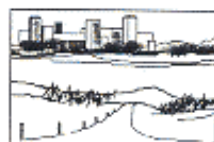




# SOCIAL EDUCATION IN THE NINETIES: A BASIC RIGHT FOR EVERY PERSON

A Rationale and  
Framework for  
Social Education



**SOCIAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE SOCIAL EDUCATOR, MARCH 1990  
REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST — PUBLICATION Nº NGB 9440

# SOCIAL EDUCATION IN THE NINETIES: A BASIC RIGHT FOR EVERY PERSON

Part One: A Rationale for Social Education  
Part Two: Towards a Common Framework for  
Social Education in Australia

**Social Education Association of Australia  
1990**

Any part of this document may be reproduced for educational purposes

ISBN 0 9590840 4 5

# CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b>	4
----------------	---

## **PART ONE: A RATIONALE FOR SOCIAL EDUCATION**

1. What is Social Education?	5
2. Why Social Education Matters	6
• Making Sense of Our World	6
• Valuing Our World	7
• Developing Skills to Cope with and Influence Our World	9
• Acting in Our World	9
• Meeting the Challenges of the Nineties	9
• How Social Education Helps	11
3. Complementary Contributions to a More Adequate Social Education	13
4. Some Requirements and Future Directions for Social Education	15
5. References	17

## **PART TWO: TOWARDS A COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA**

1. Introduction	18
2. What is Social Education	19
3. The Purpose of Social Education	19
4. The Purpose of this Framework	20
5. Essential Learnings	21
6. Approaches to Learning and Teaching	29

# PREFACE

**The Social Education Association of Australia (SEAA)** is a national organisation of people with a common interest in promoting and improving the quality of social learning both in formal institutions and in society at large. Its members include teachers at all levels, curriculum consultants, tertiary educators, tertiary students, libraries, publishers, other professional associations, community groups, and individuals concerned about the importance of social education.

The following statement, **Social Education in the Nineties: A Basic Right for Every Person** provides a complete revision for a new decade of the Association's 1984 document **Social Education for the Eighties**. This rationale for social education is intended to:

- promote discussion
- assist in curriculum development
- provide support for those who are lobbying to ensure that social education is of the highest priority on national, state and local educational agendas.

The national committee of the Social Education Association of Australia which approved this rationale statement, and whose members contributed to it, consists of the following people:

**President: David Dufty**, 243 The Scenic Rd Killcare, N.S.W. 2256. (Editor of the document)

**Vice President: Sandra Newell**, Catholic Education Office, Southern Region, Hurstville, N.S.W.

**Secretary: Bev Stubbs**, N.S.W. Department of Education, Sydney, N.S.W.

**Treasurer: Sue Milner**, Central Coast Grammar School, Wamberal, N.S.W.

**Publications Editor: Bill Driscoll**, Armidale CAE, Armidale, N.S.W.

**Past President: Malcolm McArthur**, Education Department of South Australia, Adelaide, S.A.

## **Committee Members:**

**Tony Hepworth**, Charles Sturt University, Riverina Campus, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

**Bob Hill**, Charles Sturt University, Mitchell Campus, Bathurst, N.S.W.

**Laurie Lewis**, Victorian Ministry of Education, Melbourne, VIC.

**Wayne Perkins**, Victorian Ministry of Education, Melbourne, VIC.

**Julie Hamston**, Waterdale School Support Centre, VIC.

**Greg Birchall**, Phillip Institute of Technology, Coburg, VIC.

**Rob Gilbert**, School of Education, James Cook University, Townsville, Q.

**Ray Land**, Queensland Department of Education, Brisbane, Q.

**Neil Dempster**, Mt Gravatt CAE, Brisbane, Q.

**Peter Leverenz**, Fulham Gardens Curriculum Unit, Adelaide, S.A.

**Elaine Smythe**, Tusmore, S.A.

**Margaret Calder**, South Australia CAE, Adelaide, S.A.

**Helen Withnell**, O'Connell Education Centre, Canberra, A.C.T.

**Glen Bennett**, Department of Education, Perth, W.A.

**Warren Brewer**, Department of Education, Hobart, T AS.

**Louise Finch**, Department of Education, Darwin, NT.

**Founding President: Colin Tonkin**, Ballarat, VIC.

David Dufty

**President**

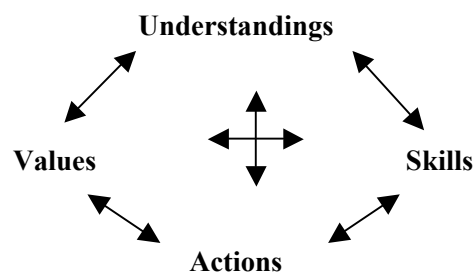
**Social Education Association of Australia**

# PART ONE: A RATIONALE

## 1. WHAT IS SOCIAL EDUCATION?

Social education is the active process by which people, through drawing on personal experience and public knowledge:

- develop and apply UNDERSTANDINGS which help them to explain the origins, diversity and dynamic nature of society, including the interactions among societies, cultures, individuals and environments
- develop and practise VALUES and sensibilities which are crucial to a just and democratic society and a sustainable world
- develop and practise SKILLS in investigating society, discussing issues, tackling problems, making decisions and working co-operatively with others
- take ACTIONS enlightened and empowered by these understandings, values and skills, which might contribute to the achievement of more desirable futures for all.



SEAA considers that schools have a responsibility to ensure that all students experience continuous and systematic social education programs which will help young people:

- make more sense of their social world
- develop a growing concern about heritage and environment, about other people in Australia and around the world, and about the future of life on the planet
- grow in their development as competent citizens, who are prepared to play a responsible part in making our society and our world a better place.

**Such education is a right of every child: a right of every person.**

The Australian Education Council (representing all Ministers of Education from the Australian States and Territories) validated this view when it included in its "Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling in Australia" (1989) the development in students of:

- knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active citizens in our democratic society within an international context,

- an understanding of and concern for balanced development and the global environment,
- knowledge and appreciation of Australia's historical and geographic context,
- judgment in matters of morality, ethics and social justice,
- understanding and respect for our cultural heritage, including the particular cultural backgrounds of Aboriginal and ethnic groups,
- skills of analysis and problem solving.

We also commend The Australian Education Council for including social education and environmental education in its exercise of mapping the Australian curriculum.

## 2. WHY SOCIAL EDUCATION MATTERS

*“Preparing young people for fulfilling personal lives and active membership of the community.”* - John Dawkins in Strengthening Australia's Schools

Much social education takes place in homes, in places of play, through institutions such as churches, and through the medium of the mass media. However, schools have a planned and active role to play in helping students make sense of and reflect on those myriad experiences of public life as they grow into adulthood and act in a way consistent with this knowledge and reflection.

Our Association joins with other educators in seeking to develop a more comprehensive and integrated form of social education than has existed in the past.

This requires all the assistance we can get from students of society as well as help from the common sense understandings of socially competent people. This will involve the design of more meaningful models for understanding society than can currently be found in any single social discipline. SEAA believes the following four related models will help in this process.

### MAKING SENSE OF THE WORLD

Social education firstly helps people to make sense of their world. In order to make sense of the social world we consider that it is essential to stress the interrelationships among the following **five** basic components of that world, namely:

**SOCIETIES: GROUPS AND SYSTEMS:** social structures which people create to help meet their needs, including families, community groups, political, economic and legal institutions and systems and the processes activating these systems, including **decision making**, the struggle for **power**, the **exchange of goods and services**.

