**A whole-school approach to implementation of the capabilities – a self-assessment tool**

Victorian Curriculum F–10

Introduction

This resource is a self-assessment tool supporting whole-school implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 capabilities in three interrelated areas: curriculum planning, explicit teaching and assessment, and transfer of learning. It complements other Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) resources supporting a whole-school approach to capabilities implementation; these resources can be found on the [Overview of the capabilities page](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10/resources/Pages/OverviewoftheCapabilities.aspx) on the VCAA website.

The development of this tool has been informed by workshops with a wide range of stakeholders and has taken into account typical barriers and enablers for implementing the capabilities, including those associated with building understanding of the capabilities, fostering learning engagement, creating a culture across the school community that values the capabilities, and coordinating delivery of the capabilities. Development of the tool was also guided by the following principles:

* The capabilities in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 describe discrete knowledge and skills that can and should be taught explicitly in and through the learning areas.
* Including explicit teaching of the capabilities will raise the standard of learning across all areas of the curriculum.
* Schools should as far as possible be able to implement the capabilities within existing resources.
* Students will demonstrate their application of the capabilities differently depending on the learning area content.
* By teaching the Victorian Curriculum learning areas together with the discrete knowledge and skills of the capabilities, teachers will help students become aware of and proficient in the kind of higher level thinking skills that are expected of modern workforces and necessary for lifelong learning.

Using this tool

The self-assessment tool (see page 5) is designed to support identification of the baseline status of a school in three key interrelated areas of capabilities implementation: curriculum planning, explicit teaching and assessment, and transfer of learning. The tool fosters thinking about the school’s vision for each area, how the school will get there and some of the challenges the school might face.

Teachers or the school leadership team can work through the self-assessment tool, nominating the descriptions that seem most like the school’s current practice and using the prompts to reflect on this practice. They self-assess the school’s practice in the three key areas as beginning, evolving, proficient or excellent.

The tool can be adapted to suit different approaches to capabilities implementation, for example, implementing one capability at a time at all year levels or implementing all capabilities one year level at a time.

It is not intended that the tool offer a definitive way forward. A school’s specific next steps after this self-assessment will be influenced by factors such as the school’s broader vision and its strategic plan, the structure and size of the school and ways of working together. The tool can be revisited once initial strategies have been implemented and when feedback is available to inform a more accurate picture.

What are some key aspects of capabilities implementation in schools?

The three key aspects of capabilities implementation covered in this tool are broadly described below. They are the basis for the descriptions in the self-assessment tool that follows.

Curriculum planning that links the capabilities and learning areas

Delivery of capabilities involves curriculum planning across a year level and from one year level to the next. Schools can identify links to learning areas that will build excellence and equity and foster holistic learning across both learning areas and capabilities. Effective curriculum planning has a coordinated approach, to ensure full coverage of the capabilities curriculums and a coherent and developmental learning experience throughout the years of schooling, including avoiding duplication of learning experiences.

For further support with the curriculum planning process, see ‘Developing a whole-school curriculum plan for implementing the capabilities, Levels 7–10’ on the [Overview of the capabilities page](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10/resources/Pages/OverviewoftheCapabilities.aspx) of the VCAA website.

Explicit teaching and assessment of the capabilities

Each capability curriculum identifies discrete knowledge and skills. These knowledge and skills must be made transparent to teachers and students, with this shared understanding being the foundation of assessment. Learning activities should be designed to include explicit introduction of new capabilities learning within familiar learning area contexts and be assessed against the relevant capability achievement standard. Students are then equipped to go on to apply their capabilities knowledge and skills to challenging and engaging learning area contexts and reflect on their progress in developing both learning area and capabilities knowledge and skills. Teachers can work together to identify, test and refine effective pedagogies and assessment methods.

For further support with explicit teaching and assessment, see ‘Introduction to explicitly teaching and assessing the capabilities’ on the [Overview of the capabilities page](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10/resources/Pages/OverviewoftheCapabilities.aspx).

