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FOREWORD

Clearly the aim of schools everywhere is to provide quality education.

Quality education implies delivering a curriculum that is appropriate in both time and place. Much of what was appropriate twenty years ago may no longer be appropriate today and what is appropriate now may no longer be so in another twenty years.

The infusing of thinking into content delivery, the use of the language of thinking and the explicit teaching of thinking is becoming an ever-present feature of classroom practice. However, the issue faced by many school leaders in particular is how can such methodology be embedded within and across the school as part of the ongoing culture of every classroom?

This handbook outlines a five-step process that will assist schools at all levels in implementing a whole-school approach to infusing thinking into the curriculum. It provides frameworks for ensuring that practices such as the explicit teaching of thinking becomes an enduring part of the culture of the school.

A whole-school approach will require comprehensive and ongoing attention to developing a shared vision, generating an implementation strategy, putting the plan into action, monitoring progress, reflecting upon success and responding to problems and challenges.

Section one provides the context for such a whole-school approach within the context of the Australian Curriculum. The important role of the General Capabilities component is discussed.

Section two describes how establishing a whole-school approach will require staff to come to some common understandings about the process of thinking itself as well as what teaching and learning with a thinking focus may imply.

Section three asks what the explicit teaching of thinking may look like at the reader's school. What baseline data would assist in mapping progress?

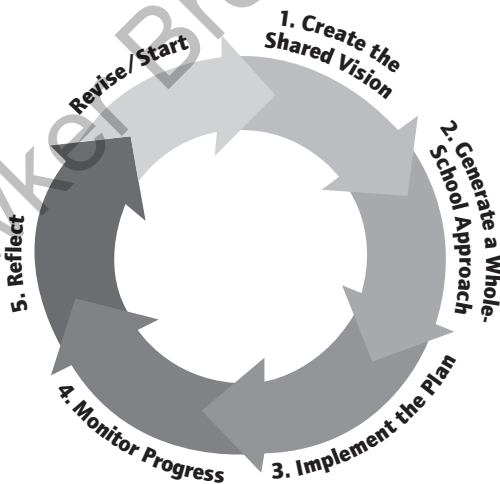
Section four investigates the challenges surrounding implementation, focusing upon the role of teachers as they develop a classroom culture of thinking and what could be expected of students as they work within a culture of thinking.

The next section provides strategies for the tracking and monitoring of student progress, while the final section provides thinking tools for reflection and identifies some common pitfalls.

While the model is portrayed as a step-by-step process, one would hope that the implementation of a range of thinking skills, tools and strategies explicitly taught at all levels of schooling would see the emergence of an enduring framework that allows for a continual spiralling progression of skills within a seamless integrated thinking curriculum across the school.

— Figure 1 —

A Thinking Curriculum at our School



1 BACKGROUND TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

The Australian Curriculum sets out the essential knowledge, understandings, skills and General Capabilities important for all Australian students. It is designed as a platform to:

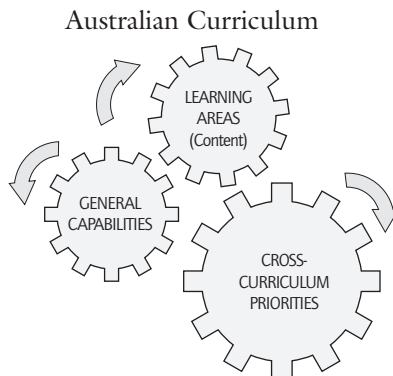
- Launch students into future learning, growth and active participation in the Australian community.
- Clarify what all young Australians should learn as they progress through their schooling.
- Highlight the high-quality teaching required to meet the needs of all Australian students.

The Australian Curriculum acknowledges the need to meet diverse learning needs, and acknowledges different groups of learners who may have different learning needs than some other students.

As suggested in the diagram below, outcomes such as knowledge, understanding and skills are targeted within each of the learning areas.

The General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum Priorities are seen as the other basic elements necessary to support a robust curriculum for 21st-century learning.

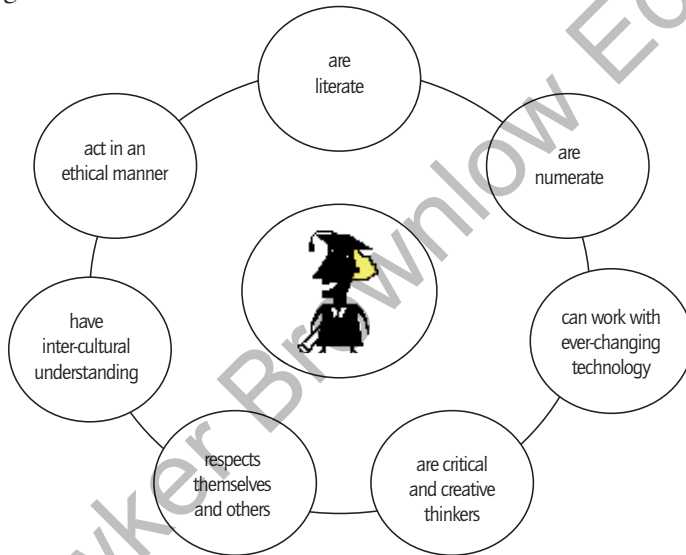
— Figure 2



The General Capabilities

The General Capabilities comprise a core component of the teaching and learning framework. The Australian Curriculum aims to create successful learners who are confident, creative individuals, and who are active, informed citizens. Consequently, students will need to be adept at a range of General Capabilities if they are to be successful beyond school. Successful learners, who are confident and creative individuals, and who are both active and informed citizens ...

— Figure 3



As suggested earlier, in an inclusive classroom, the learning content focus is adjusted for students through the lens of the General Capabilities.

The chapters that follow explore how developing the Critical and Creative dimension of the General Capabilities might take place in the context of an inclusive classroom, both from a teaching and learning perspective.

Teachers: Making Extensive Use of Visual Organisers

Recent brain research and our better understanding about retention and memory requires that we take note of the growing body of evidence that suggests more visual forms of recording our thinking will enhance recall in both the short and long term. Making extensive use of graphic organisers will only serve to meet this highly-prized outcome.

Mind mapping (i.e. a non-structured form of recording thinking) and concept maps (i.e. formal structures for recording thinking) are the tools we can use for this purpose. *Teaching Complex Thinking* (Pohl, 2000) provides many examples of how these may be used effectively in classrooms at all levels of schooling.

