The Australian Curriculum website

The release of version 8.2 of the Australian Curriculum website is tentatively scheduled for the end of June. The release should include updates to the tagging of content elaborations with general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

Languages

The draft Framework for Classical Languages (including Years 7-10 Latin and Classical Greek exemplars) and F-10 Australian Sign Language (Auslan) were released for public consultation on 19 May 2016. These curricula are open for consultation until 14 July 2016.

During the consultation period, ACARA will be conducting consultation forums with the Deaf community in Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane and Darwin. Feedback from online consultation and face-to-face forums will be used to inform revisions to the final curricula.

Work sample portfolios

The work samples content management system (CMS) is complete. All work samples (text, image, audio and video) are undergoing a graphic design review and edit. All work samples for Technologies Foundation to Year 6 have been uploaded to the CMS and begun the comprehensive approval process, which includes a professional edit by an educational editor who is familiar with the work samples project. Foundation to Year 6 Portfolios for Health and Physical Education and The Arts are in the process of being uploaded and will then undergo the same approval process.

Portfolios for The Arts, Technologies, Work Studies, Health and Physical Education and Geography 7-10 will be published between the end of June and end of December 2016. Civics and Citizenship 7-10, Economics and Business 7-10 and F-6/7 HASS will follow with publication being finalised by June 2017.

ACARA has gone out to tender for a contractor to

- develop assessment exemplars that can be adapted for use across the range of Australian Curriculum: Languages
- validate the exemplars by collecting work samples in five languages (Chinese, French, Indonesian, Italian and Japanese).

Monitoring report

The 2015 monitoring report for the period July 2014 to June 2015 that was approved by the ACARA Board on 10 December 2015 has been published on the ACARA website.

The 2016 monitoring process is underway. Feedback from state and territory authorities for the 2016 report has been requested and is due to ACARA by 1 July 2016. Jurisdictions are invited to place a particular focus on the implementation and effectiveness of the general capabilities and the achievement standards.

Parent materials

In response to one of the agreed themes arising from the Review of the Australian Curriculum, ACARA has developed materials to improve parental engagement with the Australian Curriculum. Education Council noted the parent materials at the meeting of 11 December 2015 and ACARA published the materials on the
STEM

ACARA’s STEM project is complete. Thirteen schools from around Australia participated in this project, which required them to develop an integrated approach to teaching STEM disciplines in Years 9 and/or 10. Each project was based on an authentic challenge facing the school, the local community or wider society, with the stipulation that STEM disciplines be used to investigate the challenge and propose a solution. ACARA has collected work samples that demonstrate how students approached the project work and has developed five illustrations of practice that demonstrate how schools approached the integrated teaching of STEM.

ACARA has finalised the evaluation report for the project, and it is ready for publication on the curriculum resources page of the Australian Curriculum website. The associated illustrations of practice are also ready for publication, scheduled for the end of June 2016.

Mathematics Proficiencies project

In mid-2015, the Department of Education and Training commissioned ACARA to develop a project that improved teacher engagement with the proficiencies in the Australian Curriculum for Mathematics in Years F-10.

Since the project began, ACARA has:

- conducted a two-day workshop for schools selected to be part of the process
- guided the development of lessons targeted to show the use of proficiencies and approved final proposals
- visited six schools to film up to four lessons which demonstrate teachers and students engaging effectively with the proficiencies
- collected work samples that demonstrate students’ use of the proficiencies
- interviewed teachers and students about the experience of using the proficiencies in the teaching and learning of Mathematics.

Illustrations of practice are currently being finalised and ACARA is in the process of contracting a website developer to prepare a content management system that will link to the work samples CMS. This will be used to house the illustrations of practice and all other resources that are being developed as part of the project.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) project

In April, a team of five ACARA staff travelled to Riyadh to assist thirty local educators in the development of the Saudi Arabian school curriculum. The workshop focused on the early stages of the National Curriculum Standards Specialisation Frameworks, which are roughly equivalent to the Australian Curriculum learning area shape papers. At the workshop, ACARA shared its own experiences, provided examples of current research and international practice in each of the five nominated learning areas and led the KSA team through a series of exercises to help them make decisions about the shape of each learning area for the Kingdom. As a result of the workshop, the KSA teams are preparing draft rationales and a broad general statement about the directions of the curriculum in each of the learning areas.

