Principles of Learning and Teaching P- 6

Teaching & Learning Policy
Principles of Teaching & Learning

1. The Learning Environment Is Supportive And Productive.
3. Students' Needs, Backgrounds, Perspectives And Interests Are Reflected In The Learning Program.
4. Students Are Challenged And Supported To Develop Deep Levels Of Thinking And Application.
5. Assessment Practices Are An Integral Part Of Teaching And Learning.
6. Learning Connects Strongly With Communities And Practice Beyond The Classroom.

This "unpacking" section of the handbook is intended to clarify the intention of each Principle and its underlying components. The points illustrating what each component is and is not were developed over time by a consultative process that included educators from a variety of key learning areas.
1. The learning environment is supportive and productive

The teacher builds positive relationships with and values each student. Through teacher modelling and classroom strategies based on cooperation and mutual support, an environment is created where students feel comfortable to pursue inquiries and express themselves. They take responsibility for their learning and are prepared to pursue and try out new ideas.

1.1 The teacher builds positive relationships through knowing and valuing each student.

This component is about building quality relationships, based on respect, value and care. It is about taking time to get to know and understand students, in an educational sense but also in a wider social and personal sense. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Targeting questions, or responding to answers, in a way that acknowledges individual needs and potential contributions
- Finding out about the interests and background of each student
- Focusing attention, when circulating, on students who have particular needs
- Encouraging all students to contribute
- Responding positively and non judgmentally to student contributions
- Using humour and anecdotes to develop rapport with the class
- Talking to students to determine the root causes of misbehaviour and responding appropriately.
- Establishing a tradition in class whereby students talk about instances of new ideas connected to their lives and communities.
- Providing support for students through mentoring and pastoral roles and organisation of extra activities, such that relationships are built around multiple aspects of students' lives.

This component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Teachers make judgements about students based on generalisations relating to social or cultural background
- Teachers judge students on a narrow set of skills or knowledge
- Teachers have low expectations and/or negative opinions about certain groups of students.

1.2 The teacher promotes a culture of value and respect for individuals and their communities.

This component is about creating an environment where students' comments are acknowledged, their different opinions are respected, cultural and other differences are accepted, and where students feel safe and valued. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Accepting the opinions and values on which students' comments are based, and embracing differences rather than insisting that students conform
- Ensuring that all contributions to class or group discussion are listened to and accorded respect
- Establishing a climate where difference of perspective is welcomed and learnt from
- Establishing agreed rules of behaviour to provide a safe and productive environment

This component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Class discussions are restricted by the teacher and student opinion is not acknowledged to any significant degree
- Mainstream opinions are allowed to dominate discussion
- Discriminatory language is not challenged
1.3 Teaching strategies promote students' self-confidence and willingness to take risks with their learning

This component is primarily about students being supported to feel confident to contribute ideas without fear of being ‘put down’. It includes the notion of students moving ‘outside the square’ with their thinking and learning; not settling for the ‘ordinary' but trying out new ideas and practices. This may involve teacher modelling and negotiation.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Providing appropriate support structures for open inquiry projects and investigations
- Encouraging students to follow interesting and open lines of inquiry
- Modelling acceptance and valuing of unusual ideas
- Using explicit assessment criteria that encourage students to try out new ideas.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Only ‘right answers' are accorded respect and encouragement
- Student attempts at problem solving activities are responded to judgmentally rather than as opportunities for further learning
- Speculative responses are discouraged.
- Curriculum planning does not allow room for canvassing of diverse opinion and ideas.

1.4 Each student experiences success through structured support, the valuing of effort, and recognition of their work.

This component involves teachers supporting students to achieve success as they move through the learning process. It is about recognising that all students have different abilities and acknowledging and valuing the effort each student puts into improving their work.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Determining students' differing abilities and providing support when it is needed
- Acknowledging students' progress and scaffolding learning to maximise success
- Recognising and celebrating the achievements of all students
- Assessing student work against prior achievements rather than against other students' work
- Providing students with realistic but challenging goals and recognising the effort they put towards achieving these goals.
- Acknowledging effort as well as ability, both publicly and in personal feedback

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- All student work is only assessed against general classroom criteria
- Student achievement is ranked by academic performance only.
2. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self motivation.

Teachers model practices that build independence and motivate students to work in an autonomous manner. Students are involved in decision making within the classroom in relation to what and how they learn and are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Team building skills are also explicitly taught so that students learn to collaborate, negotiate and contribute to joint assignments and experience the sharing of roles, responsibilities and ownership.

