

# Flagship Strategy 1 STUDENT LEARNING

Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) & Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)



FS1 Newsletter Number 9 - 12 May 2005

## Victorian Essential Learning Standards: Overview

By now, all schools should have received multiple copies of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards: Overview* for distribution to teaching staff. This booklet provides a useful starting point for teachers to become familiar with the new approach to curriculum. It outlines the:

- rationale and structure of the three essential learning strands
- learning domains and dimensions within each strand
- priorities at different stages of learning
- learning focus statements and standards
- approaches to whole school curriculum planning.

The *Overview* is also available to view online or can be downloaded from <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/VELSooverview.html>

## Reporting in 2006

Schools will be required to report against the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* in English and Mathematics when reporting to parents and to the system in **2006**. In other curriculum areas schools may report to parents against the Curriculum and Standards Framework or against the comparable domains in the Standards. Where no standard exists (as is the case at some of the lower levels) schools can, but are not required to, report to parents against the domains.

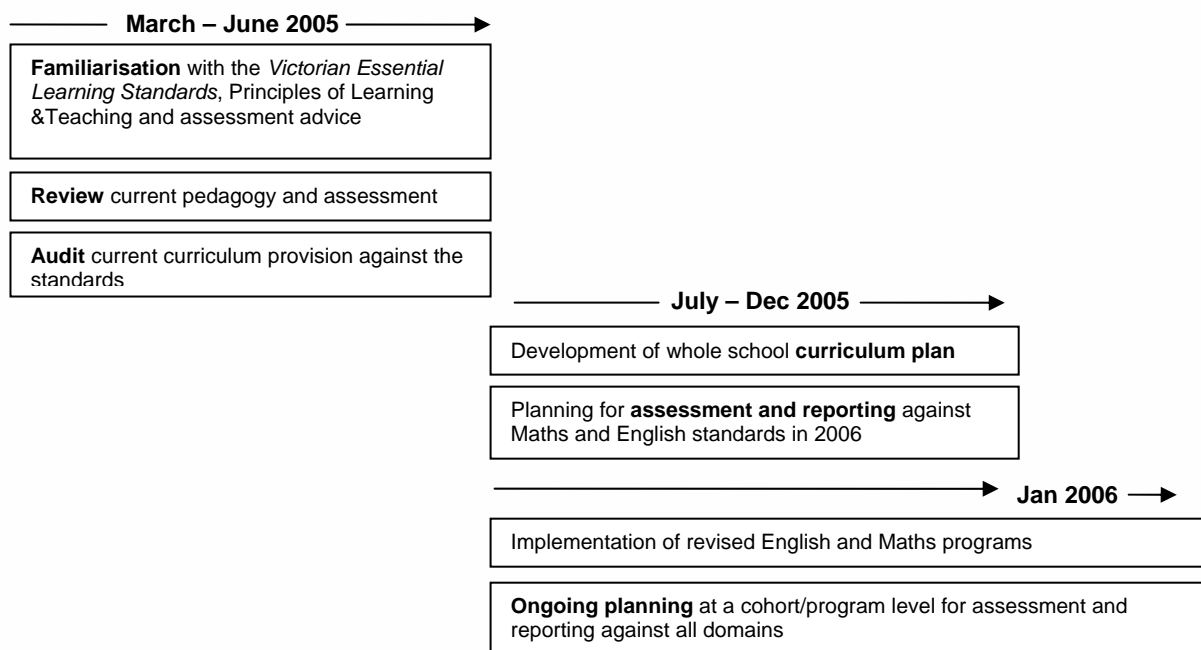
Planning for reporting to parents and the system beyond 2006 for the other domains of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* is currently occurring. Opportunity for feedback on these plans will be provided in the near future.

## Planning for implementation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

### *A timeline for Victorian Essential Learning Standards implementation -*

Now that Term 2 is well under way, schools will be thinking about and exploring the intent of Flagship Strategy 1: Student Learning within their school communities, and be providing the opportunity for school communities to familiarise themselves with the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* and the other Flagship Strategy 1 initiatives. The timeline on page 2 indicates the tasks that should be addressed as we move towards implementation of the Standards.

### Tasks for 2005



Tools to assist schools with whole-school planning are currently under development and will be accessible on the Curriculum Planning Guidelines website at the end of May. As the tools become available, a link from this newsletter will be provided.

#### ***Familiarisation with the Standards***

Becoming familiar with the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* can be done through a range of strategies. Some of the tools designed to be used at the whole school level to explore the Standards, get to know their structure and audit current curriculum provision against the Standards were highlighted in newsletter 7.

