City Cite and The Australian Curriculum

General Capabilities – Particularly Relevant to off Campus Projects in the City involving Civics & Citizenship

City Cite has been in operation since 2001 and is located on the 12th level of 474 Flinders Street overlooking the Melbourne Aquarium and the Yarra River. Currently City Cite is used by 30 different organisations. Most of these are secondary schools that want to provide a city experience for their Year 8 or 9 cohorts. The focus of programs is an orientation to the city, experiential learning and strategic visits to city icons and institutions. A key part of programs is “small group” rich task work focussing on an important city based issue related to social equity or improving city infrastructure.

The advent of the Australian Curriculum has allowed City Cite to review the rationale for what it does and how a city based experience can support schools in meeting their requirements. In looking at the Australian Curriculum and in particular the General Capabilities it is apparent that a city experience can help schools reinforce the general capabilities. In particular the following 5 capabilities are a major part of programs at City Cite:

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Competence
- Ethical Behaviour
- Intercultural understanding

Illustrated below, described is how city based programs can reinforce these capabilities in the middle years. The city is a fantastic resource and allows students to become familiar with the City’s institutions and its people. It is an environment that allows students to observe equity and diversity and extrapolate their findings to society at large.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

Organising elements

The ICT capability learning continuum is organised into five interrelated elements:
Applying social and ethical protocols and practices when using ICT
• Investigating with ICT
• Creating with ICT
• Communicating with ICT
• Managing and operating ICT

Critical and Creative Thinking

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in the lives beyond school.

Organising elements

The Critical and creative thinking learning continuum is organised into four interrelated elements, each detailing differencing aspects of thinking. The elements are not a taxonomy of thinking. Rather, each makes its own contribution to learning and needs to be explicitly and simultaneously developed.

• Inquiring – identifying, exploring and clarifying information
• Generating innovative ideas and possibilities
• Reflecting on thinking, actions and processes
• Analysing, synthesising and evaluating information.

Personal and Social Competence

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. The capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for and understanding of others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively.

Organising elements

The Personal and social capability learning continuum is organised into four interrelated elements of:

• Self-awareness
• Self-management
• Social awareness
• Social management.
Ethical Behaviour

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop capability in learning to behave ethically as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values, character traits and principles, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgment. Ethical behaviour involves students in building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others.

Organising elements

The Ethical behaviour learning continuum is organised into three interrelated organising elements:

- Understanding ethical concepts and issues
- Reflecting on personal ethics in experiences and decision making
- Exploring values, rights and ethical principles.

Intercultural understanding

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

Organising elements

The Intercultural understanding learning continuum incorporates six interrelated organising elements.

Students develop intercultural understanding through:

- Recognising
- Interacting
- Reflecting
- Empathy
- Respect
- Responsibility.