



A
BRIEF
TO
THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION
ON
THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
"MOVING AHEAD"
FROM
QUEBEC FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Montreal, December 1993

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Throughout history change has occurred gradually (with a few exceptions), giving people the opportunity to respond and adapt over a period of time. To-day, with change itself the new constant, we are being forced to adapt in the midst of an action actually in progress. "Although people know a change is taking place, they have difficulty in knowing just what it all means."

Arthur J. Cordell, The Uneasy Eighties: The Transformation to an Information Society, Science Council of Canada.

Introduction

Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) was founded in 1944 to bring together local Home and School associations, some of which had existed since the 1920's. It is an independent voluntary parental organization representing approximately five thousand families, the majority being within the English speaking communities throughout the Province. In addition there are about a hundred other educational and parental groups, such as private schools, school committees etc. that are affiliated with QFHSA. Parent volunteers are active within local Home and School associations, the provincial organization and at the national level through the Canadian Home and School Parent Teacher Federation.

One of the stated aims of the Home and School movement is to assist in forming public opinion favourable to reform and to the advancement of the education of the child. Thus we are pleased to be able to submit this brief to the Minister of Education in response to her consultation document "Moving ahead".

The document has been studied with interest by QFHSA's Education Committee. The Minister is to be commended for focusing on concerns that are being currently voiced regarding the education system and for putting forward proposals to address these concerns. However the short time allowed for consultation has meant that QFHSA has been unable to involve the local school associations in drawing up this brief.

To provide an idea of QFHSA's interest and involvement in the educational opportunities offered to our children and youth we append to this response resolutions and other pertinent information.

The Minister's proposals and measures for action are addressed in the order that they appear in the consultation document. However we wish to say that fundamental to dealing with both the proposals and the issues raised in the latter part of the document is the concept of exit profiles. It seems to us that if the Quebec community - educational, business, cultural, etc. - could come together to define a realistic and pertinent set of exit profiles then there would be a more solid base for addressing the proposals and the measures to implement them.

Proposal 1 Improve the teaching of French, mother tongue, by placing more emphasis on written French and on the mechanics of language.

QFHSA agrees wholeheartedly with this proposal. However the measures suggested to implement the proposal ignore the fact that written language will only appear useful in the eyes of the student if it is required outside the setting of the language class. The remedial and diagnostic measures undertaken must be complemented by the student being required to use written French in other courses. Many of the complaints of poor writing skills arise because the student has little secondary school experience in writing an essay in the field of history or in writing a proper scientific report. We can support the concept that a student who demonstrates the necessary knowledge and has the ability to argue a point should not be penalized for minor errors in writing. However, all teachers have a responsibility to make the students aware of their mistakes.

Measure 1 Give more weight to written language in the evaluation process and give teachers more responsibility.

While QFHSA agrees to giving teachers more responsibility we do not agree to giving more weight to written language in the Secondary V French mother tongue exam. Written exams tend to emphasize the connection between the written word, literature in particular, and the act of writing. Students learn language from many models of which the written word is only one. Television, videos, computer games, popular songs, and magazines play an important role in language development. Their influence must not be underestimated nor their use as tools for learning. There are many students for whom literature has no appeal; it is consequently, for them, ineffective as a tool for the acquisition of good writing skills. If we are really interested in broadening the number of students who leave secondary school with good writing skills then all the media with which students interact outside the classroom must be used within the context of a mother tongue language arts course.

There are other measures which will also enhance the quality of the written language. The Ministry needs to re-enforce the importance of writing by requiring written answers in the other ministry set Secondary IV and V examinations. Teachers need to have the skills to adapt their teaching to the different ways students learn and the skills to include the use of all media as examples of language.

Measure 2 Administer a ministry-prepared writing examination at the end of Secondary III.

and

Measure 3 Provide teachers with a diagnostic writing test which would be administered at the beginning of Elementary 5 and of Secondary IV.

QFHSAs agree that there should be some measure of how a student is performing with regard to what is expected of the student at a given level. Regular diagnostic tests are important; but while we could support the concept of a ministry-prepared diagnostic test at the end of Secondary III, it would be under certain conditions. Any test at this level, or any other level before Secondary V, must be purely diagnostic; it must be corrected at the school level; it must on no account be used to stream students into particular programmes in Cycle II; and it should only be implemented if the ministry has previously indicated the expectations of students at this level and provides a set of parameters for the students' work. If results are wanted to reevaluate the course then teachers should use the results to make recommendations for change.

