Hamley Bridge Primary School
Using SACSA charts and books

Summary
Educators are working explicitly with students to teach them about SACSA outcomes, Essential Learnings and Key Competencies. Students must demonstrate the connections of each of these elements to their project work; they thereby gain a better understanding of the framework approach and the concept of lifelong learning.

Band
Primary and Middle Years

Context
4/5/6 composite class and 6/7 composite class

Learning Area
All eight

Timeline
Continuous

School
Hamley Bridge Primary School

Educators
Trudy Ireland
Mark Miels

The Vision
The staff at Hamley Bridge Primary School are passionate about curriculum and engaging students in the learning process. By providing students with booklets of the SACSA Outcomes relevant to their Band, together with information on Essential Learnings and Key Competencies, students can take greater ownership of their learning.

You want teachers who will teach you how to learn Year 5 student

Students undertake negotiated learning through their project work, where they are responsible for ensuring rigour by relating their learning to Outcomes, Essential Learnings and Key Competencies.

Goals are really good because they set challenges. I set myself a goal at the beginning of the year to get into the top spelling group by the end of the year and I've got there in the middle of the year. Year 5 student

Essential Learnings have become incorporated into the school's vision statement, so that they become practical rather than merely theoretical. Furthermore, values are explicitly taught at the beginning of the year, including respect and trust.

We looked at how the Essential Learnings fit in with our value system—you can't have values like trust, respect and learning if your practice doesn't fit into that. Principal

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By running professional development for teachers and workshops for parents, Hamley Bridge Primary School has become a community of learners, with all parties recognising that education in the 21st century requires a change in pedagogy where students will become lifelong learners in a rapidly changing world.

**The Journey**

The principal at Hamley Bridge Primary School has a passion for curriculum, especially getting students involved in curriculum choices. She took over the principal's position in 2001, just as the SACSA Framework and the Quality Improvement Program were launched. Winning a Quality Improvement grant offered opportunities for change; part of this involved engaging with the SACSA Framework.

The teaching team work in unison to implement the SACSA Framework, with a large portion of the budget going into training and development. There is an expectation that all staff will avail themselves of training and development so that they are equally conversant in pedagogy and can therefore support one another.

**Constructivism**

During her first year as principal, the staff looked particularly at constructivism and what that would mean to teaching at Hamley Bridge. They considered how current practice might link with constructivism, what they might need to change in their thinking and in what ways they could improve. Having the backing of all staff meant that a total change in systems thinking could occur rapidly and smoothly.

**Essential Learnings**

Having examined Key Competencies previously, educators looked at Outcomes and Essential Learnings, looking particularly at how Essential Learning might fit into school-held values of lifelong learning. They also focused on the skills which lay outside the curriculum which they might want to impart to their cohort of students. This lead to redevelopment of the school's vision statement.

**Negotiated learning**

Negotiated learning became the next step forward, beginning in 2003. Currently upper primary students are leading the way with negotiated learning, whilst junior primary students are looking particularly at understandings of Key Competencies and Essential Learnings, preparing the way for negotiated learning.

The school is cautious to emphasise that this is negotiated learning, rather than student initiated. Negotiated learning implies a rigorous process which is explicit and includes non-negotiables, some of which students may not wish to learn but that has been deemed necessary in terms of underpinning knowledge or skills to equip students for their negotiated learning.

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Shared community understandings
The school has conducted some workshops for parents and the community, not only around the SACSA Framework, but also on generational change, preferred learning styles and 4MAT. Many parents have embraced Essential Learnings and Key Competencies, recognising their relationship to lifelong learning and that changing pedagogy is a necessity in the 21st century. Currently, some students are writing their own versions and understandings of Essential Learnings for the community.

5 star learning
The school adopted 5 star learning from the Quality Improvement Program. Students have worked with teachers to establish the criteria for 5 star learning which must be:

- well presented
- free of spelling errors
- original
- well planned
- handed up on time.

All students have familiarity with the expectations and aspire to achieving five stars. By self-assessing, they can determine if they have fallen short of the required Standard. Students can negotiate resubmissions with their teachers.

Educators are now looking at student engagement with their work, which they believe has improved dramatically since giving students a greater ownership of their learning and more responsibility for monitoring their own behaviour. Staff will be monitoring discipline over the coming months to see if anecdotal evidence of improving discipline is corroborated by statistics. Alongside this educators will be looking at what are realistic learning expectations, such as how long one can expect students to remain on-task at set times of the day.

Unpacking the SACSA Framework
Teachers comment that the SACSA Framework is not difficult once you get into it: they advise that you need to unpack it piece by piece and start to use it until it becomes an integrated way of working.

SACSA is really helpful and useful in terms of structuring the program. I just look at an Outcome, work out what it involves and what needs to be done.

