Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education

ACARA’s Curriculum team has begun a project to develop Illustrations of Practice that will support teachers and schools in their work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Cross Curriculum Priority. The project is funded by the Australian Government and the steering committee held its first meeting in July. Work is now underway, with major objectives being the identification of schools and development of a checklist of good practice in the Cross Curriculum Priority.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group will meet on 29-30 August and will include presentations from CSIRO and the Indigenous STEM project and from Reconciliation Australia and their Illustrations of Practice project.

AI Group School-Industry STEM skills partnerships

ACARA has provided advice and support for the AI Group in the development of this project. It has run two workshops for teachers whose schools are involved in the project, one in Melbourne and one in Adelaide. A further three workshops are planned, one at Dapto in New South Wales, one in Queensland and another planned for either Melbourne or Adelaide. The workshops are designed to:

- develop awareness and understanding of what constitutes a sound school-industry partnership
- help teachers identify connections between STEM disciplines in the Australia Curriculum and between the Australian Curriculum and the work of the industry partner
- provide guidelines on planning, developing and evaluating a project that has a strong educational basis, uses an authentic context and shows clear collaboration with the industry partner.

Alternative curriculum frameworks

Under ACARA’s Charter, a key responsibility is to assess the extent to which well-established alternative curriculum frameworks meet the requirements of the Australian Curriculum. To date, the Australian Steiner, Montessori Australia Foundation and International Baccalaureate curriculum frameworks have been recognised as alternative curriculum frameworks, each with assessments published on the ACARA Recognition Register. It must be emphasised that ACARA’s recognition processes are quite separate from any jurisdictional registration requirements that must be met by schools and school systems.

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 would resume from July 2016.

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

ACARA’s Board has approved the reintroduction of the recognition process, and Curriculum staff are now finalising documentation that will be published on the ACARA website to guide submissions and provide details of the process. All jurisdictions have been invited to nominate representatives to serve on the Review Panels and Recognition Committee that undertake this work.
Australian Curriculum Website – Content Management System (CMS)
Curriculum staff have worked intensively to develop a dedicated platform for the publication of work samples, and the new content management system was finalised in June. ACARA has since published work sample portfolios for Technologies, Health and Physical education and the Visual Arts to reflect students’ performance at, above and below satisfactory for Foundation to Year 6.

Portfolios showing students’ performance at, above and below satisfactory for Foundation to Year 10 in Dance, Drama, Media Arts and Music, as well as that of students in Years 7 to 10 Visual Arts, Technologies, Work Studies and Health and Physical Education have been annotated and are currently undergoing editing, graphic design and quality assurance. They will be published at the end of August.

Further work sample portfolios will be published in October 2016, December 2016 and throughout 2017.

Collaborative problem-solving online assessment
The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) have worked in partnership with Janison (a learning and assessment platform provider) to develop new forms of assessment for general capabilities. In collaboration with Swedish and Irish counterparts, ACARA’s Curriculum staff have designed and trialled innovative high quality assessment methods and tasks that elicit valid, reliable data on students’ collaborative problem solving skills. The project has resulted in the development of the draft Australian Curriculum Collaborative Problem Solving Assessment Framework (ACCPSAF). The project report has been finalised and shared with the project partners, and a presentation will be delivered to the International Association for Educational Assessment Conference in South Africa in mid-August.

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’s MoneySmart and the ATO’s Tax, Super and You by aligning these consumer and financial literacy education resources 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 the resources of ASIC and the ATO. A specialist team from Monash University has been contracted to undertake initial curriculum connections work. The mapping of ASIC’s MoneySmart and the ATO’s Tax, Super and You to the Australian Curriculum has begun.

English
In collaboration with Assessment and Reporting, work in this learning area is embarking on the development of more comprehensive guidelines for NAPLAN literacy item writers. This is to support item writers to broaden the range and type of items included in the test and to ensure maximum coverage of the curriculum. The Curriculum Specialist, English is working with A&R to explore the development of shorter, stand-alone items for the Reading test that can meet the needs of less confident readers.

Health and Physical Education
F-6 work sample portfolios, published on 30 June 2016, have been well received across Australia. Work is now focused on finalising Years 7-10 work samples. This includes quality assurance, final consultations with experts about content and preparation for publication at the end of August 2016.