If there is a diagnostic test at the end of Secondary III then there would be no need for one at the beginning of Secondary IV. It should be one or the other; teachers' input on which is essential. The Minister might wish to consider placing this diagnostic exam in the middle of the Secondary III year. This would provide the student with a better opportunity to assess his performance level before making Secondary IV and V level choices.

Proposal 2 Improve second language instruction

QFHSA is certainly in agreement that second language instruction should be improved. When the community has established an exit profile for Secondary V, it will be in a better position to judge whether the measures suggested here are adequate.

Measure 4 Establish a minimum guaranteed time for the teaching of English as a second language at the elementary level.

QFHSA strongly agrees with this measure. However, since the regimes pedagogiques already specify a time requirement for English Second Language which the Minister acknowledges is not being adhered to, we wonder how the Minister intends to guarantee this time.

Measure 5 Promote the intensive model at the elementary level.
and

Measure 6 Take advantage of the possibility of organizing English immersion classes and linguistic exchanges.

These last two measures give the local school the opportunity to increase the elementary students exposure to English. We agree with both these measures. Since the decision to act and the manner of carrying out these measures is left to the local school and school board, we suggest that the ministry might also permit the extra hours to be used to introduce English at Level I with the understanding that the introduction be oral only and that not more than two hours a week be devoted to this activity. Schools situated in communities where little or no English is spoken should use multi-media activities to stimulate learning.

Measure 7 Improve the qualifications of teachers of English as a second language.

While updating the Bachelor of Education courses for specialist teachers and hiring competent teachers is a long term solution which will improve the teaching of English as a second language, it will not have an immediate effect in an era of teacher surplus and, in some areas, declining enrolment. We suggest that the immediate measure should be to provide the means for current teachers of English as a second language to upgrade their skills. If the Minister is really serious about improving the teaching of English, such in-service education should be mandatory.

Measure 8 Recognize two proficiency levels in the second language for evaluation and certification purposes.

We wonder what significance two levels of certification would have on the students' post-secondary endeavours or in the workplace. We do however suggest that students who excel in the second language be permitted to write appropriate English mother tongue or French

mother tongue exams. Such a measure would not only distinguish those with excellent written as well as oral skills it would also address the frustrations of the English speaking immigrant who is required to attend French school.

Proposal 3 Stress the goal of providing students with a quality general education at both the elementary and secondary levels

The text of this proposal defines a general education under the terms of a new definition of literacy for citizenship: having the life skills to function in one's environment - the home, the school, the workplace, the community, the world. Literacy skills make it possible for one to participate fully in life, providing for food, clothing, shelter, education and retraining; to work; to provide for a family; to contribute to society. It is essential that all students be provided with a higher order of proficiency skills in order to function in the new information based society and technological world. Fostering a positive attitude about learning for life socially, economically, educationally and culturally is more important than ever before. In an era where change is the only constant parents are concerned that their children can learn to adapt, to be creative and flexible in a fast paced, constantly changing world. In to-day's world the school is only one of the major environments where learning takes place.

Measure 9 Design a realistic and functional "exit profile" to specify the knowledge, skills and attitudes students should have at the end of each level.

The influence of multi-dimensional media in the home and in the community at large gives students a body of information and knowledge that often competes with the current curriculum available in our schools. How to organize, analyze, synthesize and interpret knowledge from the vast resources available to the student may be one of the most valuable skills necessary to function. Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making need to be demonstrated in a language across the curriculum content. The concept of a "demonstrated outcome" as described in the section on the exit profile is a good one. The exit profile forces everyone to design a curriculum which has a destination - that a student is given preparation for living as opposed to just preparation for more schooling.

Another area impinging on the curriculum of the school is the changing nature of our population. We must not lose sight of the fact that the exit profile must take into account the fact and the needs of the growing multicultural and pluralistic society.

QFHSA endorses the concept of creating an exit profile. Any "think tank" convened to design a realistic and functional exit profile should be comprised of the widest possible representation from the community. An effort needs to be made to enlist representation from the smaller employer sectors and from the different regions of the province, thus ensuring that both rural and urban interests have a voice.