A parallel workshop for the remaining five learning areas is being run between the end of May and 3 June 2016. This involves two core ACARA team members and three new learning area leads.

Brazil project

From January to April 2016 ACARA was engaged by The Lemann Foundation to provide advice on the first published draft of the Brazilian National Learning Standards. Dr Phil Lambert and Dr Tracey McAskill travelled to Sao Paulo and Brasilia in late January and in late March to meet with government officials, the writing teams and the mobilisation movement (the body assisting the government in the reform agenda). During the most recent trip, ACARA officers provided advice on the quality of the draft learning standards
and directions for the further development of the Portuguese language standards. Dr Lambert also addressed the National Congress of Brazil on the Australian experience of developing national curriculum.

The Lemann Foundation has requested that ACARA continue to support them by providing advice on the second published version of the National Learning Standards from May to August 2016. Negotiations for this work are currently underway.

**Assessment of transversal competencies**

ACARA represents Australia in the Network on Education Quality Monitoring the Asia Pacific project. The UNESCO comparative study explores approaches and practices adopted in assessing transversal competencies or general capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. The Australian report has been developed and submitted. It involves national level information and school case studies. Each participating country’s report will be synthesised to form the regional report.

**NAPLAN – Literacy and numeracy**

The NAP and Curriculum teams continue to align NAPLAN to the literacy aspects of the Australian Curriculum: English and numeracy aspects of Australian Curriculum: Mathematics.

**NAP sample program**

The NAP and Humanities and Social Sciences teams are in the process of aligning the 2016 NAP-Civics and Citizenship test items to the revised F-10 Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum and finalising the test.

The NAP-Science Literacy report for the 2015 year and the associated framework document are currently being reviewed by the NAP and Science teams and will be published during 2016.

Processes for the development of the 2017 NAP-ICT Literacy test are underway.

**Consumer and financial literacy (CFL) collaboration**

ACARA, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) have formed a collaboration founded on the National Financial Literacy Strategy. The collaboration will support ASIC and ATO in aligning their work to the Australian curriculum. Concurrently, ACARA will support teachers’ access to and delivery of the Australian Curriculum by developing curriculum connections in the area of consumer and financial literacy that provides links to the ATO and ASIC education resources. ACARA’s Economics and Business work samples project will seek to demonstrate an approach to the Australian Curriculum which is rich, holistic and integrated using ASIC’s financial literacy resources and ATO school resources. A contract process is underway to engage a specialist team from Monash University to undertake work on the initial curriculum connections and support materials.

**Collaborative problem solving online assessment**

Collaborative problem solving online assessment is a partnership project that explores the development of innovative high quality assessment methods and tasks that elicit valid, reliable data on students' collaborative problem solving skills. Four collaborative problem solving tasks were developed and trialled in 2015 with over 2000 students. The data from the trial has been provided by our technical partner and is ready for analysis by psychometricians. ACARA co-authored a paper about project findings which has been accepted for the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) 2016 conference to be held in Cape Town, South Africa. The conference paper has been submitted and a final project report is underway.

**National literacy and numeracy learning progressions**

ACARA, in partnership with NSW, is leading the development of National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. This forms part of the National STEM School Education Strategy 2016-2026, endorsed by Education Council in December 2015,
The project will deliver evidence-based, national learning progressions to support improvements in literacy and numeracy learning. The learning progressions will amplify the detail of the literacy and numeracy aspects of the Australian Curriculum and are intended to:

- strengthen teachers’ understanding of the learning sequence for literacy and numeracy
- enable an accurate location of student skill development relative to key elements of literacy and numeracy
- support teachers’ understanding of links between the Australian Curriculum, NAPLAN and other state and territory assessments.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions will be developed in two phases over 2016 and 2017.

