

# ***Essential Learnings Framework 1***

Tasmania. Department of Education, 2002

## **Overview of the document**

61 page glossy booklet that introduces the new Tasmanian curriculum Essential Learnings Framework. It consists of an introduction, three parts (Values and Purposes Statement, Essential Learnings, and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Principles) and identifies five areas of essential learnings. Framework 1 was followed, in 2003, by Essential Learnings Framework 2, which consisted of two booklets, Learners and Learning Provision and Introduction to the Standards and Outcomes, and a series of loose leaf pages in a glossy folder.

## **Keywords**

Essential learnings; outcomes and standards; learners and learning; deep knowing; diversity; inclusivity; social capacity; tolerance; social justice; equity, innovation; responsibility; personal success; self-management; wellbeing; goal setting; whole person; democratic society; ethical framework; autonomy; identity; self-determination; life-long learning.

## **Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION

VALUES AND PURPOSES STATEMENT

ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS

Thinking

Communicating

Personal Futures

Social Responsibility

World Futures

CULMINATING OUTCOMES FOR THE ESSENTIALS

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

## **Summary of Content**

INTRODUCTION

- Introduces the document as one consisting of a statement of values and purposes, a description of learning that is essential and a set of principles to guide educational practice.
- Notes that the Essential Learnings Framework focuses on what is essential in the curriculum and that it enacts the vision of ‘Tasmania Together and Learning Together A Vision for Education, Training and Information in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ (2000).
- Notes that the Framework is designed to: reduce the crowded curriculum, engage learners more deeply, make learning more relevant, improve learning across the areas, develop higher-order thinking and support the transfer of learning.
- Notes that the Framework is underpinned by the principles that the Curriculum must:
  - focus on understanding, deep knowing;
  - interconnect and interrelate knowledge;
  - foster diversity and inclusivity;
  - focus on pedagogy;
  - clearly state what learning is expected; and
  - build confidence and coherence for all learners from birth onwards. (pp. 4-5)

- Notes that the Framework assists in:
  - “Clarifying and affirming the key purposes of education”: Notes that the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is “an opportune time” to examine the curriculum in light of significant changes in society, technology and the economy and that it is vital that education “prepare learners for this changing world.” (p. 5)
  - “Responding positively”: Notes that the Framework is a “positive response to a worldwide call for curriculum that engages all learners, including adolescents.” (p. 5)
  - “Building a seamless curriculum for learners from birth to Year 10.” (p. 5)
  - “Recognising and building on strengths of existing practice.” (p. 5)
- Notes that the Framework has been built through “co-construction” and describes the consultative process involved in developing the Framework. (p. 6)
- Provides a coloured graph that overviews 1) the values and purposes, and 2) the Essential Learnings. This graph identifies the following:
  - Values: connectedness; resilience; achievement; creativity; integrity; responsibility; and equity.
  - Purposes: learning to relate, participate and care; learning to live full, healthy lives; learning to create purposeful futures; learning to act ethically; learning to learn; and learning to think, know and understand.
  - Essential Learnings:
    - Communicating: being literate, numerate, information literate and arts literate.
    - Personal Futures: building and maintaining identity and relationships, maintaining wellbeing, being ethical, creating and pursuing goals.
    - Social Responsibility: building social capacity, valuing diversity, acting democratically, understanding the past and creating preferred futures.
    - World Futures: investigating the natural and constructed world, understanding systems, designing and evaluating technological solutions and creating sustainable futures.
  - Culminating Outcomes: inquiring and reflective thinkers; effective communicators; self-directed and ethical people; responsible citizens; and world contributors. (p. 7)

#### **VALUES AND PURPOSES STATEMENT**

- Introduces this section by noting that the curriculum consultation process was broad-reaching and sought views from a wide-range of people about what education should look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Notes that the values and purposes statement was launched by the Minister for Education in December 2000 and that this provided the basis for the planning and review of programs.
- Identifies the core set of values as follows:
  - Connectedness: including developing a sense of community through friendships, care, compassion, cooperation acceptance and belonging.
  - Resilience: including recognising strengths and maximising potential, developing self-management, self-confidence and self-respect and nurturing optimism, perseverance and wellbeing.
  - Achievement: including attaining personal success, pursuing individual excellence and displaying pride and satisfaction.

