A critical analysis of the Australian Curriculum (History)

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Geraldine Ditchburn
Abstract

In this thesis I argue that the recent introduction and construction of the Australian Curriculum has been characterised by a lack of relevant and meaningful conversations about curriculum. While sites for public and professional consultation have been numerous, items for discussion have largely been predetermined and narrow. Rather than allowing space for sensible conversations about the range of purposes of a new curriculum and the type of curriculum theory that might best achieve those purposes, the Australian Curriculum has been implemented as though there are no relevant, alternative visions of curriculum, apart from that fashioned by a neoliberal agenda. Using the tenets of critical theory and critical pedagogy as well as autoethnographic narrative, I argue that the current curriculum is a ‘thin’ curriculum that is likely to have a number of worrying implications for teaching and learning, for the role of students and teachers and that it is likely to marginalise many students and communities from schooling. Using the example of the Australian Curriculum: History, I conclude that it is possible and necessary to consider a ‘thick’ curriculum that is both rigorous and responsive to diverse local contexts. But, before that can happen, we need to claim a space for conversations about curriculum and to recognise that alternative visions of curriculum are not only possible, but also necessary if we are to more fully engage a greater number of students in the process of learning.
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### Bibliography
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