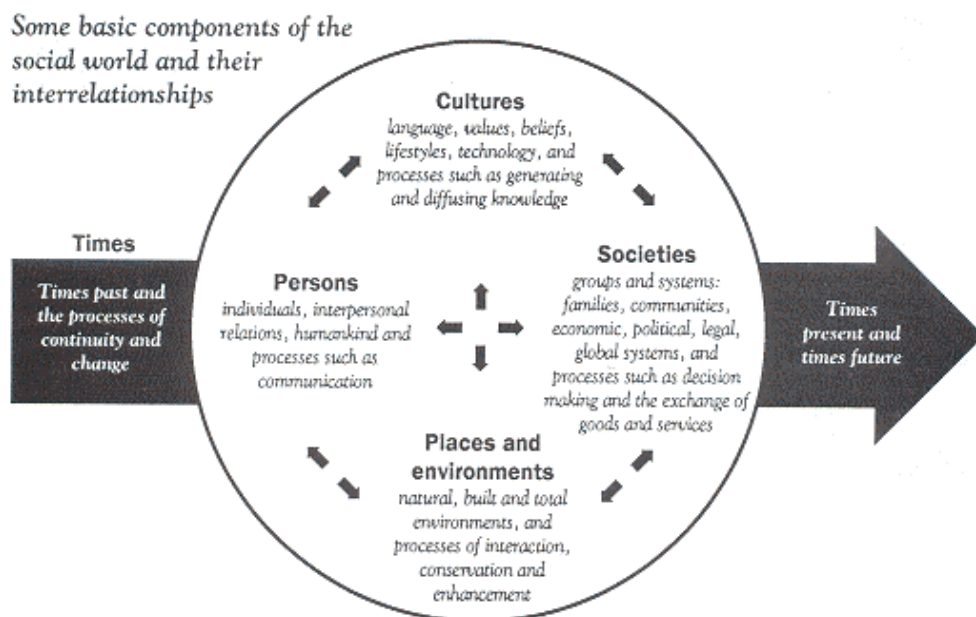
**CULTURES:** the knowledge needed in the form of language, symbols, values, beliefs, ideologies, lifestyles and technology by members of societies and the processes by which **knowledge is generated and diffused**.

**HUMAN BEINGS (PERSONS):** are set within and strongly influenced by societies, cultures, environments and times. Each individual is unique, possesses both human rights and human responsibilities, plays many roles and is involved in relating to and communicating with others. Together we constitute humankind.

PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS: persons, societies and cultures are set in, and are a part of, environments: local, national, regional and global. These environments include both natural and built environments, as well as the social and cultural environments referred to above: together making up the total environment. Processes include **interaction, conservation and enhancement of environments**.

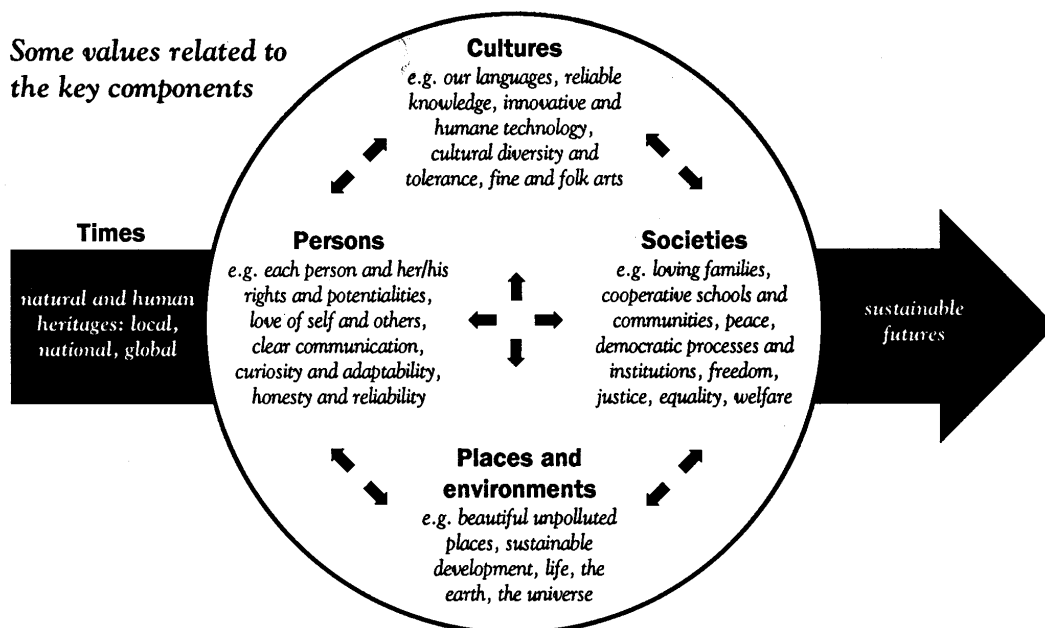
TIMES: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE: **Continuity and change** are basic processes which relate to all of, the above concepts: societies, cultures, persons, environments all change.

The following diagram can be used to suggest these interconnections. The model is highly simplified but is useful as a summary and also as a stimulus for generating many further ideas for curriculum planning. It brings out the importance of seeing social life as an interactive system, of seeing the integral relationships between the individual, the culture, the society and the environment, and the temporal setting.



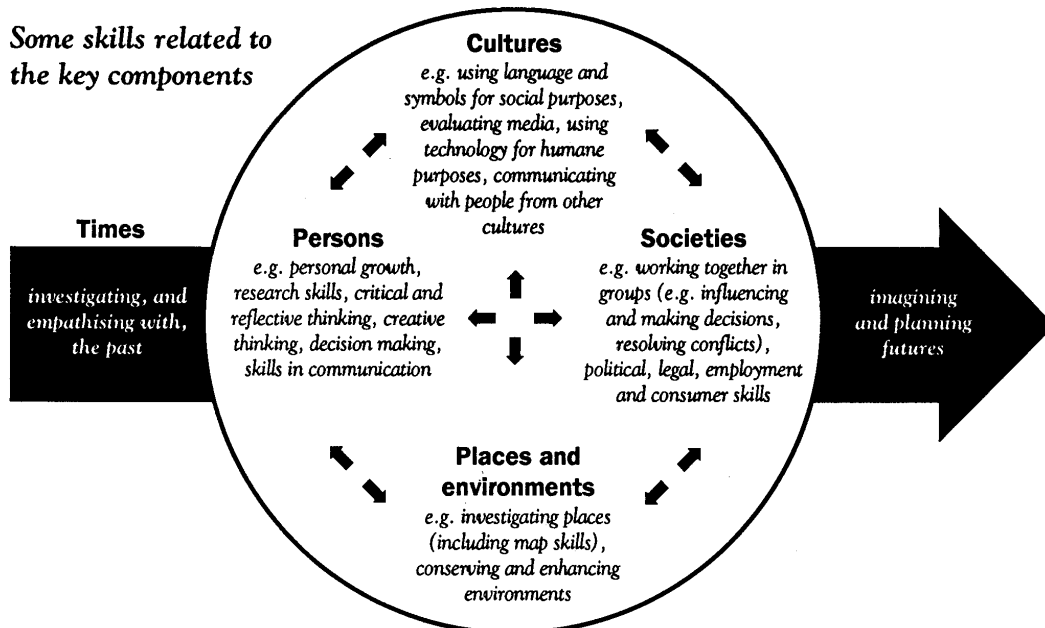
## VALUING OUR WORLD

Social education also helps us to critically and creatively evaluate our world and the same model may usefully be used to generate a picture of the wide range of values which need to be taken into consideration as people undertake this major human task. An Analytical concept like “persons” is also very much a value concept since our whole society, including the legal system, is based on the valuing of persons. The arrows in the diagram remind us of the interrelationships between values and of conflicts that occur, e.g. as between some economic and environmental values.



