

Curriculum Frameworks P-12: An Introduction

Victoria. Curriculum Branch, Education Department, 1985

Overview of the document

48 page preliminary document to Curriculum Frameworks (1988). The paper elaborates policies outlined in Ministerial Paper No. 6 and the recommendations of the Ministerial Review of Postcompulsory Schooling. The paper discusses the Curriculum Frameworks Project and school curriculum and organisation, before discussing curriculum under individual subject headings. It contains a 'Response Sheet' at the end of the document for feedback to be sent to 'Evaluation Services, Curriculum Branch'.

Keywords

Gender; culture; ethnic background; success; talents; competencies; co-operative learning; learning and teaching strategies; self-learning; P-12 approach to schooling; relate learning to action; effective participation; self-worth; collaboration; self-evaluation; mixed ability classrooms; practical learning; personal fulfilment; integrating learning.

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FOREWORD

- States that "These new policy directions are the response to a changing context of education, where greater numbers of young people will complete the full span of schooling before going on to further study or to work or to a combination of work or study. In this context, all schools are responsible for providing programs which take into account a wide range of student abilities, interests and levels of maturity." (p. 4)
- Notes that Department is committed to school-based decision making about curriculum.
- Notes that the document outlines a general approach to curriculum and invites "comments, suggestions and reactions" for the development of the 1986 Frameworks.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS PROJECT

- Notes that the Frameworks cover 9 areas of study from P-12 with the aim of providing the school with "support and guidance" for the planning and reviewing of curriculum.

- Notes that over recent years a number of social, economic and political factors have influenced developments in Victoria, including:
 - “rapidly changing economic conditions;
 - a high rate of youth unemployment;
 - a rapidly changing labour market requiring students to have more flexible skills;
 - continued advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged and minority groups to eliminate various forms of discrimination and to gain equal access to educational opportunities;
 - schools assuming increasing responsibility for their curriculum planning and review;
 - increasing desire for school and local communities to participate in school decision making;
 - social and political conflicts within society;
 - changing patterns in school enrolments at both primary and post primary levels; and
 - increasing numbers of change-oriented people influencing State education policy”. (p.5-6)
- Stresses the collaborative processes involved with the development of the Frameworks which has involved input from staff of the Curriculum Branch, regional consultants, groups of schools, school council members and various community interest groups.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND ORGANISATION

- Notes the following in relation to the purposes of schooling: “Our schools exist essentially for young people. They encourage and assist young people to develop many kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Schools need to help each individual to develop self-esteem and worthwhile personal values; to be able to use a range of ideas; and to experience a range of work and leisure options. Schools help young people to grow into thinking, responsible individuals, able to understand and contribute to society”. (p. 9)
- In regards to changes in schooling, notes that “Schools and education have changed in many significant ways in recent years. The *School Curriculum and Organisation Framework P-12* will focus on those changes relating to:
 - greater responsibility at the school level for curriculum development;
 - the involvement of teachers, parents, students and other members of the community in discussions and development of educational policy;
 - all students having access to educational experiences that are challenging, enjoyable and designed to improve educational achievement;
 - designing courses and organising programs so that all students experience a comprehensive range of studies and activities;
 - providing learning experiences which ensure students’ gender, culture and ethnic background are valued and supported;
 - ensuring that classes and educational programs are organised to cater for students with a range of previous learnings to enable all students to experience success at school;
 - basing assessment and reporting of students’ work on their success in reaching achievable goals and on their developing talents and competencies;

- providing programs which enable students to develop a sense of themselves as learners, to learn in a variety of ways, and to relate learning to action; and
- the progressive integration of students with disabilities, impairments and problems in schooling.” (p. 9)
- Defines curriculum broadly as something that “covers all the arrangements the school makes for students learning and development”. (p. 10)
- Acknowledges that “all members of the school community plan curriculum but the major responsibility lies with the school council ‘for providing the broad policy decision for the school’ and the principal and staff “to choose the educational means for realising school council policy”. (p. 10)
- Argues that a systematic approach to P-12 is necessary for curriculum to be “coherent and meaningful”. (p. 10)
- Notes that one of the central aims of developing such a curriculum is to make schooling an “enriching” and “enjoyable” experience for students. (p. 10)
- Views knowledge as something that is attained sequentially and states that “Schools, in providing for the continuing growth and development of all students, need to recognise that new learning builds on previous learning”. (p. 10)
- Sets out a democratic vision of schooling that argues for the important of creating an inclusive environment that will cater for difference and be “sensitive to the needs of students”. This vision of schooling promotes non-competitiveness and mixed ability classrooms and emphasises the emotional well-being of students and the importance of fostering a “caring and supportive environment” at school to ensure both student wellbeing and success.
- Recognises students’ home lives and parental influences as important to the context in which they learn and stresses the importance of cultivating understandings between parents and the school in terms of the purposes of schooling.
- Argues that assessment should be based on the monitoring of “each student’s achievements rather than judge an individual performance by comparison with others”. (p. 12)
- Promotes a balanced curriculum and notes that it is government policy that students experience a broad curriculum. As set out in Ministerial Paper No. 6., the key curriculum areas are:
 - Language and mathematics;
 - The world and its people;
 - Participation in the Australian environment;
 - Literature and the arts;
 - Personal fulfilment;
 - Technical competence; and
 - Science, technology and the environment.
- Draws attention to the goal, outlined in Ministerial Paper No. 6, for students to develop the opportunity to understand themselves as learners. (p. 17)

