

**Draft Australian Curriculum
materials for students with
disability**

Consultation Report

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Executive summary

This report presents the key findings from consultation and trial schools feedback received on the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability.

Key strengths

Respondents identified the following as key strengths of the draft materials:

- The three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum, including extended learning continua for Literacy and Numeracy, provides an inclusive curriculum model for all students, including those with disability.
- The draft Advice materials provide useful and practical information for teachers, with strong links to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#).
- The teaching and learning examples provide useful illustrations of the intent of the draft Advice materials.

Matters for improvement

The following issues were consistently raised in the consultation feedback:

- While there was support for planning from age-equivalent learning area content for most students, a number of respondents considered this approach inappropriate for students with significant intellectual disability
- The advice around adjustments needs to be strengthened, including more detail about using the general capabilities to personalise learning.
- There is inconsistency in the number of additional levels developed for the Literacy, Numeracy, and Personal and social capability continua, and their alignment with year levels.
- The teaching and learning examples need some revision, particularly to strengthen learning area integrity and to better reflect the diversity of students with disability.
- Successful implementation will be dependent on teachers' engagement with and understanding of the materials, in particular the Advice materials.

Responses to two of these key issues in particular included some strongly opposed views:

- Whether age-equivalent learning area content provides an appropriate starting point for planning for all learners, in particular students with significant intellectual disability.
- Whether the number of levels for the Numeracy and Personal and social capability continua should align with the number of levels in the extended Literacy continuum.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Consultation scope

The draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability were released for public consultation between 2 August and 7 October 2012.

A total of 25 schools and 50 teachers, representing all states and territories, sectors and stages of schooling, also trialled the draft materials in the classroom between July and September 2012. The 25 schools incorporated a range of classroom contexts, including specialist school classes, support classes and regular school settings.

Feedback was sought in relation to the following materials:

- Draft Advice for teachers: Using the Australian Curriculum to meet the learning needs of students with disability.
- Draft extended learning continua for the Literacy and Numeracy general capabilities.
- The Personal and social capability continuum as published on the Australian Curriculum website.
- Examples of teaching and learning activities to meet the learning needs of students with disability in English, mathematics, science and history.

There were three sources of consultation feedback:

- An online survey on the ACARA website where respondents completed a rating scale for each survey item and were able to write a comment.
- Written submissions that were faxed, emailed or posted to ACARA.
- An online discussion forum with teachers involved in the trial schools project. (Trial schools also completed the online survey on the ACARA website.)

1.2 Methodology

The quantitative online survey data were analysed using the online survey software application and Microsoft Excel. Quantitative analysis of the online survey data is presented in pie charts and column charts. The number of respondents measured in each column chart is indicated by n. Not all of the 102 survey respondents completed the agree/disagree component for every question.

NVivo 10 software was used to analysis the optional commentary accompanying online survey responses and the formal written submissions. For each item in the survey, comments were categorised as concerns, strengths or suggestions as well as against nodes for each section of the paper. An identical coding procedure was used for the formal submissions. This analysis of survey respondents' commentary and formal submissions has been used to illustrate the qualitative findings from consultation and demonstrates the diversity of views provided.

1.2.1 Online survey

All stakeholder groups, members of the public and trial school participants were given the opportunity to complete an online survey in relation to the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability.

The online survey instrument comprised 10 rating scale items and five open-ended items. The rating scale items asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the 10 items, using the following Likert scale:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

They could also include a comment in response to each item. The five open-ended items at the end of the survey were specifically aimed at teachers who had engaged intensively with the draft materials. This was predominantly, but not exclusively, aimed at teachers from the trial schools.

The online survey items are provided at Appendix 1.

1.2.2 Written submissions

All stakeholder groups and members of the public were given the opportunity to submit a more detailed response in relation to the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability, and asked to organise their written response under the same headings as in the online survey.

1.2.3 Trial schools

The aim of the trial schools project was to gain feedback on the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability from teachers who had undertaken intensive engagement with the draft materials in their own classrooms.

ACARA invited state and territory education authorities to nominate six to nine schools, across all educational jurisdictions and across a range of contexts and stages of schooling, interested in participating in the consultation activity. ACARA selected 25 schools to participate in the trial, based on a range of criteria to ensure coverage of:

- the range of school contexts, including specialist school, support class and regular settings
- all stages of schooling
- each of the four learning areas (English, mathematics, science, history)
- government, Catholic and independent schools.

Schools selected for the trial project were asked to nominate two teachers to engage intensively with the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability.

At the start of the project the participating teachers attended an introductory day in their own state or territory run by the Senior Project Officer — Students with Disability. The purpose of the introductory day was to present the draft materials for students with disability in the context of the Australian Curriculum Phase 1 learning areas and provide details about their engagement in the trial.

Teachers trialled the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability during Term 3 (between July and September 2012).

ACARA established an online discussion forum specifically for teachers in trial schools. Teachers were able to share experiences, concerns and resources relating to their intensive engagement with the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability.

Participating teachers used the draft materials to plan and deliver teaching and learning programs drawn from the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history, making necessary adjustments to ensure that students with disability were able to access and participate in those teaching and learning programs on the same basis as those without disability (Disability Standards for Education 2005 under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*).

Adjustments to age-appropriate learning area content could include, but were not limited to, teachers drawing directly from the draft extended learning continua for Literacy and Numeracy as well as the Personal and social capability learning continuum.

The trialling process involved each participating school:

- preparing at least one teaching and learning activity from the Australian Curriculum learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history demonstrating how adjustments were made to personalise learning for a student or students with disability
- collecting evidence of student participation and achievement for each teaching and learning activity delivered
- participating in an online discussion forum
- providing feedback by completing the online consultation survey.

