



FIVE CORE VALUES that Underpin Teaching and Learning in South Australian Public Education Settings

1.

EQUITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

2.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

3.

COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

4.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

5.

**RIGOUR, FAIRNESS AND INCLUSIVITY
IN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

“This curriculum policy highlights the role of the teacher as both teacher and lifelong learner.”

PREAMBLE

The South Australian Branch of the Australian Education Union supports public education’s goal of excellence in teaching, learning and a broad range of learner outcomes necessary for citizenship in a global society. AEU members are strongly encouraged to monitor, discuss and critique issues concerned with teaching and learning in our public schools and preschools.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This curriculum policy was developed through close consultation with members of the AEU SA branch. It supports members in discussions and decisions about how state- mandated curriculum is implemented in South Australian preschools, schools and other education sites.

Children are the future transformers of society and teachers play a vital role in developing in their students an understanding of what is happening in the world and the competencies to engage and act with confidence. It is therefore essential that teachers have a frame of reference that they can use in monitoring, responding to and challenging curriculum content and the methods by which students are required to be taught and assessed in South Australia’s public education system.

This curriculum policy highlights the role of the teacher as both teacher and lifelong learner. It is therefore based on the assumption that ongoing professional development and support will be made available to teachers for the purpose of enhancing their skills and knowledge to support learners to reach their full potential. Support for educators will enable them to continually reflect on their practices and implement new and innovative pedagogies into classroom practice.

STRUCTURE OF THIS POLICY

Five core values form the framework of this policy which is based on respectful relationships with each other and with our environment. Each of the values is elaborated on through a set of principles and suggested practices.

WHAT IS CURRICULUM?

Curriculum is what students learn about the world and their place in it. This learning occurs inside educational institutions and in the broader community, in ways that are both planned and unplanned.

The planned curriculum includes knowledge and skills that are deemed important by the dominant groups within the community. However, it is only through interaction between teachers and learners that the intentions of the curriculum are achieved. Teachers have the vital role of lifting curriculum 'off the page'. They assist learners to navigate their way through the diversity of information and experience that contributes to their development as citizens who can engage with their communities to shape and be part of a socially just world, at all levels; local, state, national, and international.

To do this well teachers need adequate resources, time and continuing and relevant professional development in a system that values cooperation and collaboration.

THE FIVE CORE VALUES

The South Australian Branch of the Australian Education Union recognises the role of teachers in modelling, fostering and promoting the following values in South Australian public schooling.

- 1. EQUITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY** for all learners both in and through South Australia's public education system.
- 2. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY** within a supportive culture. This diversity covers the political, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and economic circumstances of self and others.
- 3. COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION** as the foundation for ethical behaviours. This value underlies the development of a democratic, participatory and sustainable future in a civil society.
- 4. SUSTAINABILITY** through developing in students the range of critical skills necessary to interpret and act in the global society, economy and environment of the 21st century.
- 5. RIGOUR, FAIRNESS AND INCLUSIVITY IN ASSESSING LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT** using processes that are grounded in teachers' professional judgment and continuous reflection.

However, it is only through interaction between teachers and learners that the intentions of the curriculum are achieved.

EXAMINING THE VALUES: Principles and Practices

VALUE 1

Equity and equal opportunity for all learners and teachers both in and through South Australia's public education system.

PRINCIPLE 1

The South Australian Branch of the Australian Education Union recognises and supports the role of the public education system in educating all learners to enable them to reach their fullest potential regardless of race, age, class, religion, gender, disability, isolation, transience, culture, or language or location.

PRACTICES SUPPORTING THIS PRINCIPLE

There will be fair distribution of resources. In many instances full access, participation and achievement by students experiencing disadvantage will need to be supported by additional physical and financial resources and additional teachers and education support workers. For all learners, teachers will provide a curriculum that:

1. Addresses the needs of the diversity of individuals and groups.
2. Values what learners and teachers already know and understand and uses this knowledge to engage learners through a range of teaching and learning programs planned jointly by students and teachers.
3. Engages and empowers learners and teachers and promotes interesting and meaningful learning and assessment tasks.

"Equity and equal opportunity for all learners and teachers both in and through South Australia's public education system."

“This diversity covers the political, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and economic circumstances of self and others.”

VALUE 2

Respect for diversity within a supportive culture. This diversity covers the political, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and economic circumstances of self and others.

PRINCIPLE 2

The South Australian Branch of the AEU recognises and supports the role of public education as a shaper of a new and diverse generation of thinkers and active participants within society.

