The Detailed Essential Learnings

The material in this useful booklet expands on the Overview of the Essential Learnings which is found in the General Introduction of the SACSA Framework. This expanded version was the material provided by the Essential Learnings Experts Working Group for the SACSA writers.

The five Essential Learnings of Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking and Communication described in this document, were informed by numerous groups of educators and others within South Australia and throughout the world. It is also helpful to know that the aspects of the Essential Learnings are described as understandings and actions. Each of the Essential Learnings except Identity have four aspects (Identity has three). You may see these listed under the aspects column of the Overview. It is the aspects, through the dot points, which are expanded upon in this document.

Included also in this booklet is the Overview of the Essential Learnings and a simple programming process which may richly develop the understandings and actions of the Essential Learnings.

Please note there are a number of versions of the Essential Learnings all of which have been informed by this document. They are: The Friendly Language Essential Learnings, Essential Learnings for Primary Learners and a version for the Early Years. Another version 'The Concise Essential Learnings' summarises the aspects of each of the five Essential Learnings.

All the versions will eventually be available on line through the SACSA site. For now contact any member of the Essential Learning group (see below) for copies.

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Essential Learnings
OVERVIEW

Essential Learnings are understandings, dispositions and capabilities which are developed through the Learning Areas and form an integral part of children’s and student’s learning from birth to Year 12 and beyond. They are resources which are drawn upon throughout life and enable people to productively engage with changing times as thoughtful, active, responsive and committed local, national and global citizens. Engaging with these concepts is crucial to building a learning culture in a school/site setting.

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<td>What knowledge, skills and dispositions are required to maximise opportunities in creating preferred future? Learners develop:</td>
<td>This includes:</td>
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<td>• A sense of optimism about their ability to actively contribute to shaping preferred futures</td>
<td>• Understanding patterns and connections within systems</td>
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<td>• Capabilities to critically reflect on, plan and take action to shape preferred futures.</td>
<td>• Understanding world views when analysing future challenges</td>
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<td><strong>IDENTITY</strong></td>
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<td>What knowledge, skills and dispositions are required to critically understand self-identity, group-identity and relationships? Learners develop:</td>
<td>This includes:</td>
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<td>• A sense of personal and group identity</td>
<td>• Understanding self, group and others</td>
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<td>• Capabilities to contribute to, critically reflect on, plan and take action to shape relationships.</td>
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<td><strong>INTERDEPENDENCE</strong></td>
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<td>What knowledge, skills and dispositions are required to critically understand the systems to which lives are connected and to participate positively in shaping them? Learners develop:</td>
<td>This includes:</td>
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<td>• A sense of being connected with their worlds</td>
<td>• Understanding cultural and global connections, patterns and evolutions</td>
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<td>• Capabilities to contribute to, critically reflect on, plan and take action to shape local and global communities.</td>
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<td>• Taking civic action to benefit community.</td>
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<td><strong>THINKING</strong></td>
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<td>What knowledge, skills and dispositions are required to develop particular habits of mind to create and innovate, and to generate solutions? Learners develop:</td>
<td>This includes:</td>
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<td>• A sense of the power of creativity, wisdom and enterprise</td>
<td>• Using a wide range of thinking modes</td>
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<td>• Capabilities to critically evaluate, plan and generate ideas and solutions.</td>
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<td>• Initiating enterprising and creative solutions for contemporary issues.</td>
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<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
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<td>What knowledge, skills and dispositions are required to construct and deconstruct meaning, and to critically understand the power of communication and its technologies? Learners develop:</td>
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<td>• A sense of the power and potential of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology</td>
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<td>Capabilities to critically reflect on and shape the present and future through powerful uses of literacy.</td>
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<td>• Making effective use of language, mathematical and information and communication technology tools</td>
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<td>• Using communication in a range of modes to achieve identified outcomes.</td>
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What perspectives will we need to meet the critical challenges of the future?

The Purpose

- To make current educational practice relevant to learners, and provide them with the skills and the capacities to thrive in a fast changing world.

- To develop proactive, optimistic learners, who will take part in the shaping of their own futures.

This means:

- Learners developing an understanding of patterns and connections within systems.

- Learners understanding world views when analysing future challenges.