2.1 The teacher encourages and supports students to take responsibility for their learning.

This component involves structuring learning experiences and providing support and scaffolding to enable students to make choices and take responsibility for their learning. It also involves a focus on students understanding themselves as learners and is facilitated by clear, transparent, criteria-based and often, collaborative, assessment processes. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Providing opportunities for students to make individual and collaborative decisions about how they will undertake learning tasks
- Encouraging students to set goals for their learning, to self-monitor their progress and, provide evidence to the teacher when they believe they have achieved their goals
- Establishing (perhaps in consultation with students) clear criteria or rubrics for assessment before “a piece of work” is begun
- Establishing what students know already and providing the opportunity for students to build on prior knowledge in manageable steps.

This component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Decisions relating to all projects, research and investigations are made by the teacher
- All student goals are set by the teacher.

2.2 The teacher uses strategies that build skills required for productive collaboration.

This component involves students collaborating on meaningful tasks and responses to questions. While the teacher uses strategies (such as cooperative learning strategies and strategic selection of groups) to establish an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration, the focus is on the meaningful learning. Students actively participate in the negotiation of roles, responsibilities and outcomes. Such collaboration may also involve a whole class focus on related projects, such as an environmental project or community survey. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Arranging their classroom in such a way as to maximise engagement and interaction through collaborative discussion (eg. group tables)
- Regularly setting group tasks and establishing ground rules about how the groups will operate
- Explicitly teaching students to work as a team by assigning different roles within groups to make students responsible for particular aspects of tasks
- Assigning tasks that require the sharing of expertise and ensuring that students’ contributions are valued by other students.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Students mainly work individually, with little opportunity for whole class or small group discussion
- Class discussion is dominated by the teacher's voice
- Minimal opportunity is given for students to interact with and support each other.
3. Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program

A range of strategies is used to monitor and respond to students' different learning needs, social needs, and cultural perspectives. Students' lives and interests are reflected in the learning sequences. A variety of teaching strategies are used to accommodate the range of abilities and interests, and to encourage diversity and autonomy.

3.1 Teaching strategies are flexible and responsive to the values, needs and interests of individual students.

This component acknowledges that the classroom should be an interesting place and suited to a wide range of dispositions. Learning may involve a negotiation between prior views and knowledge and public knowledge found in the curriculum. A range of student competencies and potential for future learning may be untapped in classrooms. This component emphasises the need to provide opportunities for these to be displayed. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Regularly using popular media such as magazines and television, or popular fiction to introduce or challenge ideas
- Using students' personal interests (sports, hobbies) and social/ethical concerns as the context of topics, or to link with social relevance of the learning and issues
- Using classroom strategies that acknowledge gender, personal and religious differences
- Encouraging students to respect the rights of others to hold differing views
- Valuing and building on the perspectives and experiences students bring to the classroom
- Creating an environment of encouragement for students to contribute personal stories to class discussion
- Providing a stimulating classroom environment that generates active interest in topics.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- The focus of a unit is purely on formal knowledge, with few connections made to daily life applications
- Applicability of ideas are discussed, but they do not refer to the sort of situation students would normally be concerned about in their lives
- The focus of the unit is based on a single view of the topic
- Knowledge is presented in a sequence that represents the structured discipline view of the material, rather than the connections that might be made with student interests and prior knowledge.

3.2 The teacher utilises a range of teaching strategies that support different ways of thinking and learning.

This component refers to different ways students might approach learning, their different abilities and strengths, or their different perspectives on themselves as learners. It also refers to the variety of ways ideas are represented and the need to approach and demonstrate learning using different media and representational modes. The component implies the use of diverse approaches to allow students to experience diverse ways of learning and knowing, and targeted support for individuals, based on teacher monitoring. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Varying the structure and delivery mode across a range of teaching sessions
- Providing for a range of learning styles or modalities within teaching sessions and from one teaching session to another in terms of both teacher input and student learning experiences
- Helping students to understand their own specific learning needs and providing choice to cater for the range of those needs
- Setting a variety of types of tasks during each unit and using a range of resources eg. print, visual, aural, experiential.
Providing variations in tasks to allow student choice on mode of presentation or type of approach (e.g. using Bloom's taxonomy, Gardner's multiple intelligences and other higher order thinking tools to ensure variety)