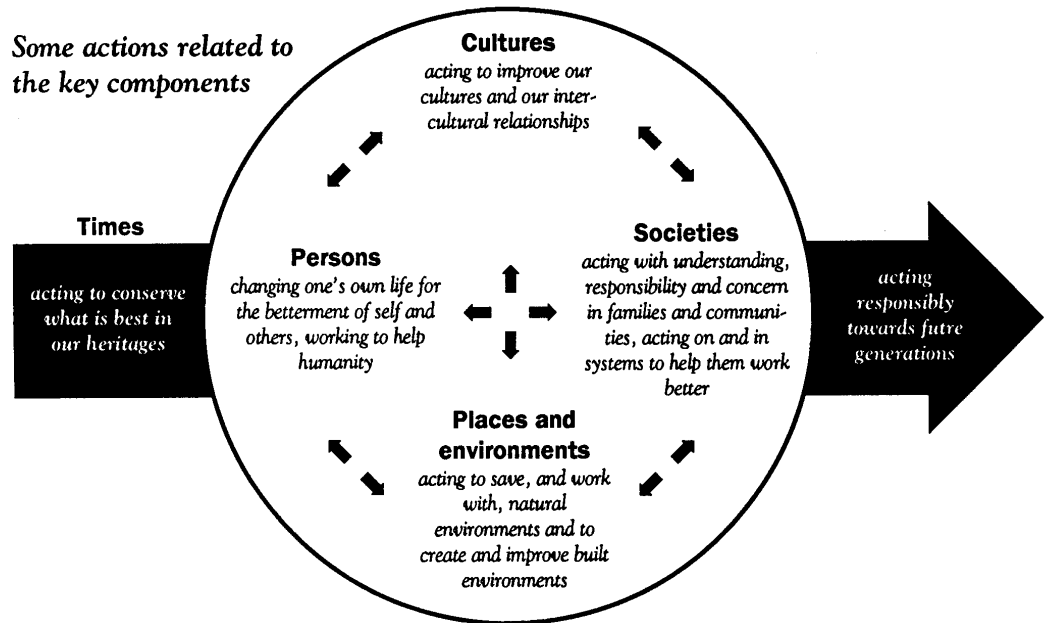
## DEVELOPING SKILLS TO COPE WITH AND INFLUENCE THE WORLD

A third role of social education is in the development of skills and the basic model may again be used to suggest a range of skills needed for social effectiveness. The arrows remind us that the socially competent person needs a wide range of complementary skills.



## ACTING IN OUR WORLD

Knowledge, competency and commitment should lead to complementary and interconnected actions in the social world.



## MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE NINETIES

Young people, Australian and global societies face major challenges in this last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which can again be related usefully to our five basic concepts.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

- Present trends in global warming, ozone depletion, destruction of forests, desertification, air pollution, population growth probably constitute the greatest challenge humankind has faced. The challenge is to create opportunities out of global crises by changing our lifestyles in ways more friendly to future generations and to all life on earth.

### SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

- Rapid social and technological changes continue to occur which, while bringing benefits to some, are also related to conflicts in, and breakdowns of, family and community life and dehumanisation of society. The challenge is to improve life in the 21st century by making humane and creative use of technological and social innovations,
- Conflict continues between different cultural, ethnic, racial and national groups, discrimination between the sexes and violations of human rights is also widespread. The challenge is to resolve such conflicts in non-violent ways and to identify and improve the lot of oppressed people, including refugees.

- The challenge to reduce the disparities between rich and poor people, and rich and poor and to reduce the impact of disasters such as famines, floods and civil wars.
- The challenge to cope better with economic issues including rising living costs, disparities in foreign trade and the fear of financial crises and depressions, and to find new solutions to age long problems of scarcity, inequality, industrial conflict and welfare in an interdependent world.
- The challenge to empower people to play a positive, participatory role in our complex political, economic and legal systems, to develop new forms of governance, better legal institutions and to improve the social skills of all citizens.

#### CULTURAL CHALLENGES

- The challenge of providing effective access by all to the huge volumes of information being generated, of creating useful global communication networks and of educating people to be able to critically and creatively use the varied forms of media.
- The challenge to create an Australian culture which is rich and diverse and responsive to the unique place, region and world in which we live: to establish social goals that move beyond political and economic spheres to a wide spectrum of ideas and issues.

#### PERSONAL AND HUMANKIND CHALLENGES

- The challenge to people to rethink their role in the ecosystem and to imagine and help into being humane and sustainable futures.
- Challenges to our values and lifestyles arising from greater longevity, biotechnology, substance abuse, and the identification and control of diseases such as cancer, heart disease and AIDS.

#### HISTORICAL AND FUTURE RELATED CHALLENGES

- The challenge of preserving ideas, beliefs, values and traditions which still have significance in our culture.
- Challenges to generate innovations and lifestyles which will help people to create preferable futures.
- The challenges raised by major changes in Asia, Eastern Europe and U.S.S.R. and "east-west" relationships to begin a new era of nuclear disarmament, international co-operation and world peace.

## HOW SOCIAL EDUCATION HELPS

Education is never a panacea for social ills but social education can help in ways such as the following:

1. Social education helps to make better societies: social groups, communities and social systems by:
  - Bringing awareness of the nature and functions of societies in human development and welfare
  - Encouraging thoughtfulness, caring and a sense of community and responsibility in families, face to face groups, local neighbourhoods and in places of work
  - Investigating the nature of justice, humaneness and democracy, the role of minorities, inequality in regard to income, race and gender, and the use and misuse of power in social institutions and systems, including schools
  - Developing skills in decision making, cooperation and conflict resolution
  - Providing understandings about complex systems such as education, the mass media, economic, political and legal systems: how they function, and also how they can malfunction, and how people can help to humanise them and actively contribute to the improvement of the quality of life through them
  - Bringing awareness of global systems and issues including poverty, abuse of human rights, militarism, the threat of nuclear war as well as indications of successful global institutions and examples of co-operation
  - Generating actions which will help to build better societies.
  
2. Social education helps to contribute both to conserving and improving cultures by:
  - Bringing awareness of the nature of culture, the role of symbols and language and the ways in which knowledge is generated and communicated
  - Encouraging creative and critical thought about human values, customs, ideologies and world views, and the role of science and technology in the modern world
  - Developing understanding and appreciation of Australia's diverse cultural heritages, including its Aboriginal heritage, and the world's many centres of civilisation
  - Helping to improve skills in intercultural communication both with people within Australia and with those from other countries.
  
3. Social education helps each **person** to:
  - Make more sense of their own lives and their perceptions of societies, cultures, environments and time
  - Develop a sense of identity and to appreciate their family, ethnic, national and global heritages
  - Become more caring and empathetic
  - Be aware of and affirm basic human rights and responsibilities
  - Learn to enquire, to value, to make decisions, to learn how to learn
  - Communicate more effectively
  - Develop a sense of confidence and empowerment in interacting with other people and to act effectively in varied social settings, including work situations
  - Be more creative and enterprising
  - Develop interests in social research, social welfare, business, government and many other work opportunities,
  - Raise basic questions about human beings and to reflect on their relationships with other human beings, other species and the planet as a whole.
  
4. Social education helps to make **better places and environments** by:

- Providing people with knowledge and skills for understanding spatial environments and their complex patterns and relationships, including skills of map reading and making
- Helping people develop a sense of place and a lively and sensitive response to the places where people live and work
- Informing people about the state of the world beyond their local communities and giving them a sense of belonging to one world
- Developing concern about environmental and development issues: local, Australian and worldwide, and encouraging people to take an active part in the solution of such problems.

5. Social education helps people to:

- Gain knowledge and understandings of times: past, present and future
- Develop a sense of time and an empathy with past and future generations and to be sensitive to the disruptions that changes can bring
- Investigate the past for themselves, gain an awareness of bias and the limitations of historical research, to learn from past human successes and failures, and to evaluate what is good and bad about past ages and events
- Reflect critically on the process of change and modernisation
- Act to conserve worthwhile places, buildings, documents, photographs, artifacts, customs and practices
- Act to honour people, including civic leaders and older citizens living in the community, who have made a contribution to the development of a worthwhile culture in Australia
- Think imaginatively, open-mindedly, hopefully and responsibly about the future and to develop skills in planning for preferable futures.