- Learners building scenarios of preferred futures.

- Learners acquiring skills that will enable them to thrive in a fast changing world rather than becoming casualties of such change.
This includes:

1. Understanding patterns and connections within systems
2. Understanding world views when analysing future challenges
3. Building scenarios of preferred futures

1. **Understanding patterns and connections within systems**
   - Recognises patterns and connections within systems
   - Understands personal relationships within contexts of social and work-related systems and environments
   - Transfers knowledge and understandings to new contexts and situations (including vocational and recreational)
   - Makes connections between concepts across all learning areas
   - Understands the organic nature of change
   - Uses divergent thinking
   - Recognises the cyclical and ongoing nature of planning, thinking, learning and problem solving
   - Relates learning to own experience
   - Uses mathematical, language and ICT models to represent systems and analyse the effects of change.

2. **Understanding world views when analysing future challenges**
   - Understands world views and how they are constructed and manifested
   - Identifies developments involved in the transition from industrial world views to different future views.
   - Identifies Western world values and practices, eg materialism and consumerism, and can describe these values and practices as they would apply through other world views.
   - Identifies and analyses challenges for the future through a diverse range of world views.

3. **Building scenarios of preferred futures**
• Identifies personal, vocational and cultural sources of meaning
• Critiques contemporary culture, and understands the role of value systems as they affect culture, behaviour, attitude and world views.
• Considers the future from ethical, aesthetic, emotional and intuitive, as well as rational perspectives, in order to gain new insights.
• Draws on a range of cultures, including indigenous cultures, to examine future challenges.
• Uses futures tools such as: technological/virtual environments, scenario building, futures wheels, futures scanning, and applies them to contemporary social and political issues.
• Creates new knowledge from insights of the past, understandings of the present and foresights of the future and applies this in building future scenarios.
• Draws on available data to analyse history, map trends, predict and construct alternative futures.

4. Demonstrating lifelong learning

• Takes responsibility for initiating aspects of own learning
• Plans and facilitates own learning
• Evaluates and articulates what has been learnt and how it was learnt
• Explores ways and means of influencing the future
• Explores relationships with the community and the potential roles it offers
• Undertakes a variety of roles in teams
• Understand the importance of evaluation in learning.
IDENTITY

Who am I/who are we and how do we see each other?

The Purpose

- To assist learners to achieve a sense of their own current and emerging identity.

- To develop proactive learners who will take action to shape their own personal and group relationships.

This means:

- Learners developing an understanding of themselves, of the groups to which they belong, and of other members of their community.

- Learners coming to an understanding of the social construction of identities.

- Learners developing the capacity to relate effectively to others and to resist the pressure of negative stereotyping.

- Learners achieving a sense of their own current and emerging identities.
This includes:

1. Understanding self, group and others

   • Develops self-awareness and understanding with a strong sense of self-worth in social and working contexts
   • Understands key ways in which groups and cultures contribute to forming identities
   • Actively engages with the interplay between the 'self' and collective identities
   • Describes aspects of personal and group identity, e.g. cultural, behavioural, social, emotional and intellectual
   • Respects different personal and collective identities
   • Reflects and communicates with others to influence and generate new personal, working and group identities.

2. Understanding the social construction of identities

   • Appreciates that identities are constructed around personal and social values, ethics, systems, policies, practices and economics, e.g. age, race, ethnicity, gender, culture, spirituality, sexuality, ability, location, work and status
   • Understands and critiques these social constructs to identify issues of power, justice and injustice, and identifies examples of ways in which groups can consequently be advantaged or disadvantaged
   • Identifies examples of social systems and practices which focus on improved equity and cultural richness
   • Recognises the impact of contemporary cultural, media and communication technologies in the shaping of identities, e.g. virtual, sporting, work, economic and social
   • Separates information about behaviours from beliefs about self concept and identity.
3. Relating effectively to others regardless of their identities

- Examines some of the key ideas about the changing nature of identity and the importance of choices and associated pressures in these changes
- Understands how identities are affected by power in relationships, civic and working life, and the distribution of resources
- Identifies actions taken individually or structurally to address issues around identity, eg harassment, racism, sexism, homophobia, employment/unemployment
- Uses personal skills and institutional structures to deal with issues affecting identity, eg harassment, grievance procedures, conflict resolution.
- Develops personal and cultural resilience to maintain and support aspects of identities that are valued
- Makes changes to those values and practices that are harmful or counter-production
- Draws on narrative as a personal source of confirmation, growth and inspiration for potential change
- Demonstrates appropriate ways of relating to others in a range of learning, social, civic and work contexts, regardless of their identities.
INTERDEPENDENCE

How can we better see our lives and lifestyles as inseparable from all the systems to which we are connected?