1.3 Summary of respondent demographics

A total of 102 online survey responses were included in the quantitative data analysis. ACARA also received 35 formal written submissions, which were included in the qualitative analysis.

1.3.1 Online survey

A total of 102 online survey responses were received and included in the quantitative data analysis. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of survey responses by state/territory.

Respondents were also identified according to the group or individual categories presented in the online survey. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of group responses by category and Figure 3 shows the breakdown of individual responses by category.

The majority of group responses were received from professional associations (31%), education authorities (25%) and specialist school teachers (22%). Teachers from specialist schools and support class settings represented 45 percent of all individual responses received.

Figure 1

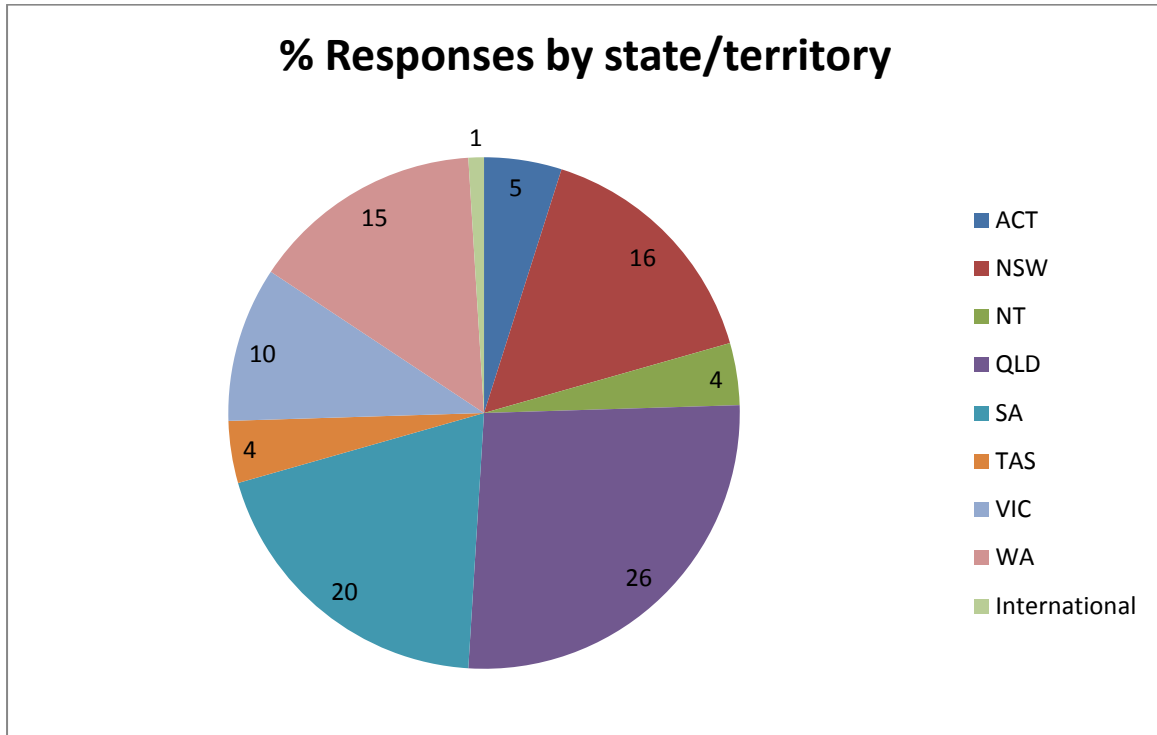


Figure 2

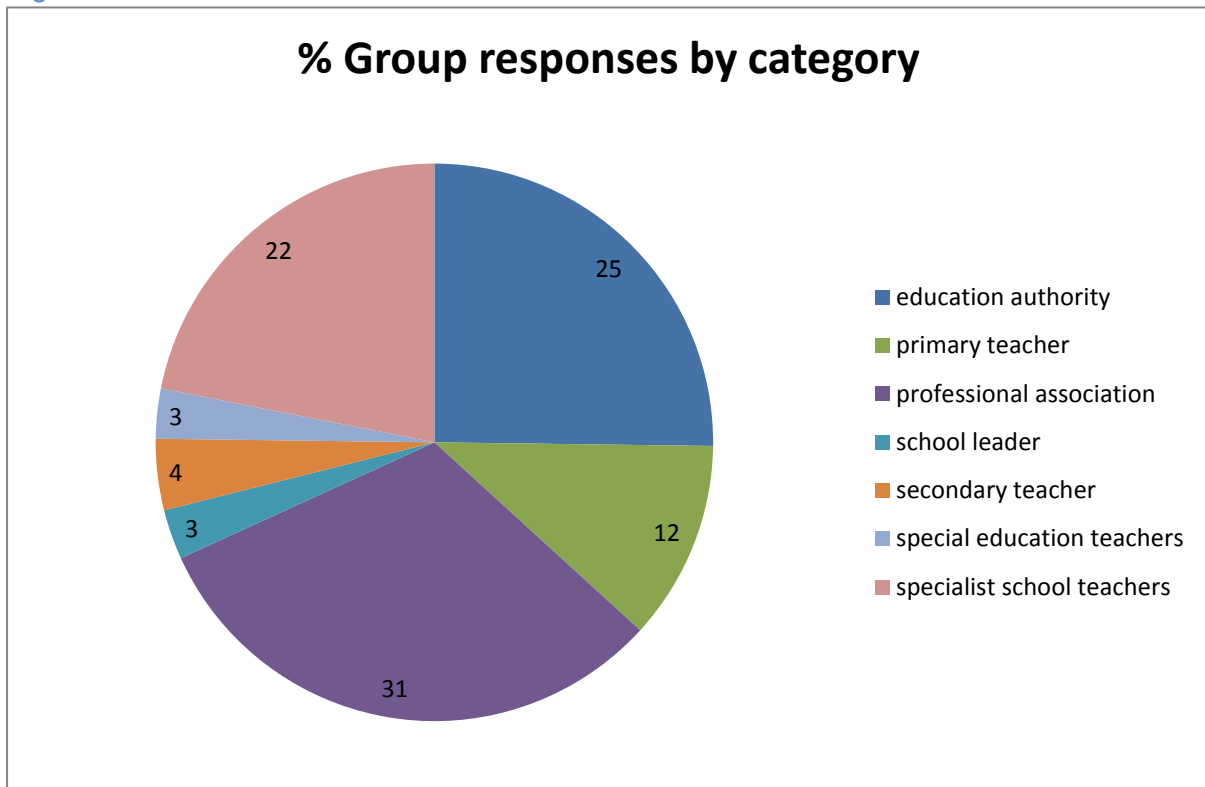
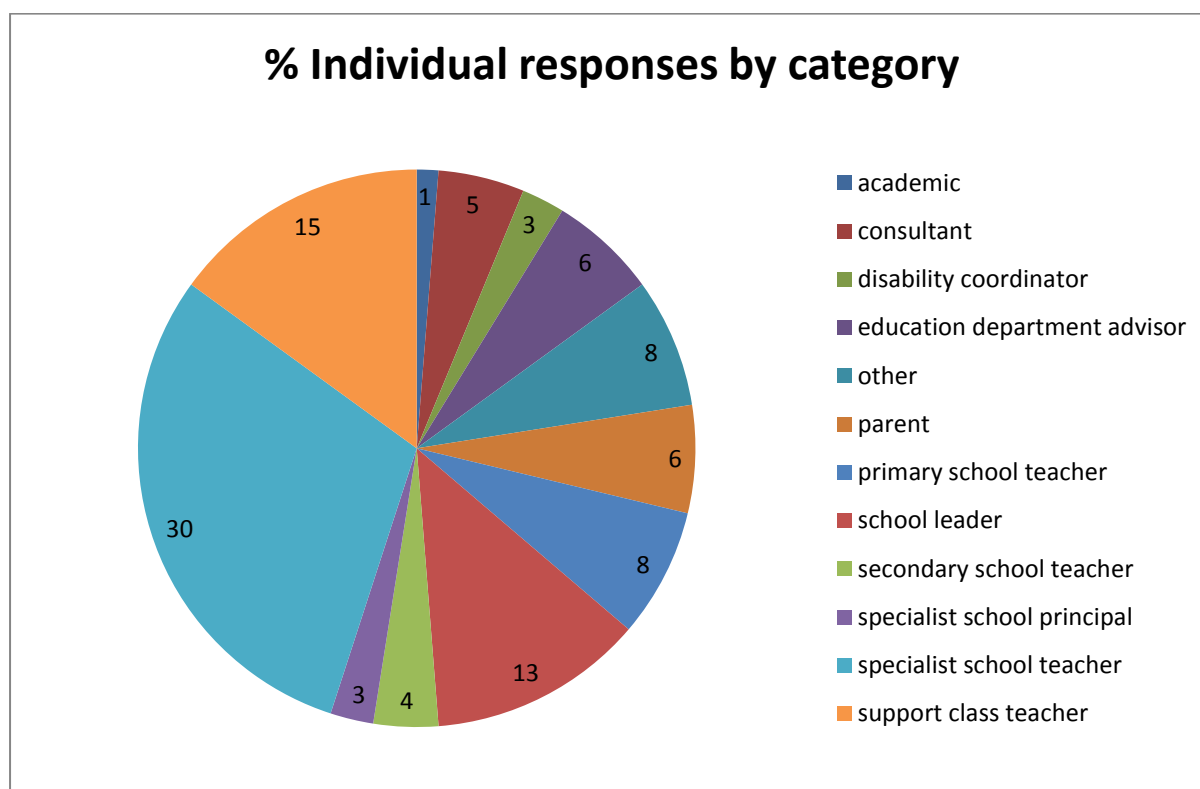


Figure 3



1.3.2 Written submissions

Thirty-five formal written submissions were received. The written submissions were categorised as follows. (See Appendix 2 for a full list of submissions received.)

Category of respondent	Submissions received
State and territory education authorities	12
Teacher professional associations	5
Education stakeholders (other than authorities or teacher associations)	2
Peak bodies and other organisations	4
Universities	1
Schools	4
Individuals	7
TOTAL	35

1.3.3 Trial schools

ACARA received 23 responses to the online survey from the 50 teachers who participated in the trial schools project.

During the trial schools project seven of the 50 teachers engaged in the online discussion forum, representing two primary schools and three specialist schools. However, 12 summary statements regarding the trial were submitted from seven of the trial schools (three regular schools, four specialist schools) and these have been included in the data analysis.

Chapter 2: Consultation findings

The following section summarises the major findings from public consultation and intensive engagement by trial schools, identifying key strengths and matters for improvement for each component of the draft materials.

Quotes included in this report are representative of the comments expressed by a variety of jurisdictions, organisations and individuals Australia-wide.

Key stakeholders expressed overall support for the direction ACARA has taken with developing the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability in response to consultation undertaken in 2011.