### 3. COMPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO A MORE ADEQUATE SOCIAL EDUCATION

There have been many contributions to social education, many traditions of study, each with its distinctive contribution to make. One of our main concerns in the Social Education Association of Australia is to ensure that all students experience a balanced and comprehensive social education. To achieve this it will be necessary for all people interested in the planned study of society to work together in co-operative and complementary ways. Once again we have made use of the five fundamental concepts and the base model to distinguish varied contributions. However, **no one viewpoint on society is sufficient by itself**: people need multiple perspectives on their social world in our complex and demanding times. Conservative demands in U.K. and some Australian states for "a return to traditional history and geography courses" are no panacea for improving social education.

Studies of **TIMES past**, historical studies, have made a time honoured contribution to social education and should continue to be an essential part of every person's education. Modern historical studies emphasise the methodologies of the historian, tease out the biases and political viewpoints of the writers, study social history and the ordinary citizen as well as the notable person and make use of prehistory with the aid of archaeology, as when studying Australian Aborigines. Temporal studies should also look at the present in the light of the past and also consider the **future** in the light of the past and the present: make tentative predictions but also consider preferable and not only possible and probable futures.

Studies of **PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS** include geographical studies which focus on the ways in which people in different parts of the world have perceived and responded to their different environments. They look at the way environmental, social, economic and political processes operate to produce contrasting patterns in the human use of the earth. Environmental educators have added a strong sense of urgency and concern to spatial studies as they consider the damage that has been done by humankind to varied environments and they consider ways of creating sustainable futures. Ecologists are helping us to look at the world as a total system. Scientific and technological education also includes major elements of social education.

Studies of **SOCIAL GROUPS** have been of major interest to sociologists, anthropologists and behavioural scientists. They have stressed the systematic and intersubjective nature of research and drawn comparisons with the methodologies of the natural scientists. Many contemporary social researchers have been critical of this tradition and have stressed the importance of research as social interaction and the need to critically and creatively examine social institutions and to make use of action research in order to create a more just and humane society.

Studies of **SOCIAL SYSTEMS** are of major importance including economic, political, legal, educational and global systems. Once again there are more theoretical traditions and there are also concerned traditions which look critically at justice, inequality and policies to improve social welfare. Of the utmost importance is the tradition of citizenship education which is concerned not only with knowing about but knowing how to be a better participant in society. Global, peace and development education lift this concern and action to the international level.

Studies of **CULTURES** are closely related to studies of social groups but place a major stress on the nature of language, symbols, values, beliefs and lifestyles. New disciplines have appeared such as sociolinguistics which have brought useful insights and applied disciplines

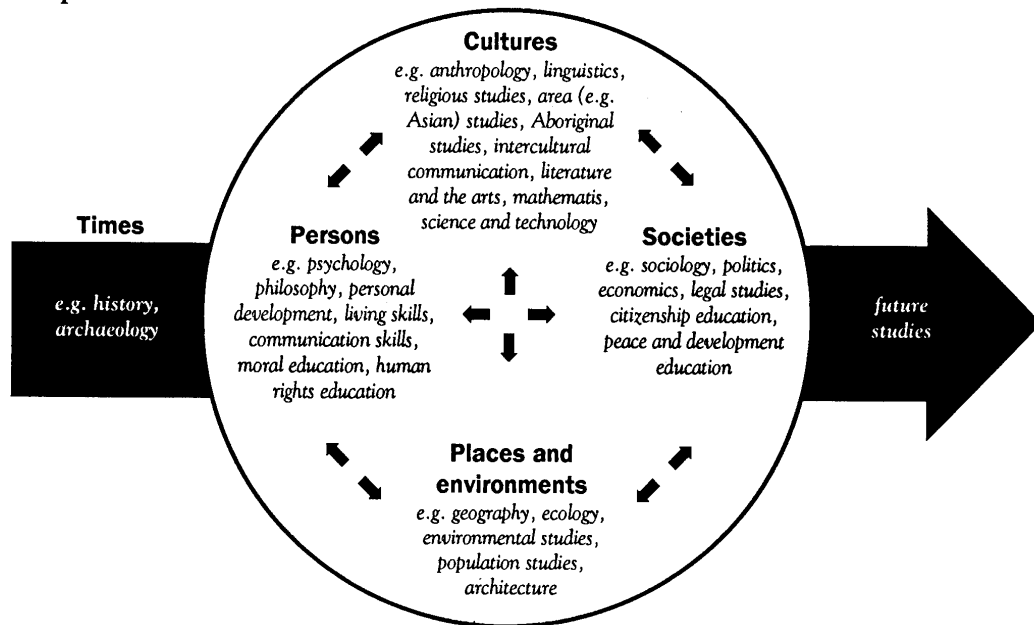
such as intercultural communication. These have added to our skills in relating to people who are different. Of critical importance in today's world are studies of the role of the mass media and technology in the formation of our values, worldviews and lifestyles. Education in the humanities - literature and the art – also closely interrelates with social education as do studies in science and social mathematics.

All of the above contributions and traditions assist in the study of individual HUMAN BEINGS as well as HUMANKIND. Various psychological disciplines help us to understand the nature of the person in society but we are also beholden to philosophical traditions of reflective enquiry, to moral education and the study of human rights, and to practical programs in the fields of community skills, human relations skills and conflict resolution skills. Of major importance is the common sense lived experience of students, teachers, parents and community members. We also need to ask one of the major questions of the age: "what is the role of human beings in the ecosystem?"

Once again a model should help to remind us that:

- The contributions of various discipline and traditions of study are complementary and interrelated
- Each perspective on the social world has its limitations. Across and beyond particular contributions, social education should help identify the patterns which connect people and events, people and places, people and systems, mind/body and matter, past, present and future in the integrated way in which people in fact encounter their worlds.

*Some complementary contributions to a more complete social education*



## 4. SOME REQUIREMENTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SOCIAL EDUCATION

Here are some suggestions for important needs in social education in the 90s and beyond, once again drawing on our definition on page 5 with its emphasis on "the active process", on integrated understandings, values, skills and actions, and on the five interrelated key concepts.

There is a need for:

1. Greater emphasis on active citizenship and on commitment to democratic processes: not just on learning about "how parliament works" but on a genuine **political literacy**, which involves understanding how decisions are actually made in social groups, as well as in local, state and federal politics, and simulated and actual experience in influencing decision making. In this regard we fully support the work of the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training and its report on Active Citizenship.
2. Greater emphasis on **the nature of, the care of, and working with, the environment** so that each individual grows up with an awareness that they are part of the total environment, part of the problems that humankind is now facing in regard to the environment and that they can be part of the solution of our environmental problems and challenges such as "the Greenhouse Effect" and population and development issues.
3. A renewed interest in **Australian Studies**, including **Aboriginal Studies**, following the wealth of new materials and interpretations of society generated for 1988. This needs to be interrelated with **Multicultural Studies** and **World Studies** so that Australian Studies is seen as an exemplar of human studies rather than of nationalistic propaganda. Love of the sunburnt country is complementary to love of the sundrenched planet. Neglect of Australian Studies in the past is not an excuse for a new age of ethnocentrism.
4. A vital concern with **Asian and Pacific Studies**, in line with work of the Asian Studies Council with and its stress on our special relationship with Asia, and also a major interest in current events throughout the world, such as the fundamental changes in Western Europe (EEC) and Eastern Europe and their repercussions on future international relations, and issues in Africa and South America.
5. Cooperation between teachers, students, parents and those in leadership positions in schools so that there is a development of **the total curriculum** and articulation of the curriculum from primary to secondary and between subjects. For example, studies of science and technology and studies of society are intimately related. Personal development needs to be seen in its social and cultural setting. New insights into the nature of language and of thinking skills need to be found in all subjects. There is also a need for **cooperation between subject associations** so as to present a consistent message to politicians and bureaucrats on the need for basic social and environmental education.
6. Use of teaching methods that **draw on the experience of the students**, as well as on public knowledge, and which systematically initiate useful and rewarding social educational experiences for students that anticipate some of the knowledge, values and skills they will need in a changing world.
7. Improved education in **analytical, critical, reflective and creative thinking** about human issues and an understanding of how knowledge is generated and how **one learns how to learn** for the rest of one's life.

