

# Teaching and Learning Framework

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is an independent specialist senior secondary school based in Melton. We deliver the Victorian Pathway Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major (VM) for students aged 15-19 years. We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. The College is committed to supporting students to reach their individual personal, social and educational potential.

## 1. College Vision, Mission and Values

### Vision

To provide a community college that encourages and inspires vulnerable students to reach their personal, social and educational potential.

### Mission

To provide students that are experiencing complex personal and educational barriers and are at risk of or have disengaged from education with an individual and supported approach to education in an alternative learning environment.

### Our Core Values

**Caring-** We provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

**Respectful-** We treat all members of our school community fairly and equally.

**Inclusive-** We put the needs of our students first and welcome diversity in our school community.

**Adaptable-** We respond to students needs in creative and flexible ways.

**Accountable-** We take responsibility for our decisions and follow through on our commitments.

### Strategic Priorities

1. Safe and inclusive learning environment
2. Excellence in teaching
3. Success for all students
4. Strong partnerships
5. A viable and sustainable school

## **Our Enactment**

Djerriwarrh Community College enacts its philosophy by:

- Offering a specialist school with small class sizes and a friendly safe environment.
- Identifying students' personal and educational barriers to learning to inform:
  - individual support plans; and
  - individual learning plans.
- Providing wrap around support services including referrals to housing, mental health and AOD services.
- Having student centred learning at the forefront of teaching practice.
- Following the Positive Education model, to assist students to;
  - strengthen their relationships
  - build positive emotions
  - enhance resilience
  - promote mindfulness
- Using restorative practice methods to:
  - build a sense of community within and around school
  - repair harm and hold parties responsible and
  - improve the emotional literacy of staff, students and the school community
- Working closely with Parents/Guardians, family and other stakeholders (for the individual student)
- Engaging with the local community
- Minimising student fees and associated costs for parents/guardians and students.

## **2. Applied Learning approach**

Our curriculum is flexible, applied, student centred and assists our students to develop community partnerships. Applied learning is education put into practical use; learning which is experiential, contextualised to real situations and personalised to the learner's needs. Applied learning has a focus on real life application and takes into account different learning preferences.

Applied Learning in the VPC/VM curriculum includes:

- Learning in classroom contexts
- Learning in community contexts
- Adult learning in vocational learning contexts
- Work based learning in workplace settings
- Project based learning involving 'real world' issues

### 3. Professional Learning Community

Djerriwarrh Community College uses a Professional Learning Community (PLC) approach to improving student outcomes. A PLC is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all. Our PLC is dedicated to the idea that the College exists to ensure that all students learn essential knowledge, concepts and skills.

The PLC provides an opportunity for teachers to work collaboratively at the school level to improve student outcomes. PLCs create a culture that is focused upon continuous improvement by linking needs of students with professional learning. It also enhances professionalism and fuels collaboration amongst teaching staff.

Teachers work collaboratively to answer the critical questions about the teaching and learning in their own classrooms:

- What is it we want our students to know? (Curriculum)
- How will we know if our students are learning? (Assessment)
- How will we respond when they don't learn? (Instruction/Intervention)
- How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient? (Instruction/Extension)

The College maintains an effective PLC by applying the following principles:

- **Student learning focus:** School improvement starts with an unwavering focus on student learning.
- **Collective responsibility:** For every student to achieve, every adult must take responsibility for their learning.
- **Instructional leadership:** Effective school leaders focus on teaching and learning.
- **Collective efficacy:** Teachers make better instructional decisions together.
- **Adult learning:** Teachers learn best with others, on the job.

- **Privileged time:** Effective schools provide time and forums for teacher conversations about student learning.
- **Continuous improvement:** Effective teams improve through recurring cycles of diagnosing student learning needs, and planning, implementing and evaluating teaching responses to them.
- **Evidence driven:** Effective professional learning and practice is evidence based and data driven.
- **System focus:** The most effective school leaders contribute to the success of other schools.
- **Integrated regional support:** Schools in improving systems are supported by teams of experts who know the communities they work in.

Creating a culture of working collaboratively to continuously improve teaching and learning is at the heart of improving student outcomes.

The College is committed to improving Student outcomes through Professional Learning Communities. School Leadership has made a commitment to:

- establishing effective professional learning team structures across the school
- allocating time for teachers to collaborate and work in professional learning teams
- appointing PLC instructional leaders to lead professional learning teams

#### 4. The Big 4

The teaching program at the College is comprised of the following areas, based on Jane Pollock's Big 4 (Pollock, J.E. (2007) Improving Student Learning One Teacher at a Time.)

- **Curriculum:** what we expect our students to learn
- **Classroom Instruction:** how we expect students to learn
- **Assessment:** how our students will demonstrate their learning
- **Reporting:** where the student is at a particular time in their learning

Teachers work collaboratively in a PLC to ensure these critical questions are being answered. In weekly PLC meetings teachers create, reflect and revise the curriculum and their own classroom instruction.

Data is used to inform teaching practice and learning programs are amended to ensure the needs of all students are being met.

PLC will ensure curriculum is differentiated, guaranteed and focused on the core skills. Formative and summative assessments are designed in PLC and student supports are identified.

## 5. Curriculum

The intention is that our students fully develop their understanding, knowledge and skills in each domain area. Each area identifies the most essential skills and builds its teaching program around them.

The curriculum areas are:

- Literacy and Numeracy skills
- Work related skills
- Personal development skills
- Industry specific skills
- Skills for Further Study

## 6. Documentation

The curriculum of each strand is planned on the basis of the following documents:

- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA):
  - VPC/VM Assessment and Planning Guides
  - VPC/VM Curriculum Planning Guides
- Sample Assessment Task Templates: an overview of the assessment tasks and the project/theme
- Unit Outlines: an overview of each individual unit and the methods of delivery. Weekly breakdown of tasks and content being covered
- Teaching Resources: specialised items required for teaching the unit

Documentation is available to all teaching staff and is located on the server. Differentiated and viable curriculum are maintained and updated throughout the year. Assessment items are revised and stored alongside S.A.T.Ts.

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