

SCHOOL PRACTICE BRIEFING

Designing Life-Skills Learning That Carries Into Everyday Life

A planning framework for school leaders, student-development teams and educators commissioning or designing a practical life-skills programme.

Framework. Working template. Sources.

By the Figured team

Education beyond academics – Singapore

The central idea

Begin with a specific learner need and a situation where the capability matters. Connect practice, adult support, everyday opportunities and a realistic review before agreeing delivery.

1. Start with the gap in practice

A broad aspiration such as confidence or leadership can justify many different activities. A commissioning decision needs a more specific description of the need, the learners and the setting.

Ask where students already have opportunities to develop the capability. Include classroom routines, pastoral provision, enrichment and family engagement. An external programme should have a clear contribution within that landscape. More provision is not automatically a better fit.

Write the need as a situation: "During shared projects, learners need a more reliable way to hear different ideas and agree the next step." Then identify the learners for whom this is a priority and the evidence behind the concern.

Check the interpretation with the people closest to the setting, including learners where appropriate. Quiet participation, additional-language processing or an inaccessible activity should not be mistaken for a general lack of ability.

Decision to record: which recurring situation are we trying to improve, and why is this programme a reasonable way to create the needed practice?

2. Use research to inform design, then state the limits

The EEF's primary-school SEL guidance recommends explicit teaching alongside everyday opportunities to practise. The National Academies' learning synthesis places attention on context, feedback and learner differences. The EEF's implementation guidance highlights the interaction between people, setting and process.^{[1][2][3]}

These sources inform the planning questions in this briefing. They do not evaluate the framework below or establish the effectiveness of Figured's programmes. We have not conducted a systematic literature review here.

A provider should be able to describe the evidence behind its own claims. Evidence for a broad field of practice, a different programme and a specific proposed course are three different things.

Record what is established, what is an informed design choice and what needs to be tested in your setting. That distinction makes an ambitious programme easier to improve because uncertainty remains visible.

3. Complete a one-page learning plan

The following is an original Figured planning tool. Complete it with the provider and the school liaison before agreeing the activity sequence. It is a discussion framework, not a validated assessment or procurement standard.

Planning field	What to agree
Learners and situation	Age stage, relevant needs and the everyday situation in which the capability matters.
Observable action	One or two actions a learner could demonstrate, described without a personality label.
Practice task	A manageable challenge that requires the intended action and gives each learner a useful role.
Support and access	Prompts, preparation, response options and adult support that make participation possible.
Feedback and another attempt	What the educator will notice, how feedback will be given and when the learner can use it.
Everyday opportunity	A specific classroom or home situation, the cue and the adult who can support it.
Review and responsibilities	What will be recorded, by whom, when it will be discussed and what decisions it will inform.

Keep the plan short enough that a classroom teacher can use it. A document that requires extensive interpretation is unlikely to provide a shared starting point.

4. Test the logic with an example

Consider a hypothetical programme goal: learners explain a proposal and respond to a question before a group chooses an option. This is an illustration of design logic, not a Figured delivery case.

The activity could ask small groups to choose between two ways to build a useful object with limited materials. Learners first sketch an idea, then explain a reason to a partner. The partner asks a clarifying question. The learner makes a revision before the group decides.

The facilitator watches whether the explanation includes a relevant reason, whether a question is heard and how the learner responds. They also record the support used. An adult prompt and an independent attempt should not be presented as identical observations.

A classroom transfer opportunity might be the next group-project planning meeting. The teacher uses the same understanding-check question and notices whether the group can apply it with different content.

The logic is now inspectable: the intended action is required by the task, feedback concerns that action and there is an agreed opportunity to use it elsewhere. If one of those connections is missing, revise the design before adding more activities.

5. Make participation and delivery workable

A practical challenge should offer more than one route to a meaningful contribution. A learner may need time to write before speaking, a visual sequence, vocabulary preparation or a quieter first rehearsal. Discuss access needs without assuming that one adaptation suits everyone.

Review the group size against the actual task and staffing. Ask how often each learner can attempt the target action and receive useful attention. A lively room can still leave some learners with little practice.

Clarify the facilitator's preparation, school-specific requirements, supervision and escalation arrangements. Agree the room, materials, attendance process, liaison, permissions and any information needed for participation. Put responsibility where it belongs rather than relying on an assumption that the other party will handle it.

Staff and family capacity also matters. A daily follow-up task may be unrealistic. A single classroom cue integrated into existing work may be more workable. The school should judge the fit before delivery, not discover the burden afterward.

6. Agree a review that can change a decision

Before beginning, decide which questions the review needs to answer. Were the intended activities delivered? Could learners participate? What actions were observed, with what support? Was there a realistic opportunity to use the learning elsewhere?

Separate the learning review from satisfaction. Learners can enjoy a programme and need a different next step; an activity can feel challenging while producing useful information. Both experience and learning matter, but they answer different questions.

Agree what would lead the school to repeat, adapt, pause or investigate further. A provider should be willing to discuss a narrow result, an inaccessible activity or a weak transfer opportunity without converting every observation into a success claim.

Use the companion evaluation briefing to define the evidence in advance. A clearer plan at the beginning produces a more useful conversation at the end.

A learning plan to discuss

Working notes for a school planning conversation. Adapt the fields to your learners, setting and agreed responsibilities.

Learners and everyday situation	
Observable action and practice task	
Support, access and staffing	
Feedback and another attempt	
Everyday opportunity and supporting adult	
Evidence, responsibilities and review date	

Sources and scope

1. Education Endowment Foundation (2019). Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools. Public overview and recommendations for primary-school practice.
2. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018). How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures – Summary. Summary chapter; learning across settings and the lifespan.
3. Education Endowment Foundation (2024). A School's Guide to Implementation, third edition. Public overview of implementation behaviours, context and process.

This is a Figured practice framework informed by selected sources. It is not a validated assessment, a systematic review or a report of Figured programme outcomes. Questions and corrections: programs@figured.co.