8. Use of **enquiry methods and research projects** by students which are systematic in nature, which have concern for those being interacted with, and which may possibly lead on to act for example in regard to historical preservation, local environmental action or improved human welfare.
9. Further use of a **variety of media, methods and resources** in classrooms, including use of language, art, drama, music and movement, as a reflection of our growing knowledge of various forms of cognition and the value of varied learning styles adapted to the needs of individual learners. Use of interactive computer programs to stimulate active learning by all students.
10. An emphasis on **cooperation** and the building of school and classroom climates which are characterised by essential human values including love and respect for other persons and oneself, honesty, justice and freedom and a commitment to human rights.
11. Further **community involvement** in education by drawing on the riches of local and regional resources, including old and young, business, industry and government, ethnic and other groups and by forming school councils which include parents, teachers, students and other interested people, and so helping to create lifelong learning communities in our often fragmented and materialistic towns and suburbs.
12. **Active networking** between schools (students/teachers/community members) and professional groups around Australia and overseas (eg. through computer links) so that we can share the wealth of ideas and resources now available and which are becoming more accessible by means of computers, satellites and other technological developments.
13. **Dialogue and cooperation** (backed by appropriate funding) between state governments, the Commonwealth Government and its educational agencies, the Commission for the Future, professional organisations, other groups interested in education including political parties, business and industry groups, environmental, development and peace education organisations, the universities and colleges on the nature of the total curriculum, including social and environmental education. Mapping and redesigning of curricula by public processes rather than by closed committees in state department backrooms.
14. **Rethinking of the context for social education in schools** by research and preparation of alternative models or ways in which social education can be clearly and legitimately incorporated into the total organisation of the curriculum and sequenced throughout the years of compulsory schooling.
15. Ongoing provision to ensure **improved preservice and inservice education** eg., by the provision of resources which can be used within schools, or by groups of schools, so that teachers are kept abreast of, and given the opportunity to share in the development of, better ideas and practices in social education.
16. Development of a more **wholistic approach to social education**, which relates the varied elements suggested in the model on page 7, which takes account of the whole person in the learning process and which emphasises the need for global cooperation for our common futures.

## REFERENCES

- Bicentennial Australian Studies Schools Project.** Various bulletins published by the Curriculum Development Centre for the Bicentennial Year.
- Curriculum Review of Social Studies and Social Sciences Education.** Perth: Ministry of Education, 1990.
- Education for Active Citizenship.** Canberra: Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, AGPS, 1988.
- Education for Peace: Explorations and Proposals.** Canberra: Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1986.
- Educating for the Future and Global Education.** Annual editions of *Ethos Journal of the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers*, 1987 and 1988.
- Engle, S.H. and Ochoa, A. **Education for Democratic Citizenship: Decision Making in the Social Studies**, New York, Teachers College Press, 1988.
- Fien, J. Gerber, R. & Wilson, P. (eds) **The Geography Teacher's Guide to the Classroom.** Melbourne: Macmillan, 2nd edition, 1988.
- Geography in Secondary Education.** Brisbane: Australian Geography Teachers Association, 1988.
- Grieg, S. Pike, G. and Selby, D. **Earthrights: Education as if the Planet Really Mattered.** And **Greenprints for Changing Schools.** London: Kogan Page, 1987 and 1989.
- Home, Donald. **Ideas for a Nation.** Sydney: Pan, 1989.
- Human Society: R-10 Framework for Learning.** Adelaide: Education Department of South Australia, 1988.
- In the National Interest: Secondary Education and Youth Policy in Australia.** Canberra: Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1985.
- Johnston, G. **Social Studies: In Search of a Rationale.** Hawthorne: ACER, 1989.
- Marsh, Colin (ed.) **Teaching Social Studies.** Sydney: Prentice Hall, 1987.
- Miller, J. **The Holistic Curriculum.** Toronto: OISE Press, 1986.
- Our Common Future.** Oxford University Press, 1987. (World Commission on Environment and Development Report.)
- National Strategy for the Study of Asia in Australia.** Asian Studies Council. Canberra: AGPS, 1988.
- P-10 Social Education Framework.** Brisbane: Department of Education, 1989.
- Pike, G. & Selby, D. **Global Teacher, Global Learner.** Hodder & Stoughton, 1987.
- Primary Social Studies Guidelines.** Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1985.
- Slaughter, R.A. **Studying the Future: An Introductory Reader.** Melbourne: Commission for the Future, 1988. (Available from Commonwealth Book Shops)
- Social and Cultural Education 8-10 Guidelines.** Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Education, 1986.
- The Social Education Framework P-10.** Melbourne: Ministry of Education, 1987.
- Tinkler, Don. **Social Education for Australian Primary Schools.** Melbourne: Macro-view Educational Publications, 1989.
- Tonkin, Colin. **World Perspectives in the Social Studies: A U.K.-Australia Comparison.** Ph.D. thesis, Latrobe University, 1988.
- Social Education.** Washington: National Council for the Social Studies. (The major journal in the field.) See especially Vol. 53 No.6 October 1989 on participatory citizenship and on scope and sequence alternatives.

# PART TWO: A FRAMEWORK

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This framework has been prepared by the following members of the Social Education Association of Australia to promote discussion and contribute to the improvement of social education in Australia:

Wayne Perkins (Victoria)  
Peter Leverenz (SA)  
Malcolm McArthur (SA)  
with help from:

Rob Gilbert (Queensland)  
Laurie Lewis (Victoria)

David Dufty (NSW)  
Bev Stubbs (NSW)  
Bob Hill (NSW)  
Greg Birchall (Victoria)  
Ray Land (Queensland)  
Vie Foster (ACT)  
Louise Finch (NT)

Sandra Newell (NSW)  
Tony Hepworth (NSW)  
Julie Hamston (Victoria)  
Colin Tonkin (Victoria)  
Helen Withnell (ACT)  
Glen Bennett (W A)

As a professional organisation we support in principle the efforts to establish broad common frameworks as suggested by Mr Dawkins, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, which "would set out the major areas of knowledge and the most appropriate mix of skills and experiences for students in all years of schooling, but accommodate the different or specific curriculum needs of different parts of Australia". We would see these not as mandatory documents, but as having advisory functions which would:

- acquaint people in different parts of Australia with education developments in other areas,
- serve to improve curriculum design in all areas and aid in the development and sharing of resources, and
- assist students and teachers who move from one system to another and one school to another.

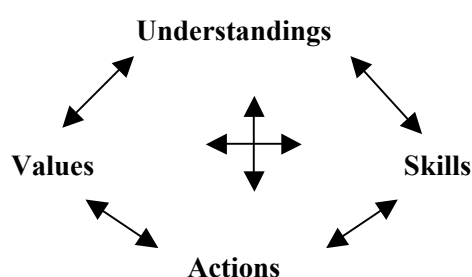
We are concerned, however that such documents should be neither mandatory nor a rigid viewpoint imposed from the centre, nor that they should be reduced to the minimal levels of entitlement. Rather, they should be rich in possibilities and open to the constant developments in thinking and events occurring in Australia and the world. They should complement the excellent work being done in many centres in Australia, including schools, and should show cognizance of worldwide thinking in social education.

As an association which has given special attention to the tradition of integrated social study, especially in primary schools and junior secondary schools, we have encouraged co-operation between teachers and supporters of the various socially concerned subjects such as history, geography, economics, commerce, politics, legal studies, home science, living skills and personal development. We remain hopeful that teachers in these areas will see the value of mutual co-operation to ensure that there is an emphasis on the need for basic social education as well as other basics. We would hope that all Australian students in their years of schooling can benefit from the special insights of the varied approaches to the study of society, and also from common understandings, values and skills which underlie the whole area of human and social studies.