The Purpose

• To develop learners who recognise that their own lives and lifestyles are inseparable from wider systems.

• To develop learners who are proactive in shaping local and global communities.

This means:

• Learners coming to an understanding of cultural and global connections, patterns and evolutions.

• Learners coming to an understanding of what is needed for sustainable social and physical environments.

• Learners cooperating to achieve agreed outcomes.

• Learners acting to benefit their communities.
This includes:

1. Understanding cultural and global connections, patterns and evolutions
2. Understanding what is needed for sustainable social and physical environments
3. Acting cooperatively to achieve agreed outcomes
4. Taking civic action to benefit community.

1. **Understanding cultural and global connections, patterns and evolutions**

   • Appreciates the diversity of systems and cultures to which people belong
   • Understands the ways in which environments, languages, beliefs and practices can be both culturally cohesive and divisive
   • Identifies how the relationships between individuals, families, communities and societies define and shape their existence
   • Demonstrates respect for difference in cultural, social and vocational practices
   • Understands the evolution of global thinking and perspectives and the impact of global communities on global development
   • Understands the paradoxical nature of globalisation - the positive benefits and the potential tensions between national and global interests and identities
   • Understands issues of human and community well-being and identifies action that supports global and local well-being.

2. **Understanding what is needed for sustainable social and physical environments**

   • Appreciates the value of tension and conflict and develops conflict management skills to take ideas, relationships, understandings and possibilities further, working towards the achievement of collaborative goals with others
   • Understands that all living things are connected and interdependent
   • Appreciates that we need to live together in harmony to maintain the well-being of the planet
   • Identifies how human actions have had a positive or negative impact on other living systems or things, eg new and emerging technologies.

3. **Acting cooperatively to achieve agreed outcomes**
• Develops personal skills and abilities to create and maintain rewarding and effective relationships
• Works effectively as a member of a team to achieve individual and shared goals
• Understands and values the differences in people’s needs, interests, capabilities, skills and perspectives and how these can be used cooperatively to achieve outcomes.
• Considers ways to achieve preferred social and physical environments, taking into account ethical and equitable principles for living and working cooperatively
• Contributes to planning, organising and action at local and global levels for future sustainable social and physical environments
• Understands the mutual and equal interdependence of the public and private spheres of life which includes the connections between, for example, the political and the personal, the civic and the domestic, (eg paid and unpaid work).

4. Taking civic action to benefit community

• Shares experiences about making a difference in the communities we are part of, and how this impacts on a changing society
• Makes contributions to strengthen civil society by building social capital
• Identifies changes which would benefit community development and takes appropriate action
• Works with others in mutually beneficial ways
• Engages in social action in powerful and constructive ways
• Fosters partnerships in interactions with employers, schools, local suburbs and cities, local governments and agencies
• Contributes to the creation of a culture of learning in communities.
THINKING

What creative thinking and enterprising attributes are needed to find solutions for contemporary issues?

The Purpose

- To develop learners who value both the rigorous and creative aspects of quality thinking.
- To develop learners who have the capacity to generate and evaluate ideas and solutions.

