**Craig Smith:** Hello, and welcome, everyone. My name is Craig Smith. I’m the Victorian Curriculum F-10 Unit Manager for the VCAA. It’s my great pleasure to introduce you this afternoon to, first of all, our presenter for this webinar, Monica Bini. Monica is the VCAA’s Curriculum Manager for the Capabilities. And in the background, our colleague Alicia Farrell. Alicia is the person who is responsible for organising the registrations and making sure these webinars flow smoothly.

This is the last of our Professional Learning webinars that the F-10 unit’s brought to you this year. So, it feels strange to already be in the month of December. I don’t know about you, but it does make me wonder what happened to most of 2020. I’m sure we’ve got an idea.

Anyway, to get right into it, today’s webinar is a process for supporting whole-school implementation of the Capabilities. Before we start, I’d just like to begin by offering an acknowledgement of country.

We’re all joining today’s session from across Victoria, and I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the many lands across Victoria on which each of you are living, learning and working from today. For myself and for those also in the inner north and metropolitan area, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Kulin Nations. When we acknowledge country, we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ spiritual and cultural connection to Country. We acknowledge the continued care of the lands and waterways over generations and celebrate the continuation of a living culture that has a unique role in this region. And as we share our knowledge in teaching and learning, we pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation, and hope they will walk with us on our journey.

This afternoon, just a couple of quick points. First of all, the webinar will be recorded. We will put it up on the VCAA website underneath the F-10 Professional Learning pages. Follow the links there, it will take you to past recordings. They’re organised under topic. That process generally takes a couple of weeks to do. We need to put a transcript against each of these webinars. So be patient, but this webinar, the recording and the PowerPoint will be loaded, will be available for you to download from the VCAA’s website.

The other quick thing is I would invite you to put any questions or comments you may have in the Q&A box. You have two boxes. You can either select chat or questions and answers. The chat box, we tend to reserve for participants who may be experiencing technical issues, and they go straight through to Alicia, who will try and assist you as best we can. For questions or comments, or suggestions even about today’s webinar, please put them in the Q&A box. We won’t answer them all as they come in, but there will be time in the presentation to come to any unanswered questions and to get a response from Monica at the end of the presentation.

So that’s more than enough from me. Monica, flipping it over to you. Take it away.

**Monica Bini:** Thanks so much, Craig. And good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this session on the whole-school implementation of Capabilities. I’m really pleased to be here today. I enjoyed reading over your questions that you submitted when you put in, you know, your registration. And I hope that, throughout this session today, we will have addressed those questions overall. There is a... Just bear in mind that we have a really wide range of people in the webinar today, ranging from primary schools to secondary schools, different leadership positions and also classroom teachers. So, hopefully, you’ll all get something out of this.

The process we’re going to look at today is really a curriculum-focused process, for obvious reasons, coming from the curriculum area at the VCAA. But, obviously, when you’re implementing Capabilities, it’s...implementation of change is, obviously, broader than merely putting in process...or putting into play a curriculum implementation process. For example, you might want to build understanding of Capabilities amongst the school community, including parents and students themselves. And that’s linked to creating a Capabilities culture – so, a safe classroom climate for strong collaboration, respectful dialogue, taking intellectual risks.

I was at a school this morning, talking to the head of science, where they’re doing some work on metacognition. And so I might sprinkle the presentation today with some reflections from there as they come to mind. But just with regards to creating a Capabilities culture, we were just discussing how the Year 7s will be required to reflect on learning strategies, and how well it worked, and what didn’t work, and they might have to do that in front of their peers in class. You can hear them perhaps admitting that something didn’t work quite so well, they struggled with this and that, or this worked just fine. And you do need a safe classroom climate for that to happen effectively.

And, of course, another string to your bow is identifying good pedagogies, which we won’t cover today. That’s a separate thing to curriculum, although, of course, it’s related. But identifying good pedagogies is also part of what it is to implement Capabilities.

