

# Identities and individualism: Youth cultures

## Strand

Time, Continuity and Change  
Culture and Identity

## Core learning outcomes

### *Time, Continuity and Change*

- TCC 6.4** Students produce a corroborated argument concerning causes of a change or continuity in environments, media or gender roles.
- TCC 6.5** Students develop criteria-based judgments about the ethical behaviour of people in the past

### *Culture and Identity*

- CI 6.1** Students analyse the ways in which various societies inhibit or promote cultural diversity.
- CI 6.2** Students develop a proposal to promote a socially just response to perceptions of cultures associated with a current issue.
- CI 6.3** Students collaboratively develop a community strategy for celebrating or moderating the effects of globalisation on cultural groups to which they belong.
- CI 6.5** Students analyse ways in which social construction of gender in different cultures and socio-economic circumstances affects adolescent identities.

## Purpose and overview

In this module youth identities as constructed by the media are explored. The activities assist young people to consider how they might take greater control of their lives, especially their ideas, values and attitudes in present-day globalised Australia.

Phases (Minimum time recommended: 12 hours)	Activities	Core learning outcomes	Assessment opportunities
<b>1. Exploring youth cultures</b>  (approximately 3 hours)	1. Identities — Media influences 2. Identities — gender 3. Identities — age 4. Influences — ethical or not?	TCC 6.5 CI 6.1	Group oral reports or individual written responses
<b>2. Investigating youth gender roles</b>  (approximately 6 hours)	5. Gender roles in different times and places 6. Locating and analysing evidence 7. Communicating an argument	TCC 6.4 TCC 6.5 CI 6.1 CI 6.5	Research essay (Resource 1)
<b>3. Young people and globalisation</b>  (approximately 3 hours)	8. Current issues — young people and globalisation 9. Reflection	TCC 6.5 CI 6.1 CI 6.2 CI 6.3	School or local community strategy

## Assessment

The assessment opportunities outlined are examples of how to assess students' demonstrations of the identified learning outcomes. As often as possible, negotiate assessment with students and support a variety of ways of demonstrating the learning outcomes. Reflect with students on evidence gathered when making judgments about their demonstrations of learning outcomes. Some students may require more time and/or other contexts in which to demonstrate these learning outcomes. Other modules may provide such time and/or contexts and the 'Levels 1 to 6 module learning outcomes maps' in the *Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Sourcebook Guidelines* can be used to identify these modules.

### **Assessing learning outcomes at different levels**

Activities are designed primarily for students working towards demonstrations of Level 6 learning outcomes. Some assessment opportunities may be used to decide whether students are demonstrating the learning outcomes at levels before or after Level 6. To guide judgments about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes consider whether students are:

- working towards demonstration of the Level 6 learning outcomes
- demonstrating the Level 6 learning outcomes
- demonstrating the Level 6 learning outcomes and working towards Beyond Level 6 learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes in the syllabus at Level 5 and Beyond Level 6 could provide a guide for teacher judgments. Studies of Society and Environment learning outcomes are organised so that there is a progression of concepts and processes within a strand. For example, the progression from CI 4.2 and CI 5.2 to CI 6.2 involves increasing sophistication and complexity particularly related to the concept of *cultural perceptions* and the process of *creating*, though neither of these is exclusive of other concepts and processes. The elaborations provide specific content examples of how the concepts and processes may be levelled from Levels 1 to 6. See the Queensland School Curriculum Council website at [www.qscc.qld.edu.au](http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au) for more information.

## Using this module

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The activities in this module are based on a cultural studies approach, which promotes interdisciplinary analysis and evaluation of cultural practices. A tenet of cultural studies is that the analysis of media and popular cultural texts can make a difference to the way people perceive themselves and others. Cultural studies' foregrounding of popular culture also means that methods associated with media studies are particularly applicable to the study of youth cultures. Many of the activities in this module use media studies approaches such as the analysis of media representations of youth; the study of youth as a media audience; the relationship between media technologies and youth; the examination of media institutions; and the analysis of media languages, particularly visual language.

## Background information

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### Terminology

In this module students have opportunities to become familiar with and use the following terminology:

adolescence	gender	representation
consumerism	globalisation	socialisation
deconstruction	media	youth
ethics	popular culture	

### School authority policies

Be aware of and observe school authority policies that may be relevant to this module.