... the direction of the document represents a major step forward in ensuring that the Australian curriculum will meet the needs of all Australian students, including students with disability. (Australian Association of Special Education (AASE))

Aspect acknowledges ACARA's previous consultation on 'Students with Disability: Progressing to Foundation' and provided feedback through the online survey. We are pleased that ACARA followed the suggestions for improvement in the survey and reviewed the existing materials and released this new consultation paper. (Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect))

APPA endorses the broad philosophical position taken in the draft advice and sees the advice as providing a generally sound and practical basis for meeting the needs of students with disability. (Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA))

Building on the three dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum keeps the curriculum inclusive of all learners including students with disability ... The materials are built on evidence based research which is clearly referenced and explicit links are also made with commonwealth legislative requirements. (Disability Programs Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Communities)

While endorsing the philosophical approach, only 46 percent of respondents thought the draft materials clearly describe how to use the Australian Curriculum to meet the learning needs of students with disability (see Figure 6). Detailed recommendations were provided for further developing the draft materials.

2.1 Draft Advice for teachers: Using the Australian Curriculum to meet the learning needs of students with disability

2.1.1 Strengths

Most responses found the draft Advice material easy to navigate and accessible. The language was considered plain and clear and the document contained useful, practical information with strong links to legislation. In particular, there was strong support for the section on adjustments.

The use of quotations and the explanations of adjustments [are] very clear and support the focus of teachers. (AASE, SA Chapter)

Great to see the emphasis on the multi-dimensional characteristic of the curriculum and emphasis placed on more than the content descriptors. (support class teacher, Qld)

Respondents supported the emphasis the draft Advice materials placed on the three dimensions of the curriculum design as providing flexibility for teachers to personalise learning for all students:

The linkages demonstrated between learning area, general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities will provide teachers with greater options to meet the learning needs of the full range of students with disability. It will also demonstrate to teachers that teaching and learning for all students with disability including students with the most complex needs, can be provided within the Australian curriculum learning areas. (AASE)

The structure of the Advice paper was very logical and coherent. It ... demonstrates the flexibility of the curriculum and drills down to show that the general capabilities could be the key to unlocking the content of the Australian Curriculum for students with disabilities. It enables the reader to see the big picture perspective and then shows the applicability of the extended general capabilities in unlocking the curriculum for all. (support class teacher, WA)

Figure 4

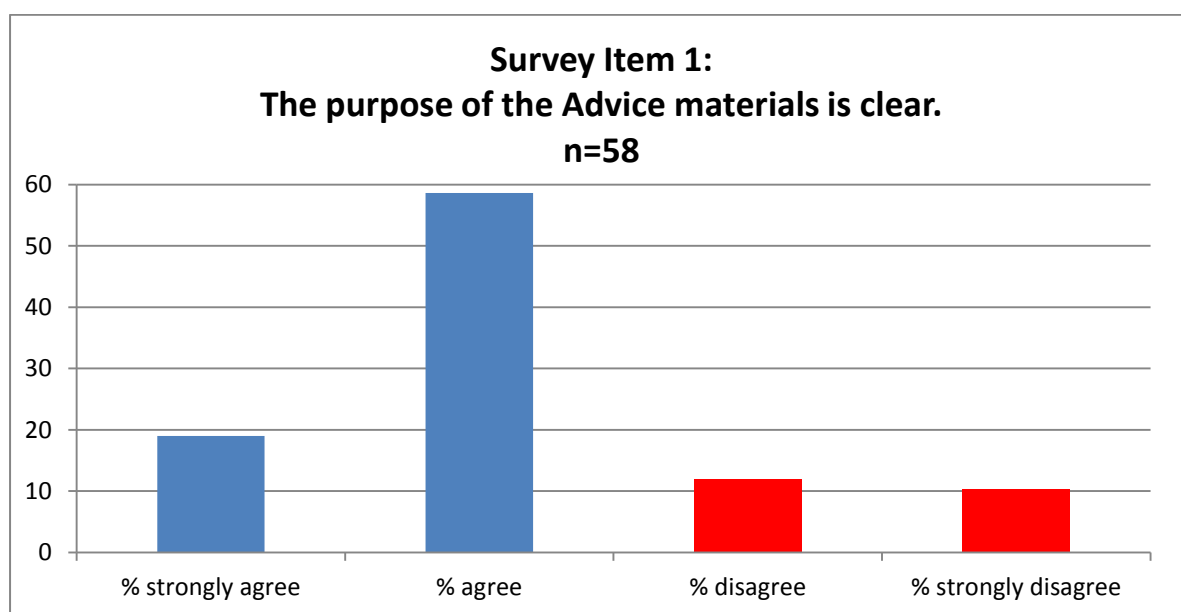
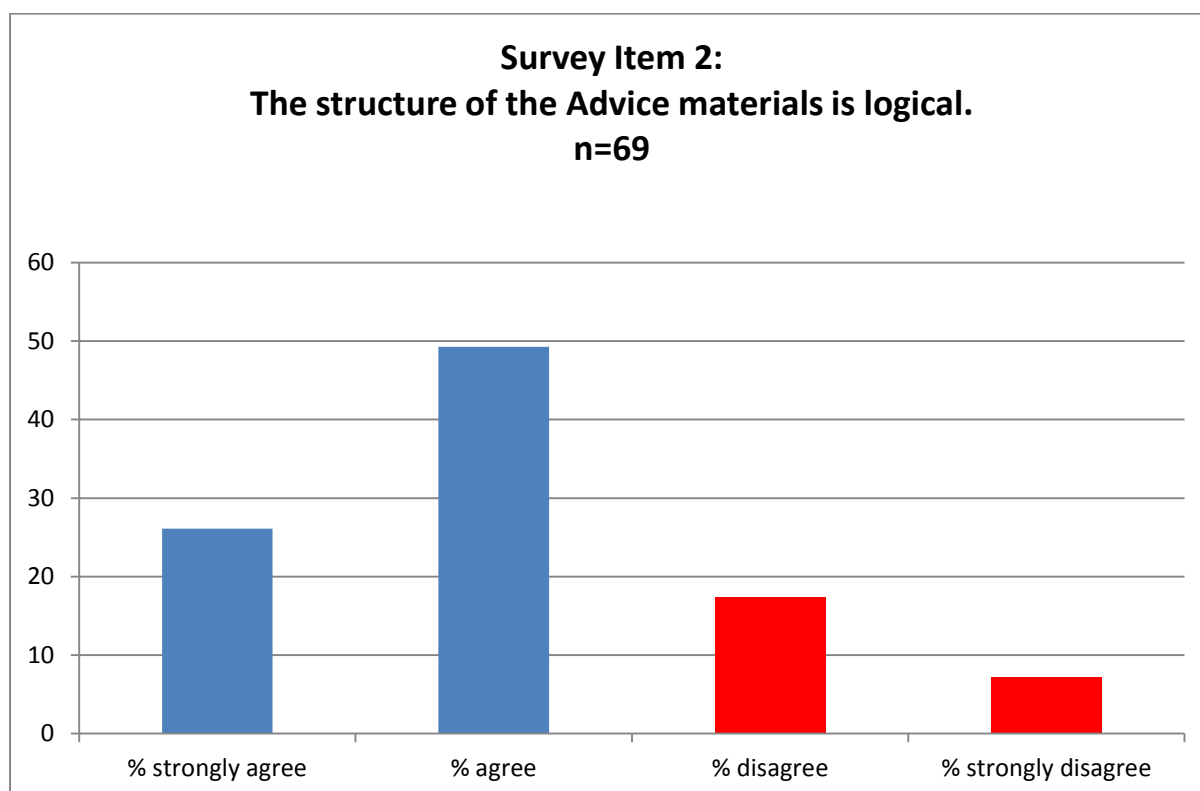