Ensuring each task has an open ended aspect that allows students to work at different levels and paces

Arranging for time in each teaching session to give individual support to students in need of particular attention

Providing opportunities to use a range of multimodal communications as they are used in the community

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- The unit is structured with the 'average' student in mind
- All students cover the same material with few opportunities for varied work
- There is little variation in the teaching strategies used in any unit
- There is little variation in the resources used eg. reliance on written texts
- Each teaching session has a similar structure
- There is the same balance between student and teacher voice in each teaching session
- All teaching sessions are based on activities with instructions and involve students negotiating what they do in the same way

3.3 The teacher builds on students' prior experiences, knowledge and skills

Contemporary learning theories emphasise the importance of prior knowledge and beliefs in framing learning. This component emphasises the need to explore and monitor, and build on students' prior learning. This exploration is important for students also, to support their own understandings of their learning.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Actively seeking to establish students knowledge, beliefs and skills as part of planning
- Utilising students' particular strengths and experience in supporting learning
- Building on students' prior learning, that may have taken place outside the school bounds
- Explicitly linking new ideas with the language and perspectives students' bring to the classroom

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Planning assumes students' prior experience and knowledge is immaterial, and probing of prior knowledge is not explicitly planned
- Student opinion is not canvassed
- No attention is paid to bridging between everyday and expert language

3.4 The teacher capitalises on students' experience of a technology rich world

Students come to classrooms with a variety of experiences of and expertise in contemporary technologies. This component encourages the exploration with students of their interest and expertise and the meaning they assign to technological communication, design and representation. It is about enlisting students' capabilities and interests associated with contemporary technologies.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Incorporating contemporary technologies into learning sequences in ways that are meaningful for students
- Planning to acknowledge a diversity of student technological expertise and to take advantage of particular student expertise to support learning
- Talking about the purpose of texts, how they work and how meaning is organised, drawing examples from a variety of contemporary media and texts (websites, newspapers, TV commercials, films, magazines, lyrics, journals, video clips, online games and chat)

The component is NOT demonstrated when:
- Teachers do not incorporate contemporary technologies in ways that take advantage of students' interests and experience.
- Teachers do not acknowledge students' capacity to engage with technologies at a high level.
- Teachers refer to and teach only traditional print literacies.
4. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application

Students are challenged to explore, question and engage with significant ideas and practices, so that they move beyond superficial understandings to develop higher order, flexible thinking. To support this, teaching sequences should be sustained and responsive and explore ideas and practices.

4.1 Teaching sequences promote sustained learning that builds over time and emphasises connections between ideas.

This component involves running with ideas for sufficient time to examine and use them in depth. This applies to the way key ideas are built across a learning sequence, but might also mean having sufficient time in teaching sessions to properly examine ideas. Links are made across subject areas to demonstrate relevance and connectedness with what is being taught and how key ideas can apply to a range of situations. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Allowing time for discussions to arise naturally and be followed in class to encourage the resolution of questions
- Extending consideration of key ideas over a number of teaching sessions, rather than starting with a new idea or context each teaching session
- Revisiting previous teaching sessions so that ideas explicitly build across a unit
- Recognising that skills, understandings, processes or practices currently being taught have relevance for other subject areas and drawing students' attention to such relevance
- Identifying a series of generic skills and processes (such as problem solving, creative thinking skills, metacognition, etc.) that can become areas of focus across the curriculum
- Relating current learning to work done in previous teaching sessions
- Fostering connections to life outside school
- Allowing activities to continue, where possible, while students are productively engaged
- Collaborating from time to time with teachers from different disciplines to explore different aspects of an idea or skill, or related ideas or skills over the same time period with shared students.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Activities and discussions are discrete, with minimal links between them
- Teaching sessions are compartmentalised such that each covers a separate idea from a list
- Key understandings are covered without reference to, or exploration of, relationships with other subject areas, prior learning and/or life outside school.

4.2 The teacher promotes substantive discussion of ideas.

This component involves the teacher providing opportunities for students to talk together, discuss, argue and express opinions and alternative points of view. 'Substantive' refers to a focus on significant ideas, practices or issues, that are meaningful to students, and that occur over a sufficient period of time to be effectively explored. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Providing stimulus materials that challenge students' ideas and encourage discussion, speculation and ongoing exploration
- Encouraging students to raise questions or speculate or make suggestions
- Asking a high proportion of open ended questions
- Encouraging students to challenge, support or amplify others' contributions.
The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Teacher questions are mainly closed, with a particular response in mind
- Investigations or projects are run without significant class discussion of the purpose or key ideas and approaches
- Class discussion is allowed to wander, without focus.
- Discussion is dominated by the teacher, who provides most of the input.