A new tool on the Curriculum Planning Guidelines is designed to be used at a staff professional learning forum. It enables teachers to become familiar with the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*, in particular, the dimensions and their related standards. It provides an opportunity for teachers, while examining the Standards, to make links across the strands, domains and dimensions, and to start considering learning experiences that will facilitate the integration of the strands, domains and dimensions at a particular level.

These tools may be accessed on the Curriculum Planning Guidelines website at:  
<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/guidelines/phase1/vels.asp>

#### **Validation of the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards***

As schools work through this process, teachers will have views about the standards, their usability and the way they can be applied in teaching and learning and assessment programs. During this validation year, the VCAA is seeking to capture this feedback in a structured way. At the same time, the VCAA will work with volunteer schools to trial assessment tasks with students that will provide useful data on the standards. An independent study will also be commissioned to evaluate and benchmark the standards. Data from each of these projects will be collated and used to inform any refinements to the current domain content.

### ***Collection of feedback from schools***

Feedback from schools and key stakeholders on the clarity and usability of learning focus statements and standards will be collected through a range of methods. Further details about this process will be provided in a subsequent newsletter.

### ***Trials of assessment tasks***

As outlined in Memorandum to Schools no: 44/2005 sent by the VCAA on 5 May 2005 expressions of interest from schools that would like to participate in trialing assessment tasks and/or assessment descriptors are being sought. Schools are asked to express their interest on the expression of interest form located at:

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/standardsvalidation.html>

### ***Trials of assessment descriptors***

Schools will also be invited to participate in the development and trial of descriptors within each standard in the Interdisciplinary and Physical, Personal and Social learning domains of Communication; Thinking; Information and Communications Technology; Design, Creativity and Technology; Personal Learning; and Interpersonal Development that can be used for global assessment purposes by teachers from all curriculum areas.

The VCAA is seeking expressions of interest from schools that would like to participate in trialing assessment tasks and/or assessment descriptors. Schools are asked to express their interest on the expression of interest form located at:

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/standardsvalidation.html>

### ***Independent review and benchmarking***

Initial work on evaluating the developmental progression from Levels 1-6 within each of the domains and consistency of expectations in standards across the 16 learning domains was conducted prior to the release of the Essential Learning Standards. During Terms 2 and 3, an independent study of the standards will be undertaken, looking particularly at:

- developmental progression from Levels 1–6 within each of the domains
- consistency of expectations in standards across the 16 learning domains
- the degree of performance associated with standards
- benchmarking of the standards against the CSF II (where relevant) and other national and international curriculum frameworks.

## **Funding to Support the Introduction of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards**

Coordinator schools of each Schools for Innovation and Excellence cluster will have now received a grant to support teacher professional learning activities associated with the introduction of the Standards.

This is the first grant payment for this purpose, with the remaining half of the grant to be paid to coordinator schools in July 2005.

Clusters are reminded that they may wish to use the additional professional learning funding for a range of purposes, including:

- Teacher release to enable teams of teachers to use the material available through the online toolkit to familiarize themselves with the Standards;
- Funding costs associated with curriculum days which focus on the Standards;
- Providing time for teachers to conduct curriculum audits on current school programs and how they align with the new Standards
- Supporting other activities relating to those initiatives outlined on the Student Learning website.

More detailed information about this funding was provided to schools via the DE&T Mail Bulletin on 19 April 2005. This information can be accessed at:

[https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Circulars/2005/circular\\_131-2005\\_vels\\_funding.doc](https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Circulars/2005/circular_131-2005_vels_funding.doc)

### **Gresswell Cluster supports teachers to implement curriculum reform**

Gresswell Cluster Educator, Donald Eddington, has organised professional learning forums and developed a number of online tools in conjunction with the teachers in the cluster. The [Gresswell Cluster website](#) contains links to these tools.

A two day professional development activity, "Implementing the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*", was held recently for school leaders and cluster educators from Northern Metropolitan Region. The focus was on :

- **Unpacking the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*** - linking up the strands, domains, dimensions and standards through an interrelated approach
- **Unpacking the *Principles of Learning and Teaching*** - explicitly defining the roles of the teacher and the student in the teaching and learning process
- **Unpacking the *Assessment advice for schools*** (with explicit links to the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* )
- **Use of the *Curriculum Planning Guidelines*** for developing and reviewing school programs.

Donald has developed and placed on the Gresswell Cluster website, a "train the trainer" package containing all the necessary resources to run this activity in your cluster, school or professional learning team. These resources can be downloaded from the Gresswell Cluster website– click on "ENTER" then follow the link to *Implementing the Victorian Essential Learning Standards* P.D.

The website also includes descriptions of the various cluster projects, including electronic links to the domains, dimensions and standards addressed by each project. This model appears on [Knowledge Bank](#) as a case study of exemplary practice in student learning.

<http://www.gresswell.vic.edu.au/>

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