Humanities and Social Sciences
The work samples project is a key activity for Humanities and Social Sciences, with the breadth and diversity of this learning area reflected in wonderful input from schools across the nation. Specialist contractors are working with the Curriculum Specialist, HASS to publish 7-10 Geography work samples in October 2016. F-6/7 HASS, 7-10 Civics and Citizenship, and 7-10 Economics and Business work samples are in development, with some portfolios to be ready for publication in December 2016. The new interactive website has received very positive feedback from schools that are working with ACARA on HASS activities, with many teachers saying how helpful it is in developing an understanding of assessment tasks and ways in which they can refine the strategies they use to process samples.
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. The consultation period has been extended to Monday, 8 August 2016 to provide as much flexibility as possible for communities around Australia while maintaining ACARA’s deadlines for review and publication.

ACARA has conducted Community Consultation Forums for Auslan 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.

Consideration continues to be given to the most efficient and cost-effective ways in which ACARA’s Curriculum team can
- 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).

Mathematics
A meeting of Mathematics specialists from state and territory curriculum authorities was convened prior to the celebration of 50 years of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) held in Adelaide in early July. ACARA CEO Rob Randall addressed the guests about where Mathematics education may be heading in the next fifty years and the role that ACARA could take in this learning area.

A reference group for the project of Developing an Evidence Base for Best Practice in Mathematics Education met at Melbourne University in the middle of July. The initial report on the findings was presented for comment.

Mathematics Proficiencies project
The Maths Proficiencies project will be published on ACARA’s new Content Management System (CMS) from the end of August.

Monitoring the Australian Curriculum (2015-2016)
This annual report is produced by ACARA’s Curriculum team and will be published early in 2017. All state and territory authorities, together with numerous professional and other organisations, were invited to contribute their feedback on the ongoing implementation of the Australian Curriculum, with a particular focus on the use of the achievement standards and the General Capabilities. The 2015-2016 iteration will be complemented by a report focusing on international research and practices relevant to specific learning areas.

NAP sample program
The NAP and Humanities and Social Sciences teams have aligned the 2016 NAP-Civics and Citizenship test items to the revised F-10 Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum. Initial plans have begun in relation to the inclusion of History in the NAP Civics test for 2019.

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 later in 2016.

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

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.
National literacy and numeracy learning progressions

In partnership with NSW, ACARA 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.

Primary education

All Curriculum Specialists continue to be involved in supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum for students in Foundation to Year 6. The most recent version of the Primary Matters newsletter will be distributed soon. A new Curriculum role, to be known as Curriculum Specialist, General Capabilities, will commence from the end of August; it will be filled by a very experienced primary teacher and former school leader who will enhance the connections that can be made across the curriculum for students in Foundation to Year 10.

Science

The STEM Connections project has been published on the Australian Curriculum website and has attracted very positive feedback, particularly because of the ways in which numerous projects reflect the Australian Curriculum’s General Capabilities. At a recent workshop in Melbourne, the Curriculum Specialist, Science and other Curriculum staff highlighted ways in which schools can make links with the Australian Curriculum: Science through innovative projects that may address issues in the local or wider community.

Student Diversity

A new role of Curriculum Specialist, Student Diversity has been established to support the work undertaken in the Curriculum and Assessment and Reporting units. This role will make a particular contribution to the development of NAPLAN test items and to working with school authorities and other stakeholders to enhance ways in which the Australian Curriculum can meet the needs of students from a range of backgrounds and of varying abilities.

Four videos have been made in collaboration with schools where the Australian Curriculum’s General Capabilities are being used to support the learning of students with disability. Feedback from the Students With Disability Advisory Group, ACARA’s Board and other stakeholders has been received and these illustrations of practice will be published later in the year once further editing has been completed.

Members of ACARA’s Curriculum team have had productive meetings with representatives of the Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted and Talented and specialist educators to consider ways in which the Australian Curriculum can support students.

Technologies

Following publication of the F-6 work sample portfolios on 30 June 2016, attention is now focused on work samples for both Digital Technologies and Design and Technologies for Years 7-10. Annotations are complete for both subjects, and quality assurance and preparation for publication has begun for Digital Technologies, with a planned publication date of 30 October 2016.

Papers have been submitted for two conferences: Australian Computing in Education Conference and the Technology Education Research Conference. On Tuesday, 2 August, the Curriculum Specialist, Technologies presented ‘Australian Curriculum: Technologies with a focus on critical and creative thinking’, a webinar designed for the Australian Curriculum Studies Association. A series of presentations at the ICTENSW regional workshops, including Wagga Wagga and Armidale, have been scheduled throughout
July and August. In her role as Director, Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia, Julie King will be meeting with primary industry stakeholders and visiting schools in Perth. On 30 August, Julie will present the keynote at the *Criterion Implementing the Digital Technologies* conference in Brisbane.

**The Arts**
ACARA has worked with specialists in each of the art forms to redefine and review work samples and determine consistent approaches to annotating samples for the Arts.

**Appendices**

*Appendix 1 – Curriculum Staff List*
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