4.3 The teacher emphasises the quality of learning with high expectations of achievement.

Teachers need to clearly signal an expectation that students will achieve at a high level and put in effort to produce quality work. This also involves teachers expressing and demonstrating confidence that students are capable of significant achievement. There is structured support to help students learn effectively so that this expectation does not occur in a vacuum.

The component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Using language that implies an expectation and a confidence that students will work effectively and achieve at a high level
- Praising efforts towards the production of quality work, and its achievement
- Providing support for students having difficulty on the basis that their work needs to improve to meet expectations
- Signalling clearly the standard to be achieved
- Not accepting work that is just ‘good enough’ and encouraging students to produce work at the standard they are capable of.

The component is not demonstrated when:

- The teacher implies by words or actions that some students are not expected to achieve
- Standards of achievement are not made clear
- All work is praised regardless of quality
- The teacher turns a ‘blind eye’ to students who are working at a lower level than they are capable of.

4.4 The teacher uses strategies that challenge and support students to question and reflect.

This component involves the development of learning tasks designed to encourage and support students to move beyond their current understandings and think more deeply about ideas and practice. Teacher questions are open-ended and designed to promote depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding. Teachers emphasise engagement with ideas and practice through exploration.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Introducing ideas by using interesting and challenging activities
- Using short, group-based challenging activities to raise questions
- Challenging students to reflect on their response to tasks
- Asking open questions calling for interpretive responses
- Posing questions and hypothetical situations to move students beyond superficial approaches
- Asking students to represent their understandings in a variety of ways
- Including frequent open ended problems and explorations
- Strategically building opportunities for students to develop hypotheses or speculative ideas and to extend and question interpretations.
- Focusing on the reasons for answers or steps in procedures as a vehicle for building understanding
- Encouraging students to see knowledge as a construction and to examine critically and even challenge information provided by the teacher, a textbook, a newspaper, etc.
The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Classroom work is constrained or recipe like, without room for discussion or debate of purpose or methods
- Lesson plans contain too much material to allow sustained discussions in response to student questions
- Activities focus mainly on knowledge and comprehension
- Concepts are treated as 'things to be learnt', emphasising formal definitions
- Ideas are introduced formally without discussion or questioning
- Illustration and exploration of ideas occurs mainly through one source eg reference to text books.

4.5 The teacher uses strategies to develop investigating and problem solving skills.

This component refers to higher order thinking skills that may be described in various ways, but encompass such things as interpretation, analysis, and application. It refers to the development of knowledge of ways of reasoning with evidence, particular to the discipline area. These skills and knowledge are needed to successfully solve problems.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Using higher order thinking tools when planning activities to allow for multiple entry points and to develop higher order thinking skills such as synthesis, evaluation etc.
- Providing students with questions or challenges as the impetus for learning and encouraging and supporting students to construct their own responses to such questions
- Explicitly supporting students to develop the language and other representational tools (such as graphs, diagrams, reporting templates) needed to conduct investigations.
- Clarifying the purpose and context of investigations and problems.
- Setting learning challenges that require students to analyse, evaluate and create and that allow for student risk taking, decision-making and time-management
- Providing support and scaffolding for investigative or problem solving tasks through checklists, proformas, planning frameworks, teacher-student conferences, self-and peer assessment processes, etc.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- There is a strong focus on ensuring content coverage, as distinct from understanding
- Students are given a choice of activities but not given training in appropriate skills and knowledge
- Group commitment is not gained for ideas being developed
- Activities focus on having fun without regard to conceptual understandings or the deeper meanings of practice.