Transfer of learning between capabilities and learning areas and for lifelong learning

Learning transfer occurs when past learning is used to assist in new learning, and doing this autonomously is integral to what it is to be developing a capability. Transfer of capabilities learning can be facilitated through scaffolding student progress from familiar to unfamiliar contexts both within and across learning programs with rich links to the capabilities. With regard to capabilities implementation, transfer of learning involves developing the ability to apply capabilities knowledge and skills to learning area contexts and also to apply learning area contexts to further develop individual capabilities. Teachers can collaborate to develop and refine pedagogy that teaches for transfer and supports students to become more motivated and autonomous in the transfer of their learning, assisting students to recognise that it is not automatic.

For further information on transfer of learning, see ‘Teaching for learning transfer’ on the [Overview of the capabilities page](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10/resources/Pages/OverviewoftheCapabilities.aspx).

What does implementation of the capabilities look like in your school?

The self-assessment tool on the following page identifies how effective practice in the nominated three aspects of capabilities implementation might develop over time as strategies are put in place to strengthen practice in those aspects.

The question prompts can be used to reflect on your school’s context and to begin to set goals and next steps.

Self-assessment tool

|  | **Beginning** | **Evolving** | **Proficient** | **Excellent** | **Which description is most like your school?**  **Record any additional observations about  practices at your school.** | **What goals in this area do you think should be set?**  **What are some steps towards achieving  these goals?** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Curriculum planning** | Recognition of the capabilities as building academic excellence and equity varies within the school among leadership, teachers and students. Isolated staff or teams may be planning for capabilities delivery. | Teams or faculties recognise their responsibility for teaching and assessment of the capabilities but there is a silo approach to curriculum planning.  There may be strong links to learning areas identified but this is not well documented. | Teams or faculties work together to develop and document programs that provide equity of access to the capabilities within and between each year level and foster academic excellence and holistic learning. | High level curriculum plans align with individual programs vertically and horizontally across year levels, showing a coordinated approach to provision of a range of rich programs for the introduction and application of the capabilities.  Data is gathered to assist in strengthening curriculum mapping. |  |  |
| **Explicit teaching and assessment** | Capabilities are embedded in some programs but they may lack explicit unpacking of content, leading to difficulties in assessment. Program design relies on individual students encountering incidental opportunities to develop the capabilities, leading to inequitable access across a cohort.  Effective pedagogies and assessment methods are being trialled by individuals, potentially without the knowledge of colleagues. | There is a shared understanding throughout the school of what explicit teaching and assessment of the capabilities involves.  Teachers work collaboratively to build expertise in unpacking capabilities content.  Pedagogy and assessment method successes are shared, reviewed and built into new programs. | Teachers have deep expertise in unpacking the content underpinning relevant capabilities.  Individual program design reflects principles of equity and academic excellence, providing all students with challenging opportunities to further develop the capabilities and to apply capabilities to deepen their understanding of learning area contexts.  A variety of effective pedagogies and assessment methods are experienced by students within and across programs. | Teachers creatively generate and adapt resources, pedagogies and assessment methods to challenge students.  They collaborate on programs that develop a capability in a rich way across more than one learning area context.  Teachers track assessment, from the introduction of new capabilities learning to the application of learning, and regularly review practice. |  |  |
| **Transfer of learning** | Teaching for transfer occurs within some learning areas but not for the capabilities and for lifelong learning.  The importance of teaching for transfer and strategies for enabling transfer are understood unevenly within the school and may be expected to happen automatically for students. | Staff work together to identify opportunities for effective transfer of learning between the capabilities and learning areas and for lifelong learning.  Strategies are developed in response to anticipated challenges for teachers and students in managing transfer effectively. | Programs are purposefully designed for transfer of learning between the capabilities and learning areas according to student need and sound underlying principles.  The school culture values transferability between capabilities and learning areas and lifelong learning.  With prompting from teachers, students strive for transfer of their learning within and across programs. | The whole school uses a range of strategies to scaffold transfer of learning, including for lifelong learning.  Students and parents value the capabilities, can articulate in a holistic way how they are developing them, and autonomously strive for transfer, with ongoing support given according to need. |  |  |