## 2. WHAT IS SOCIAL EDUCATION?

Social education is the active process by which people, through drawing on personal experience and public knowledge:

- develop and apply **UNDERSTANDINGS** which help them to explain the origins, diversity and dynamic nature of society, including the interactions among societies, cultures, individuals and environments
- develop and practise **VALUES** and sensibilities which are crucial to a just and democratic society and a sustainable world
- develop and practise **SKILLS** in investigating society, discussing issues, tackling problems, making decisions and working co-operatively with others
- take **ACTIONS** enlightened and empowered by these understandings, values and skills, which might contribute to the achievement of more desirable futures for all.



In preparing young people for "fulfilling personal lives and active membership of the community" (J.S. Dawkins in *Strengthening Australia's Schools*), schools have a particular responsibility to ensure that all students experience continuous and systematic social education programs.

These programs should be committed to the development of competent citizens who are prepared to participate in the decision-making processes of society, to act to protect our heritage and environment, and in general, to show concern for their own future well-being and that of all members of the world community .

## 3. THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL EDUCATION

The major purpose of social education in schools is to provide for the systematic development of young people's understanding of society and their ability to participate effectively in it. Social education aims to help students to identify the historical, environmental, social and cultural factors that shape their identity, to make the world intelligible to them, and develop their visions for the future. The well being of a democratic society and a fragile ecology depends on having citizens who are informed, committed and able to act. This form of social knowledge is practical knowledge which involves knowing, valuing and acting.

To achieve this, social education must be concerned with significant issues facing contemporary societies and with possible and preferred futures. This involves questions of change, of power, of conflict and cooperation, and of social justice.

The global society into which our young people are moving, and for which they will have responsibility, is marked by rapid change and increasing complexity and interdependence. To be a socially educated person in the 1990s requires the ability to understand and act in this increasingly complex and interdependent world, and to relate everyday experience and structures to larger social structures, processes and events. Since we cannot "know" all the details of this world, to make our meanings we require a set of understandings that enables us to generalise and abstract, to analyse and explain, to ask questions, to view issues, processes and structures from a variety of perspectives, to compare and contrast, to make connections and links and to suggest alternatives.

The development and application of these understandings involves the development of particular **learning skills** - those thinking skills, research and communication skills that enable young people to identify essential issues and separate what is important from what is not. As practical knowledge, concerned with solving problems and making futures, social education also requires the development and practice of social action skills, including such abilities as cooperating, negotiating, goal setting, organising and evaluating. An understanding of values; why people hold particular values and the ways in which they affect their behaviour, is central to practical social knowledge. This necessarily involves the values of the learner. In an interdependent and changing world, young people need to be able to defend their views, and be flexible and open to change if they are to be able to make decisions and accept commitments and responsibilities. Social education provides the opportunity for young people to identify, reflect on and modify their views and values, to compare these with those of others, to critically examine and appreciate their own culture and those of others, and to develop and practise values such as co-operation, caring for others, social responsibility, peaceful resolution of conflict and environmental responsibility.

## 4. THE PURPOSE OF THIS FRAMEWORK

In conjunction with A Rationale for Social Education in Part One of this document, **A Framework for Social Education** is designed to:

- identify the contribution social education makes to a comprehensive curriculum;
- identify shared, national goals for social education;
- assist in establishing priorities and providing balance in what is an increasingly crowded curriculum.

**A Framework for Social Education** is designed to assist schools and curriculum developers in identifying the understandings, skills and values essential for self knowledge, a critical understanding of society, and active citizenship. It does not in itself provide a curriculum nor suggest sequence, age level appropriateness, forms of assessment or resources. Such advice is to be found in recent curriculum statements of the various states.

In April 1989 the Australian Education Council outlined a set of national goals for schooling. Of these goals, **A Framework For Social Education** will particularly help: *"To enable all students to achieve and develop self-confidence, optimism, high self esteem, respect for others, and achievement of personal excellence."*

*"To develop in students:*

- *a knowledge and appreciation of Australia's historical and geographic context*
- *an understanding of and concern for balanced development and the global environment*
- *skills of analysis and problem solving*
- *a capacity to exercise judgment in matters of morality, ethics and social justice."*

*"To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context."*

*"To provide students with an understanding and respect for our cultural heritage including the particular cultural backgrounds of Aboriginal and ethnic groups."*

*"To provide appropriate career education and knowledge of the world of work, including an understanding of the nature and place of work in our society."*

## **5. ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS**

All education systems in Australia have in recent years developed comprehensive framework statements about the nature, practice and content of Social Education. There is a high degree of agreement within the statements. This document builds on these in an attempt to provide a national statement of essential learnings about society.

The state systems use different strands, themes or organising categories, but this statement groups essential learnings under five broad headings. Any categorization is to some degree arbitrary, but these perspectives have the capacity to encompass all important generalizations about society. They are:

- Heritage and Change
- Environments
- Culture and Groups
- Social Systems and Decision-Making
- The Individual Person

The complex interdependence of contemporary society demands of self-confident and active citizens not only an understanding of particular aspects of society, but also an understanding of the interrelationships that link them. The perspectives draw on the concerns and concepts of various disciplines that contribute to social education, such as history, geography, sociology, politics and economics, and each provides a particular perspective on society. However, when used together they offer a dynamic framework through which society can be investigated, and all need to be considered in any particular inquiry. For example the Greenhouse Effect cannot be considered only in environmental terms: political, economic and life style issues should also be considered if students are to develop a comprehensive understanding and be able to suggest possible solutions.

Yet there is another perspective: that of the individual. A starting point for social investigation may be the individual's experience. Systems and structures are better understood through an examination of their impact on individuals, and knowledge of systems allows individuals to make greater sense of their world and act more effectively in it. This framework expects that an individual's values, experience and decisions should permeate all learning about society. On occasions, it can be the focus of study in its own right.

There is another sense in which the individual person is central to social education. A concern with better persons not only demands that social education enables young people to make more sense of their lives and of how and why they act and behave. It also means that the contexts and experiences provided in programs should:

- develop self confidence, identity and self esteem;
- promote moral growth;
- improve communication skills;
- develop people's understanding of how they learn.

Teachers, through pastoral care, personal development or social skills programs linked to the studies of wider society allow for the development of this dimension. This linkage is crucial, since only by considering universal human questions of needs, values and rights can we promote the development of the individual.

These are outcomes that are basic to social education's concern for human rights and responsibilities and as such are also essential to the goal of better societies. This focus on the person is an integral part of each of the other perspectives and their respective outcomes, understandings and contexts.

**Essential learnings** include not only the development of understanding, but also of relationships, skills, values and attitudes. The latter apply equally to every social investigation no matter what the issue. For this reason they are considered in more detail following the treatment of the four broad perspectives.

To assist schools and curriculum planners to review and develop their social education programs, **outcomes, key understandings and contexts** are provided for each of the organising perspectives.

The **outcomes** describe the desired qualities and competencies to be developed during the student's compulsory schooling. They attempt to outline what students will know, what they will be able to do and what they will value.

The **understandings** are useful generalizations about society which help provide meaning for students and provide direction to investigations of particular social phenomena and issues.

The **contexts** indicate aspects of society and individual experience which every student should explore during their schooling, and which provide the basis for content selection in program planning.

## HERITAGE AND CHANGE

OUTCOMES for learning about heritage and change will be:

- The development of a capacity to adapt to and influence change.
- An awareness of the contribution to the human experience of other people in other places and other times.
- A sense of personal, community, national and global heritage and identity.
- A sense of our environmental heritage.
- A capacity to examine evidence, identify bias and consider cause and effects.
- A capacity to draw parallels between times and cultures.
- A capacity to understand the nature of change, consider alternatives and to speculate about possible and preferred futures.

- A capacity to evaluate the quality of change with respect to people and environments.
- A commitment to preserve what is worthwhile and work towards a more just future.