- Creativity: including valuing original ideas, demonstrating enterprise and innovation and engaging with and responding to the aesthetic qualities of the natural and constructed world.
- Integrity: including acting honestly, ethically and consistently.
- Responsibility: including accepting individual and collective responsibility.
- Equity: including developing tolerance and commitment to social justice. (p. 9)
- Outlines the purpose of ensuring children and students are:
  - “Learning to Relate, Participate and Care”: Notes that this purpose develops skills and values for full participation in a democratic society and involves developing communication and social skills, respect, cooperation, nurturing relationships and a sense of community. (p. 10)
  - “Learning to Live Full, Healthy Lives”: Notes that this purpose supports the development of the whole person and involves self-knowledge, the capacity to enjoy a healthy life, optimism, adaptability and the capacity to negotiate change. (p. 10)
  - “Learning to Create Purposeful Futures”: Notes that the purpose involves pursuing individual goals and positive engagement with the future. (p. 10)
  - “Learning to Act Ethically”: Notes that this purpose involves developing understandings about actions and consequences, accepting responsibility and understanding rights and responsibilities. (p. 10)
  - “Learning to Learn”: Notes that this purpose stimulates curiosity and encourages love of learning and a desire to continue learning throughout life. Notes that this involves literacy and numeracy skills, motivation and self-discipline. (p. 10)
  - “Learning to Think, Know and Understand”: Notes that this involves developing the ability to reason and apply knowledge to new situations and critical thinking and questioning. (p. 10)

### **ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS**

- Begins by noting the extensive consultation process that went into the development of Essential Learnings.
- Notes that consultation “highlighted the personal growth and development of learners, and the education of learners for social, civic and environmental responsibility, as essential components in a new curriculum”. (p. 11)
- Identifies the following themes as important across the Essential Learnings:
  - thinking and communicating;
  - ethical action;
  - the nature of interdependence; and
  - the concept of futures. (p. 12)

### **Thinking**

- Opens with the following statement: “The ability of individuals to think flexibly and creatively to manage their learning throughout life is increasingly vital to personal success and effective communities. Thinking clearly and compassionately is prerequisite to fulfilling a role as an active and concerned citizen and to following personal pursuits successfully. Workplace requirements and career paths are likely to change frequently over a lifetime and the ability to apply knowledge to new situations and make informed choices and decisions will be of paramount importance. The transmission of information is rapidly increasing in volume and pace. This demands a

capacity to think quickly and clearly about options and opinions in order to evaluate their veracity, applicability and consequences. Higher-order thinking is increasingly essential in dealing with the complex problems facing individuals and organisations. Ethical, altruistic and long-range thinking are crucial to the future of society.” (p. 13)

- Identifies the key elements as Inquiry and Reflective Thinking. (p. 14)
- Stresses the importance of developing in students the capacity to think flexibly.
- Notes that changes in careers and workplace requirements require individuals who can apply knowledge to different situations.
- Notes that “Learning and thinking which enable the courageous, flexible, creative and imaginative use of mental capabilities for a compassionate and sustainable world are essential for solving complex global problems.” (p. 14)
- Offers an overall description of “thinking” followed by a more in-depth description of the key elements of this curriculum area. Under the key element ‘Inquiry’ discusses posing problems, gathering information, thinking about possibilities, making decisions and justifying conclusions. Under the key element ‘Reflective Thinking’ discusses thinking about thinking and learning, understanding and caring about different perspectives and ethical reasoning. After each area is described the section concludes with a series of reflective “key questions for educators” – for example, “What skills and attitudes of the mind are required to pose and define problems, clarify the issues involved and select and modify processes to use for inquiry?” (p. 16)

### **Communicating**

- Opens with the following statement: “The ability to use a range of symbols to create, express and communicate meaning is essential to learning and living productively in a complex world. Facility with language and symbolic systems provides the means to relate effectively with others, to select and evaluate personal and life options, and to plan, adapt and enact purposeful futures with openness to learning throughout life. In an era of global communications, having creative and flexible communicative competence is fundamental to our personal, recreational and vocational opportunities. Increasingly, the capacity to interact critically with communications created and presented by others is crucial to making reasoned and informed choices and decisions. Being able to articulate our point of view thoughtfully and persuasively is essential to full participation in social and civic life as members of a democratic community.” (p. 19)
- Identifies the key elements as follows:
  - Being literate;
  - Being numerate;
  - Being information literate; and
  - Being arts literate. (p. 20)
- Offers an overall description of “Communicating” followed by more in-depth description of the key elements of the curriculum area. At the end of each description of key element areas reflective “key questions for educators are listed” – for example, “What knowledge about different ways of speaking, listening, reading, viewing and writing is required to use them for a range of purposes, and to adjust communications for different audiences?” (p. 21)

### **Personal Futures**

- Opens with the following statement: “Young people need to be provided with educational experiences that will enable them to deal successfully with current and future change with optimism and resilience. Our economic and social systems are

changing. Support structures that formerly provided individuals with a sense of identity and direction, such as relatively stable families, traditional membership of religious organisations and security of work, are also changing. Technology is advancing at an accelerating pace. Ethical dilemmas abound in the modern world and learners increasingly need to examine the positions implicit in these issues, think critically about all perspectives to determine their own position, deal with current challenges, and contribute to preferred futures for themselves and their community.” (p. 24)