PRACTICES SUPPORTING THIS PRINCIPLE

This principle is supported by the recognition of diversity and respect for other peoples, other cultures and other ways of being. With regard to curriculum, this means:

- 1.** No discrimination on any grounds.
- 2.** Teaching and modelling skills that support the continuing development of respect for others.
- 3.** Actively modelling and teaching for the reduction of prejudices based on race, class, gender, creed, culture, language, disability, age and sexuality.
- 4.** Actively teaching critical literacy skills that facilitate the challenging of prejudices and stereotypes.
- 5.** Explicitly teaching about and against bullying, sex discrimination, racism and homophobia and implementing programs that support continuing development of respectful relations.
- 6.** Actively modelling and teaching about fairness, justice and the values of democracy and human rights.

“Cooperation and collaboration as the foundation for ethical behaviours.”

VALUE 3

Cooperation and collaboration as the foundation for ethical behaviours. This value underlies the development of a democratic, participatory and sustainable future in a civil society.

PRINCIPLE 3

The South Australian Branch of the AEU recognises and supports the role of public education in assisting all learners to explore, critique and practise the ethical behaviours that can lead to a democratic and sustainable future. These behaviours will be based on cooperation and collaboration.

PRACTICES SUPPORTING THIS PRINCIPLE

Ethical behaviour is basic to a sustainable future in a global economy and environment. With regard to curriculum this means:

- 1.** Recognition of the need for cooperation and collaboration and a critical understanding of the costs and benefits of competitive behaviours within an ethical framework.
- 2.** Providing learners with opportunities to examine local and global events from an ethical perspective through which their own values will be illuminated.
- 3.** Development of skills including critical literacy, numeracy and information skills and communication technology skills, that support teachers and learners to examine their present local and global communities from an ethical perspective.
- 4.** A focus on positive relationships between learners, their families and their teachers, and between preschools/ schools and their communities and other educational settings.
- 5.** Where parents participate in school/centre activities, they need to comply with and uphold ethical behaviour in all community events i.e. sports, inclusive decision-making, information and confidentiality.

“This value underlies the development of a democratic, participatory and sustainable future in a civil society.”

VALUE 4

Sustainability achievable through developing in students the range of critical skills necessary to interpret and act in the global society, economy and environment of the 21st century.

PRINCIPLE 4

The South Australian Branch of the Australian Education Union recognises and supports the role of public education in the development of critical skills with which to interpret the world and challenge the status quo.

PRACTICES SUPPORTING THIS PRINCIPLE

(i) Taking a critical approach

With regard to the curriculum, this means explicitly teaching students how to take a critical approach through modelling critical practices and encouraging students to:

1. Interpret the world, including the learning environment, from a social, political, religious, cultural, environmental, gender and economic perspective.
2. Develop and practise skills and strategies that examine the way historical and contemporary worlds are presented to learners.
3. Examine futures that are sustainable and strategies and actions for achieving these goals.
4. Develop skills, attitudes and values that promote active participation in public, social and private life.
5. Develop a critical awareness of Australia's place in the global society, economy and environment.
6. Develop skills for participation in democracy, including an understanding of the role of unions, political parties and lobby groups.
7. Develop a critical awareness and recognition of the dispossession of Australia's indigenous peoples and the existence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures long before European occupation.

(ii) Examining the nature of knowledge

With regard to curriculum, this principle supports the need for teachers to acknowledge their role as co-constructors of knowledge in cooperation and collaboration with their students and to develop teaching and learning programs in safe environments that encourage teachers and learners to:

1. Critically examine what is knowledge, how knowledge is constructed and in whose interests.
2. Acknowledge that there are many 'ways of knowing'.
3. Seek differing and diverse views and constructive debate.
4. Challenge conventional wisdom and enable new constructions of knowledge.
5. Model and promote the need to be active learners with a passion for making sense of the world and acquiring the skills to do it.

"With regard to the curriculum, this means explicitly teaching students how to take a critical approach..."

VALUE 5

Rigour, fairness and inclusivity in assessing student achievement using processes that are grounded in teachers' professional judgement and consistent with current pedagogies.

PRINCIPLE 5

The South Australian Branch of the Australian Education Union recognises the importance of assessment to all education stakeholders and the need for fair, just, valid and reliable processes. It is essential that a range of assessment strategies be used and resourced to allow for:

1. Use of assessment measures that recognise teachers' professional judgement.
2. Flexible assessment mechanisms that enable maximum autonomy for learners.
3. Student involvement in planning relevant assessment processes.
4. Development of assessment mechanisms that value learning through cooperative and collaborative tasks.
5. Assessment processes that intrinsically promote learning, especially from the early years where children may be inhibited by scrutiny.
6. Recognition that standardised testing is limited to particular types of knowledge, learning and skills that are not available to all learners.
7. Use of standardised testing only in conjunction with other forms of assessment including teacher observation.
8. Use of standardised tests that have been open to scrutiny, comment and challenge by the profession.
9. Evaluation of state-wide performance only through representative sample data collection.
10. Use and publication of data only in accordance with protocols jointly agreed by DECS and the South Australian Branch of the AEU.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Professional Development Policy,
AEU Branch Council, 20 November 1999



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