Australian Curriculum: opportunities, challenges and insights

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Outline of presentation

• A national curriculum: opportunities and challenges
• The three-dimensional Curriculum
• A curriculum for the 21st century
• A national curriculum: insights
• Observations
• State of play
• What’s ahead?
• Initiatives, support and praise
A National Curriculum: opportunities and challenges

• We have a rigorous national approach
• We draw on the best talent and expertise available in each subject area
• Our approach is inclusive, robust and cost effective – bringing knowledge and resources from around the country
• We now have everyone on the one page
A national curriculum: opportunities and challenges

• No matter where students live, they now have access to the same curriculum content, and their achievements can be assessed against the same achievement standards.

• We benchmark all that we do against the best in the world and draw on contemporary research to inform our decisions.
Structure of the Australian Curriculum

3 cross-curriculum priorities
- Sustainability
- Asia and Australia’s Links with Asia
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

8 Learning areas
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- The Arts
- Languages
- Health and Physical Education
- Technologies

7 general capabilities
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- ICT Capability
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Capability
- Intercultural Understanding
- Ethical Understanding
A curriculum for the 21st century

The general capabilities:
• Literacy
• Numeracy
• ICT
• Critical and creative thinking
• Personal and social capability
• Intercultural understanding
• Ethical understanding
A curriculum for the 21st century

Current Cross-curriculum priorities:

• Asia and Australia’s links with Asia
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
• Sustainability
A curriculum for the 21st century

• Mathematics: The proficiencies: fluency, understanding, problem-solving and reasoning; financial literacy as a key competency for all young Australians and the ability to interpret and analyse the data to which young Australians are exposed as the world generates more and more information.

• Science: Science as a human endeavour; a focus on inquiry and representation that aligns with contemporary science education research; a systems-thinking approach to science; and contemporary technologies and their role in science problem solving.

• English: English builds the skills needed to engage with written, spoken, multimodal (in print or digital/online forms); visual language with terminology for analysing, justifying or explaining ideas in texts; the evolving nature of English to meet future language needs.
**A curriculum for the 21st century**

- **History:** representing Australian history within a world history framework; emphasis on the concepts of historical thinking and contestability; the need to understand our own and other’s histories

- **Geography:** ‘geographical thinking’ - the underpinning concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, scale, sustainability, and change to frame inquiry and thinking about the content and to demonstrate and apply understanding; an emphasis on inquiry learning through fieldwork and a focus on the future

- **Economics & business:** Economics and business skills and understandings in primary schools; the inclusion of enterprising behaviours and capabilities; the explicit connection to the consumer and financial literacy framework

- **Civics and citizenship:** The emphasis in the skills on collaborative problem-solving and developing evidence-based arguments; the skills of ‘planning for’ and ‘reflecting on’ roles and actions as a citizen; the idea of sustaining a resilient democracy
A curriculum for the 21st century

**Arts:** Five arts subjects from the beginning of primary school (dance; drama; media arts; music and visual arts; an interrelated approach of making and responding; students’ participate as both artists and audience

**Health PE:** The strengths-based approach, explicitly developing the three dimensions of health literacy – the functional dimension; the interactive dimension and the critical dimension and the strong focus on movement

**Technologies:** The focus on preferred futures and the types of thinking: systems, computational and design; the development of digital technologies with a focus on computational thinking

**Languages:** Recognises our linguistically and culturally diverse world requiring a capability to communicate and act interculturally and interlinguistically; recognising the significance of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages in the language ecology of Australia
A national curriculum: insights

- GELP: reflections of curriculum leaders from other countries (Finland; Singapore; Korea; USA; Canada)
- National curriculum development guidance
  - Saudi Arabia
  - Brazil
  - Korea
- Curriculum directors (Australia): dialogue, sharing
- School visits
Observations

- Interpretations of interpretations (Ball)
- Media – myths; our responses
- Significant resource development – Scootle (linking from the AC content tags)
- Scootle community
- Focus of conferences – professional associations
- Social media
State of play

- F–10 and senior secondary: English; mathematics; science; humanities & social sciences (history; geography)
- Student diversity (illustrations of personalised learning); general capabilities continua
- F–10: arts; humanities & social sciences (economics & business; civics and citizenship); health PE; technologies
- F–10 languages +
- Work studies Ys 9–10
What’s ahead?

• Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Framework
• Work samples
• New version of the website – dynamic; responsive to teachers’ needs
• Monitoring of the Australian curriculum
• Senior secondary curriculum – options
• Collaborative assessment
• Primary illustrations of management
• Curriculum connections
• National testing aligned to the Australian Curriculum (NAPLAN; NAP sample)
• Humanities – landing page and subject relationship (history, geography, civics & citizenship, and economics and business)
• Curriculum review
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