Alright, I’m just going to... So, today, we’ll begin with a bit of a background. There’s a baseline resource sitting...that we’ve just published that sits behind this webinar that I’ll talk about a little bit, and Alicia will put in the link to that when we get to that slide. We’ll have a look at a curriculum planning process, to help you implement Capabilities from the curriculum end, across the whole school, we’ll unpack it, and then we’ll talk a bit about assessments as well. And take questions, of course, at the end.

So, as I said, the resource can be found there at that link that... And I think Alicia will put this in the chat box for you as well. But how did it arise, given that the Capabilities are new? And we are in 2020. They were launched, you know, at least the Victorian Curriculum schools, 2017, started work on them – how come it’s taken this long? Well, one of the reasons is that this is new, and if we’d started with something like this back then, it would have really been guessing a bit, because nobody had done it. We would have invented it out of our heads.

So, where we’ve landed after a few years is, we’ve worked with...I’ve worked with curriculum leaders who’ve invited me along to talk, say, to regions, or within schools, sometimes to whole faculty heads and so on, tested and tried workshop materials, gotten feedback from them, refined and revised things, worked together to identify the barriers and enablers, curriculum links and so on. We also ran...the VCAA ran a workshop with representatives from practically all the subject associations. We came together to talk about curriculum links between learning areas and Capabilities and identifying those, and getting work under way with the curriculum planning process to identify strong links, helping to identify what they think. They were practising teachers, the ones that came along, by and large. What are the barriers and enablers in their school that will assist with implementation and help make it doable?

What did result from that, though, as you’ll see in the resource, is a fictional school in the end – Dialogue Secondary College, we decided to call it, because we met at the Dialogue Centre near where we work, at Casselden Place in the city, and so we thought we’d call it Dialogue Secondary College. But I want you to know that it might be a fictional school, but it’s based from a lot of input across schools right across Victoria, at least in the last few years, as best as we’re able to get it.

And the final piece of the puzzle is working with curriculum managers, and at the VCAA, who provided technical expertise, suggestions, constructive suggestions, and helped to make sure that links that are identified in this resource... And you’ll see in the appendix, there are a number of suggested links. It’s not exhaustive though – it’s not the same as a curriculum map. It’s imagining that this is a school wanting to implement Capabilities – what might that look like? So, to make sure it had disciplinary integrity there. So, thanks to our curriculum managers, and thanks to all the people – some of you might be here today – who helped with that development of all that work, culminating in this resource.

So, bearing that in mind, you’ve got some choices when you implement the Capabilities. You could implement one at a time, you could implement a section at a time. So, the school I was at this morning, the science faculty is looking very carefully at metacognition in critical and creative thinking. A lot of schools are starting there. They’ll also look at a little bit of reasoning and questions and possibilities. But they’re starting in Year 7. They’re implementing it carefully there and then looking to see... They’re prototyping, testing, getting feedback, and then looking to see what they can upscale. They’ve also implemented some strategies at Year 10, but done most of the work at Year 7, and that’s their choice. And then they’ll build it on in Year 8, Year 9, Year 10. So, that’s an example of a staged approach.

You could, of course, implement all the Capabilities across the school all at once. And, I mean, in this kind of careful, strategic way. I know, with your requirements in terms of reporting and so on, you might have just quickly farmed it out, but you might at this point be going, “Well, we want to just go back and look at this a bit more carefully.”

So, in terms of looking at it more carefully, how to start, because it’s a big job. And those decisions will depend on the structure and size of the school, what kind of buy-in you have at the moment from the staff and the broader school community. And one of the key factors there is buy-in from leadership. Teachers have been very clear to us that what really matters is that the Capabilities is part of the broader vision of the school and part...hopefully, part of the school’s strategic plan. If it matters to leadership, then that will trickle down to the school.

