



SELECTIONS FROM VCE SEASON OF EXCELLENCE

Principal Curriculum Coordinator PD Coordinator AIM Coordinator P-10 Teacher

P-10 Supplement

Information about Prep to Year 10 education in Victorian schools

Student Learning April 2005 DVD

By now, all schools will have received copies of the *Student Learning April 2005* DVD. The DVD has been produced to facilitate teacher access to the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* and the initiatives designed to support improved student learning. A DVD rather than a CD-ROM has been developed due to the range of material provided in the publication. It combines content current in April 2005 from online resources, including:

- the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* website <<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>>
- the Student Learning section of the *Blueprint for Government Schools* website <www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/default.asp> including the Curriculum Planning Guidelines, Principles of Learning and Teaching, and links to Assessment and Reporting

- Advice and to Knowledge Bank
- the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) II, and the complete suite of support materials developed by the VCAA from 2000 to 2003.

The DVD is suitable for use on both PC and Macintosh platforms and can be used as read only or installed onto stand-alone computers or local servers.

During 2005, updates to some of the material will be available on the VCAA and Blueprint websites. Schools will be notified through this newsletter as this occurs. Following validation processes and development of additional Student Learning support material, an updated DVD will be produced and distributed to all schools in Term 4 2005.

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A CD-ROM version of this resource is being developed to support schools that do not have access to a DVD drive. Schools should contact Michelle Gregory at <gregory.michelle.m@edumail.vic.gov.au> if a CD-ROM version is required.

Frequently Asked Questions

In the next few editions this section will focus on different areas of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* and answer some frequently asked questions.

The *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* provide a new and contemporary approach to curriculum for a very different, rapidly changing, technology-rich world. Fundamental to the Standards is the interrelated focus on the three strands of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, Discipline-based Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning. The three strands are equally important components which make up the curriculum as a whole for students in Prep to Year 10.

In using the Standards, schools will develop appropriate curriculum programs which provide opportunities for students to achieve the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours across all the domains. These programs should reflect the resources and expertise available, the needs of students and the interests of the school community.

This month, this section outlines ways that schools can use the Standards in practice, first in relation to the domain of Design, Creativity and Technology, and second how an outdoor education program could be developed in a school program.

How can the domain of Design, Creativity and Technology be implemented within school programs?

Design, Creativity and Technology is a domain within the Interdisciplinary



Student demonstrating wood technology skills

Learning strand of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*. This is an essential domain with a unique set of knowledge and skills. The most defining and distinctive characteristics of the Design, Creativity and Technology domain are the integrative powers which bring design knowledge and awareness, creativity in planning

and producing together with applications in a wide variety of media, materials and settings. In effect, the interdisciplinary nature of this domain means that Design, Creativity and Technology has a clear relationship with domains across all three strands.

School programs must identify how Design, Creativity and Technology can

be appropriately delivered. The domain will not necessarily be identifiable on the school timetable as there are a number of ways schools can structure programs. Design, Creativity and Technology could be used as either the basis for designing delivery of discrete courses and units or as an integrated program. Schools decide how best to structure subjects but, of course, may continue to organise curriculum around their current subject selections. Some examples of approaches are outlined below:

- Schools can continue to offer such subjects as wood technology and textiles. Where such subjects are offered they would need to address the standards in the Design, Creativity and Technology domain as well as standards from other domains. The main challenge in these circumstances is to ensure that the content, pedagogy and learning tasks are in place for the full range of standards to be addressed, including those in the Physical, Personal and Social, Discipline-based and Interdisciplinary Learning strands.
- The Design, Creativity and Technology domain standards could be woven into any or all subjects within the curriculum. When this is done, it is crucial that the specific standards of Design, Creativity and Technology can genuinely be met by students undertaking an integrated program. This would be best done when teachers work in a team which includes the expertise of a teacher with design and technology expertise. Schools may at the same time continue to conduct specific classes in the materials or systems areas of Design, Creativity and Technology and in Information and Communications Technology.
- One or more disciplines and other domains could be combined and addressed through key questions or themes. For example, a theme on sustainable futures at Level 6 could incorporate Science, Humanities – Geography (from the Discipline-

based Learning strand), Civics and Citizenship, Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning (from the Physical, Personal and Social Learning strand), Design, Creativity and Technology, Information and Communications Technology and Thinking (from the Interdisciplinary Learning strand).

