

Service learning in Lutheran schools

Service learning and the Australian Curriculum

There are many opportunities to link LEA's service learning initiative to the Australian Curriculum. First, we must remember that the notion of service learning in Lutheran schools is two-fold; first service is 'personal response to God's love' and second, 'a broader response as part of one's humanity for the sake of justice for all.' Service learning in Lutheran Schools, 2010

A seminal education document for Australian education, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, implies aspects of service. The document notes that successful learners are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are. As active and informed citizens, young Australians are expected to act with moral and ethical integrity, participate in Australia's civic life and relate to others near and far – working for the common good.

As a result, there are many opportunities to link the Australian Curriculum with service learning. Not only is there an opportunity to develop the concept of service in an intellectual and practical way in English and History, the Australian Curriculum features other dimensions where key aspects of service can grow and flourish.

Two other dimensions of the Australian Curriculum include Cross Curriculum Priorities where students can 'make an important contribution to building the social, intellectual and creative capital of our nation' (p. 1 Cross Curriculum Priorities) and General Capabilities that are 'skills, behaviours and dispositions that students develop (to become) active and informed citizens' (p. 1 General Capabilities).

Three of the seven Australian Curriculum's General Capabilities (ethical behaviour, personal and social competence as well as and intercultural understanding) link to service learning. Below is a table that summarises the most pertinent, service-related phrases:

<p>Ethical behavior As students develop ethical behaviour, students learn to:</p>	<p>Personal and social competence As students develop personal and social competence students learn to:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that everyday life involves consideration of competing values, rights interest and social norms • Identify and investigate moral dimensions in issues (General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum p. 8) 	<p>Perceive and understand other people's emotions and viewpoints, show understanding and empathy for others, identify the strengths of team members, define and accept individual and group roles and responsibilities, be of service to others (General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum p. 7)</p>
<p>Intercultural understanding As students develop intercultural understanding students learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify increasingly sophisticated characteristics of their own cultures and the cultures of others • Accept that there are different ways of seeing the world and live with that diversity Service learning in Lutheran schools • Take responsibility for developing and improving relationships between people from different cultures in 	

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Australia and in the wider world

- Contribute to and benefit from reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum p. 9)

The cross curriculum priorities are another dimension of the Australian Curriculum where service may be featured. These priorities include:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Lutheran schools seek to provide opportunity for learners to 'deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures' (p. 2 Cross Curriculum Priorities).

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

'We need to understand, learn from and engage and communicate with our Asian neighbours' (to be good regional and global citizens) (p. 4 Cross Curriculum Priorities)

Sustainability

'Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations ... actions to improve sustainability are both individual and collective endeavours ...' p. 6 Cross Curriculum Priorities)

When considering Phase 1 Curriculum areas, service can also be viewed as 'a topic for study' as well as an integral part of the ethos of the school. Below are a couple of suggestions about starting points of study.

History: Once the concept of service is understood, service could be a topic that is explored in particular historical eras (eg service during times of conflict such as during the World Wars, when exploring other concepts such as 'rights' and 'freedoms' in Year 10, or differing cultures' perceptions of service (past and present).

English: One way of exploring service in English is to examine texts of note that have significant themes of service. Many award winning texts feature this theme. Eg Charlottes Web, An American Plague: The true and terrifying story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 (Newberry Honour Book, 2004).

Whilst studying about service, it is important to return to Lutheran education's definition noting that 'Service is faith active in love ... (and) involves the selfless giving and loving of others, making a difference in their lives by responding to their needs, and acting without expecting recognition or reward'. (Service learning in Lutheran schools: 2010)

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