



OFFERING AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM

Introduction

A Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) learning program must include curriculum and learning outcomes from each of the VCAL strands of Literacy and Numeracy, Work Related Skills, Personal Development Skills and Industry Specific Skills. While at first these may seem like discrete fields of study, many applied learning tasks, activities, and projects will involve learning across several of these curriculum areas. This reflects the integration of skills that often occurs outside the school curriculum; in everyday life and the workplace.

Why integrate?

The principles of applied learning that underpin the VCAL emphasise the benefits of making learning more immediately relevant to the needs and interests of students and their future goals. This means providing students with a context for learning new skills which is not driven by traditional curriculum divisions, but which reflects how those skills will be applied in the community, a workplace or in their personal lives.

Adults do not read, write, speak or complete mathematical tasks in isolation but in meaningful contexts. In these contexts they will also need to work with others, plan, organise, set goals and use technology. In an integrated approach students combine these skills in contexts relevant to their personal interests and goals.

Planning an integrated approach

Planning an integrated VCAL program involves identifying which teaching areas and learning outcomes can be delivered and assessed most readily through the proposed activity, task or project. If students have the opportunity to be involved in a local community activity, this could be mapped to a number of learning outcomes from different strands.

Careful planning makes sure that opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills across the curriculum are identified, as well as gaps, where additional activities need to be designed or incorporated to fulfil curriculum requirements. Planning also ensures that the evidence required for assessment purposes is incorporated into the task or activity, and that teaching and assessment is not unnecessarily duplicated in other parts of the VCAL program.

Which learning outcomes can be integrated?

There are no rules about which learning outcomes and which VCAL strands can or cannot be offered through an integrated program. Determining which outcomes can best be offered in this way will depend on the students and the specific teaching and learning context. In one school the students may be involved in a construction project as part of the completion of the Work Related Skills strand, which will offer lots of opportunity for developing their numeracy skills. In another the Personal Development Skills strand may include a project where VCAL students work with senior members of the community, using technology to document their life stories, and developing their reading, writing and oral communication skills at the same time.

The VCAL units, which have been developed in literacy skills, numeracy skills, work related skills and personal development skills have been designed to encourage the integration of learning outcomes and the incorporation of local content. They offer learning outcomes which can be developed in a wide range of contexts and which can be achieved in a variety of ways. Other curriculum outcomes can also be used in an integrated VCAL program, including VET in Schools and VCE studies. Assessment of VCE Units must be in accordance with VCE study designs.

If an integrated project or activity does not allow for all of the outcomes of a particular course to be covered, for example where curriculum requirements are tightly specified, additional teaching time can be dedicated to these outcomes, while still offering students the benefits of an integrated approach to developing the more generic skills and concepts.

Assessment in an integrated approach

Another benefit of an integrated approach is that it offers many opportunities for assessment, in a variety of ways. However, assessment needs to be carefully planned and record keeping systems developed which make sure that evidence of achievement of learning outcomes is documented. Involvement in more complex integrated activities and projects often means that learning outcomes will be achieved along the learning pathway, as part of the process, not just in the end product. Developing checklists of the learning outcomes covered by different components of an integrated program, and collecting a folio student work which shows how different learning outcomes were achieved are useful tools in integrated assessment.

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EXAMPLES OF SOME INTEGRATED VCAL TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMS

An integrated approach to the Work Related Skills and the Literacy Skills strands.

This program aimed to offer students a thorough preparation for structured workplace learning, at an Intermediate level VCAL course. Most of the students had already completed some job search type activities, such as preparing CVs in Years 9 and 10 and have also undertaken some work experience. Others had regular part-time employment outside of school. The integrated approach offers students the opportunity to demonstrate the skills they already have and build on them.

VCAL Work Related Skills unit Outcomes:	The 'ready for work' program Key activities:	VCAL Reading and Writing Outcomes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, analyse and organise information about basic conditions and entitlements of a specific industry. Obtain and provide information in response to a work related requirement. Identify routine problems or hazards that can affect the safety of the work environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a personal details folder which includes your CV, a general letter of application, any certificates of achievement or letters of recommendation you have. Complete an initial work placement interview and collect and document information on your work placement in a short report. Take part in a workplace problem solving scenarios activity. Complete the Safe@work program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write an instructional or transactional text. Write a report or explanatory text. <p>VCAL Oral Communication unit Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use and respond to spoken language in instructions and transactions. Use and respond to spoken language in discussions to explore issues or solve problems.

An integrated approach to outcomes from the Numeracy Skills and Personal Development Skills Strands:

Students at an Intermediate level VCAL program were asked to come up with a design for an outdoor table and to calculate the cost of the materials required. They then developed a production plan and a marketing strategy to sell the tables. Students worked in groups and were given activities specifically designed to focus their attention on the benefits of working in a group or team. One design was chosen and built in the school workshop.

