P-10 Curriculum Framework

Queensland. Department of Education, 1987

Overview of the document

38 page framework for discussion purposes resulting from a product of a review of curriculum policy and practices within the Department of Education. Provides a structure for curriculum design and development for P-10 at both system and school levels. The document emphasises the importance of an approach that is consistent in providing continuity in learning experiences and is responsive to the needs of children.

Keywords

P-10 curriculum; policy; content; continuity in learning; responsive curriculum.

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Summary of Contents

INTRODUCTION

➢ Notes that the Framework consists of five elements (as set out in the ensuing sections): policy, understanding individuals, content, worthwhile activities, and evaluation. (p. 1)

POLICY

➢ Provides an overview of the P-10 curriculum from the standpoint that a "sound general education" is to be provided to all children during these years. (p. 3)

Purposes

➢ States that "The overarching purpose is to enable State schools...to provide learning situations that assist all children to experience personal fulfilment while at school, to grow as individuals and to contribute to society." (p. 3)
➢ Notes that related to this purpose are others that take into account:
- o Social Changes: The P-10 Curriculum Framework: takes account of the social changes of recent years, and defines a curriculum which is "a product of, and a valid response to, those changes"; and takes account of "current and predicted changes to establish a curriculum which accommodates both present realities and future possibilities". (p. 3)
- o Compulsory Attendance: The P-10 Curriculum Framework: "is intended to provide a structure on which a suitable curriculum for all children in the compulsory years of schooling can be constructed". (p. 3)
- o Special Provisions: The P-10 Curriculum Framework: "accommodates... diversification in the provision of educational experiences for groups of children with special needs". (p. 4)

- Autonomy of Institutions: The P-10 Curriculum Framework: "is sufficiently flexible to enable individual institutions to pursue excellence in particular aspects of the curriculum appropriate to their clientele or setting". (p. 4)
- Continuity of Experiences: The P-10 Curriculum Framework: establishes a common structure that promotes "a smooth transition from home to school, and from one year level to the next", enabling children "to experience a sense of cumulative learning". (p. 4)

Principles:
- Notes that these provide "the criteria for ensuring the adequacy and suitability of the curriculum offerings" and give guidance on the development, organisation and implementation of learning experiences. (p. 4)
- Notes that they are derived from three major data sources: Children, Culture and Schooling.
- In terms of children, states that the P-10 curriculum:
  - "Aims to develop appropriately the strengths and weaknesses of each child" and "can be described as child-centered." (p. 4)
  - "Provides opportunities for individual learners to proceed through sequences of learning in their own ways and at their own rates." (p. 4)
  - "Is planned to capitalise on what is known about the growth and development of children and how they learn in three stages of development: early childhood, middle childhood, and early to mid-adolescence." (p. 5)
  - "Uses many different educational activities to provide breadth and depth of experience." (p. 5)
  - Assists children "to co-operate with and learn from others" in a variety of settings. (p. 5)
- In terms of culture, states that the P-10 curriculum:
  - "Promotes the need for young people to know about, understand and respect their own cultural heritage and that of others living in Australia" and as such accepts cultural diversity. (p. 5)
  - At the same time ensures that all children become acquainted with "certain requirements for effective participation" in society, such as the ability to communicate in English, understanding how institutions work, and the skills necessary for obtaining employment. (p. 5)
  - "Provides a means of introducing children to what is considered to be essential knowledge." (p. 5)
  - "Remains responsive to…social change and changes in attitude." (p. 5)
- In terms of schooling, makes some general comments on the role of schools, with an emphasis on the importance of: the continuity of programs offered in the P-10 curriculum; the place of schools within the community; schools in the social lives of children; and balance between the needs of individual children and groups of children. (pp. 5-6)

Priorities:
- Notes that some priorities for the curriculum represent a reaction to perceived changing circumstances while others are of more enduring nature.
- Identifies current priorities of the P-10 curriculum as:
  - Development of Functional Competencies – especially literacy and numeracy.

- o Development of Capacities for Critical Thinking – including the development of skills in identifying and using the kinds of information necessary to resolve problems and perform tasks.
- o Familiarity with Technical Change.
- o Provision of Equal Educational Opportunity for All – cites various policy statements to illustrate Departmental commitment to initiatives designed to assist all learners to achieve their potential.
- o Enhancement of Individual Strengths and Weaknesses – including the development of each learner's special interests and abilities.
- o Reassessment of Priorities to ensure Curriculum Continuity.

UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUALS

- ➢ Lists seven generalisations on child development, with the respective "characteristics of growth" typical of early childhood, middle childhood and early to mid-adolescence. Notes that these "can be used in conjunction with curriculum policy to determine the kinds of knowledge, experiences and activities that should be promoted during the years of compulsory schooling" (p. 9) and stresses the need to cater for "commonalities and variabilities" within and among children.
- ➢ The seven generalisations are identified as:
  - o Individuality: "As children develop, they progress through the general stages of growth and development according to their own individual and unique set of aptitudes." (p. 10)
  - o Behaviour: "As children develop, they grow from a stage of egocentric behaviour to behaviour that is more socially oriented." (p. 11)
  - o Perception: "As children develop, their perceptions change from being undifferentiated to being increasingly differentiated." (p. 12)
  - o Reasoning: "As children develop, their powers of reasoning tend to grow from those based on what is immediate and personal to more generalised and commonly shared abstractions." (p. 13)
  - o Response: "As children develop, their responses increase in sophistication." (p. 14)
  - o Tasks: "As children develop, they are able to engage in increasingly more complex tasks." (p. 15)
  - o Materials: "As children develop, they begin to use more complex materials and to develop more sophisticated ways of working with them." (p. 16)