Figure 5



There was a mixed response to the flowchart illustrating how to use the Australian Curriculum to meet the needs of all students, on page 4 of the Advice materials. There was however overall support for the emphasis placed on chronological age as the starting point for planning and delivery of effective educational programs:

I particularly like the flow chart graphic — this makes the planning process clear for me. (education advisor, SA)

Page 4 is at the crux of what is important to teachers in the sense of the practical application. (school leader, NT)

It is imperative that all students with disability, regardless of their educational setting, access curriculum content which is age-appropriate. (AASE)

The advice is clearly evidence based, consistent and easy to read. It is pleasing to see the emphasis on age appropriate content and rigour in planning and programming for students with a disability. (Association of Independent Schools of NSW)

2.1.2 Matters for improvement

The purpose of the draft Advice material needs to be clarified. Respondents were uncertain whether the document refers to the diverse needs of all students, or the needs of all students with disability.

While the advice is focused on a student with disability, it could be applied to the full range of diverse learning needs. (Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC))

While we understand the value of advice covering all children with disability, we believe that the document should principally focus on students with a need for substantial curriculum adjustments and support. (APPA)

The advice material ... would be clearer, however, if the document focuses specifically on meeting the needs of students with disability in the context of the Australian Curriculum. (AASE)

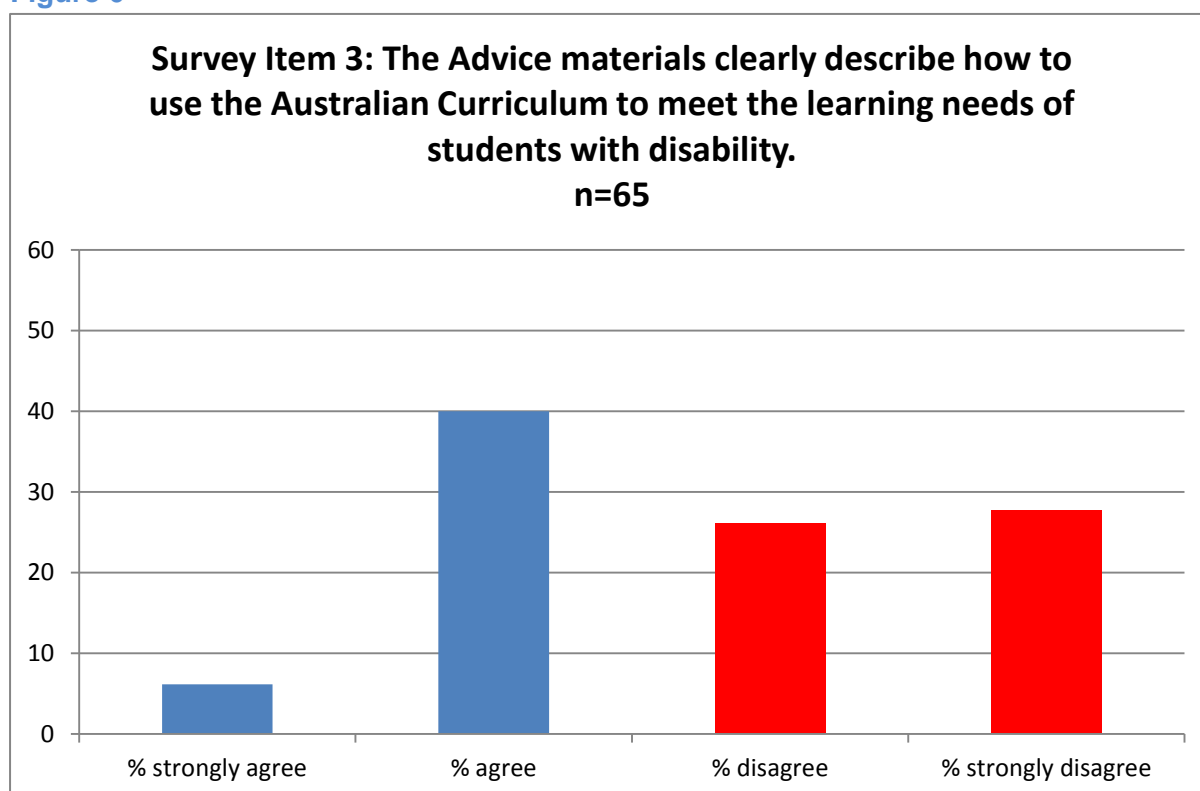
The cohort of students is not clear — whilst not wishing to highlight a specific cohort of students i.e. those with significant intellectual and or multiple disabilities, it needs to be clarified as to who will principally require the extended continua. (individual, SA)