Tasks	Personal Development Skills Strand outcomes	Numeracy Skills unit outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in a group to design an outdoor table. Cost your design. Present your group's design to the class. Reflect on the role you played in developing your groups design. Work in groups to develop a production and marketing plan. Identify different roles in the production and marketing plan for members of your group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organise a complex activity. Demonstrate self-management skills for goal achievement Describe leadership skills and responsibilities Utilise interpersonal skills to communicate ideas and information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can interpret and use the knowledge and conventions of common shapes and their representation for describing, designing or representing real life object. Can use straight forward measurement and the metric system to estimate and measure for the purpose of interpreting, making or purchasing materials in familiar practical situations. Can use and interpret whole numbers (including large numbers), simple fractions, decimals and percentages to make decisions about money and time in familiar situations.

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RESOURCES AND TOOLS USEFUL FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Integrating the Curricula: A Collection

Fogarty, Robin (ed), 1994
Hawker Brownlow Education
The purpose of this collection of papers was to provide those in the educational field with a 'deeper understanding of the multifaceted concept of curriculum integration'. Papers of both a theoretical and practical nature are included.

Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS):

Teacher's Guidelines

Bates, Susan, 2000
The Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS) provides a framework for integrating literacy and numeracy into VET training courses using a team teaching model. The teacher's guidelines outline critical issues for the effective implementation of the course and includes sections on creating a literacy culture, a course outline, and details of pilot deliveries of the course.

Introducing CAVSS: the Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills

WA Department of Education and Training, 2003
Introducing CAVSS is a CD designed to encourage and support people interested in using the model and is based round a video of a panel of VET, literacy and numeracy teachers, who talk openly about their experience of the CAVSS and its value.

Moving Memories: Learning Module

SkillsPlus, 2002
Moving memories was a pilot project for young people who had negative experiences of learning. It aimed to develop their skills in reading, writing and oral communication while enhancing their IT skills, and reconnecting them to an inclusive education program. Students were matched with older volunteer mentors and worked with them to develop a computer based video of their lives. This involved the learners in planning and organising meetings, communicating with their mentors and exchanging knowledge, as the students explained how the stories could be developed and formatted on computer and mentors shared their life experiences.

Going for your L's

Central West Community College, 2000
This resource, produced in New South Wales, provides a comprehensive course for assisting literacy students and others to prepare for the Road Transport Authority Computer Knowledge Test and is a good example of how literacy can be integrated with the development of other skills and knowledge. The curriculum is specifically designed for use

in New South Wales and users from other States would need to adapt the materials and follow up their own state specific practice tests and handbooks. However, the activities, lesson ideas and worksheets should be readily adaptable.

Enterprising ways to teach and learn.

Book 3:

Enterprise briefs

Kearney, Paul
Enterprise Design Associates, 1998
These 'real life' projects are designed to achieve standard school based curriculum outcomes, plus enabling students to practise some kind of enterprise (responsibility, teamwork, experiential learning, reflection). Over 20 different briefs are included in the book. For teachers and trainers looking for a supportive entry point into applied or integrated learning projects this might be a good place to start.

Adventures in VCAL: Personal Development and Work Skills Workbook 2004

Kangan Batman TAFE, 2003
This resource is designed as a Personal Development Skills and Work Related Skills workbook and was developed by teachers from Kangan Batman TAFE to support delivery of VCAL units. The book is well laid out, easy to follow and illustrated with cartoon drawings. A great resource for those who want some instance structure for project work with particular links to VCAL outcomes.

VCAL Unit Assessment Planning Guide 2006

This resource guides teachers through the processes and procedures for appropriately assessing and recording outcomes in the VCAL Work Related Skills and Personal Development Skills Units. It provides clear guidelines on appropriate assessment and determining levels of performance required for teachers delivering these units. It gives useful examples for the Work Related Skills Units, completed proformas, sample portfolio evidence, structured workplace learning record keeping proformas and checklists with similar examples for the Personal Development Skills Units. Other topics addressed are the RPL process and how Advance a Victorian Youth Development Program might be incorporated into a VCAL program. Essential and well presented resources for those working in VCAL programs. Access via www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

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The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL): Quality Assurance Kit 2006

This resource outlines the Quality Assurance process for VCAL providers. It provides templates for completion during the Quality Assurance process.

VCAL Literacy and Numeracy Skills Units Record Keeping Kit

Language Australia, 2003

This kit has been developed to assist teachers of the VCAL in documenting, charting and maintaining student assessments. Its framework allows teachers to readily chart student progress against the domains of the literacy and numeracy skills units of the VCAL.

VCAL Road Safety Units

This resource provides a range of ideas for classroom activities that align to units of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), specifically units in Personal Development Skills, Numeracy Skills, Reading and Writing and Oral Communication Skills at VCAL Foundation, Intermediate and Senior levels. The VCAL Road Safety Units are also suitable for use with other groups of young people aged 15-19 years, e.g. Years 10, 11 or 12 students, or those enrolled in the Certificates of General Education for Adults.