### Equity considerations

Activities take place in a supportive environment. They provide opportunities for students to increase their understanding and appreciation of equity through valuing diversity and challenging inequities. Activities encourage students to:

- develop criteria based judgments about ethical behaviours
- applying multiple perspectives to develop understandings of gender socialisation processes.

Some students with disabilities may need assistance with some activities. Advice should be sought from their support teachers. It is important that these equity considerations inform decision making about teaching strategies, classroom organisation and assessment.

### Links

#### **Studies of Society and Environment**

This module is one of a suite of modules for Levels 1 to 6. See the Queensland School Curriculum Council website at [www.qscc.qld.edu.au](http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au) for more information.

This module has conceptual and process links to the following modules:

- Level 5: *Youth cultures: Talkin' about my generation.*

#### **Other key learning areas**

Activities may offer opportunities for planning across key learning areas. However, it is important that the integrity of the key concepts, organising ideas and processes within key learning areas is maintained.

### **Evaluation of a unit of work**

After completion of units of work developed from this module, collect information and make judgments about:

- teaching strategies and activities used to progress student learning towards demonstrations of core learning outcomes
- opportunities provided to gather evidence about students' demonstrations of core learning outcomes
- future learning opportunities for students who have not yet demonstrated the core learning outcomes and to challenge and extend those students who have already demonstrated the core learning outcomes
- the extent to which activities matched needs of particular groups of students and reflected equity considerations
- the appropriateness of time allocations for particular activities
- the appropriateness of resources used.

Information from this evaluation process can be used to plan subsequent units of work so that they build on, and support, student learning. The evaluated units of work may also be adapted prior to their reuse. For further information, refer to the 'Curriculum evaluation' section in the sourcebook guidelines.

## Activities

### Phase 1 Exploring youth cultures

**Core learning outcomes emphasis: TCC 6.5, CI 6.1**

Activities in this phase assist students to begin to explore their own youth cultures and other cultures to gain understanding of themselves.

**Focus questions:**

- How can I be myself?
- Who/what may influence what I think and who I am?
- How can I have more control over my life?

#### Activity 1 Identities — Media influences

Discuss student's expectations of exploring identities and individualism with a study of youth cultures. Ask what they think may be some of the benefits of becoming an adult. This could be a discussion or students could record their feelings and discuss them later. Discuss some of the perceived disadvantages of becoming an adult.

Empathise that all human beings at some point find themselves somewhere between childhood and adulthood. For example in some countries and in the past, childhood was often considered complete by age 6 or 7. After that many adult roles were expected. Review students' knowledge of the socialising forces that influence young people as they move through this time of their lives known as adolescence. Consider the influence of the media. Show a segment of a current popular television program or advertisement for adolescents. Ask students to discuss in small groups whether this program inhibits or promotes cultural diversity. Ask students to consider characteristics such as wealth, clothing, homes, attitudes, ethnicity and levels of disability depicted and decide whether the young people depicted are from diverse groups or not. Discuss whether television is a socialising force and how students might challenge, be aware of and critique such forces.

Discuss the issue of media portrayal of gender roles. Encourage the nature versus nurture aspects of this issue. Conclude by emphasising that:

- many questions in Studies of Society and Environment do not have definite answers but they are nonetheless extremely important to consider
- if we adopt a 'who cares?' attitude even this attitude, among others, will still have been influenced to some extent by socialising forces
- identifying and discussing socialising forces and doing something about it can help us to have more control over our lives
- by investigating influences on youths and their responses in other times and places we can learn more about how to have more control over our own lives.

#### Activity 2 Identities — gender

Provide a variety of resources to assist students to explore the construction of gender in past times and the present in Australia. Assist students to analyse how cultural diversity is promoted or inhibited. For example see chapter 6 of McCauley, D. Brown, P. and Mills, M. (2001). This analysis may provide evidence of demonstrations of CI 6.1.

#### Activity 3 Identities — age

Discuss the concept that in 'western' society certain generations have been labelled as having something in common. For example the so-called depression generation were young people when unemployment reached over 30% in the 1930s. It has been claimed that as a group they are therefore materialistic and very concerned about saving money. The so-called 'baby-boomers' are the largest generation alive at present. They were born between 1947, when women who had postponed having children during World War Two began having children, and 1963 when the contraceptive pill first began to be widely used. This generation who were young people at a time when there was almost no

unemployment have sometimes been stereotyped as spoilt spendthrifts with a sense of social justice who tend to behave as a group. Generation 'X' were supposedly born in the 1970s- to early 90s when unemployment was rising. This group is sometimes claimed to be cynical and less prone to group manias.

