

Thinking about the Australian Curriculum in the Queensland context

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Purpose of this workshop

- ▶ Support critical consideration and discussion of the Australian Curriculum
- ▶ Promote Early Childhood Educators to be curriculum activists, rather than curriculum advocates
 - Enacting the Australian Curriculum with ECEC pedagogy
 - Providing feedback to ACARA
 - Participating in the Queensland discussion about the Australian Curriculum

Why have an Australian Curriculum

- ▶ States and territories can focus on how students' learning can be improved to achieve the national goals, regardless of individual circumstances or school location
- ▶ Greater attention can be devoted to equipping young Australians with those skills, knowledge and capabilities necessary to enable them to effectively engage with and prosper in society, compete in a globalised world and thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future
- ▶ High-quality resources can be developed more efficiently and made available around the country
- ▶ There will be greater consistency for the country's increasingly mobile student and teacher population.

ACARA,
2010

Why have an Australian Curriculum

- ▶ What young people should be taught and the quality of learning that is expected of them will be made clear in the Australian Curriculum. At the same time, it will provide flexibility for teachers and schools to build on student learning and interest.
- ▶ Whilst the Australian Curriculum will outline the scope of what is to be learned, teachers in classrooms who will make decisions about:
 - how best to organise learning
 - contexts for learning
 - depth of learning that will be pursued for each child in their class.

ACARA,
2010

Features of the Australian Curriculum

- ▶ World class
- ▶ Developed through a consultative process in different phases:
 - K – 10
 - Senior schooling
- ▶ Different learning areas
 - English, Mathematics, Science, History
 - Languages, the Arts, Geography
 - Other areas
- ▶ English, Mathematics, Science and History published in 2010
- ▶ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Home>

ACARA,
2010

Features

- ▶ The first successful collaboration towards the adoption of a national curriculum
- ▶ Professional opportunities for teachers and freedom for schools about how curriculum is implemented
- ▶ Sets out a learning entitlement for all students in Australia
- ▶ Cross curricular dimensions:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dimensions
 - Sustainable patterns of living
 - Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- ▶ Deep not wide
- ▶ Tells teachers what to teach and how well to teach

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2010

The 10 general capabilities

- ▶ literacy
- ▶ numeracy
- ▶ information communication technology
- ▶ thinking skills
- ▶ ethical behaviour
- ▶ creativity
- ▶ self-management
- ▶ teamwork
- ▶ intercultural understanding
- ▶ social competence.

ACARA,
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Key elements curriculum

- ▶ Content descriptors organised in strands
 - What teachers will teach
 - What children will learn
 - Knowledge, skill and understanding
 - Elaborations
 - context in which content may be taught
 - Illustrations of how a student may learn the material
- ▶ Achievement standards
 - Quality of the learning that children are expected to demonstrate as they progress through school

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Overview:

1. Documenting ideas (Activity 20 min)
2. Unpacking the draft (Presentation/ discussion 15 min)
3. Constructions of curriculum (Presentation 10 min)
4. Providing feedback to ACARA (Presentation/ activity)

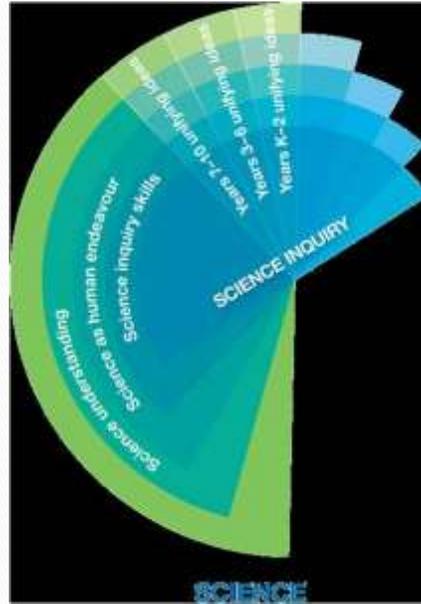
Documenting ideas (Activity 25 min)

- ▶ Professional practice What does the Australian curriculum bring to our early years teaching practices?
- ▶ Professional beliefs What does the Australian curriculum bring to our beliefs as early years educators?
- ▶ Professional knowledge What does the Australian curriculum bring to our professional knowledge as early years educators?
- ▶ Professional culture What does the Australian curriculum bring to our professional culture as early years educators?

Science

- ▶ Less quantity and more in quality
- ▶ Return to traditional areas
- ▶ High expectations aimed at recapturing student interests

The Australian Curriculum: Science is organised around three interrelated strands: Science inquiry skills; Science as a human endeavour; and Science understanding. Each strand is of equal importance.