Proposal 4 Split Secondary I to V into a three-year first cycle and a two-year second cycle.

Measure 10 Change the prescribed length of the secondary school cycles in the basic school regulation for secondary school education.

Secondary III is a pivotal year for most students. For many this is a time when the physical, social and psychological aspects of their maturation reach peak importance. Any other aspects of life, such as school studies, tend to be regulated to a lower level of importance.

While agreeing with the proposal to change the prescribed length of the secondary school cycles, much of the benefit will be lost if there is not a clear exit profile for Secondary III which will enable the student to benefit from the greater self discipline that will be required and the choices to be made in Secondary IV and V.

Proposal 5 Define the characteristics of the first cycle of secondary school.

Measure 11 Establish, in the first cycle, stable classroom groups under the primary responsibility of a homeroom teacher.

This is a measure that we feel should not be spelled out. The responsibility for the arrangement of classes and the assignment of teachers should be left to the local school. We do, however, believe that first cycle students need to be given a sense of belonging and that each teacher involved with cycle I should have responsibility for the general support, care and welfare for a particular group of students.

Proposal 6 Diversify the courses offered in Secondary IV and V.

It is important that the courses in Secondary IV and V are courses that provide the student with the opportunity to examine fields of interest other than those which may be deemed to be leading to a possible career profile for that student. We agree with the concept of diversification; however any action on the part of the ministry to-day must be undertaken knowing that there may be changes tomorrow. When an exit profile for the student leaving secondary school has been determined, it may well be necessary to review the courses available, and their content at all levels of schooling.

M 12 Offer "clusters" of elective courses grouped together according to broad fields of study.

We find it difficult to understand how this concept of clusters will benefit the student. The present lack of diversification in many students' programmes comes not from lack of availability of other courses but from a preconceived idea on the part of the student, the parent or, in many instances, the school that certain courses are necessary in order to be admitted to a certain profile at CEGEP. While we acknowledge that there are some parents and teachers who believe that for the able student a focus on science cannot begin too early, we feel that Secondary IV and V should still provide the student with an avenue for exploration of interests and should include course offerings in a variety of areas that will give the student a realistic picture of what further study in that field might involve. We consider that specialisation properly begins at CEGEP.

The Minister suggests that each school board might decide which fields of study it would offer based on its own resources. We can accept that a small school board, or a board whose secondary schools are small, has to limit the choice of electives even now. Secondary schools in these boards should be encouraged to look at the future employment opportunities within their community and we would strongly endorse the concept of offering a cluster of courses which enhance the students' opportunity of future employment. In this way it would be possible to use community expertise for enrichment.

In an urban area where the students are able to travel to more than one school we are concerned about the concept of board specialization. Does a school board with a number of secondary schools choose not to offer the arts cluster in any of them?! This concept even if carried out at the school level may cause problems if it means that students will have to change schools at the end of Secondary III to take optional courses in, say, a language or a science cluster. It is important, if there is to be specialization that, within the constraints of resources, the number of choices available to the student is not unduly restricted.

Whether there are clusters or not it is important for the teachers to widen their knowledge of job opportunities available to the students after graduation. There should be close and constant communication between the teachers, including teachers in the elementary sector, and the employers in the community. It is important that all teachers in a community know the future needs of that community and can teach with these needs in mind.

M 13 Continue reducing the number of courses required for admission into college.

QFHSA agrees with this measure. At the same time it would help the students if they knew which courses were prerequisites for being admitted into each of the CEGEP profiles. This is information that should be given to students at the time of registration for Secondary IV courses. All teachers need to participate in in-service education regarding the transition, both academically and socially, to higher education.

M 14 Vary instructional approaches within the framework of general education courses offered to students in Secondary IV and V.

We are appalled that the Minister feels that it is necessary to put such a measure in this document. This should be happening now in every class and not just Secondary IV and V! In the framework of professional development and life-long learning teachers need a constant renewal of their interest in their task. There are many new tools, particularly information technologies, which are not being used by classroom teachers.

Proposal 7 Revise the rules for granting Secondary School Diplomas.

This seems to be a good proposal. If Cycle I now comprises Secondary I, II and III and becomes the period when the basic secondary school learning is achieved, then the students will all be entering Secondary IV on the same footing. We believe that one cause of dropping out is the "baggage" that some students have acquired by the end of Secondary III. Some students have acquired so few credits at this time that they do not see the point of going on.