The other thing in terms of motivators is, what we’ve found, is that one of the key motivators for staff will be to demonstrate that Capabilities can contribute to academic excellence in the learning area. And, in fact, without prompting from me this morning, the head of faculty I was talking to said, “It is really clear to us that students’ science...the quality of their science learning is improving with the strategies that we’ve been putting in place.” So I said, “So, it’s not the case Capabilities are undermining anything or taking over or away from science, or...?” “Oh, no, no,” she said. “It’s really actually improving their quality of their learning.” And that’s what will then motivate other members of the faculty beyond Year 7 to take this on.

And, of course, the other thing that you’re looking for is that it’s doable. And, you know, “We can do this,” to build confidence, and we’re trying to roll out a range of resources to help build that confidence. For example, reasoning is something that a lot of teachers struggle with, with Critical and Creative Thinking. So we’ve developed a range of resources to unpack what those content descriptions are on about. You know, what would you teach? And we’ve already got them in place for Ethical Capability and Intercultural as well, that just unpack the content descriptions to build the confidence, and so you can say that it’s doable.

And, obviously, documentation of curriculum, communication across faculties and so on, is key to implementing the Capabilities, and implementing the Victorian Curriculum per se, I might say, as well.

The other thing that you’ll get buy-in from staff is where you have really strong links to Capabilities. And, of course, that feeds into academic excellence. So they’re not tokenistic links. And we’re going to really zero in on that today.

So, why would you bother with whole-school planning? Well, it’s really about, from the students’ end, you want to avoid duplication in content delivery. We know that students often get taught stuff they already know. And, of course, I’m making a distinction here from having to revise something because they weren’t paying attention... I get that that happens. Of course it does. But we don’t want to inadvertently go as if they’ve never learnt it before, versus knowing full well that they’ve learned it before but they might need a revision. We want to avoid duplication in content delivery. We want to be able to track the introduction and application of knowledge and skills in the Capabilities, because it is something that learning areas have in common. It’s a curriculum area they can share, and just like you might now actually share maths across learning areas, certain skills in maths.

The other reason for planning is enables rich multi-disciplinary learning links to be identified. And we’ll talk a little bit more about that later. So, if you want to, you know, work on multi-disciplinary learning tasks that have depth and really rich learning, you can see it much more easily if you’re doing a whole-school planning approach. And, of course, you’ve got a coherent vertical pathway. So, in other words, as the student progresses through schooling, they are progressing in their learning as well.

So, really, it’s about coordinating. Planning will help you coordinate these things to achieve these particular goals, and what helps with that is the explicit teaching of Capabilities. And often in a school, I’m talking here... You know, primary schools and secondary schools are in different situations. In a secondary school, it’s sometimes taught in introducing the context of one area, and then perhaps transferred to other learning areas or applied in other learning areas. It depends – those things are school decisions. We don’t...the VCAA doesn’t tell you which learning areas to deliver Capabilities in and through. That’s your choice. But we’re going to look and see as an example of how you might do that across two learning areas as part of this webinar, for a start.

So, the process we’re going to look at is one that you’ll see. What I’m going to do is basically imagine that I’m sitting next to you as we’re going through the resource that we’ve published, which unpacks this in a lot more detail and has examples that cover all the learning areas and so on. It has templates in it, etc. And if I was sitting next to you, taking you through this to help you understand it, what might we talk about? So, what you’ll say here is that there’s a process within that resource, which involves...it assumes that schools want to begin by auditing current programs, identifying strong links to Capabilities from the learning areas, resolve any gaps, because they’re committed to implementing all the strands across the Capabilities, in this case, and then, how can we coordinate things in the end to achieve those aims that we were looking at before – whole-school learning?

So... The first step in auditing a current program is to identify the underpinning learning areas. And I say that because it’s not necessarily, in every school, the case that, say, a learning area, at least a program that appears in, I don’t know, a subject called... Oh, what’s a good example? It might be something like Taking It To The Masses, and that’s a...just from that, you may not know what learning areas are in a sort of funky program called Taking It To The Masses, and maybe there’s a unit of work there on marketing. And maybe that unit of work might include aspects of English, it might include aspects of design and technology, it might include aspects of economic and business. You wouldn’t know unless you actually have a look at the unit of work. Perhaps it’s multi-disciplinary. A lot of schools just have programs which are based on one learning area, but, more and more, sometimes you’ll find multiple...ones that have multiple learning areas.