This means:

- Learners knowing themselves profoundly as learners and thinkers.
- Learners using a wide range of thinking modes.
- Learners utilising thinking from a range of times and cultures.
- Learners developing and employing enterprising attributes.
This includes:

1. Using a wide range of thinking modes
   - Knows how to learn in a range of contexts and for different purposes
   - Understands and knows oneself as a thinker and learner (Metacognition)
   - Understands that meaningful learning develops through questioning, the recognition of patterns and the creation of relationships
   - Demonstrates a full range of thinking styles and capabilities, eg cognitive, intuitive, use of multiple intelligences like visual, spatial, environmental, spiritual, musical, and lower and higher order thinking skills
   - Develops habits of mind that use incisive and critical thinking, eg How is it that things are the way they are? What are the contexts? Whose interests are being served? How might things be different?
   - Takes risks in thinking, uses creative and imaginative processes, is independent and interdependent and shares thinking processes with others
   - Shows the ability to operate on several planes - physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, social - and understands how thinking operates through these forms, often simultaneously
   - Rejects 'quick fix' thinking and appreciates the role and value of time and conflict itself, in generating new solutions, directions and understandings
   - Present particular points of view with examples of thinking and reasoning behind them.

2. Drawing on thinking from a range of times and cultures
   - Draws on learning and thinking from a range of times and cultures, including non-Western cultures
   - Values and incorporates a diversity of world views where appropriate
   - Applies solutions that accommodate diversity and demonstrate holistic thinking and understanding in a range of contexts.
   - Understands that certain ways of thinking are valued differently in different cultures, eg linear or cause/effect models may be dominant in Western, but not necessarily other, cultures.
3. **Demonstrating enterprising attributes**

- Uses enterprising thinking to identify areas for change, growth, innovation or future development
- It resourceful and able to think expansively in ways that open-ended and unconstrained by linear, single dimensional world views
- Uses thinking for scenario-building, problem solving, exploring possibilities and creating social and work related enterprises.
- Demonstrates key competencies in critical reflection and analysis, planning and organising, working in teams, testing solutions, developing new projects and applications for real-life situations
- Shows a willingness and ability to 'push the limits'; is discriminating yet knows there is often more than one right answer.

4. **Initiating enterprising and creative solutions for contemporary issues**

- Analyses and experiments with ideas and constructs to understand their internal meanings, connections and social implications
- Gathers a range of evidence to substantiate beliefs and ideas, and is able to organise and evaluate these to create new solutions, concepts and knowledge
- Generates ideas, new options, and knowledge applications with individuals, groups and communities
- Uses reframing as a strategy to generate new ways of thinking
- Applies creative thinking to the generation of ideas and solutions
- Demonstrates initiative and calculated risk-taking in generating solutions for contemporary issues
- Develops some of these solutions in practice.
COMMUNICATION

How do we make meanings from various communications in a contemporary social world?

The Purpose

• To develop learners who understand the complexity and power of communication and how it works.

• To develop learners who have the capacity to communicate effectively through their understanding of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

This means:

• Learners having an understanding of the complexity and power of language and data.

• Learners having an understanding of how communication works.

• Learners having the ability to make effective use of language, mathematical information and the tools of information and communications technology.
This includes:

1. Understanding the complexity and power of language and data and their pivotal role in communication
   - Is able to use language effectively to communicate ideas, information, values and emotions, in individual, group and social contexts
   - Is aware of the power and function of different discourses and adapts communication to different people and contexts
   - Is aware of the ways in which language and data can be used for change or social control, exclusion or inclusion, equity or inequity.

2. Understanding how communication works
   - Uses cognitive and intuitive processes to scrutinise different communications for layers of meaning, underlying themes and agendas
   - Appreciates that all communication involves issues of power, equity and control and can ask critical questions, (eg Who benefits? What is left out?) to identify underlying power structures
   - Uses a variety of skills and strategies to deconstruct and reconstruct texts, eg decoding, reassembling, challenging stereotypes
   - Is aware that understandings, eg mathematical, ICT and language, are socially constructed in response to the needs of particular times and places
   - Evaluates the selection, processes and outcomes of technology in terms of efficiency, content - suitability and creative potential
   - Uses processes of advocacy and inquiry to explore issues, values and ideas
   - Engages in critical debate and explains and advocates positions to different audiences and in different settings.

3. Making effective use of language, mathematical and information and communication technology tools
• Understands and produces a range of verbal, visual and other texts using different media and technologies
• Reads and interprets a range of texts in formal and information situations.
• Understands that language and communication technologies are shaped by individual and social values, and provide the scaffolding upon which our values and knowledge develop
• Uses technology and appropriate tools to communicate ideas effectively to different audiences and in different contexts
• Is able to use a range of tools to solve problems when working individually or with others
• Researches, collects, plans and organises information and shares findings with others
• Uses a variety of media and modifies communication for different audiences and contexts
• Confidently explores different forms of interpersonal and public communication – eg group discussions, posters, multi-media texts, public forums.