ARTS

- Argues that as the arts are constantly expanding to accommodate new ideas, we need to continually broaden our understandings of what the arts in education can be.
- Proposes that through exploring the arts, students come to understand themselves, others and the world.

COMMERCE:

- Places significant emphasis on “the development of the individual”. (p. 20)

- States that “by learning about the range of values and attitudes held by consumers, workers, businesses and governments in the global community, students develop respect for the rights of others to hold different points of view; ability to find common ground with those whose lives and experiences are different from their own; notions of responsibility and ethics in decision making; and ability to clarify their own values as they discover and evaluate options and results in commerce-related problems”. (p. 20)

ENGLISH:

- Stresses the importance of English literacy not only for the function of students in society but in “enabling people to find fulfilment in work [and] in personal relationships”. (p. 22)
- States that “language learning is gradual, continuous process” and stresses the importance of an integrated curriculum. (p. 23)
- Argues for the benefit to all students of mixed-ability classrooms.

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH:

- Acknowledges the shift in the teaching of LOTE since the 1960s from the study of language patterns and structures to the use of language in “real life contexts”. (p. 26)
- Suggests that LOTE helps with the development of language skills more broadly as well as providing an understanding of cultural difference and the multilingual world.
- Notes the policies upon which the teaching of LOTE has been given support and also that the teaching of LOTE is supported in national reports as an important dimension in the context of the support for multiculturalism.
- Argues that LOTE is important because it offers knowledge but also practical skills which provide students a competitive advantage in the workplace. (p. 29)

MATHEMATICS:

- Argues that mathematics is important because it is a fundamental knowledge to have in the 20th and 21st century as well as being “intrinsically interesting”. (p. 30)
- Calls for a renewal of the mathematics curriculum that makes mathematics accessible to all students and states, “We have catered for too long to that small group of students in the corner; adopting a narrow understanding of what ‘mathematics’ is and using classroom approaches that only suit some students”. (p. 30)
- Strongly advocates a more inclusive approach and advances the idea that mathematics success can be achieved more broadly.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Argues that personal development is a necessary component of a “balanced curriculum”. (p. 34)
- Notes the moral dimension of personal development in the curriculum and stresses the importance of “personal fulfilment”. (p. 34)
- Recognises that practical dimensions require a depth of knowledge of the self and others as opposed to just discipline based knowledge.
- Notes that in a rapidly changing world, students need to be equipped with knowledges that assist them with managing change.
- Argues that in self-learning, the teacher acts not so much as the transmitter of knowledge, but rather as a facilitator to encourage the student to develop self-understanding and self-reflexivity.

PRACTICAL STUDIES AND DESIGN:

- Sets out the importance of the acquisition of practical skills necessary for everyday life.
- Asserts that technology studies can be empowering and help students better understand change at a time when “the advance of technology is engendering a sense of powerlessness that people feel in the face of rapid technological change”. (p. 38)
- Stresses the idea of integrated learning.

SCIENCE:

- Argues that scientific developments help people understand and operate more effectively in their environments.
- Argues that science is both interesting and useful and offers children “a satisfying and valuable way of exploring and understanding their world and prepares them to take an informed role in caring for the earth’s resources and resolving social problems”. (p. 41).

SOCIAL EDUCATION:

- Argues that social education enables students to develop an understanding of the increasingly complex world they live in.
- Argues that the goal of social education is “ultimately concerned with enabling students to participate actively, effectively and responsibly in a multicultural and democratic society”. (p. 44)
- States that the four dimensions of social education are: knowledge, skills, values and action.
- Suggests that as social education encompasses a broad mix of subject areas from the traditional discipline based areas of history, geography, politics and economics, social issues must be considered from a multidisciplinary perspective.

RESPONSE SHEET

- Requests feedback from schools on the document on factors including the rationale, materials and support.