4.6 The teacher uses strategies to foster imagination and creativity

There has been considerable recent attention paid to lateral and creative thinking, as part of 'higher order' thinking and a 'thinking oriented curriculum'. Many schools have made this a major focus of teaching and learning policy. There are a number of elements of 'creativity' including flexible and unusual thinking, and facility with generating ideas.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Encouraging students to be discoverers, explorers and creators in a variety of ways
- Setting tasks that ask for a variety of solutions
- Using strategies such as brainstorming or the generation of lists to encourage flexible thinking
- Setting tasks that require unusual approaches or unusual juxtaposition of ideas or the importation of ideas from a variety of fields
- Setting extensions to tasks that favour lateral thinking or diverse applications.
The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Tasks ask for a convergence of ideas on a single solution
- The teacher sets problems and projects for which the requirements and the outcomes are closely specified
- Opportunities for students to speculate and voice different ideas are minimal
- Every student is expected to produce the same (possibly high quality) result or outcome or artefact.
- A premium is placed on consolidation of skills or refinement of particular techniques and solution types, above the production of variety or the unusual.

5. Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning

Assessment contributes to planning at a number of levels. Monitoring of student learning is continuous and encompasses a variety of aspects of understanding and practice. Assessment criteria are explicit and feedback is designed to support students' further learning and encourage them to monitor and take responsibility for their own learning.

5.1 Assessment practices reflect the full range of learning program objectives.

This component involves teachers designing assessment tasks that require students to demonstrate knowledge and skills at many levels including lower order processes such as basic comprehension and higher order processes such as synthesis and evaluation. It involves the assessment of a variety of forms of knowledge and practice such as reasoning skills, values and orientations.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Using a variety of methods to assess student understandings at various points in a unit, including open ended questioning, checklists, project work, problems, practical reports, role plays
- Assessing a range of types of understanding and practice, including knowledge of processes, conceptual ideas, the way the learning is used and practiced and different aspects of practice such as fluency, accuracy and capacity to innovate
- Ensuring assessment incorporates a range of levels of thinking (comprehension, analysis)
- Monitoring student perceptions and attitudes as well as knowledge and skills
- Using a variety of reporting modes for assessment, including project reports using posters, multimedia, or student presentations, end of unit tests, reports of investigations and responses to set problems.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Assessment involves two or three types of task only and is mainly in written format (eg. worked problems, practical reports, end of unit test)
- Judgments are made on the basis of presentation, for instance on the layout of reports, rather than demonstration of the ability to extend ideas
- Assessment focuses mainly on low-level factual information and straightforward comprehension, with few opportunities for students to demonstrate application or synthesis of key ideas.

5.2 The teacher ensures that students receive frequent constructive feedback that supports further learning.

Appropriate feedback has been found to be critically important in improving student outcomes. Feedback by its nature should be aimed at supporting the learning process, should be ongoing and timely, and provide advice on ways forward for students. Feedback can be provided by other students, or through community engagement.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:
• Providing feedback on tasks that challenges students to review, reflect on, and refine their understandings at various points in a learning sequence
• Giving timely feedback, acknowledging areas well handled and suggesting areas for improvement.
• Structuring feedback to support further learning
• Organising for feedback from a variety of audiences.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

• Judgments about students’ understandings are fed back only in formal, summative assessment situations without the opportunity for students to refine and develop understandings on the basis of such feedback.
• Little feedback is provided to assist students to understand why their responses were not rewarded (marked incorrect).

5.3 The teacher makes assessment criteria explicit.

This component involves the encouraging the development of shared understanding of the assessment tasks. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

• Providing an explicit list of learning outcomes at the outset of a unit of work
• Providing the criteria for assessing each outcome prior to students undertaking each assessment task
• Leading discussions with students in which the criteria appropriate for different levels of performance on tasks are generated and clarified
• Providing feedback to students concerning their performance in relation to explicit criteria.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

• Assessment tasks are not included in documentation provided to students
• Assessment criteria are generated after a task is submitted
• Assessment is mainly based on scores on tests in which items are not constructed to represent clear criteria
• The type of items on tests has not been signalled to students and they have not had the opportunity to work at the competencies assessed.

5.4. Assessment practices encourage reflection and self assessment.

This component involves the active involvement of students in the assessment process. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

• Providing assessment instruments for self and peer monitoring
• Discussing the learning process explicitly with students
• Providing tools that make explicit for students their understandings
• Providing opportunities to review prior ideas and compare them with current understandings.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

• Assessment is presented as the teacher’s prerogative and there is little attempt to engage students in making judgments about their own learning
• The assessment criteria are hidden and/or arbitrary
• Assessment occurs infrequently and is not integrated into the learning process.