4. Using communication in a range of modes to achieve identified outcomes

• Builds personal energy and confident interpersonal style based on open, respectful communication
• Contributes to safe communication environments – seeks rapport, inspiration and engagement in preference to defensiveness, blame and fear
• Emphasises ‘yes’ responses, yet is able where appropriate to vigorously contest issues
• Take risks and experiments with new ideas in communication
• Actively engages in dialogue and uses critical/constructive feedback and affirming/reflective feedback to improve communication
• Uses appropriate language skills, eg active listening and assertive talk, to seek and provide information and elicit feedback
• Empathises and/or persuades, appreciating that values and beliefs derive from many different positions.
• Uses discretion, care and appropriate timing in communicating with others
• Understands the social and physical factors that can contribute to interpersonal conflict and its possible resolution
• Appropriate selects and uses a diverse range of communication modes to achieve identified outcomes.
A Simple Programming Process
Incorporating the Essential Learnings

1. Consider the learners – their needs, interests, and topics of significance to them at this time. You may negotiate this with them.

2. Choose a topic – ideally this will be a BIG picture topic which is inclusive of all e.g. 'Celebrations' rather than 'Easter'. You could also choose a concept or a critical question as a topic e.g. 'The Australian Identity' or 'Diverse and Changing Lifestyles' or 'Is our school environmentally friendly?'

3. If it is a BIG ideas topic you and the learners will now need to discuss which aspects you will focus on and strategies you will need to employ to develop the learning.

4. Consider the deep learning and understandings that can be developed through this topic and through the strategies you employ. Both of which are about the Essential Learnings. Refer to the Detailed Essential Learnings. (Do not choose too many Essential Learning dot points as it becomes too hard to monitor)

5. Which learning area/s will richly develop this topic? Refer to the SACSA charts. Record key ideas and outcomes from the charts. (Please note you may wish to reverse the order here and consider no. 5 before considering the deep understandings referred to in no. 4)

6. Think about strategies/methodologies again. Include assessment strategies which support the learning of all and which are NOT separate from the learning itself.

7. How will you monitor the in depth understandings of the Essential Learning dot points you have chosen to develop?
   Just a few suggestions here:
   • Sometimes a product such as an argument text may indicate the development of understandings,
   • response to critical questions with reference to the understanding asked by the educator may be an indicator,
   • the student's own reflections,
   • actions taken spontaneously by learners.
   • children, if they are reasonably familiar with the Essential learnings can monitor their development of deep understanding themselves.

8. Review your program for:
   • literacy, numeracy and ICT opportunities
   • methodologies which develop enterprise attributes ie learning to learn
   • opportunities to advance equity understandings and critical ethical capacities of learners
A SIMPLE PROGRAMMING PROCESS FOR
INCORPORATING THE ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS

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2. Choose a topic - ideally this will be a BIG picture topic which is inclusive of all eg “Celebrations” rather than “Easter”. You could also choose a concept or a critical question as a topic eg “The Australian Identity” or “Diverse and Changing Lifestyles” or “Is our school environmentally friendly?”

3. If it is a BIG ideas topic you and the learners will now need to discuss which aspects you will focus on and strategies you will need to employ to develop the learning e.g. if the topic is ‘The Australian Identity’ then aspects of this topic might be Aboriginal Perspectives, Australia as a monarchy or a republic, migration to Australia, Australian history since 1788 etc.

4. Consider the deep learning and understandings that can be developed through this topic and through the strategies you employ i.e. the Essential Learnings. Refer to the Detailed Essential Learnings. (Do not choose too many Essential Learning dot points as it becomes too hard to monitor).

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   * children, if they are reasonably familiar with the Essential learnings can monitor their development of deep understanding themselves (See versions of the Essential Learnings for all levels of schooling)

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   * literacy, numeracy and ICT opportunities
   * methodologies which develop enterprise attributes ie learning to learn
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