Furthermore:
Taking a project approach has worked really well. However, without the underpinning of SACSA, there would have been no rigour or breadth, as SACSA enables students to know the expectations they have to meet.

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Relief teachers initially found it difficult to see how the program worked, particularly the integration of so many elements, such as the SACSA Framework and multiple intelligences. However, students have assisted in skilling-up relief teachers, demonstrating how learning works in their classroom, so that many returning relief teachers are well integrated into the system.

*We love coming here because the kids know what to do and they just get on with their learning so that I'm there if they need me.*

**Future plans**
The next step is to look at fully negotiated learning across the school. Since introducing negotiated learning in middle school—upper primary, teachers and students have become much more familiar and experienced with the concept. Introducing negotiated learning into junior primary will increase student and parent familiarity still earlier in the student journey, making it increasingly easier to implement in upper primary.

Once negotiated learning is fully introduced throughout the school, educators will then be able to look at improving the system still further, for example by getting each student to track their learning on a database which includes SACSA Outcomes and the Essential Learnings.

Ultimately the school's goal is for the whole community to recognise that by teaching the skills of lifelong learning, value is added to each student's experience which extends well beyond the time they spend at the school.

**The Program**
Hamley Bridge Primary School has introduced SACSA Outcomes and Essential Learnings to all learners in middle school—upper primary. Many children were introduced to Key Competencies already in year 3. In the 4/5/6 classroom, the educator is working with the SACSA Framework charts, initially demonstrating how learners can incorporate Outcomes into their learning and later allowing learners to find ways to do so independently. In the year 6/7 classroom, learners have booklets containing Outcomes, Essential Learnings and Key Competencies from which they must choose appropriately and link to their project work.

**The 4/5/6 classroom**
The educator in this classroom has the SACSA Framework on the classroom wall and identifies to learners which Outcomes they will be working on when she introduces a topic or when learners are doing specific work. As they cover an Outcome, they highlight it on the chart. She is therefore working very explicitly on SACSA Outcomes with the students, explaining them and how they relate to the current task.

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Students articulated this as follows:

*We try and read the Outcomes ourselves. Our teacher encourages us to try to understand it ourselves, so if we get stuck we look in the dictionary or ask our friends and if we are still stuck she will help us and explain it. We're not really learning heaps if we go straight to the teacher, so we try to work it out ourselves first.*

*If you just ask the teacher all the time or copy people, when you get older and want a job and have to be working by yourself, you won't know how to do it because you were always copying people at school or asking the teacher.*

The class has just undertaken a project around the world of work; they have looked at the society and environment strand social systems

**Outcome 2.11** Identifies and critically examines work, paid and unpaid, of people whose roles involve providing goods or services for a community.

Working together as a class, they have unpacked the Outcome and simplified it.

Learners began by thinking about their futures and considering what they might like to be doing at different stages in their lives. Many learners had not thought beyond high school and this task presented them with the opportunity of seeing their lives ahead of them, directly linking with the Essential Learnings, especially Futures.

The next stage is looking at work, researching employment options, the future job market and the work which may be available to this cohort in coming years. This will thus also demonstrate work towards English in the strand texts and contexts Outcome 2.4.

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**English—Texts and contexts**

**Outcome 2.4** Composes a range of texts that include interrelated ideas and information about familiar topics and shows an awareness of different audiences, purposes and contexts. T.C. KC1

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Learners are looking at the Job Guide, considering their personal interests and identifying jobs which will meet their interests and the type of lifestyle they would like. They need to identify one job initially, researching what the work involves, what sort of training is involved, what the training opportunities are and where they can get more information. Later they will look at other jobs so that their focus is not limited to just one career path. They will then share their research through both written and oral presentations and will link up with other students who may be interested in similar jobs.

They will thus also provide evidence towards meeting Outcome 2.2 from the text and context strand of English by giving oral presentations.

**English—Texts and contexts**

**Outcome 2.2** Produces a range of spoken texts about topics and events of personal and community interests for different school and some community audiences and purposes. Id. In. C. KC2

Although students have choices in which jobs they investigate, it is the educator who instigates the task and states how it fits into the SACSA Framework and the Essential Learnings. As each Outcome is covered, they will highlight the Outcome on the SACSA Framework chart to show that they have demonstrated work towards this Outcome. The class is moving through the Framework from Standards 2 to 3, with the year 6 learners concentrating more on meeting Standards 3 Outcomes.

The teacher explains:

*I've moved to working with SACSA in the easiest and simplest way by putting the Outcomes chart on the wall, reading each Outcome as we're going to be doing it, unpacking it into child friendly language, doing activities associated with it and highlighting the Outcome to demonstrate that we've covered that area. It's visual, simple, modified and at their level—they can understand it.*

Although students have initially found the Outcomes difficult to understand, they have found the Essential Learnings easy. Nevertheless, they understand the concept of the framework and the aspect of moving on to more difficult and challenging goals.