Discuss the possible degree of accuracy of such stereotypes and labels. Remind students that the sources of evidence they have analysed so far will vary in their degree of representativeness. Discuss whether they consider their generation to have any common characteristics and refer to effects of globalisation (CI 6.3) as well as construction of gender (CI 6.5). Discuss whether students perceive they have different attitudes and values from people older than them, and why this may be the case.

#### **Activity 4 Influences — ethical or not?**

Remind students that the documents they have explored are sources of evidence about how the ideas and attitudes of young people have been influenced. Ask students to reconsider the sources and answer these questions:

- How acceptable is it that young people's lives should be controlled by a variety of influences?
- Was the behaviour of those constructing the images, laws, rules and fashions ethical? Give reasons for your answer.

Ask students in small groups to create criteria that they agree can be used to make judgments about whether a behaviour was ethical (Note the Level 4 sourcebook module *Influences on me: Global media and identity*, provides opportunities to develop ethical criteria). Discuss criteria. These may have a basis in utilitarianism and the greatest good for the greatest number and/or in key values that are central to your school.

As students share their criteria and answers, opportunities may be provided to demonstrate TCC 6.5.

## **Phase 2 Investigating youth gender roles**

**Core learning outcomes emphasis: TCC 6.4, TCC 6.5, CI 6.1 CI 6.5**

Students investigate youth gender roles in different times and places and compare findings to produce an argument about the main causes of changes or continuities in these roles.

**Focus questions:**

- How do the times we live in effect our ideas?
- How have ideas about 'masculinities' and 'femineities' varied in different times and places?
- What variety of issues cause change over time in gender roles?
- How do societies inhibit or promote acceptance of differences between people?
- On what bases can we make judgments about the behaviours of other people?

#### **Activity 5 Gender roles in different times and places**

Explain how investigating gender socialisation processes in different times and places can help us to notice the socialisation around us, expand our ideas about possible different roles and take more control of the forces that are shaping our ideas. Negotiate with students the times and places to be investigated. Do not preclude the possibility of students investigating familiar current Australian sub-cultures but encourage case studies of more culturally diverse groups.

#### **Resource 1**

Distribute and discuss Resource 1. Explain that you will work with students to assist them to complete the tasks on Resource 1.

### Activity 6 Locating and analysing evidence

Form groups of about 5 students to investigate gender roles in:

- the same society and time spans or
- different societies and time spans.

Discuss what is meant by producing a corroborated argument based on evidence about the main causes of change or continuity in adolescent gender roles. (TCC 6.4). Assist students to locate evidence and begin to analyse evidence to answer questions for their essay. Ensure cultural diversity is included in the discussion.

### Activity 7 Communicating an argument

#### Resource 1

Continue to assist students to complete the tasks on Resource 1. Revise the concept of an argument, including possible sequences and the use of rebuttal. Assist students to plan and draft their essays and compare and revise their findings and arguments.

Conduct a whole class discussion of issues raised.

## Phase 3 Young people and globalisation

*Core learning outcomes emphasis: TCC 6.5, CI 6.1, CI 6.2, CI 6.3*

Students review what they have learnt in previous activities concerning ethical behaviour and the impacts of globalisation. They use prior learning to collaborate and create proposals for socially just responses concerning current youth related issues.

*Focus question:*

- How does globalisation influence youth issues?

### Activity 8 Current issues — young people and globalisation

Discuss with students globalisation of culture and how this may be evident in everyday lives. With students, identify a current issue that involves young people and globalisation.

Assist students to investigate the effects of globalisation in relation to the issue identified. Consider whether the issue may impact negatively or positively on the school or local community. Invite students to discuss and decide:

- Whether the effect of globalisation should be celebrated or moderated.
- How the school or local community may assist in such celebration or moderation.

Ask students to work in groups to develop a strategy for the school or local community to celebrate or moderate the effects of globalisation as demonstrations of CI 6.3.

### Activity 9 Reflection

Assist students to reflect on the strategy they have developed. Ask whether their strategy is a socially just response.

Distribute definitions of social justice or refer students to definitions they have developed. Remind them of the criteria developed earlier to make judgments about the ethical behaviour of people, (TCC 6.5) and emphasise that community strategies also need to be ethical.

In small groups, assist students to:

- collaboratively consider strategies
- create visual summaries or written reports on how strategies support social justice
- develop ethical ways of promoting the strategies.

