9). Political elections and questions about leadership and voting were seen as relevant. Curiously, this finding shows evidence at least in these schools of connection to civic and citizenship knowledge which is at odds with national surveys of this understanding. Important nationalistic events such as Anzac Day were commented upon students as being part of our story. The discussion of objects centred mainly around photographs and some students identified family stories or events as relevant to their understanding of history. Families who came from migrant or refugee backgrounds were able to connect with past generations and older people as a source of history. The most important thing is “stories from Nan” (Bronte, Year 6).

What is the most difficult thing to understand in history?

I find it most difficult to memorise specific dates and details, particularly with the volume that is needed to be remembered (Ali, Year 9).

The most difficult aspect for some students was causation, dates, facts and historical language. Students responded that they were not sure why the teachers focussed on what came first or second. The difference between primary and secondary types of sources was problematic for some students. Some students found textbook teaching also concerning and could not understand why all history was so dense, hard to understand or when “people had time to write it all down” (Joe, Year 8). These interpretations of history were seen as problematic for students. Jackson in Year 10 questions “why people tend to repeat it or twist or manipulate history to suit their needs, I don’t like the selfishness of history and how people can lie during their time and only later through evidence we find the truth.”

The morals of historical figures confounded students and revealed the development of historical empathy and judgment- “the morals they had.” (Billy, Year 8).

How does history help you to understand your world?

Understanding the global ties between countries (Peta, Year 12).

Students did respond with ideas to this question about making sense of global events such as impeachment of American President Donald Trump, the nuclear stand-off and diplomatic stalls between North Korean and United States, the ongoing Brexit instability and the climate change advocacy with school protests ignited by Greta Thunberg. The survey released in

school term one following horrific events in neighbouring countries with the Christchurch Mosque shootings in New Zealand may have contributed to this result. Nonetheless, the students were able to detect the significance of history in promoting understanding, condemning actions that withdrew rights or social justice and did link the idea of the past to actions or choices we could take into the present. Tom in Year 9 commented that history is “extremely important as it assists in my studies in other subjects as it allows me to understand the context of events and empathise with the views of those who experienced certain events.” The fall-out from the Industrial Revolution and link to present day debates on climate change was made by some School Year 9 and 10 students. According to these students, history was “quite, quite important” (Tom, Year 9).

How important is it for you to know about history in your life now?

As a study unto itself, not really. As context for other events that are happening in the world currently (re- Hong Kong protests, US/China relations and European nationalism), quite important (Charlie, Year 10).

This question provoked a range of responses. The relevance of history was framed in terms of social, global, or family connections. To many students who came from migrant backgrounds, history and possible connections to future history was seen as important. To students who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander overcoming racism and people knowing the real stories was critical. The moral framework and historical patterns were recognised as centrally significant – “it is not all that important; however, it allows for reflection on past mistakes and gives advice when making future political decisions” (Chloe, Year 10). However, to some students, history was not important to them at this point; “nope, nothing, of little importance” (Sam, Year 11).

What evidence is there for Historical Consciousness from the findings?

This data suggests that historical consciousness is formed when it is linked to present events and layered with multiple perspectives and ideological interpretations. Students were interested to understand stories and often attached significance to events that aligned with personal and cultural contexts, norms and traditions. Historical empathy and understanding of agency are evident in many of the students’ responses. There was a willingness to see history as a contested text and some linkage with how the past could inform their future or direct actions. The conflation of the present with episodes from the past did occur, indicating that at times students struggled with the contextual depth or substantive knowledge of a period. Nationalistic narratives were recognised by students and there was a degree of interest in these stories. Yet clearly students are taught to see alternative perspectives and positions and were able to recognise when historical figures or institutions acted badly with power, fear or lack of decency or equality. The discipline or procedural understanding of how to treat sources, determine accuracy, provenance, reliability, bias or perspective seemed to create the most uneasiness for students. This lack of competence suggests that the discipline of history and the process of interrogating evidence is a complex task and requires further pedagogical input and opportunities. Van Drie’s and van Boxtel’s (2008) ideas for developing students’ questioning skills to scaffold historical reasoning may be useful for this purpose.

The students’ responses indicate that they are capable of understanding some aspects of historical consciousness and specifically use inclusive terms such as ‘my family’ and ‘our story’ from School Year 6 to School Year 8. This language reveals how students perceive history from a personal lens or identity. Historical consciousness is evident in students’

understanding of contemporary events and judgements about these actions. Students see evidence of racism, class, gender, inequality and difference in sources and can understand that history was experienced differently according to one's perspective, temporality and circumstances. History is filtered through these lens and enables students to form opinions about present issues and concerns. However, at times students' lack of robust historical reasoning and competence with the skills and precision of history leads to conceptual and conflation errors, and questions of relevance, or presentism.

Conclusion

Emerging from this survey data is the identification of varying levels of historical consciousness in Australian school students. This consciousness is influenced by collective and personal connections to the past and is reinforced with social, cultural, global, and temporal fabric. Clearly, concepts such as empathy, significance, contestability, perspective, causation and agency are being developed within schools as part of the focus on historical thinking. The Australian History Curriculum is developing both historical thinking processes and creating the foundations for the emergence of different forms of historical consciousness.

Traditional historical consciousness is detected in students' responses about the rituals and continuity of the past to the present. For students of migrant ancestry traditional historical consciousness is important. The concept that history creates moral or exemplar lessons for future generations is identifiable in some students' responses. There is evidence of judgment about past decisions and patterns of human behaviour. The critical form of historical consciousness is strongly evidenced in a wide range of student responses. The survey data reveals how students interpret historical events through an ideological lens and post-modernist perspectives. The widespread acceptance of historical narratives about the 'other' is an important finding of genetic historical consciousness. However, there is still some pre-occupation with historical thinking about nationalistic narratives, fact giving, and memorisation of dates and insignificant events. This focus on historical thinking and process as a second order concept undermines the emergent roots of the four types of historical consciousness.

Historical thinking within the Australian History Curriculum as a second order concept needs further alignment with historical consciousness to promote the globalised connections and critical thinking needed about our present and future world. Teaching students to develop skills in critical historical reasoning may provide an ontological and contemporary perspective to dissect and make sense of the world. Using an array of material culture, broad social, economic, and political sources including visual and oral content could extend opportunities for Australian students to improve their historical consciousness. Further case studies are planned to provide a more complete rendering of the contemporary landscape of historical consciousness within Australia school students. This additional data could provide compelling understanding of how pedagogical choices could promote historical consciousness in Australian school students from Years 6 to 12.

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