And the move here is to identify the underpinning learning areas. Make that effort, because it will enable better control of coverage of the whole curriculum, including learning areas and Capabilities. And what you’re looking for is looking for explicit progression of learning when you are looking for a link to a learning area. And this is a particular shout-out to primary schools, who often are really good at making links across to many learning areas.

But sometimes the caution here is not to overlink. So, for example, you might, in a particular unit of work, have a reference to local councils, and notice that local councils make particular decisions. It doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re linking to Civics and Citizenship just by doing that. What you’d want to see, though, is, for it to count as a link, is it intentional, and is it associated with intentional and purposeful teaching? And are there learning activities associated with councils, in this case, designed to progress students’ knowledge and skills, or is it just the case that, on the way through, we’re happening to notice that councils are a stakeholder in this particular issue that’s being looked at in this program? Or is there something we’re learning here, something new, something we’re progressing? And then it’s worthwhile noting that it is a link to a learning area. Merely mentioning, you know, a government doesn’t mean you’re linking to civics and citizenship. It has to be a bit stronger than that, otherwise you’ll end up with too many links, and not very useful ones.

So, in the resource, you’ll see there’s a spreadsheet for that, and so I’ll explain that briefly. It’s based on templates we’ve already published, we did publish back when we launched the curriculum, and we’ve modified them a little bit for this resource, but they’re similar. So, down the left-hand side there, you can write down the title of your program, which might in fact just be called Mathematics – it may not be called Taking It To The Masses. But, you know, it’s flexible to allow either of those things. Then you begin...you can begin to annotate, which could either be a comment or a tick, or whatever you want to put in there, against learning areas. The template we’ve got does include Capabilities as well. But, if you’re not sure or they’re not present yet, you can just leave that out for the time being. The first step is just to link to Capabilities.

And I... I’m just going to say...I’m just going to check with questions from time to time, just whether there are any here. So I’m just doing a check. OK, so, I’m relying on Craig, though, to let me know if there are any unanswered questions in there, in the meantime.

Alright, so, now that you’ve identified underlining learning areas in the program, now you’re looking for strongest links between the learning area that is within the program – or the learning areas – and the Capabilities. And what do we mean by strongest? So, the strongest links are mutually beneficial ones. So, in other words, you’re looking for something that the learning area will contribute to the Capability, and vice versa. And what the learning area will contribute are things like really rich examples, case studies, other contexts that will nuance understanding of Capabilities concepts. Because, if you look at the curriculum for Capabilities, it’s very abstract. It needs learning areas to bring it alive and to make it teachable and concrete. And you want to kind of bring that abstract knowledge to life through learning area contexts that are meaningful for nuancing the knowledge. But, on the other hand, you want the Capabilities to support academic excellence. So, you’re looking for concepts in the Capabilities that will strengthen student work in that learning area. And those, if you do both of those, they’re the strongest links.

So, what to look for as you go through that process. And bearing in mind we’ve tried this in workshops numerous times and this process seems to work. The first thing to do is look to see whether Capabilities concepts are featured in the content description of a learning area. Is it directly asking you something about Ethical Capability or Intercultural or Personal and Social or Critical and Creative Thinking that you can spot, that’s right there in the content description? Or is it in the unpacking of it? Is it in how you would unpack the learning area that would involve Capability knowledge and skills or benefit from it, where there’s a choice? Sometimes it will be unpacked using those, sometimes it’s a school choice – you can unpack it in a certain way. But would learning of that content from the learning area benefit from those concepts or not?