As 4/5 students explained:

*We can understand how the framework becomes more advanced. It makes it better because we can understand better why we're doing it. If we didn't have the chart we wouldn't be as into it... it has made a difference because we can see what we've been doing in the past.*

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Reporting to parents
Student work is reported to parents in portfolios, giving a description of the task and how this links to Outcomes, Essential Learnings and Key Competencies. The discourse from the SACSA Framework is used, although Outcome numbers are not included, as this would have no relevance for parents yet.

The year 6/7 class
Learners in the 6/7 class are undertaking project work for which they need to select Outcomes they can demonstrate. The teacher has made booklets containing Standard 3 and 4 SACSA Outcomes, which he has photocopied from the framework, for each of the 8 Learning Areas.

*Instead of me standing at the front of the classroom, telling the kids what they have to do because it says so in SACSA, I have made up the booklets so that they can see for themselves and make their own choices.*

Students can negotiate any topic for their project but must integrate activities which will provide evidence towards demonstration of Outcomes from each of the eight Learning Areas and also demonstrate how they have incorporated Essential Learnings and Key Competencies into each activity. The teacher has also made explicit that Outcomes are demonstrated over time by multiple pieces of evidence and that each piece contributes to meeting the Outcome rather than acting alone as a demonstration of achievement.

Although students are guided in their Outcomes selection to the appropriate Standard, there is flexibility in this choice. Thus year 6s are guided to select from level 3, but may wish to take level 4 Standards, if they have provided evidence of meeting the Outcome at level 3. Those year 7s who may find Standard 4 Outcomes too challenging, may select from level 3.

Students explain:
*We used the SACSA books of level 3 and level 4 Outcomes—level 4 was for year 7s but year 6s could use it as well. Books have dot points of what you can do—SACSA Outcomes.*

A third book contains the Essential Learnings and Key Competencies, each with a brief description taken from the SACSA Framework. The teacher intends to expand these explanations, thereby making them easier to understand.

The SACSA Outcomes books are kept in a box at the back of the classroom and there are enough copies of each book for all students. Students use them freely and may take them home to discuss them with their parents. Students have embraced the notion of taking more responsibility for their learning and the box is frequently empty.

Explicit teaching in the first term involved looking at the eight learning areas around the topic of gardening. Working with the level 3 and 4 SACSA Outcomes booklets, the class discussed and identified those Outcomes from each of the learning areas which related to the topic of gardening. They then chose activities which demonstrated work towards each of the identified Outcomes.

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The teacher continues:

Some kids had difficulty with the complexity of language. With the gardening, we went through the Outcomes and decided what we had to do. Last term not many of them said they didn't understand but we did it all together as a class.

In second term, each student has their own folder in which they present their project work on topics negotiated with the teacher. The process begins with each student choosing their topic and identifying Outcomes which can be met through studying the topic. Rostered times allow students to individually discuss with the teacher their topic, chosen activities, how they relate to Outcomes and the steps they should take to produce suitable evidence.

On the cover page of their project book, students list the activities which will meet Outcomes in each of the Learning Areas. On completion of their project, they also indicate that they have applied four stages of learning to each activity:

- information—I am aware of it
- knowledge—I understand and explain it
- know how—I can do it
- wisdom—I choose to apply it wisely.

Students strive for 5 star learning and self-assess according to criteria with which they are all familiar.

For each learning area, learners identify how their activity links with a SACSA Outcome, Key Competencies and Essential Learnings.

They also plan their work by identifying the steps they need to take for each activity to meet the Outcome.

Before progressing with the activity, they demonstrate in what way they are meeting the four stages of learning.

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A selection of work from students' completed projects is available on the website.

At times the teacher engages in 'just in time teaching', teaching skills which students identify as necessary to complete their activity. For example, one student chose to present his project on a rock band. For his maths activity, he surveyed students in the school to determine their favourite bands, which he wanted to present as a graph. He already knew how to create bar and column graphs, so the teacher suggested he create a pie graph. A few other students identified a similar need, so the teacher ran a lesson on how to conduct the research and create a pie graph using a protractor or using Excel.

Rigour was thus injected by teaching a new form of graph and the learning was further embedded by getting all students to create pie graphs of their weekly mental activities scores. The learning was therefore student initiated and relevant to the majority of students; those students disinterested would 'switch off' anyway, the teacher concluded.

Linking this to Outcomes, the student presenting the 'rock band' project wrote on the cover sheet for maths:
Topic: bands
Learning area: Maths
Activity: Make a graph of favourite bands in the school
SACSA Framework link: Represents data graphically or electronically (linked to Outcome 3.1 in Exploring, analysing and modelling data)
Key Competencies: KC7 Using technology to make a graph
Essential Learning: Communications: communicating with the rest of the school

Assessment is conducted using the 5 star learning from the Quality Improvement Program, with which all students are familiar.