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Curriculum focus: awareness of self and the local world

- ▶ Young children have an intrinsic curiosity about their immediate world and a desire to explore and investigate things around them. Asking questions leads to speculation and the testing of ideas. Exploratory, purposeful play is a central feature of their investigations. Observation is an important skill to be developed during these years, and involves using the senses in active ways. Observation also leads into the idea of order that involves describing, comparing and sorting.
- ▶ Unifying ideas for students in this age range are:
 - Exploration
 - Observation
 - Order
 - Change
 - Questioning and speculation

Kindergarten content standard

Kindergarten Content descriptions		
Science Inquiry Skills	Science as a Human Endeavour	Science Understanding
1. Questioning Recognise and identify objects and events of interest in the students' world and ask questions about them	1. Nature of science Scientists are people who explore the world around them and share information about what they find	1. Living things Features and basic needs of humans and other familiar living things
2. Observing Explore and make observations by using the senses, as appropriate, during guided investigations		2. The daily environment Ways the environment influences the daily lives of students
3. Using equipment Follow directions to use equipment safely		3. Everyday materials Names and features of everyday objects and materials
4. Communicating Describe and share observations and ideas using oral language, role play, and writing and/or drawing		4. Movement Ways in which objects of different shapes and sizes move

Kindergarten achievement standard

By the end of Kindergarten, students participate in guided group investigations. They use appropriate senses to explore and describe phenomena and objects of interest. They ask questions about objects and events in their familiar environment and describe observations orally and with writing or drawing. They recognise and describe characteristics of their immediate environment including identifying the features, use and behaviour of familiar living things, materials and objects. They understand that science is about exploring and investigating to answer questions and to find things out. They articulate ideas on how they use science.

History

- ▶ Engaging for all Australians
- ▶ Inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- ▶ Understanding and awareness of Australia's place in the region and a world perspective
- ▶ Theme of sustainability

History is organised into two interrelated strands: historical knowledge and understanding, and historical skills.



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Early Years Curriculum focus : awareness of personal and family history

- ▶ children use their interest in people and how things work to make sense of their world, through experimentation, practice and play.
- ▶ Through this history curriculum, children in Years K–2 learn about their own social context of family, friends and school, and the significance of the past
- ▶ They engage with the remains of the past; develop a concept of time as present, past and future; and use their imagination to speculate about the lives of others in the past through role play

Kindergarten content standards

Knowledge and Understanding	Skills
1. Personal and family stories	1. Historical questions and research
Personal place in the generational structure of family and the differences and similarities in the daily lives of generations within the family	Ask and answer questions about the past using sources provided
2. Personal and family stories	2. Analysis and use of sources
Significant events in personal histories and the stories of family that can be told through sources such as photographs and artefacts	Explore and engage with a variety of sources about the past
3. Personal and family stories	3. Analysis and use of sources
How families commemorate past events that are important to them	Identify and compare features of objects from the present and the past
	4. Comprehension and communication
	Order familiar objects and events in a time sequence
	5. Comprehension and communication
	Use language to describe the passing of time
	6. Comprehension and communication
	Describe an event or place and retell a narrative from the past
	7. Comprehension and communication
	Use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written, role play) and technologies

Kindergarten Achievement standard

- ▶ By the end of Kindergarten, students are able to select and connect family and familiar sources (photographs, toys, objects) to sequence key events, continuities and changes.
- ▶ They use the language of time (eg the olden days, a long time ago, yesterday, tomorrow) to describe and illustrate events and stories in response to directed questions (eg telling a story about where their family came from, drawing a picture to describe their family).
- ▶ When inquiring into the past, students respond to questions by providing examples. They use terms associated with the passing of time (eg now, then, before, after I had my third birthday).
- ▶ They make reasonable assumptions about the past based on evidence found in stories about past events.

Mathematics

- ▶ Inclusive for all until end of Year 9
- ▶ Succinct and clear
- ▶ Deep and provides for engagement in mathematics
- ▶ Understanding, fluency problem solving and reasoning

Mathematics is organised around the interaction of three content strands and four proficiency strands.

The content strands are Number and algebra, Statistics and probability, and Measurement and geometry. They describe 'what' is to be taught and learnt.



The proficiency strands are Understanding, Fluency, Problem solving, and Reasoning, and describe 'how' content is explored or developed in the thinking and doing of mathematics.

Early Years learning focus: lay the foundation for learning mathematics. Students at this level can access powerful mathematical ideas relevant to their current lives.

- ▶ Learning the language of mathematics is vital in these years.
- ▶ Children have the opportunity to access mathematical ideas by developing a sense of number, order, sequence and pattern
- ▶ Understanding quantities and their representations
- ▶ Learning about attributes of objects and collections, position, movement and direction
- ▶ Developing an awareness of the collection, presentation and variation of data and a capacity to make predictions about chance events
- ▶ These understandings and the experiences in the early years provide a foundation for algebraic, statistical and multiplicative thinking that will develop in later years. They provide a foundation also for children to pose basic mathematical questions about their world, identify simple strategies to investigate solutions, and strengthen their reasoning to solve personally meaningful problems.