Or, on the other hand, would best practice pedagogy for the learning area benefit from Capability knowledge and skills? And the most obvious example there is something like collaboration. Personal and Social Capability, has curriculum around collaboration skills. Or, just been doing some work about...on productive struggle in Mathematics, and productive struggle is really a mixture of Mathematics and Personal and Social Capability and Critical and Creative Thinking all together to create, dare I say, an engaging productive struggle that doesn’t leave kids with a sense of despair, but rather a sense of satisfaction from intellectual challenge. So, and that links to, obviously, pedagogical challenges there. So, it’s not only about the knowledge and skills, but how it’s taught, where some Capabilities will be relevant there.

So, an example to bring it alive, because that was very abstract. So, just...I’ll show you an example of what I mean. So, here, cultural context is something that is front-focused. In other words, it is mentioned in content descriptions for English and the Arts. Obviously, cultural context is also relevant to other learning areas, in particular languages. But I wanted to pick two areas here, rather than three and make it too complex. So I’ve just picked English and the Arts because it does mean...you know, the content descriptions are there.

Now, the concepts in Intercultural Capability related to cultural context are things like cultural practice, cultural representation, cultural expression and so on. And those...the question is, are they useful for English and the Arts, and vice versa? So, the content descriptions, as I said, for English and the Arts do identify that an understanding of cultural context is essential learning, because it’s there in the content descriptions for those learning areas. So, how can we do a good job of this? And Intercultural Capability is something you would obviously go to and go, “Oh, cultural context. Maybe that’s got something to do with Intercultural Capability.” So you’d go across and have a look at Intercultural Capability and see what you can see, to see if there’s a link there.

So, again, with the questions, in terms of unpacking it, does it support progress in the learning area? So you’d be asking, if you were the English teacher and the Visual Arts teacher, etc – whichever learning areas you’re working on – would background understanding of cultural context foster academic excellence? And I’ve worked with English teachers on this in particular, and the answer is always yes. If you could get kids who had some idea of what cultural context means, are they going to do better in English? Yeah. Does it support progress in development of the Capability? Remember that mutually beneficial relationship? So, in other words, would analysis of the English text help them further their understanding of concepts like cultural representation, cultural expression, and so on? And are there ongoing learning benefits? “Why are we doing this?” is ultimately a question not only...beyond academic excellence, but what’s the path beyond the immediate use next week, you know, and this semester? Perhaps there are upcoming prescribed texts where cultural...right up to VCE, where cultural contexts, a really deep, solid understanding of that beyond just the surface is really important to be able to survive that.

Sometimes the Intercultural Capability in schools is taught to help with respectful relationships. As part of that program, I’ve had quite a few schools contact me from that perspective. And in terms of lifelong learning, there’s an understanding of, is there a kind of moral imperative, if you like, as citizens to give students an understanding of cultural context which will help them not only in academic contexts, but social and citizenship ones as well, in an, you know, ongoing way that makes it worth the spend of time and effort to do that? You know, in order to actually spend time on strengthening those links and coordinating it and so on, as we were talking about before.

Now, in our resource, we do have a supporting template for that, and I haven’t put it up as a screenshot because it’s got lots of boxes, and when I attempted to do it, it just was difficult to read. But you’ll see it there in the resource. Effectively, you just enter the learning area and Capability content descriptions, both of those, relevant achievement standard extracts. Then you write a link saying what you think the link is. And this is one that our English curriculum manager wrote for the cultural context one that’s in there. So, they’re making the link to say, well, through a tech study, students will consider cultural context, as well as other contexts in which they’re located, and they’re going to look at the representation of those characters in the text and the value afforded them in the text. Now, those are things where you’re beginning to use words like representation. Pausing for a second and doing some explicit teaching based on the Intercultural Capability curriculum to help understand what cultural representation is, what a cultural practice is, how cultures are expressed and what they might look like in a text, is worthwhile.

Now, this particular annotation or description could be in the current program that you already have, or it could be something that you intend for the future. You’re kind of...as you’re looking across for the link, it might strike you that this could be a link that’s made that we’re not quite doing yet. And there’s no harm in just noting...noting that.

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