Measure 15 Incorporate the proposed rules into the basic school regulation for secondary school education.

QFHSA certainly agrees with the action proposed. We would, however, like to add a few comments on Secondary IV and V courses. We believe that the secondary IV history course is in urgent need of revision. What we need to know to-day, and retain is far more encompassing than the content of the present course. We also note that a pass in ME/MRE is no longer required. The fact that a pass in this course is at present required has tended to lead to a trivialization of the course, because teachers are unwilling to allow the student's performance in this subject to be the cause of non-attainment of a Secondary School Diploma. We do believe, however that every student should be required to take this subject in every year. Much of the language of cultural values is learned when this programme is taught well.

Measure 16 Review the content of the Secondary IV and V Mathematics.

QFHSA strongly agrees with this measure. The description of a mathematics course described in the text is one that we believe all students should be taking. It is our view that this should be the course of which a pass is required for a Secondary School Diploma. To-day all students need a higher level of proficiency in mathematics as a prerequisite to daily living. We believe the current courses providing more advanced level concepts, and which currently are and which should remain as prerequisites for entering the CEGEP science profiles, should be retained as options.

Proposal 8 Establish an instructional management model that would highlight the professional status of teachers and school principals.

QFHSA agrees with this proposal; but, to make it work , professional development and regular upgrading of skills must be mandatory for both the teachers and principals.

Measure 17 Provide tools for reinterpreting the current programmes.

The most important tool for reinterpreting the current programmes will be the exit profile proposed in Measure 9. If the teachers are to be responsible for reinterpreting programmes in the light of this exit profile it is important that they participate in designing this profile and that they, through professional development enhance their skills in this area. We are pleased that teachers are being encouraged to take ownership of their own professional tasks.

Measure 18 Review the procedure for drawing up and revising programmes.

The ministry may determine the curriculum guidelines, but it is the local school boards and schools that should be giving meaning to the curriculum in a practical rather than a theoretical content. Full use should be made of the resources, both human and material, in the larger community to make the curriculum work.

Curriculum guides in many instances are seen as prescriptive and as such are a barrier to innovation and creativity. At the same time we recognize that teachers are sometimes called upon to teach in areas in which they have little experience. In these circumstances curriculum guides have been a real help. When teachers are required to teach courses new to them it is important that support is available. It is also imperative that teachers assume responsibility for updating their skills and acquiring the necessary new expertise.

Measure 19 Give teachers greater responsibility in the evaluation and examination process.

We believe that teachers should have a greater role in the evaluation process. We are also in agreement that for those subjects for which a pass is compulsory there should be a uniform exam. However we believe that the responsibility and the endorsement of the value of the written word should rest as much with the ministry as with the teacher. Thus both the school and the ministry should set exams that require some written answers. In order that effective evaluation may take place teacher education should include the development of skills in setting examinations.

Measure 20 Support innovative school projects.

QFHSA agrees that there should be support and encouragement for innovative school projects. The ability to undertake such projects may depend on the availability of resources. Schools need to be aware that community expertise is an important resource.

Measure 21 Ensure teacher representation on the committees that make decisions concerning the teaching profession.

The Minister appears to have begun the implementation of this measure. We suggest that teachers, and school principals, should also be involved in pedagogical decisions at the school board level.

Measure 22 Encourage the diversification of teachers' workloads.

QFHSA agrees with this measure. It is important not only that teachers be more flexible in the establishment of their tasks, but, also, that they be permitted to be more flexible.

Issue 1 Assessing learning in English Language Arts.

The document states that questions have been raised regarding the quality of the students' writing skills. It is hard to discuss this issue without knowing what the questions are or who is raising them. We do not doubt the validity of the statement; we too hear criticism of students' writing. However it is difficult to discuss possible solutions without knowing the exact nature of the problem. Is it a matter of the percentage of students exiting school with good writing skills remains the same while with almost universal access to higher education - CEGEP at least - CEGEP and university teachers are being exposed to more students and consequently more with less good writing skills? Is it really a matter of an over all deterioration of writing skills over the past ten, twenty, fifty years? Is it a sign that our new technological society requires more people to have a higher proficiency in writing?