Key UNDERSTANDINGS about heritage and change:

- Each person has a unique heritage and belongs to a wider heritage.
- Individuals develop and grow throughout their lives.
- Change is occurring constantly.
- Any change has a variety of interacting causes and effects.
- Tradition and continuity are essential aspects of society.
- Individuals and groups can affect change.
- Some change is intentional, some unplanned and unforeseen.
- Change has both positive and negative outcomes.
- Change often creates resistance and conflict.

The CONTEXTS for investigation heritage and change:

Every social investigation will involve students in the consideration of change, and students will need a clear understanding of the nature of change if they are to make sense of their social world. They will need to become aware of the extent to which their own heritage may colour their evaluations of change, and develop the capacity to recognise their own and others' biases. Discussions of possible futures form an important part of the study of change.

Students should have opportunities to consider change on a local scale, by investigating change in the more immediate settings of school, family and community, and on a broader scale by developing a sense of time through historical studies, particularly of Australian society.

While the study of any social phenomena will include consideration of change, there are particular aspects of society which every student should have opportunities to explore in relation to change.

These would include:

- the changing nature and role of the family
- the impact of technology
- global interdependence
- environmental issues
- the structure and organisation of work
- war and peace
- gender roles and relationships
- issues of nationalism
- the development of Australian identity
- Aboriginal heritage
- European, American and Asian heritages
- Australia in the last 200 years
- Asian Societies
- Future Studies

## ENVIRONMENTS

The OUTCOMES from learning about environments will be:

- An appreciation of ways in which all life on earth is bound together interdependently in ecosystems.
- An appreciation of, and concern for, the environment.
- A respect for the cultural significance of the environment for different groups and societies.
- A preparedness to make lifestyle choices which reduce demands on environmental resources.
- An ability to work with others to maintain and improve the environment.
- A capacity to understand and influence decisions about environments.
- An awareness of the relationship between technology, economy and the environment.
- A commitment to the more equitable global use of resources.

Key UNDERSTANDINGS about environments:

- People and environments are interdependent.
- People interact with the environment for a variety of purposes and in a variety of ways.
- Individuals, groups and societies hold different, often conflicting attitudes to the environment.
- The satisfaction of basic needs and wants affects, and is affected by, the environment.
- The satisfaction of needs and wants demands that societies make choices and decisions about resource use and distribution because some resources are scarce.
- Economic development involves environmental change.
- The ways in which individuals, groups and societies interact with the environment frequently lead to environmental degradation, such as air pollution, salinity, erosion and desertification.
- The interdependent nature of environmental systems means that environmental degradation anywhere in the world is of global concern.

The CONTEXTS for investigating environments:

An understanding of the relationship between human settlement and the natural environment both in Australia and other continents is fundamental. The significance of weather and climate for daily life in rural and urban settlements, and the ways in which communities trade and interact should be understood.

Environmental issues are becoming increasingly important and students should have frequent opportunities to investigate them. In particular, they should be aware of the impact of such factors as increasing energy use and the depletion of non-renewable resources on a fragile global ecology.

Students should be involved in the investigation of environmental issues at a local and national level and these should provide opportunities for direct involvement and action. They also need to develop an awareness of the interdependent nature of the global environment through the investigation of such planet-threatening issues as the Greenhouse Effect, deforestation and marine pollution. The focus of these investigations should be on possible solutions to these problems, ranging from the adoption of socially and environmentally responsible personal consumption patterns to speculation about alternative approaches to global economic development.

There are particular aspects of the environment and the ways in which human beings interact in the environment that every student should have the opportunity to explore:

- location and distribution of resources
- patterns of resource use
- renewable and non-renewable resources
- population
- urban/rural lifestyle comparisons
- extinction of species
- deforestation and desertification
- industrialisation
- agriculture
- weather and climatic changes
- decisions about resource use
- technology, work and leisure
- tourism

## **CULTURE AND GROUPS**

The **OUTCOMES** from learning about culture and groups will be:

- A positive self-concept and a sense of worth as a member of society and an ability to participate effectively in a variety of roles.
- A compassion for other people and a sensitivity to their rights and freedoms, aspirations and beliefs.
- An appreciation of and empathy with the value systems of cultures within Australia.
- A recognition of the values inherent in social issues and the clarification of personal values in relation to these.
- A capacity to develop and refine a set of personal values as a basis for just and democratic action.
- A developing sense of national and global identity.
- A critical understanding of the dominant cultural values of Australian society.
- An understanding of some of the characteristics of cultural groups outside of Australia.
- An understanding of the role of race, class and gender in culture and groups.
- An understanding of the nature of culture and the role of symbols, language, custom or values.

Key **UNDERSTANDINGS** about cultures and groups are:

- Every member of society belongs to a variety of groups and can play a variety of roles.
- Some groups in society are more powerful and have higher status than others.
- Culture includes the systems of shared knowledge, language, rules, values and beliefs that provide meanings and norms for members of a cultural group.
- Contemporary societies contain a variety of cultural influences, with some more dominant than others.
- Societies transmit and express their culture through a variety of institutions and practices such as schools, religion, families, art, music, story and custom.
- Cultures change over time, particularly when they are affected by contact with other cultures and by changing environments.
- Interaction between cultures and pressures for change within cultures often result in conflict.
- Environments help shape cultures and different cultures have varying impacts on environments.

The **CONTEXTS** for investigating culture and groups:

Students should explore the ways cultures are maintained and changed, such as comparative studies of the family and the development of gender roles.

Students should have opportunities to investigate major relevant social groupings and the roles in which these involve people. This would include school, work, recreational groups, pressure and community groups, political parties.

The role of group affiliation and loyalty, and its capacity for creating both conflict and cooperation should be considered in relation to a number of key issues.

Students should participate in activities (for example role plays and simulations) that provide the opportunity to think critically about their own views of society and the influences on them, and to experience a variety of cultures through participation in cultural events and practices within the community.

Investigation should concentrate on the relationship between shared knowledge, values and beliefs and social systems and structures. It should also focus on the identification of socially just outcomes and the means by which these can be achieved. Activities should develop appropriate strategies for co-operative interaction that promotes the peaceful and positive resolution of conflict. Students should be involved in co-operative action to achieve identified goals.

Investigation of the maintenance and transmission of culture should include:

- the 'Australian identity', its values, rituals, symbols and myths
- Aboriginal cultures and the impact of European cultures
- issues surrounding the practice of multiculturalism
- Australia's social, political, economic and religious belief systems
- relationships with Australia's neighbours
- the role of the media in socialisation and the construction of values
- the impact of ownership and control of the media
- big corporations, governments and culture
- communications and the shrinking world - the 'global village' concept
- the world of work

## SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND DECISION MAKING

OUTCOMES from studying social systems and decision making will be:

- A capacity to make appropriate personal decisions.
- A willingness to participate in community decision making, to assume responsibility for carrying out individual or group decisions and to accept the consequences of such action.
- An awareness of rights and responsibilities and of laws which affect the individual, and the confidence to use the legal processes.
- A capacity to make responsible choices about wants in relation to limited resources.
- Awareness of membership of local, national and global societies.
- Commitment to work towards more just decisions and systems, both locally and globally.

Key UNDERSTANDINGS about social systems and decision making:

- Rules and ways of making decisions are present in all groups, communities and societies.
- Individuals and groups have varying abilities to influence decisions.
- All decisions have consequences, both intended and unintended, fair and unfair.
- All societies develop economic and political systems which affect the life opportunities of their citizens.
- The production and distribution of resources is organised in a variety of ways.
- Economic, political, legal and social systems are interdependent.
- There is an increasing tendency for systems to be global.

The CONTEXTS for investigating social systems and decision making:

Students should have opportunities to investigate formal and informal decision making in a wide variety of settings, including the family, the school, the local community, and at national and global levels. From early years they should explore questions relating to needs and wants, the setting of rules and sanctions, and the consideration of consequences.