CONTENT

- ➢ Notes that "The term content means the scope of the curriculum, and focuses on the knowledge and attitudes that young people will learn and develop throughout their years of schooling."
- ➢ States that "The selection, organisation and integration of P-10 curriculum content is influenced by the purposes, principles and priorities of the curriculum." (p. 17)
- ➢ Argues that "The overarching purpose of the curriculum is the provision of a sound general education." (p. 17)
- ➢ Notes that curriculum principles are derived from what we know about children and young people and that society's expectations demand that learnings selected for the curriculum should reflect the past, be relevant to the present, and provide for the future.

➢ Notes that the curriculum must be organised so that it can accommodate change and respond to new perceptions of priority.

Aims of the P-10 Curriculum
➢ Identifies the aims of the P-10 Curriculum as:
- o development of the individual;
- o social participation;
- o introduction of children to the different kinds of knowledge necessary for living in today's society;
- o equipment of children with ways of learning; and
- o promotion of moral and spiritual growth. (pp. 18-19)

Goals of the P-10 Curriculum
➢ Notes that the following "fields of learning" provide centres for the organisation of curriculum goals:
- o The Natural World
- o Practical Application
- o Critical Thinking
- o Human Endeavour
- o Information Processing
- o Communication. (p. 20)

Objectives of the P-10 Curriculum
➢ States that "Institutions should be able to demonstrate that their policies and objectives reflect the spirit of, and contribute to, the achievement of the P-10 aims and curriculum goals." (p. 21)

Organisation and Integration of Learnings
➢ Argues that "Programs must provide for all...a balanced, comprehensive sound general education, and be flexible enough to respond to individual strengths, interests and styles of learning." (p. 21)
➢ Notes that "The P-10 Curriculum Framework provides for this with a Common and Optional Program, complementary structures for the organisation and integration of learnings." (p. 21)
➢ Identifies the curriculum areas of the Common Program as:
- o Arts Education
- o Health and Physical Education
- o Language Education
- o Mathematics Education
- o Religious Education
- o Science Education
- o Social Education. (pp. 22-23)
➢ Summarises approaches to the implementation of the Common Program.
➢ States that "The Optional Program complements the Common Program and also provides a special vehicle for curriculum flexibility and responsiveness…a set of offerings not only designed to cater for...particular strengths and interests, but also appropriate to the setting, environment and locale of the school."

- ➢ Notes that the Optional Program will include studies related to:
    - o personal interests and strengths
    - o vocational or career orientation
    - o recreational pursuits
    - o extensions from the common program
    - o daily living skills. (p. 24)
- ➢ Summarises approaches to the implementation of the Optional Program and notes that "The amount of time allocated to the Optional Program should increase throughout the school years to not less than 20 per cent of total time in Year 10." (p. 25)

WORTHWHILE ACTIVITIES
- ➢ Argues that worthwhile activities are those "most likely to contribute to the attainment of curriculum goals". (p. 27)
- ➢ Outlines the criteria for selections activities as follows:
    - o appropriateness - suited to a learner's age / level of maturity.
    - o accessibility - allows the learner to use a preferred mode or style of learning.
    - o relatedness - a learner must be able to relate the novel elements of any experience to some previous learning.
    - o validity - the status of an activity with respect to the discipline or body of scholarship with which it is customarily associated.
    - o engagement - it must attract and hold the learner's attention.
    - o humanity - "worthwhile activities will be distinguished by their capacity for promoting positive relationships and for developing caring attitudes and concern for the feelings of others."
    - o efficiency - "the conjunction of the learner's characteristics and those of the learning task may require a specific type of activity." (pp. 27-28)
- ➢ Identifies the criteria for organising activities as follows:
    - o coherence - learners should be able to recognise that each activity is part of a whole.
    - o continuity - ensuring that learners can make a smooth transition from one activity to the next.
    - o comprehensiveness - sufficient breadth and depth to make a set of activities a satisfying whole.
    - o productivity - "an effective organisation of activities should be productive of multiple outcomes."
    - o variety - "to make allowance for different learning styles and for the need to obtain several perspectives on a topic."
    - o autonomy - young people accepting responsibility for their own learning. (pp. 28-29)
- ➢ Overviews the categories of worthwhile activities and discusses six questions which might typically be asked by someone planning a program of learning activities:
    - o What is the level of maturity and/or development of the learners? (p. 29)
    - o What are the intended outcomes of the activity? (p. 30)
    - o What is the particular role of this activity? (pp. 30-31)
    - o What resources can be used to promote and support learning? (pp. 31-32)
    - o Where should the learning take place? (p. 32)
    - o How many children should be involved in this activity? (pp. 32-33)

- ➢ Discusses the structures for organising activities and notes that activities can be organised around time, space, people, or subject matter. Stresses the benefits of using several different types of organisation at different times and in different circumstances.

EVALUATION
- ➢ States that "All aspects of the curriculum should be kept under review by a process of evaluation." (p. 35)
- ➢ Discusses the importance of evaluation in general and guidelines as to how it may be applied to the different aspects of the Framework (Policy, Understanding Individuals, Content, Worthwhile Activities, and Evaluation itself).