The exploration of this issue needs to be carried out in conjunction with perceiving writing skills in the new context of need in the wider world beyond the school. What is the exit profile of a student from an English school? What are the needs of that young person embarking on further education, job training or initial employment with regard to English language skills?

Question 1.1 Would it be appropriate to introduce ministry-prepared writing examination in order to better assess student learning in English Language Arts?

It is indicated in the document that there is an abnormally high pass rate in English Language Arts at the Secondary V level. The statement that there is a discrepancy between the marks accorded locally and those of the sample that is corrected by the ministry implies that the teachers and the ministry are using different standards of evaluation. This is a matter that needs to be resolved, in the first instance, between the ministry and the Secondary Language Arts Committee.

We have no problem with there being a ministry-prepared diagnostic exam which could be used as a benchmark and to help the students. We would not, however endorse such a measure if it were used either to compare institutions or if the student's result were incorporated in any way to the student's official mark for that particular year. Any such exam must reflect the predetermined exit profile in English Language Arts for that year.

Issue 2 Determining Priority Content and Reviewing the Subject-by-grade Time Allocation

This is another area on which discussion needs to be preceded by the discussion on the exit profile. Once we have determined the skills and abilities needed by the student on leaving secondary school then we will be in a better position to judge what the priorities are. The questions asked on this issue are premature at this point.

However our discussion on this matter brought out the following points that we feel are important to make at this time.

Question 2.1 Is it still relevant to maintain the compulsory status of certain courses?

The courses questioned in the document are ones whose course content overlaps, at least in part, with the content of other courses. It is important that the curriculum is seen as a whole, and that the division into courses is a matter of facilitating learning by grouping related concepts together. Curriculum designers in related subject areas should consult each other to avoid duplication..It should certainly be possible to reduce the number of courses without losing any content. Career education should be carried out by the classroom teachers in relating the concepts being taught to the type of employment for which knowledge of these concepts is important. Students should be exposed to many career opportunities, not just those that interest them at a particular moment.

Some courses must be maintained as compulsory courses. Moral and Religious Education/Moral Education and also Physical Education provide an extremely important contribution to the moral, spiritual, psychological and physical development of the student.

Question 2.4 Should the sequence of compulsory natural science courses at the secondary level be revised?

We do not have the expertise to know if the present sequence is inappropriate. We do, however, believe that the student needs skills and experience in the use of computers and other information technologies, a skill whose use needs to be integrated into all courses. This is an area where the school system is lagging behind the progress of society. It is essential that teacher education programmes equip the teacher with the skills to use modern technology, and that in-service courses be provided for those already in the profession.

Issue 3 Making Vocational Education More Readily Accessible to Young People.

Question 3.1 Should students under 16 years of age be allowed to enrol in certain vocational education programmes?

Vocational education has for too long been the poor relation of the educational system. Vocational training is now a major pathway to highly paid, responsible jobs. While students need to make responsible and informed career choices, we feel that unnecessary barriers should not be put in their way. The ministry appears to be perceiving Secondary III as a watershed following which students diverge to explore courses and follow their interests. We believe that, providing the students have met the entry requirements for a particular vocational course, their age should not be a barrier.

Question 3.3 Should students enrolled in a vocational education programme be given the possibility of continuing their general education simultaneously?

The Minister should consider reviewing the requirements for the Secondary School Diploma so that a choice of vocational education in Cycle II need not preclude obtaining this diploma. The vocational student should be encouraged to continue studies in those courses that are compulsory for obtaining a Diploma and credits should be given for the courses within each vocational programme which can be used towards a Secondary School Diploma. In other words, students should be able to pursue post secondary studies or go on to the workplace having chosen either educational pathway to a Secondary School Diploma.

Question 3.4 Should new vocational education programmes for less complex occupations be offered?

Many of the less complex occupations are in the large and growing service sector of the economy. These jobs require a high level of proficiency in communication skills, in particular. These vocational education programmes are necessary, but greater public awareness for parents and students is required to "sell" their effectiveness. It is also important that all Cycle II programmes be considered of equal value; the variety of programmes must not lead to some of them being a "dumping ground" for less able students.

Issue 4 Evaluating the Schools and Holding Them Accountable.

Question 4.1 Should we attempt to ensure that evaluation and accountability take into account all major aspects of school life?