5.5 The teacher uses evidence from assessment to inform planning and teaching.

This component requires the use of formative assessment to provide information for the teacher to adjust tasks and strategies to ensure that the teaching and learning program is responsive to student learning needs and
builds on prior knowledge and skills. Teaching sequences and teaching strategies need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to information coming from both informal and formal assessment.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Using a variety of methods to assess student understandings, at various points in a unit, including open ended questioning, checklists, project work, problems, practical reports, role plays
- Strategically monitoring student understandings by circulating during practical or project work and discussing this with individuals
- Probing student understandings and perspectives early in a learning sequence to help plan subsequent teaching sessions
- Reviewing understandings from previous teaching sessions before proceeding with work
- Monitoring constantly and strategically to determine how best to respond to the class.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Lesson plans are strictly followed (perhaps because of time constraints) and unexpected difficulties in understanding are glossed over
- Units are planned without embedding opportunities to probe and respond to student understandings
- Student understandings are not informally monitored and responded to
- A lesson sequence continues despite evidence that many students have already achieved the target understandings.

6. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom

Student learning needs to connect with their current and future lives, and with contemporary thinking in the broader community. A variety of links are made between the classroom program and the local and broader community, leading to students developing a rich view of knowledge and practice, including social and ethical issues. This principle concerns relevance and connectedness, and also the communal nature of learning.

6.1 Students engage with contemporary knowledge and practice.

This component refers to the need to present ideas and their applications in a contemporary context. Conceptual and procedural understandings should be linked to their use in the community and by different professions. Contemporary understandings may of course be informed by consideration of their historical lineage.

This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Providing the opportunity for students to experience the learning as it would be experienced and used by people in their professional lives
- Using industry, contemporary technologies, and everyday events and artefacts, as the context for learning
- Making links with stories reflecting the historical roots of the ideas
- Engaging with rich tasks that link the learning to a variety of aspects of real life
- Equipping students with skills for self-extending learning aimed at enabling them to keep pace with current trends and practices.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Students are taught narrowly defined skills that are not self extending or transferable
- The classroom program focuses on formal aspects of the subject matter knowledge only.
- Ideas are taught without reference to contemporary application

6.2 The teacher plans for students to interact with local and broader communities.
This component emphasises the importance of the connectedness of schools to the community and society more generally. It promotes the idea of the porous classroom. ‘Communities' would include the parent community of the school and the school community in general, local communities, which might provide speakers or be the target of community environmental or aesthetic projects, through to national, international and interest based (eg scientific) communities accessed through the internet, guest speakers and other forums. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Linking the classroom with the community by arranging incursions or excursions to a variety of venues, including studies of the local environment, surveys in the local community and local industry visits.
- Basing sequences of work around local or global community projects, such as environmental maintenance or studies of local industries or social groups.
- Using parents with special expertise to provide input or support in a topic.
- Arranging links and collaboration with other schools and classrooms or professional institutions, through the internet.
- Targeting individual students to take advantage of camps or conferences.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Units of work are entirely bound within the walls of the classroom.
- Little or no use is made of the school ground or local neighbourhood for exploration of, for instance, plant reproduction and growth, discussions of structures and design of SOSE and civics investigative surveys.
- Excursions are not effectively integrated with the curriculum.
- Concerns of the local community (eg. environmental, or consumer based) are not raised, nor are the class's studies communicated to parents or the local community.

6.3 The teacher uses technologies in ways that reflect professional and community practices

New technology challenges and changes the way we behave and learn in our contemporary society. Learners need to develop a mastery of contemporary skills and techniques and their application through new media and new technologies. When used in ways that reflect their contemporary use, learning technologies can provide powerful stimulus for students to operate autonomously and develop expertise. Learners use a range of learning technologies to create new knowledge and understandings. This component is demonstrated by teachers:

- Developing students' capabilities with generic software such as spreadsheets, design tools and communication technologies.
- Using learning technologies to support quality learning behaviours such as exploration, conjecture, or collaboration.
- Using ICT to increase student choice and flexibility with respect to their learning.
- Having students collect information by electronic means such as data probes, digital cameras, video recording, digital displays.
- Having students use the internet for information searching and to communicate with special interest groups.
- Having students explore ideas and possibilities using simulation software.
- Encouraging students to present results and publish reports using a range of software.

The component is NOT demonstrated when:

- Students are exposed to a limited range and uses of ICT.
- Students are not educated or encouraged to make choices about what learning technologies they use or when and how they use them.
- The use of computers does not encourage increased dialogue and questioning, but tends to isolate individuals within their tasks.
- Technologies are not used in ways that take advantage of their particular potential to support learning.