**Assessment task****Resource 1**

Core learning outcomes:

**TCC 6.4** Students produce a corroborated argument concerning causes of a change or continuity in environments, media or gender roles.

**TCC 6.5** Students develop criteria-based judgments about the ethical behaviour of people in the past.

**CI 6.1** Students analyse the ways in which various societies inhibit or promote cultural diversity.

**CI 6.5** Students analyse ways in which social construction of gender in different cultures and socio-economic circumstances affects adolescent identities.

- What characterised their culture in terms of values, expectations, attitudes towards work, family, learning, society,

Your tasks:

1. For at least two societies of your choosing, investigate the way young people were socialised into gender roles. That is what expectations did their families have of them? Did the expectations differ if they were male or female? What values were they expected to show? What attitudes towards work, learning and society were expected?
2. Was there much change over time in the way young people were socialised?
3. What were the causes of any changes or continuities?
4. Write a corroborated argument about these causes. You will need to use references to the evidence you have used.
5. In your essay include the ways cultural diversity was inhibited or promoted.
6. At the end of your essay, in point-form, add some ethical judgements about the behaviour of people involved in the changes or continuities you have described. This could begin with 'The *(insert name of people)* were/were not *(delete one)* particularly ethical because:
  - include a description of something they did and a reason why this was or was not ethical.

## Support materials and references

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Alexander, A. 2001, *SOSE for Queensland Book 3*, Heinemann, Melbourne, for example see sections on gender and culture, the globalisation of culture, tribalisation of culture and Americanisation of youth.

Cuffley, Peter, 2001, *Send the Boy to Sea*, The Five Mile Press, Noble Park Victoria. This text documents the life of James Smith who left home at age 14, travelled from Britain to Australia, several times by age 21, and generally in the 1850s had a very different concept of youth culture than that common in Australia today

Department of Education, *Piecing it together: Understanding the Construction of Gender*, Department of Education, Brisbane, 1996.

**Gaarder**, J. 1994 *Sophie's World*, Berkley, USA

Healey, Kaye [ed.], "Gender Roles" in *Issues in Society*, The Spinney Press, Sydney, 1998.

Hoepper, Brian et al, "Changing Gender Relations: A History" in *Inquiry 2: A Source - Based Approach to Modern History*, Jacaranda, Brisbane, 1996.

Lovat, Terry et al, *New Society and Culture, A Student Text*, Social Science Press, New South Wales, 1994.

McCauley, D. Brown, P. and Mills, M. (2001) *SOSE for Queensland 2*, Jacaranda, Brisbane For example see Chapter 6 and sections on identities, gender, culture and youth cultures

Nayler, Jennifer [ed.], *Gender Up Front: Strategies for a Gender Focus Across the Key Learning Areas*, The Association of Women Educators, 1997.

Quin, Rod et al, *Teaching Viewing and Visual Texts (Secondary)*, Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne, 1995.

Westbury, Marcus "Generating Some Noise" in *Out Loud: Giving Youth a Voice [supplement]*, *The Weekend Australian*, January 3 - 4, 1998.

Youth Advocacy Centre, *The Kit: Legal Info User's Guide*, Youth Advocacy Centre, Woolloowin, 1996.

### Videotapes

ABC Television, *Attitude: U.S. Influence on Australian Television*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1993.

BBC Worldwide, *The People's Century: Half the People*, ABC Video, 1997.

"Homefront USA" *Vietnam, A Television History*

National Film and Sound Archive, *Fashion Daze: Australian Style 1910 - 1970*

### Websites

(All websites listed were accessed in January 2002.)

Young people in Thailand: [www.thaistudents.com/](http://www.thaistudents.com/)

Future Leaders of Australia [www.members.tripod.com/~fla\\_/index2.htm](http://www.members.tripod.com/~fla_/index2.htm)

The Source [www.thesource.gov.au/](http://www.thesource.gov.au/)

National Australia Day Council, Young Australian of the Year, Past winners [www.nadc.com.au/awards/bio.html](http://www.nadc.com.au/awards/bio.html)

Youth Studies Australia: Organisations [www.acys.utas.edu.au/ncys/organisations/default.html](http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/ncys/organisations/default.html)

# Acknowledgments

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**This sourcebook module should be read in conjunction with the following Queensland School Curriculum Council materials:**

***Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Syllabus***

***Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Sourcebook Guidelines***

***Studies of Society and Environment Initial In-service Materials***

ISBN 0 7345 2303 3

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