QFHSA would welcome a system of compulsory evaluation of schools, carried out every five years. The purpose of this evaluation should be formative, at the same time measuring the school against previous evaluations. The evaluation should indicate how well the students are meeting the exit profiles. The results should be shared with the school's community and with the school board.

We like the suggestion that schools produce an annual report for parents. The evaluation should include an account of how the school has carried out its educational mission. This could be presented first to the school committee and local Home and School association and then distributed to parents at the end of the year,

Conclusion

QFHSA wishes to emphasize that educational success and quality learning, the twofold goal outlined in the introduction, can only be achieved when all the partners - parents, students, teachers, principals, school boards and the larger community are involved in reaching that goal. The new information technologies have pushed education well beyond the confines of the school. Society is only beginning to come to grips with the realities and implications of the more advanced skills needed to cope in a technologically oriented society. If knowledge is doubling every eighteen months and mental skills are more valued than manual skills, how well are we, as adults, responding to meeting our children's needs in this exciting and challenging environment?

We agree that immediate attention must be given to the issue of quality student learning in the secondary school. However, we would caution that even short term solutions may have little success until the situation in the learning environments leading up to this stage are examined. The building block theory of learning, beginning in the home and proceeding on to schooling in all its formal sectors, primary, elementary, secondary and beyond, must be reexamined before effective solutions can be found.

QFHSA strongly recommends that the Minister make it a priority to open discussion on the concept of the exit profile for all levels of academic and vocational learning in the public and private educational sectors. This will provide an opportunity for the whole community to be involved in defining the mission of the school on behalf of its students and their future. QFHSA looks forward to being part of that discussion.

December 1993

Additional Background Information



THE FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Why should parents be involved in schools?

All parents are teachers, and undoubtedly the most important ones in a child's early years. Now more and more research is showing that, when parents are involved in their children's education in school, the children's achievement improves.

The benefits

When parents help their children at home and stay in touch with schools, more than grades improve. Children's self-esteem and confidence are strengthened by caring parental involvement. Teachers can be more effective by knowing more about their students. And well-informed parents make valuable advocates for improving school systems and departments of education.

What can parents do?

Common sense as well as current research back up what many parents already know. First, home-centred learning is crucial to a child's achievement at school. Second, talking to teachers and taking part in school activities can have a direct impact on the child's learning, behaviour and attitudes.

At home, parents can easily create conditions that support school-learning and behaviour:

- Establish a quiet place for schoolwork;
- Monitor homework;
- Be positive and reassuring;
- Set up a chore schedule;
- Encourage educational play, games, reading and hobbies, rather than hanging around with friends and passive TV watching;
- Support participation in organized after-school community and church activities (music, Guides, Scouts, sports, etc.);
- Talk about TV programmes, movies and family life.

As a parent, getting involved in the child's school is equally straightforward;

- Take the initiative in contacting the school and teachers;
- Attend regular interviews with the teachers;
- Ask directly about homework policies, report card procedures and what is required for your child to pass and improve;
- Attend student performances, sports and other events;
- Volunteer to help out in the classroom, library, lunchroom, gym, schoolyard or on field trips;
- Participate in Home and School or Parent-Teacher meetings, fundraising and social events;
- Keep up your involvement from elementary through high school.



The Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation is working to bring together the family and the school for the good of all children



WHAT IS LITERACY?

A DEFINITION OF LITERACY

Literacy varies with time and place. In the western world, literacy has traditionally meant the ability to read and write. A general definition of literacy is 'the ability to function effectively in one's environment.' Being literate in a technological environment is considerably more complex and extensive than being able to read and write.

Literacy today is multi-faceted. The literate person is able to read, comprehend and evaluate information in print, on the screen, from the computer and through the arts. The literate person is also able to express information, ideas and emotions in these forms.

The literate person is able to understand the construction that has been placed on reality in a 'text' expressed in one of the many forms, and to understand how the reality of the reader influences interpretation of it.

The literate person is aware of the way in which the socio-cultural environment that we have inherited shapes our understanding of what we perceive.

The literate person is aware of thinking and learning processes, both his or her own and those of others.

The literate person has the capacity to **think critically** and to communicate effectively, and is able to use his or her expanded understanding of the world to enhance relationships.