The nomenclature, 'draft curriculum materials', [implies] that the materials hold curriculum status. If the materials are intended as support and advice for teachers in using the Australian Curriculum, then it is recommended that the nomenclature be revised. (Board of Studies NSW)

The Board of Studies NSW was the only respondent to question the dual labelling of the learning continua, finding this to be confusing and not inclusive:

... it is recommended that a numerical sequence is used, that is, 1–10. Labelling levels by years of schooling presents concerns regarding the inclusivity of students with disability, as the four additional levels sit outside the Foundation to Year 10 sequence. (Board of Studies NSW)

Figure 6



Some respondents reported that in their current form the draft Advice materials present as a 'one-size-fits-all' model with insufficient detail to support teachers to follow the process and understand how the adjustments, referred to on pages 7–9, can be made. There was overall agreement that the flowchart needs to be simplified.

The section on adjustments on pages 7–9 of the Advice document was thought to be useful but requiring further development:

... a clear explanation is needed that adjustments to teaching and learning need to be determined according to individual student need. (AASE)

There is ... scope to build in a greater emphasis on an individual student centred approach to programming. It should be emphasised that the individual plan is based on the student's academic, social, communication and behavioural needs and the specific outcomes needed to meet these needs. The individual plan would map appropriate activities within each content area to the age appropriate content. (Association of Independent Schools of NSW)

Respondents requested clearer guidance with regard to the relationship between a student's individual plan and the Australian Curriculum content descriptions and achievement standards. Concern was expressed by both APPA and the Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders (QASEL) that the current messaging was not sufficiently explicit and could inadvertently imply that some students would not access the Australian Curriculum.

There will need to be guidance as to how to use the curriculum to align with individual plans and more strategies in each of the levels to more clearly ascertain achievement (Positive Partnerships, NSW)

Individual plans should be clearly based on the Australian Curriculum and should aim to give every child access to the richness of the curriculum. (APPA)

QASEL members seek some clarity around where these goals will be drawn from ... and how these students who will have individual learning goals are identified. (QASEL)

The consultation materials were considered to place a heavy emphasis on the general capabilities, and it was recommended that more explicit advice be provided about when and how to use the general capabilities in making adjustments to learning area content.

The advice re the General Capabilities needs to say specifically how these can be used to enable students with disabilities to access the curriculum and this advice linked to the continuum and the sample lessons. (Association of Independent Schools of NSW)

The concept of drawing from the learning area content, the general capabilities learning continua and the cross-curriculum priorities for developing a teaching and learning program needs to be teased out in more detail and explanations given clearly as to how this might be done. It would be extremely helpful to teachers if this section of the document could include links to short video segments which demonstrate these processes. (AASE)

Not all respondents agreed that chronological age should be the starting point for planning teaching and learning for students with significant intellectual disability. Common practice is to draw on students' personal interests, preferences, likes and dislikes, and it was suggested that teachers' personalised understanding of their individual students should be acknowledged as a valued part of the process of curriculum planning:

... using the starting point of a student's chronological age ... can be somewhat flawed when planning for [students with disability] especially for those students with significant cognitive impairments. (Australian Special Education Principals' Association (ASEPA))

Chronological age content as the starting point is flawed. The starting point for all including gifted and talented is what the learner brings to the learning experience. That is not to deny the vital importance of chronological age context within the planning, implementation, assessment and reporting aspects. (school leader, Qld)

For our students who are at pre-intentional level, this starting point was not relevant as these students need to experience content that is relevant to them. (trial school, NT)

Other respondents chose to highlight the professional challenge presented to teachers by the proposed approach:

The idea of using the student's chronological age as the starting point for considering curriculum provision for students with disability is a significant departure from practice in some classrooms and will challenge some teachers' beliefs about planning for students with disability. (Department of Education, Tas)

There was some confusion about ACARA’s role in assessment and reporting. Some respondents requested explicit instruction about appropriate assessment processes in relation to adjustments and individual learning plans.

