

Feedback to ACARA Australian Curriculum English

From Meanjin Local Council of ALEA, April 2010

KINDERGARTEN – 3

Inconsistency of headings within each of the three 'strands' e.g.

Kindergarten No. 1 is Analysis of Information – when will the children experience 'play'?

Year 1, No. 1 is called Comparing Languages.

By Year 5 it is called Systems of Communication.

We want 'consistent language' – a Scope and Sequence is needed.

Question about Strand 8 (in Literature Creating) asking to dramatise, discuss and write about imaginative elements of literary texts. They need to write whether it is the student actually writing it or is it the teacher generating it in an incidental fashion building to full implementation in year 1.

The 'setting out' of the three strands, being language, literacy and literature should be done in a horizontal format not a vertical format so that it is presented with total language and then literature and then literacy in a horizontal format because it is too difficult to read in the columns going from one page to the next.

Language Strand (p. 9) – repetition of headings within one strand. Phonic and word knowledge is numbers 6, 7 and 8 within kindergarten. Language No. 8 should be titled 'Sight Word Knowledge'.

Phonological Awareness (should be the heading in the first line) for no. 9 Sounds, Letters and Words.

Year 1, No. 2 Reading Strategies 'recognising most high frequency sight words when reading text' – attach a number please e.g. 50.

Year 1, No. 2 Reading Strategies are appropriate and acceptable.

Year 3 – PHONICS and WORD KNOWLEDGE not considered. There is no reference to Frequency Words in the Language Strand.

Phonics and Word Knowledge - Specificity in the teaching of phonics up to and including year 3 – reference to this needs to be referred to in year 3.

Numbering and Headings - Within the strands, the numbering and headings should be consistent across the year levels e.g. comprehension strategies should be in K, year 1, year 2 etc. as number 1 consistently (in the draft document it appears as No. 5 in K, No. 3 and 4 in year 1, No. 3 and 4 in year 2, No. 6,7,8 in year 3 and No. 1, 7 and 8 in year 4 ETC ETC).

- Is there a glossary?
- If so, it should be able to be printed. Is it detailed enough and cross referenced between common synonyms.

- The notion of “grade level” is not showing an awareness of children experiencing difficulty or those working beyond the grade level.
- The expectation of what is to be achieved by the end of kindy are too high e.g. Language Strand Point 9(sounds letters and words), composing short text
- “High frequency sight words” are referred to in Language Strand across year level, however there is no clear indication of what these words are. Are they to be high frequency words or “sight” words (that cannot be sounded out)
Is this the old Dolch words?
- It is not clear how many or which words are to be targeted each year
- No acknowledgement of Prep in Qld being a play based year
- Kindy “Literacy Strand” Point 9 Handwriting and word processing, concerns about the fine motor skills of young children to use a keyboard to manipulate upper and lower case font. No acknowledgement that not all children have access to word processing programmes.
- In the lower primary it does not appear to follow the developmental stages of language/literacy development as indicated by experts such as speech therapist, motor skills as indicated by Occupational Therapist.
- The need to develop oral language skills before focussing on writing skills does need seem to be acknowledged. There appears to be a rush to have children producing written texts and reading before underlying foundations have been cemented.
- Children who are experiencing difficulty and from a range of diverse backgrounds are going to be rushed through these early years and may not acquire a strong foundation of basic skills, strategies and knowledge. This often results in a group of children about age 8 or 9 who suddenly show up as being weak.

Years 4-7

Content clarity

The terminology used from year level to year level appears to vary (e.g. expressive verbs, participants, adverbials) and therefore lacks consistency. That threatens the future of a metalanguage for grammar and may make the glossary unworkable.

It is difficult to elicit (from the content descriptions) what specific teaching is required to provide a balanced approach across the four macro-skills of writing, reading, etc.

Content placement and sequence

Attempts to create a scope and sequence for grammar across the year levels have proved extremely difficult.

Manageability for teachers

There must be alignment of subject-specific literacy demands.

Digital format and layout

Layout – sequence, naming and numbering of content descriptions – must be consistent/uniform across year levels. For example, Year 5 Literature, the second content description is *Discussing and responding*, in Year 6 Literature, the second content description is *Choices and techniques* and in Year 7 Literature, the second content description is *Cultural context*.

Also, in Year 3, several content descriptions in the one strand have been given the same name. For example, in Literacy, 6., 7. and 8. are all named *Comprehension strategies* and one must refer to the explanatory sentence to distinguish between them.

Reason: for alignment of planning in composite and multi-age classrooms *and* in small schools and to allow teachers to gauge the scope and sequence of the curriculum to differentiate in all mainstream classrooms.

Secondary School

Feedback

Content placement and sequence

- Structure –no level of cognitive demand. What is the cognitive demand in the language strand. How do you map the cognitive demand?
- Some elaborations very good
- Digital layout good –can be manipulated
- Dependent on knowledge and understanding of reader
- Problem with strands and trying to spell stuff out year by year
- An experienced teacher should not need to read elaborations – if it does not make sense then statement is poorly written
- Heading describes that content therefore difficult to see structure of - 96 in language 62 individual
- Should be able to get coherence if we went higher up in a language framework
- Not user friendly for planning – cannot read across, no framework
- What does this mean in practice? Tick the dots???
- Need scope and sequence for grammar and need it to follow a model of language
- Lack of apparent framework
- The year by year structure a problem
- What comes before must be covered – no repetition

Recommendation

As not time to change structure, what's in preface needs to be beefed up and include a language model. Also use of phases – organise content to junctures to avoid repetition and recognise spiral nature of teaching and learning

- Yr 8 – ‘positioning ‘
- Is it possible to spell out the difference between year levels – preface statements yrs8-10 almost the same
- Vagueness in terminology in preface statement

- Can something be made of initial graphic? And can it include viewing? Can it be unpacked in the preface statement?

Suggestion

- Could there be a way to give greater clarity to the text types/genres expected for assessment? Link to Purpose – to focus on textual features,
- What are the real world text types that
- Need to include higher-order thinking in a real world context

A backward step – literary criticism essay

- Good for primaries to get back to literature
- Literacy in science? Is this English? Persuasion in science??
- Are primary units genre driven?
- Stages and phases - in orientation, complication etc. What are the phases in your resolution?
- Need to teach phases
Assessment
- Mode – nobody talks about matching student needs to assessment and multiple exposure to the texts that develop the skills we value
- If we give assessment with a view to developing skills, then
- Backward mapping – tease out skills and literacies required to be taught

21 century kids – where is the multimodal????

- Grammar – what is done is good. Grammar should be a means to an end, not an end in itself.