Kindergarten content standards

Number and Algebra	Statistics and Probability	Measurement and Geometry
1. Counting Say, understand and reason with number sequences, initially to and from 20, and then beyond, moving to any starting point	1. Data representation Collect, represent and interpret data from simple questions with objects and drawings where one object or drawing represents one data value	1. Geometry Sort, describe, name, and represent familiar two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects in the environment
2. Numeration Understand numbers to 10, including matching number names, numerals and quantities, and work fluently with small numbers including subitising and partitioning	2. Data investigation Solve problems by collecting data and answering questions about obvious attributes of themselves and familiar objects and events	2. Comparison Use direct and indirect comparison to decide which is longer, heavier and holds more and explain reasoning in everyday language
3. Comparing collections Compare and order collections, initially to 20, and then beyond, and explain reasoning		3. Time Read time on the hour on digital and analogue clocks, and make connections between common sequences such as days of the week and other familiar events and actions
4. Addition and subtraction Model, represent and solve problems concerning additive and sharing situations involving combining, change and missing elements		4. Location Describe the position and movement of objects, including themselves
5. Pattern Sort and classify familiar objects, explain reasons for these classifications and copy, continue and create patterns with objects and		

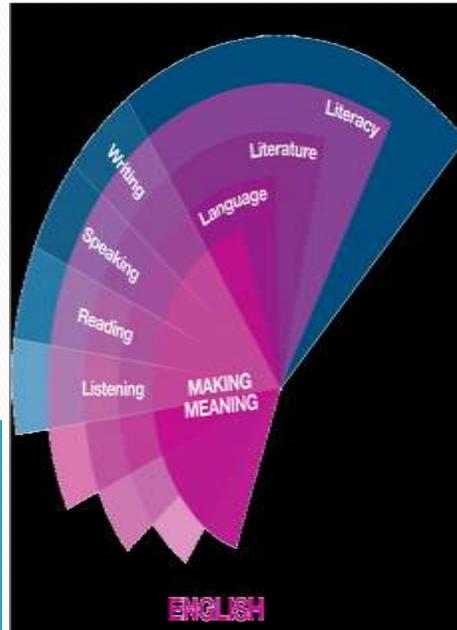
Kindergarten achievement standards

- ▶ By the end of Kindergarten, students are able to confidently recall the sequence of numbers to 20, matching names and numerals and find the total of small collections by counting.
- ▶ They subitise small quantities, partition numbers to 10 and use one-to-one relations to share and count out quantities.
- ▶ Students collect data from straightforward questions about themselves and familiar events and, with assistance, can organise this data.
- ▶ They readily use everyday language to describe measurements found by direct comparison and sort and classify familiar shapes.

English

- ▶ Intensify continuity of learning across school years
- ▶ Primary years intense focus on literature, fewer texts more deeply
- ▶ Sense of what to do with children as they grow older if all have a continuous experience with different texts and textual demands

English is organised in three interrelated strands that support students' growing understanding and use of English: language, literature and literacy.



Early Years learning focus

Kindergarten content standards

Language	Literature	Literacy
1. Analysis of information	1. Reflecting on text	1. Listening and responding
Different languages are spoken by family, classmates, community and in the media	Engage in the rhythms and rhymes of a wide range of literary texts	Listen and respond to simple texts and to the speech of others in informal and more formal classroom situations
2. Expressive language	2. Shared reading	2. Purposes of texts
Language, images, body language and facial expressions can be used to express a range of feelings and emotions	Participate actively in shared reading, viewing and storytelling of literary texts	Recognise the purpose of imaginative or factual texts
3. Differing subject matter	3. Meanings of texts	3. Sequencing
Texts create meanings of various kinds, about personal experiences, imaginative experiences, and familiar factual topics	Discuss the meaning of literary texts	Sequence events in texts
4. Nature of texts	4. Recognising and responding	4. Reading strategies
Texts are made of words and sentences and sometimes images that have meaning and can take many forms	Recognise and respond to familiar literary texts	Use emerging grammatical and phonic knowledge, and meaning and context to read and view print and digital texts
	5. Purposes of texts	5. Comprehension strategies
	Recognise that one purpose of literary texts is to entertain	