- A project-based unit that begins with the definition of a problem written into a design brief could be developed. In addition to the unit being planned to allow students to demonstrate aspects of the Design, Creativity and Technology standards, standards from Information and Communications Technology, Communication, Thinking and Personal Learning could also be incorporated.

The VCAA is currently developing further advice about the Design, Creativity and Technology domain and its relationship with other strands, domains and dimensions in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

How can outdoor education be developed in school programs using the Victorian Essential Learning Standards?

There are many ways to link outdoor education programs with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards across the three organising strands of the curriculum. The domains of Health and Physical Education, Interpersonal Development, Thinking and Humanities – Geography, for example, can all contribute to the development of an outdoor education program.

The domain of Health and Physical Education addresses the development of skills to participate in physical activity and improve fitness; and motivates students to participate in physical activity; risk taking and harm minimisation. Outdoor education in a curriculum program traditionally links with learning outcomes in health and physical education. The Standards

continue this tradition so Health and Physical Education can be used as the basis to develop an outdoor education program.

The new curriculum approach includes standards in the domain of Interpersonal Development which specifically address student capacities to work effectively as part of a team and build positive social relationships. These types of knowledge, skills and behaviours provide a significant focus for any school's outdoor education program. For example, at Level 5 students could 'work cooperatively to achieve a shared purpose within a realistic timeframe' when planning an outdoor education activity for a specific date which requires the use of specialised equipment.

Thinking is an integral part of a student's development. An outdoor education program focuses on problem solving and decision making as well as identifying and synthesising information readily related to the thinking processes. These are all highlighted as essential aspects of the Thinking domain.

Humanities – Geography includes the investigation of environmental issues as well as the use of geographical tools and skills such as the interpretation of scale, grid references, legend and direction when using maps. Teachers of outdoor education programs with a strong environmental focus are encouraged to consider the standards in the Humanities – Geography domain.

These examples are some of the many links to domains identified in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards that relate to an outdoor education program. Schools are encouraged to explore other links to match the focus of individual school programs.

Further frequently asked questions about the Standards are located at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/about/faq.html>

Background discussion papers

As part of the preliminary work for the development of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, the VCAA commissioned papers designed to lead discussion on the essential elements of a number of learning domains. To support the key emphasis on the stages

of learning in the new curriculum, the VCAA also commissioned two studies related to student development.

These discussion papers provided theoretical and historical background for the development of the new standards in their relevant learning domains.

Many teachers will find these papers provide interesting information about developments in their teaching areas. These have been edited and will be published progressively from June on the Standards website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/links/downloads.html>

Level publications

In addition to the Portable Document Format (PDF) versions of the Standards in each domain, PDF versions for each of the six levels are now available on the website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/links/downloads.html>

Each Level publication includes:

- the relevant stage of learning statement
- the relevant level statement
- introductions to each of the three strands
- introductions to each of the 16 domains
- learning focus statements and standards for each domain.

In response to requests from schools, the VCAA will soon distribute sets of the Level publications. These will support staff to become familiar with the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* and facilitate development of teaching and learning programs which address more than one domain.

Planning ahead at Holy Trinity, Wantirna South

Schools and teachers have begun the process of familiarisation with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Recently we spoke to the Principal, Richard Wans and Curriculum Coordinator, Andrea Dinon, at Holy Trinity, Wantirna South. We wish to thank them for sharing with us how they have begun this process at their school.