Not all students completed their projects, so term 3 is one of analysis—students will look at their work and analyse where they could have improved, including their time management.

Enthusiasm for negotiated projects continues to be high. Year 6/7 students have been working on their folders for homework each night, often undertaking far more than the 30 minutes per night allocated to homework, thus demonstrating their passion for student negotiated learning.

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If I had the choice I would choose negotiated learning because we have a say in it, so we don't just have to do everything the teacher says.

I'd rather work individually—you're learning much more effectively, because you are not copying from others.

Whilst many students wanted to produce something familiar, such as a poster, rigour was injected by expectations that they would demonstrate new learning through new forms of evidence.

Although they found the most difficult exercise was linking their work to Outcomes, Essential Learnings and Key Competencies, the teacher and students are confident this will improve as their familiarity with the SACSA Framework increases.

With some kids we spend 10 minutes trying to find a way to see how Outcomes, KCs and ELs match the activity.

A 6/7 student adds:
We didn't understand the Outcomes as well as our teacher did, so we asked him to help us. The SACSA Outcomes weren't in children's language so he helped us to understand them. He told us what it could mean and what activities we could do.

Negotiating the timetable
Working on the timetable became a collaborative class exercise. The teacher asked the class how much time they needed in order to complete their projects by week 8. The consensus was that 2–3 hours per week were needed, with additional time at home. They then had to factor into the timetable non-negotiables, such as LOTE, NIT and sport, as well as spelling and maths. Students wanted to do their projects first thing every day, so this was programmed for 45 minutes each morning on 4 days, as well as using Friday afternoon as resource time.

I had a bit of a panic about fitting everything in but I could see the value in the kids doing what they were passionate about, so I dropped a few other things in order to accommodate it.

Integrating learning areas across year levels
As part of the move to introduce SACSA Outcomes to younger students in the school, the year 6/7s worked with the reception/1 class. The receptions/1s were making animal homes as part of technology, whilst year 6/7s were acting as mentors to the younger students. In this way Outcomes were integrated across learning areas and year levels:

Year level: Reception/year 1
Learning area: Technology
Activity: Making animal homes
Assisted by Year 6/7s
Learning area: Health and physical education

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Activity: Acting as teacher and mentor to reception/year 1, including listening to stories, considering the wellbeing of younger children.

The class determined that they therefore had some evidence to demonstrate working towards Outcomes in health and personal development:

Strand: Personal and social development

3.5 Assumes different roles when working as part of a cooperative group or team to achieve a shared goal and understands the effects on relationships. Id. In. KC4

4.5 Develops skills for working effectively in groups and in teams, explores different constructions of group dynamics such as leadership and identifies qualities for good leaders. Id. In. KC1. KC4. KC6

Reporting to parents

Students and their teacher worked together to demonstrate links between their projects and the SACSA Framework to present in a portfolio for parents. A further advantage of the SACSA Outcomes booklets made up by the teacher is that parents' familiarity with the SACSA Framework has increased, supported by the workshops run by the school. Many parents have worked through the SACSA Outcomes booklets with their children, assisting them to find appropriate and interesting activities to complete their projects.

I took one of the books home and asked my mum who is a teacher and uses the SACSA Framework as well, so she was able to help me find activities. My mum was happy that we had the books.

Ways forward

Currently the SACSA Outcomes booklets do not contain the strand names for each of the Learning Areas. This will be addressed to give students a greater understanding of the construction of Learning Areas and to assist them to simultaneously integrate Outcomes from across the strands into their learning.

The teacher would also like to spend some time explicitly teaching Essential Learnings so that students have a better understanding of them and can incorporate them into their learning more easily.

The teacher is also keen to make the curriculum and assessment still more explicit by tracking learning in a more efficient and explicit way. He envisages using a folder for each learning area in which evidence and a record of achieved Outcomes could be collated.

For example, in maths, students could be provided with a list of all the activities listed for each Outcome in the maths SACSA resources which they could tick off as being:

- achieved
- partially achieved or
- not yet achieved.

When there is sufficient evidence demonstrating successful completion of each activity, students would have achieved the Outcome.

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Alternatively, learning could be made more explicit by listing the evidence produced and what is still required. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Evidence I have produced which has contributed to this Outcome (completed in conjunction with teacher)</th>
<th>Further evidence I could produce to contribute to this Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this instance, one would not necessarily need to produce the evidence, as it would have been assessed by a teacher, but it would serve a record of demonstration of achieved Outcomes.

The teacher envisages that the folders displaying learning achievements could travel with students to high school, where they could be used to demonstrate their learning journey in all Learning Areas.

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