Kindergarten content standard

5. Concepts about print and screen	6. Features of texts	Understand and respond to short informative and narrative texts, including understanding literal information and ideas and making simple inferences
Concepts about print and screen, including how books and simple digital texts work; and features of print such as letters, words, sentences, and punctuation including full stops and capital letters	Discuss some features of literary texts including events and characters	6. Oral communication skills
6. Phonic and word knowledge	7. Discussing and responding	Participate in informal conversations and discussions in familiar situations
Spoken sounds can be written down using the letters of the alphabet	Discuss their responses to literary texts	7. Creating texts
7. Phonic and word knowledge	8. Creating	Create a range of short written, spoken and multimodal texts
Regular vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words are made up of letters that correspond to the sounds heard	Dramatise, discuss and write about imaginative elements of literary texts	8. Vocabulary and writing
8. Phonic and word knowledge		Write texts that include beginning understandings of spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and concepts about print
Recognise high frequency sight words in texts		9. Handwriting/word processing
9. Sounds, letters and words		Handwrite lower case and upper case letters and begin to use a word processing program
Phonemic awareness including how to recognise rhymes, syllables and single sounds (phonemes) in short spoken words		

Kindergarten achievement standard

Achievement standard (Kindergarten)

Listening and speaking

By the end of Kindergarten, students listen attentively for short periods. They listen and respond appropriately to the content of short spoken texts that use everyday language and familiar vocabulary and to texts read aloud. They recall one or two ideas, events and details from texts listened to or viewed. They show developing understanding of how texts convey meaning and take many forms. They recognise rhymes, syllables and single sounds in short spoken words. They talk informally on familiar topics with peers, teachers and known adults in everyday classroom situations. They use informal talk effectively to engage in pair, group and class discussions and participate in group tasks.

Reading

By the end of Kindergarten, students recognise several types of print texts and identify the purposes of some familiar texts. They effectively navigate a simple picture book or digital text using knowledge of basic concepts about print. They discuss how factual texts differ from imaginative texts. They name sound-letter matches for most consonants and short vowels, recognise high frequency sight words and work out short regular words using context, grammatical and phonic knowledge. They read about short, predictable texts with some fluency and demonstrate early reading strategies such as re-reading to maintain meaning. They retell one or two events in a story or a film, and discuss events and characters. They relate one or two facts from an information text. They recognise and name most letters of the alphabet.

Writing

By the end of Kindergarten, students write short texts of one or two sentences to retell events and experiences for a small range of audiences. They understand concepts about print such as letters, words, and sentences. They use left to right directionality, return sweep and spaces between words. They handwrite most lower case and some upper case letters, and use some capital letters and full stops. They show some evidence of the use of sound-letter knowledge to write unknown words and spell a small number of common words correctly. They use a keyboard to compose short texts, locating the keys for most letters including capital letters and full stops.

Definitions of curriculum

- **Definition 1: Curriculum is such “permanent” subjects as grammar, reading, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, and the greatest books of the Western world that best embody essential knowledge.**
- **Definition 2: Curriculum is those subjects that are most useful for living in contemporary society.**
- **Definition 3: Curriculum is all planned learnings for which the school is responsible.**
- **Definition 4: Curriculum is all the experiences learners have under the guidance of the school.**

Definitions of curriculum (cont)

- **Definition 5: Curriculum is the totality of learning experiences provided to students so that they can attain general skills and knowledge at a variety of learning sites.**
- **Definition 6: Curriculum is what the student constructs from working with the computer and its various networks, such as the Internet.**
- **Definition 7: Curriculum is the questioning of authority and the searching for complex views of human situations.**
- **Definition 8: Curriculum is all the experiences that learners have in the course of living.**

(From Marsh, C. J. & Willis, G. (2003). *Curriculum: Alternative approaches, ongoing issues*. (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.)

Constructions of curriculum

- ▶ Curriculum as desirable knowledge

Curriculum as practice & decision-making

- ▶ Curriculum as politics & policy

Ben Levin on Government Policy

They are usually genuinely concerned about the results of their actions and policies. They do believe that their policy goals will make society better. They do want to fulfill their commitments to voters, and programs and policies are the means of doing so. They do not set out to make a mess of things any more than schools set out to have high numbers of dropouts or unhappy parents. Moreover, a mistaken policy can create very large political costs. Voters do tend to toss out of office governments whose performance is disappointing—as virtually all eventually are.

The politics of curriculum (Levin, 2008)

- ▶ Curriculum: An official statement of what students are expected to know and be able to do.
- ▶ The statement of what should be taught and learnt in schools is a statement of public policy.
- ▶ The view that education is a matter of expertise and should be beyond politics is a problem, because it ignores that politics is the primary process through which public policy decisions are made.

Providing feedback to ACARA

- ▶ Keeping up in Queensland <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/approach/9188.html>
- ▶ Keeping up with ACARA http://www.acara.edu.au/home_page.html
http://www.acara.edu.au/news_media/subscribe.html
- ▶ Geography Shape Paper <http://www.acara.edu.au/geography.html>