Holy Trinity Catholic primary school, Wantirna South, began understanding and implementing the Victorian Essential Learning Standards in November 2004 when they attended a briefing on the new approach to Prep to Year 10 curriculum. Enthused by the nature and purpose of the new approach, Richard and Andrea used the VCAA PowerPoint from the Standards website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/VELSPowerpoint.html> to

introduce their staff to the rationale and purpose of the Standards. Teachers then discussed the key question, 'What does the new approach mean for us and our students at Holy Trinity, Wantirna South?'

The schools curriculum leaders developed an audit tool and diagnostic survey to facilitate discussion about the new Standards. This involved identifying the schools:

- achievements in different aspects of the school program
- priorities over the next three years
- policy direction
- different curriculum needs.

These audit tools then assisted in providing more specific direction when implementing the Standards at Holy Trinity, Wantirna South. During this

process discussion and feedback was very positive and comments included:

- the new approach would be consistent with an inquiry approach that the school is using
- the values that the school has made explicit could be mapped to the educational principles of the Standards
- the weaving of the three strands into curriculum areas promote a range of teaching and learning strategies that the school is developing
- the new approach validated the school's commitment to a holistic approach to the education of its students.

Staff also raised questions such as:

- What do the standards look like?
- How can the standards be assessed and reported against?

- What professional development will staff require?
- How do we develop a whole school curriculum plan?

Though these questions were unanswered at that stage, Holy Trinity wanted to build on the culture of the school by taking ownership of the new approach. This enabled the staff to implement the new approach at their own pace through being informed and by developing a whole school curriculum plan over three-five years.

The School Development Committee developed an action plan. This plan identified that staff needed formal opportunities to establish professional dialogue about the Standards. To facilitate this dialogue, staff meetings were allocated throughout 2005 to engage staff in a process to gain a better understanding of the Standards and how they would affect classroom programs and practice. The action plan includes:

1. Exploring the domains

Teachers discuss the learning focus statements and standards of a domain at one level and then compare the learning focus statements and standards to the level above and below. Staff discuss what is familiar, the main focus of the learning focus statements and standards and what is different between different levels. Teachers continue to look at each domain using the same process.

2. Making links to current programs

Through their understanding of the learning focus statements and standards teachers examine current curriculum programs and discuss the links, and any differences in emphasis from the Curriculum and Standards Framework. From this understanding teachers establish what this means for developing units of work in the future at their school.

3. Links to teaching and learning

Teachers review current teaching and learning practices that will support the Standards and identify areas that could be developed as whole school curriculum approaches. Professional development needs are also identified.

In this process the School Development Committee at Holy Trinity recognises the value in working as a team to understand the new approach. Teachers individually analyse the approach from their own classroom teaching and learning programs. From this discussion the Committee looks at the existing whole school plan and builds into it links to the Standards. When refining the whole school curriculum plan the Committee will consider:

- the school’s understanding of the Standards
- the domains which are strengths at the school and domains which require development in a whole school approach

- the teaching and learning strategies which will assist with the new approach
- the goals that will assist in implementing the approach at different stages of the plan
- the existing units of work that reflect the new approach or can be modified
- professional development that will be required
- the strategies that can support staff during the change.

Richard and Andrea recognise that assessment and reporting are still key issues that need to be resolved at their school. They believe that the school needs to provide a plan that will allow for an implementation strategy in 2006 and beyond. In this plan teachers will have the opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the Standards, their impact on teaching and learning, and assessment and reporting.



Richard Wans and Andrea Dinon, Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Wantima South

Validation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Many schools and teachers have begun the process of familiarisation with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Feedback from forums with principals and teachers indicates that schools are at varying points in this process. Some have conducted general information sessions for staff using materials provided by the VCAA, while others have taken another step by conducting more focused sessions in which they explore some of the detail in the domains. Useful tools to assist in this process are available in the Department of Education and Training's Curriculum and Planning Guidelines at www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/guidelines/phase1/vels.asp

As schools work through this process, teachers will have views about the standards, their usability and the way they can be applied in teaching and learning and assessment programs. During this validation year, the VCAA is seeking to capture this feedback in a structured way. At the same time, the VCAA will work with volunteer schools to trial assessment tasks with students that will provide useful data on the standards. An independent study will also be commissioned to evaluate and benchmark the standards. Data from each of these projects will be collated and used to inform any refinements to the current domain content.