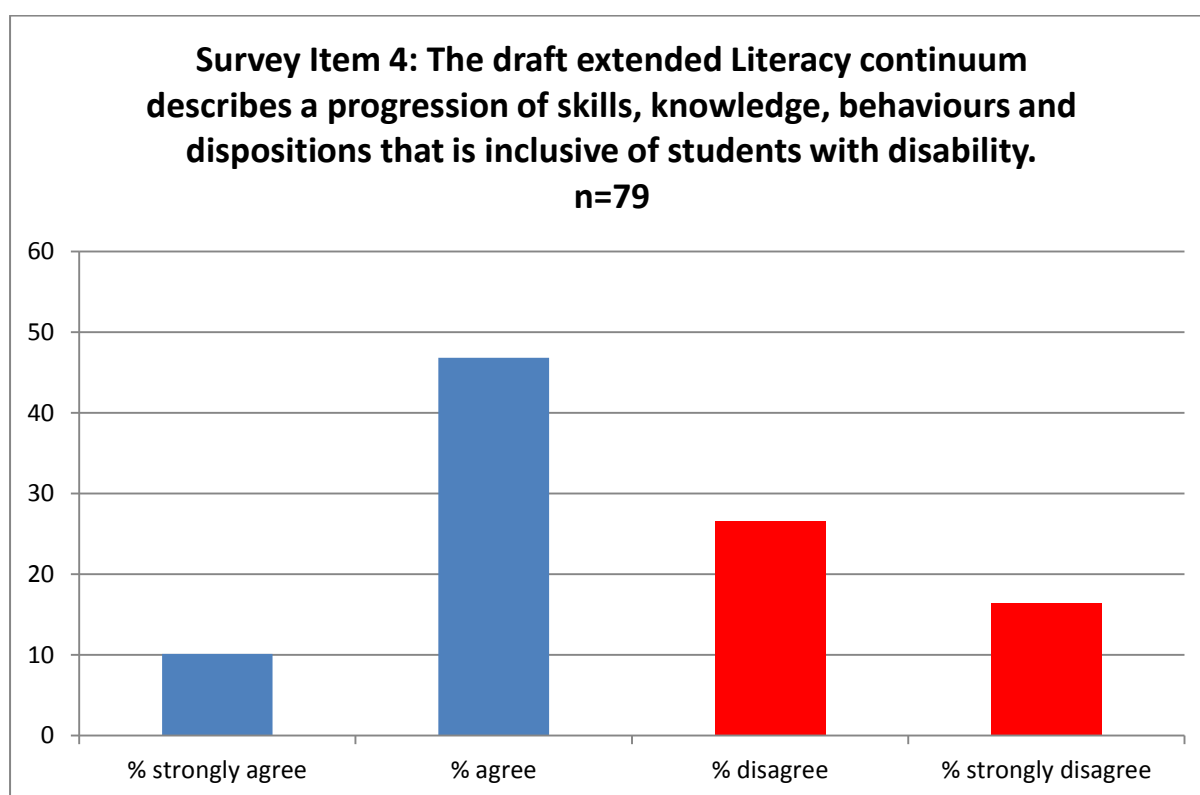
2.2 Draft extended learning continuum for the Literacy general capability

2.2.1 Strengths

As with the draft Advice materials, there was overall support for the direction taken to extend the Literacy continuum to be inclusive of students with disability (in particular those with significant intellectual disability).

Figure 7 illustrates that 57 percent of online survey respondents considered the extended Literacy continuum to be inclusive of students with disability.

Figure 7



The development of the additional draft Levels 1a–1d was strongly supported as providing useful information for teachers to use in programming teaching and learning for students with disability:

The draft extended Literacy curriculum acknowledges that students with disability present across the entire range of the continuum and takes into account students who are at school with literacy levels below entry to the school standards. (QCEC)

The levels of communication development would be well understood by teachers in Aspect schools. (Aspect)

ASEPA supports the use of Levels 1a–d. (ASEPA)

The documentation promotes teachers to use the literacy continuum to make adjustments to 'access age-appropriate learning area content' (p.15) or they 'may shift the emphasis of the lesson ... to develop and apply a student's literacy skills' (p.15). (NSW Department of Education and Communities)

The importance of teaching communication skills as represented by the additional levels was strongly supported by speech pathologists:

We congratulate ACARA on their acknowledgement of the importance of communication as a vital skill that all children, including children with disabilities, should have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. (Speech Pathology Australia)

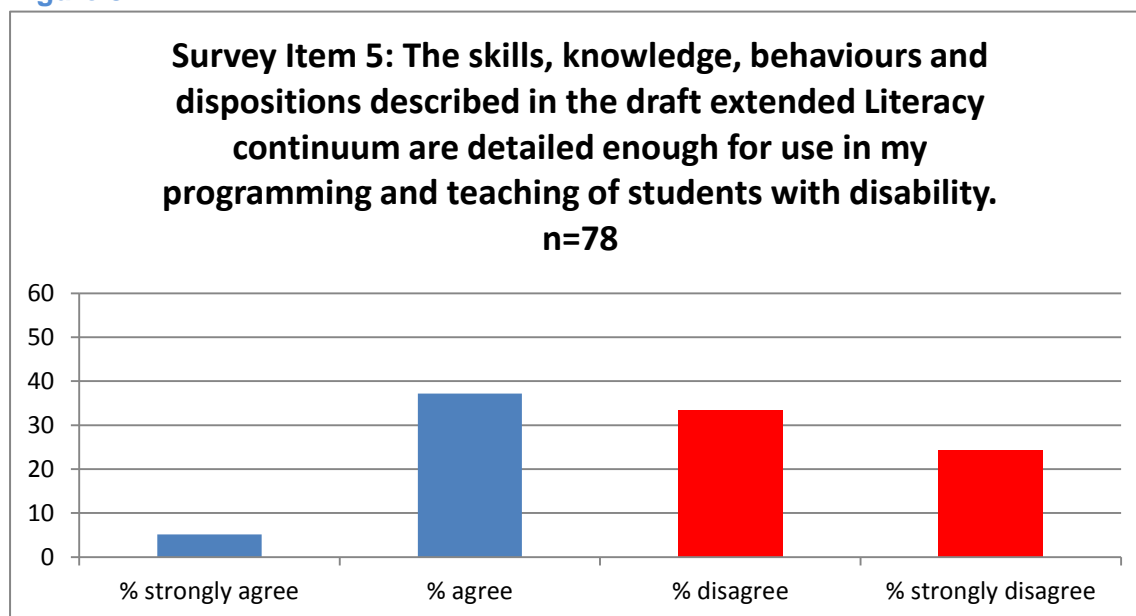
Great to see the use of the Communication Matrix categories to assist teachers to make adjustments for students who are at different levels of communication development. (Qld Department of Education, Training and Employment Speech-Language Therapy Services)

I was particularly pleased to read the acknowledgement that teaching communication skills should be one of the most important priorities. (speech pathologist, Vic)

2.2.2 Matters for improvement

Despite strong support of the extended continuum in Literacy, Figure 8 illustrates that only 42 percent of online survey respondents considered that the progression of skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions were sufficiently detailed for use in programming and teaching students with disability.