Students should understand the nature and origins of Australia's legal, political and economic systems and the issues associated with them, and be able to compare them with those of other societies. An important focus is how these systems attempt to balance rights, responsibilities, and human needs and wants.

They should investigate the role of the constitution and the three levels of government in the formal structures of decision making, power and authority in Australia. Investigation of decision making, power and authority should also include the role and varying influence of groups such as trade unions, commercial interests, the media, lobby groups and transnational corporations.

Particular emphasis should be given to decision making in such significant issues as:

- environmental degradation
- the implications of a diversity of lifestyles, values and beliefs
- the distribution and control of wealth and resources
- the development and application of technology
- ethical and moral issues
- questions of rights and discrimination
- access to information
- equality before the law
- global inequalities and the issues of development
- the nature and role of the education system

## THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON

This framework expects that an individual's values, experience and decisions should permeate all learning about society. It may, however, be the focus of study in its own right.

OUTCOMES from learning about the individual in society will be:

- A sense of identity with all members of a global society.
- A sense of personal worth.
- A capacity to live and work with others and develop productive interpersonal relationships.
- A commitment to care about oneself and others.
- A commitment to human rights and a just society.
- A critical and reflective approach to social action.
- A sense of empowerment and an ability to influence life situations.

Key UNDERSTANDINGS about the individual:

- Each person is unique and our democratic institutions value individual contributions
- The way we are and how we understand ourselves are influenced by the time and place in which we live.
- An individual's needs result from unique and changing combinations of biological and cultural factors.
- Individuals perceive the world in different ways and this affects their communication with others.
- Individuals need a variety of social skills to survive in, and to change society.
- Individuals have rights and responsibilities within social systems.
- Membership of social groups carries moral obligations for each individual.
- Individuals influence, and are influenced by, their environments.
- The needs of other individuals are both similar to and different from our own.
- Individuals can help to create the future for themselves and others.

CONTEXTS for investigating the individual:

Teachers and students should include the individual perspective in whatever aspect of study they are attempting. In addition, special times may need to be set aside for skill development in areas such as conflict resolution, values analysis, class meetings, group work and enquiry. It is assumed that social educators adapt learning styles to individual needs and do not focus on any one model of learning. Social education classes make extensive use of enquiry approaches, which also include simulations, stories, experiential learning, collaborative learning, community experience and learning by talking and listening. This implies that a variety of assessment modes must be used to cater for this variety of learning.

Students need to participate in class meetings where they experience listening, speaking, rule making, and decision making, and undertake a variety of group roles. They should critically investigate and plan social action.

The classroom should be a place where individuals care for and are cared for by other people. Opportunities should be found for individuals to learn about themselves and others through:

- reflecting on group processes
- experience in resolving moral dilemmas
- reflecting on stereotyping and prejudice
- practising conflict resolution
- examining human rights
- trying new learning styles
- identifying media influences

- social skills development
- recognising universal human needs and aspirations
- reflecting on their relationship to the environment, community, country and world in which they live.

## **6. APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Learning in social education is an active process in which students relate to their social world through experiencing, questioning, critical analysis, reflection and practising new behaviours.

The goal of social education is to prepare students for individual fulfilment and effective participation in society. The learning process and not just the content must be looked at to ensure all students can participate.

The climate of schooling is very important. This relates to considerations such as personality, relationships, interactions, values, hopes and feelings. For some students schooling can be an alienating and crushing experience. To avoid this we need to ensure that all students learn how to learn - and that they develop a positive self concept.

Students involved in social inquiry will be laying the foundation for problem solving and decision making necessary for effective participation in society. They will deal with a range of significant issues that are of current and future concern, and they will be encouraged to consider values and to develop appropriate action. Teachers have a responsibility not only to teach the inquiry process, but to model an inquiry approach through their own teaching.

Social education should be a dynamic area of curriculum which encourages students to adopt a critically questioning approach to their learning. While it has as an important aim the transmission of culture, this transmission should involve reflection and questioning and have as a goal the retention of what is worthwhile and a commitment to change what is unjust, wasteful or harmful. Students who critically reflect upon what they learn are more likely to develop and value a thoughtful commitment towards what they identify as worthwhile.

The personal experiences of students are a valuable basic resource for social education and should be fully utilised. Further, the social education program should aim to extend the social understanding of students by providing a wide range of direct experiences upon which they can reflect. Field work where students can gather data by such means as observation, survey and interview, are an important part of social education methodology. Experiential learning is basically a recognition that what students learn about in the classroom must relate as directly as possible to what they experience and are likely to experience in their everyday lives.

Such learning involves the whole person, their ideas, feelings and relationships. A variety of learning styles is needed to be inclusive of all students.

### **SKILLS**

There is a wide range of skills involved in learning about and participating in society.

Research skills are fundamental. Students should be able to identify and clarify the central issues in any particular study, to plan an investigation and to develop and apply a range of skills necessary to gather and organise data from a variety of sources. This will include learning and applying skills such as observing and recording, surveying, interviewing and listening, and content analysis. It will include using tools such as computers and maps.

Analytical and critical skills are needed for students to interpret, clarify and analyse data, to distinguish between fact, opinion and propaganda and to detect bias in others as well as themselves. Problem solving skills also involve hypothesising and predicting possible solutions, and synthesizing outcomes. Skills in viewing data from different perspectives, and imagining possibilities and speculating futures are crucial in a rapidly changing and interdependent society.

Fundamental skills in written, oral, graphic communication and mapping are necessary to social inquiry and the understanding of sequence, processes of cause and effect and spatial relationships.

Social education places great store on cooperative learning because it maximizes learning, because it reflects and encourages human interdependence and because it develops skills necessary to active citizenship. There is a wide range of skills relating to group work that students need to learn and apply. These include the ability to identify, negotiate, distribute and coordinate tasks, the ability to undertake a variety of roles, the ability to share and to resolve conflict, the ability to communicate the outcomes of investigations in ways appropriate to a variety of audiences and purposes, and the ability to formulate and implement appropriate actions. Students must have frequent opportunities to develop and apply - these skills of cooperative learning in investigations which should progressively become less dependent of the teacher.

## **VALUES**

As members of society, all young people are in the process of developing a personal set of values. Through involvement in social education programs students should further clarify these values and be able to identify various influences on them. They should be able to formulate judgments about social issues and be able to defend these.

All significant issues that are likely to be investigated in a social education program involve, by definition, a range of value positions, frequently in conflict. An essential part of the investigation is the identification, analysis and evaluation of the values component. Further, certain values underpin learning in social education. These values, which are essential to rational debate and critical analysis, include adaptability, curiosity and questioning, openness and rationality. Students should be able to empathise with other value positions and should have a commitment to the peaceful resolution of value conflict.

Particular values are essential to living with others. They include compassion, co-operation, self esteem, caring for others, honesty and reliability, and the social education classroom should provide the opportunity to practise these. A range of values is also essential to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and these need to be developed through social education programs and experiences, including social responsibility, commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict, a sense of social justice, environmental concern and responsibility, respect for the law, respect for heritage, recognition of the rights of others and a commitment to democratic processes.

## **ACTION**

Action, or doing something to solve a problem, resolve an issue, or make a decision, is the outcome of a social investigation. Students, as an integral part of their investigations, should include consideration of what might be done and the formulation of an action plan to achieve this. This would include identification and evaluation of a range of action alternatives, and the selection of the one considered most appropriate, using criteria such as social justice, environmental sustainability and peaceful resolution of conflict.

On occasions there will be opportunities, particularly with older students, to implement the action option. Involvement in action will depend very much on the nature of the issue being investigated. Some issues may be global in nature and difficult for school children to influence immediately, although limited action such as letter writing to the media or politicians is always possible. Action in this case can be considered in two ways: 'What could be done to solve this global issue?' and 'What can we do as a result of our investigation?' However, if being able to act is an essential part of effective participation in society ~ the major rationale for social education - then students must include the consideration of appropriate action in their classroom investigations and must gain experience in implementing action when this is feasible.