Trials of assessment tasks and development of student work samples

The VCAA would like to thank the 200 or more schools that have expressed interest in participating in trialing assessment tasks and/or assessment descriptors as part of the validation process.

Schools selected for participation in these projects will be involved in implementing tasks designed to assess student achievement of selected standards across more than one domain and level. Following the trials, teacher feedback about appropriateness of the standards and student performance data will be evaluated. This project also aims to provide annotated work samples that illustrate levels of achievement against the standards.

Schools will also participate in the development and trial of descriptors within each standard in the Interdisciplinary and Physical, Personal and Social learning domains of Communication; Thinking; Information and Communications Technology; Design, Creativity and Technology; Personal Learning; and Interpersonal Development that can be used for global assessment purposes by teachers from all curriculum areas.

Collection of feedback from schools

Feedback from schools and members from the education community on the clarity and usability of learning focus statements and standards will be collected through a broadly available questionnaire and structured focus groups, interviews and forums. Further details about this process will be provided soon.

Independent review and benchmarking

Initial work on evaluating the developmental progression from Levels 1–6 within each of the domains and consistency of expectations in standards across the 16 learning domains was conducted prior to the release of the Standards. During Terms 2 and 3, an independent study of the standards will be undertaken, looking particularly at:

- developmental progression from Levels 1–6 within each of the domains
- consistency of expectations in standards across the 16 learning domains
- the degree of performance associated with standards
- benchmarking of the standards against the CSF II (where relevant) and other national and international curriculum frameworks.

Further information about these validation projects will be provided in future editions of the Supplement and at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/standardsvalidation.html>

AIM important dates 2005

State-wide testing program

	Pencil and Paper Tests
24 June	Final date for schools to request a variation to the testing dates
24 June	Final date for schools to request large print and Braille materials
Week of 11 July	Schools to receive and check contents of the AIM test packages (Years 3 and 5)
Week of 11 July	Requests for extra test materials (Years 3 and 5)
18–29 July	Conduct and mark the Teacher Assessed Tasks (Years 3 and 5)
Week of 25 July	Schools to receive and check contents of the AIM test packages (Year 7)
Week of 25 July	Requests for extra test materials (Year 7)
25 July	Last date for return of Principals' Agreement
2 August	Mathematics AIM test (Years 3, 5 and 7)
3 August	English AIM test (Years 3, 5 and 7)
4 August	Test Booklets packed and ready for collection
12 August	Final date to return Test Booklets for catch-up assessments
Week of 3 October	Reporting packages delivered to schools
	AIM Online Year 7 Tests
25 May – 17 June	Training of teachers from participating schools
11–30 July	Preparation of the online system at schools
25–29 July	AIM Online tests available for download
1–5 August	AIM Online English Writing Task
1–19 August	AIM Online Mathematics Test
1–19 August	AIM Online English Test
12 August	Deadline to upload Writing Task
26 August	Deadline to upload Mathematics and English tests
Week of 3 October	Reporting packages delivered to schools
	AIM Online Years 3 and 5 Extended Pilot Tests
25 May – 17 June	Training of teachers from participating schools
11–30 July	Preparation of the online system at schools
26–29 July	AIM Online tests available for download
1–12 August	AIM Online English Writing Task
1–26 August	AIM Online Mathematics Test
1–26 August	AIM Online English Test
12 August	Deadline to upload Writing Task
26 August	Deadline to upload Mathematics and English tests
Week of 3 October	Reporting packages delivered to schools

This P-10 Supplement is an adjunct of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) Bulletin. The VCAA BULLETIN is a monthly publication (excluding January) carrying information and administrative advice about the Victorian Certificate of Education and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning.

For subscriptions to the VCAA BULLETIN go to: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/correspondence/bulletins/bullsubscription.html

The VCAA BULLETIN and Supplements are also available online at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

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