- Identifies the key elements as follows:
  - Building and maintaining identity and relationships;
  - Maintaining wellbeing;
  - Being ethical; and
  - Creating and pursuing goals. (p. 25)
- Offers an overall description of “Personal Futures” followed by more in-depth descriptions of the key elements of the curriculum area. After each area is described the section concludes with reflective “key questions for educators” – for example, “what is meant by “identity” and how does it vary, develop and change?” (p. 26)
- States that “Personal futures focus on building the capacity to live fulfilling lives, to shape one’s personal future and to make wise life choices.” (p. 25)

### **Social Responsibility**

- Opens with the following statement: “In a fluid and complex global community faced with challenging choices and decisions that will affect the future of humanity and of the planet, it is imperative that we are prepared to participate actively, creatively, optimistically and responsibly as citizens in democratic communities.” (p. 29)
- Identifies the key elements as follows:
  - Building social capacity;
  - Valuing diversity;
  - Acting democratically; and
  - Understanding the past and creating preferred futures. (p. 30)
- Offers an overall description of “Social Responsibility” followed by more in-depth descriptions of the key elements of the curriculum area. After each area is described the section concludes with reflective “key questions for educators” – for example, “What does it mean to be a citizen in this democracy?” (p. 33)

### **World Futures**

- Opens with the following statement: “The future of the world depends on our having the understandings, dispositions and skills to make responsible decisions to achieve a balance between acting for human benefit and sustaining ecological systems. A sense of connection with the natural world helps us to act thoughtfully and with sensitivity and care. Scientific and technological innovation is wide-ranging and occurring at a rapid pace. While this offers opportunities to participate in a new age of design and development, with the potential to enhance quality of life, the innovations must be evaluated in terms of personal, social and environmental impact and values.” (p. 34)
- Identifies the key elements as follows:
  - Investigating the natural and constructed world;
  - Understanding systems;
  - Designing and evaluating technological solutions; and
  - Creating sustainable futures. (p. 34)

- Offers an overall description of “World Futures” which involves investigating systems and their interrelationship and focuses on the challenge of ecological sustainability. This is followed by more in-depth descriptions of the key elements of the curriculum area. After each area is described the section concludes with reflective “key questions for educators” – for example, “In what ways can the concept of systems be developed?” (p. 37)

### **CULMINATING OUTCOMES FOR THE ESSENTIALS**

- Describes “a small set of valued learning performances linked to each of the Essential Learnings”. (p. 40)
- Outlines these culminating outcomes as follows:
  - Inquiring and Reflective Thinkers (Thinking): Able to reason, question, make decisions and solve complex problems. As reflective thinkers they will be empathetic and able to make ethical decisions about issues, events and actions.
  - Effective Communicators (Communicating): Able to create, communicate and convey ideas clearly and confidently, using the full range of symbolic systems. They will interact critically with communications created by others, interpreting linguistic, numerical and graphic information with judgement and discernment.
  - Self-Directed and Ethical People (Personal Futures): Having a positive vision for themselves and their future, acting with moral autonomy and contributing to the constructive futures for themselves and others.
  - Responsible Citizens (Social Responsibility): Prepared to participate actively in a democratic community, valuing diversity and acting for a just and equitable society.
  - World Contributors (World Futures): Willing to consider the consequences of scientific and technological innovations, make thoughtful decisions about their application, and act to maintain, protect and enhance local and global environments. (p. 40)

### **LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES**

- Notes that the learning, teaching and assessment principles “articulate a set of beliefs that inform pedagogical thinking, choice and action”. (p. 41)
- Presents twelve principles that include a statement of belief and what this means for teaching and assessing.
- As an example, the first principle states that
  - “We believe that”: “Humans want to learn”; and that “Learning is an innate and lifelong process”.
  - Teaching: Therefore educators: “Expect that all people can learn”; “Maintain challenging expectations for all learners”; “Are passionate about learning”; and “Model Curiosity and persistence”.
  - Assessment: Therefore: “The primary purpose for assessment is to improve learning” and “Assessment provides all learners with the capacity to demonstrate what they know, value and are able to do.” (p. 42)
- The eleven other principles begin with the following belief statements:
  - “Learning is a process of making meaning of the world.” (p. 42)
  - “Learners are unique and they determine their own learning.” (p. 43)
  - “Learning depends on being able to connect prior knowledge, perceptions or patterns of experience to new experiences or new information or contexts.” (p. 44)

- “Learning is profoundly influenced by social relationships.” (p. 45)
- “Learning is significantly affected by emotions.” (p. 46)
- “Self-concept directly affects motivation and learning.” (p. 46)
- “Learning is more effective when information is embedded in purposeful and meaningful experiences.” (p. 47)
- “Learning occurs all the time and part of what is learned is understanding about context.” (p. 48)
- “Learning is enhanced by learners being aware of how thinking and learning occur. Meta-cognition gives learners increased control over their learning.” (p. 48)
- “Learning is demonstrated when learners can apply their understandings in new situations in flexible and thought provoking ways.” (p. 49)
- “Learning is complex and non-linear.” (p. 49)

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIES**

- References are presented by section over twelve pages.