- State and territory school and curriculum authorities were invited to contribute by 17 June strong evidence of student development of literacy and numeracy skills and the names of key experts whose research may be beneficial to the project.
- Evidence analysis, writing and consultation with key experts will occur between June and August.
- F-12 CRG and SPG will provide advice during the development of the progressions.
- Version 1 of the progressions will be developed for consideration by Steering Group, F-12 CRG, ACARA Board, SPG, AESOC and Education Council in the period September to December 2016.
- Version 1 will be made available on the Australian Curriculum Consultation Portal.
- Version 1 will be trialled in Semester 1 2017 with schools nominated by the F-12 CRG. This usability trial will inform further refinement.
- Version 2 of the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions will be developed for consideration by Steering Group, F-12 CRG, ACARA Board, SPG, AESOC and Education Council in the period September to December 2017.
- Version 2 will be published on the Australian Curriculum website.
- Other deliverables of the project include a literature review of national and international research and evidence related to National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions. These will be made available on the ACARA website at the conclusion of the project.

Expertise for the project team will be drawn from existing staff at ACARA and the NSW Department of Education and supplemented by contracted experts.

The project will be resourced through the use of existing ACARA and NSW Department of Education staff and additional resources associated with expert literacy and numeracy and psychometric advice. In addition the May AESOC meeting endorsed National Project funding to support ACARA’s delivery of the learning progressions.

**SPG Working Group - Domestic Violence (DV)/Respectful Relationships Education (RRE)**

At its December 2015 meeting, COAG considered advice from the Education Council and agreed to continue to help change the attitudes of young people including using the national education architecture to ensure that approaches to addressing domestic violence remain at the forefront of initiatives and practices.

One of COAG’s six commitments includes the following:
- consideration will be given to the Education Council tasking ACARA (as part of their ongoing curriculum review process) to consider ways in which changing attitudes to violence, including building positive and respectful relationships, continue to be articulated in the Australian Curriculum

ACARA has representation on this national working group to provide input and feedback on schools-related initiatives endorsed by COAG. The Australian Government draws on the knowledge and expertise of the group to support its development of high-quality Respectful Relationships education resources that are appropriate for use by all jurisdictions and will reduce duplication of effort.
ACARA has representation on this national working group and provides feedback on four projects:

1. Awareness training for school staff
2. Classroom resources
3. Good practice prevention and early intervention strategies for schools, including effective parent engagement mechanisms, and effective information-sharing mechanisms
4. Community and youth engagement forums

A training resource for leaders will be trialled in Victoria in May 2016. Additional opportunities to trial the resource in other jurisdictions will be subject to further discussion between the SPG CVE Working Group, project coordinator, AGD and interested jurisdictions.

ACARA has also provided explicit mapping that demonstrates the ways in which the Australian Curriculum supports students who may be at risk of radicalisation.

ACARA has been invited to become a member of this expert panel. The establishment of this panel was flagged by Minister Birmingham in his statement on 18 March as one of the actions emerging from the independent review of the appropriateness and efficacy of SSCA resources.

The Minister’s statement, which is available at: http://ministers.education.gov.au/birmingham/statement-safe-schools-coalition, includes the following text:

1. c) Requiring that the amended resources and any further resources be peer reviewed and approved by a panel of qualified educators appointed by the Department of Education and Training.

In response to the current social issues facing schools (e.g. CVE, DV, RRE) Education Services Australia (ESA) is reviewing its National Safe Schools Hub. This is a repository for information and resources for schools. This work will include ensuring clear links to the Australian Curriculum. As a starting point, ESA have been provided with the work undertaken by ACARA to map the ways in which the Australian Curriculum supports students who may be at risk of radicalisation.

Since 2011 ACARA has assessed the extent to which well-established alternative curriculum frameworks meet the requirements of the Australian Curriculum. Currently, the Australian Steiner, Montessori Australia Foundation and International Baccalaureate curriculum frameworks have been recognised as an alternative curriculum framework, each with assessments published on the ACARA Recognition Register.

At its meeting of 30 April 2015, the ACARA Board determined that budgetary constraints required temporary cessation of the recognition process. In October 2015, following the endorsement of ACARA’s four-year work plan proponents were informed that the recognition process will resume from July 2016.

Several educational organisations that use alternative curriculum frameworks have now indicated an intention to submit Phase 2 and 3 subjects and learning areas for assessment as additions to their nationally recognised curriculum frameworks. Southern Cross Educational Enterprises has indicated an intention to again seek recognition for a curriculum framework consisting of English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography having been unsuccessful in 2014.

At its meeting of 23 June, the ACARA Board will consider a proposal to modify the published Process of Recognition to create a more timely and cost-efficient pathway for the assessment of subjects and learning areas to be added to nationally recognised curriculum frameworks.