Figure 8



Feedback included specific recommendations for more detailed descriptions to be provided in each level of the extended Literacy continuum to ensure its usefulness in supporting teachers' programming. There was also some suggestion that more detailed information is required in the Advice materials to support teachers in using the additional levels.

ASEPA and the Catholic Education Commission NSW Special Education Advisory Group recommend more explicit and detailed explanation regarding how communication links into literacy.

Some respondents found the 'notes for teachers' in Levels 1a–1c to be confusing and inconsistent with the rest of the learning continuum, and recommended that these teaching strategies be removed. Recommendations for improving clarity included:

- *content elaborations that give examples of student behaviours in each of these levels (principal, Qld)*
- *use Rowland's communication matrix in full as an additional resource (QASEL)*
- *'Towards Level 1' Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) could be used by schools as an additional resource for Level 1a–d content (ASEPA).*

AASE and Speech Pathology Australia both drew attention to the specialist nature of teaching communication skills and the need for multidisciplinary collaboration to be reflected in the Advice materials.

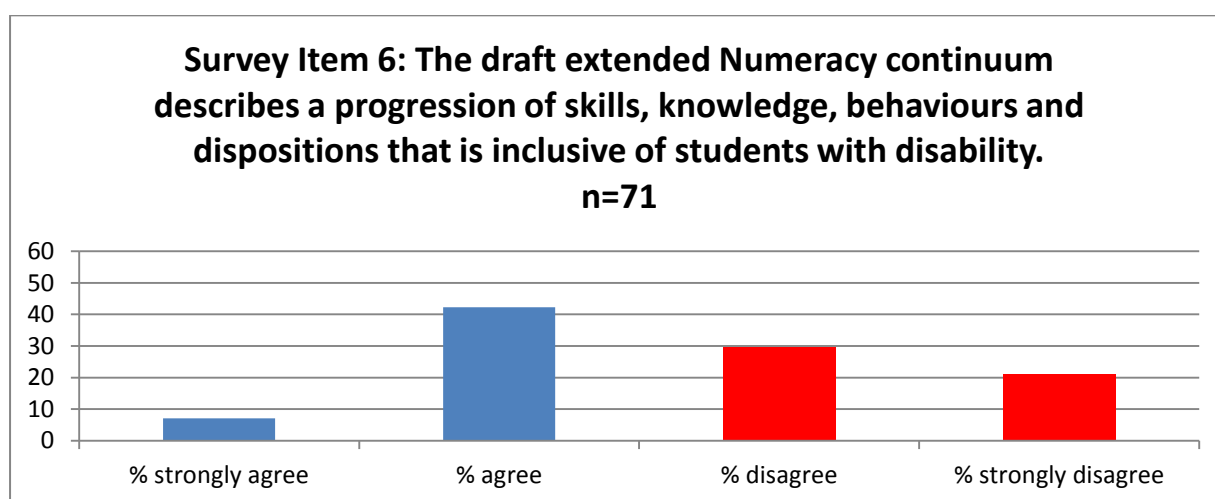
Strong concern was expressed over specific terminology relating to communication behaviours, in particular the inappropriate use of 'reflex behaviours' in describing the pre-intentional level of communication and in the associated examples.

Some concern was also expressed about the potential for the extended Literacy continuum to be used as an assessment tool.

2.3 Draft extended learning continuum for the Numeracy general capability

Figure 9 shows that online survey responses were evenly split in relation to the question of whether the draft extended Numeracy continuum describes a progression of skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions that is inclusive of students with disability.

Figure 9



2.3.1 Strengths

While there was overall strong support for extending the Numeracy continuum, a range of views were expressed about the appropriate number of additional levels. Some respondents

supported the draft continuum's extension by a single level to ensure the content's integrity as numeracy.

The continuum is only extended by one level (by comparison [with] four for Literacy) and this is supported as appropriate to Numeracy since it enables a focus on matters especially to do with Numeracy rather than broader communication matters which would likely be introduced with additional levels. (APPA)

The additional level for each of the elements in the numeracy continuum is supported, particularly with the emphasis on the development of numeracy concepts. (AASE)

Numeracy concepts would lose their intent should they be further drawn out. (Special Education Curriculum Cluster (SECC))

2.3.2 Matters for improvement

Many respondents commented that without a Foundation statement it was difficult to gauge the sequence of progression. Some feedback suggested additional levels are required prior to the current Level 1:

Beginning with 'understanding' sets an entry point that is too high for some students with disability as it assumes they already have knowledge of and some degree of understanding of specific mathematics concepts ... (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA))

The provision of one additional level for students with disability within the draft Numeracy continuum does not provide enough scope for the development of students' numeracy skills. (Board of Studies NSW)

ASEPA recommends the addition of Level 1 a–d as in the Literacy General Capability continuum to assist teachers to provide meaningful and relevant learning opportunities in Numeracy for [students with disability] ... (ASEPA) (This view was shared by QASEL, NSW Special Education Principals' and Leaders' Association and QCEC.)

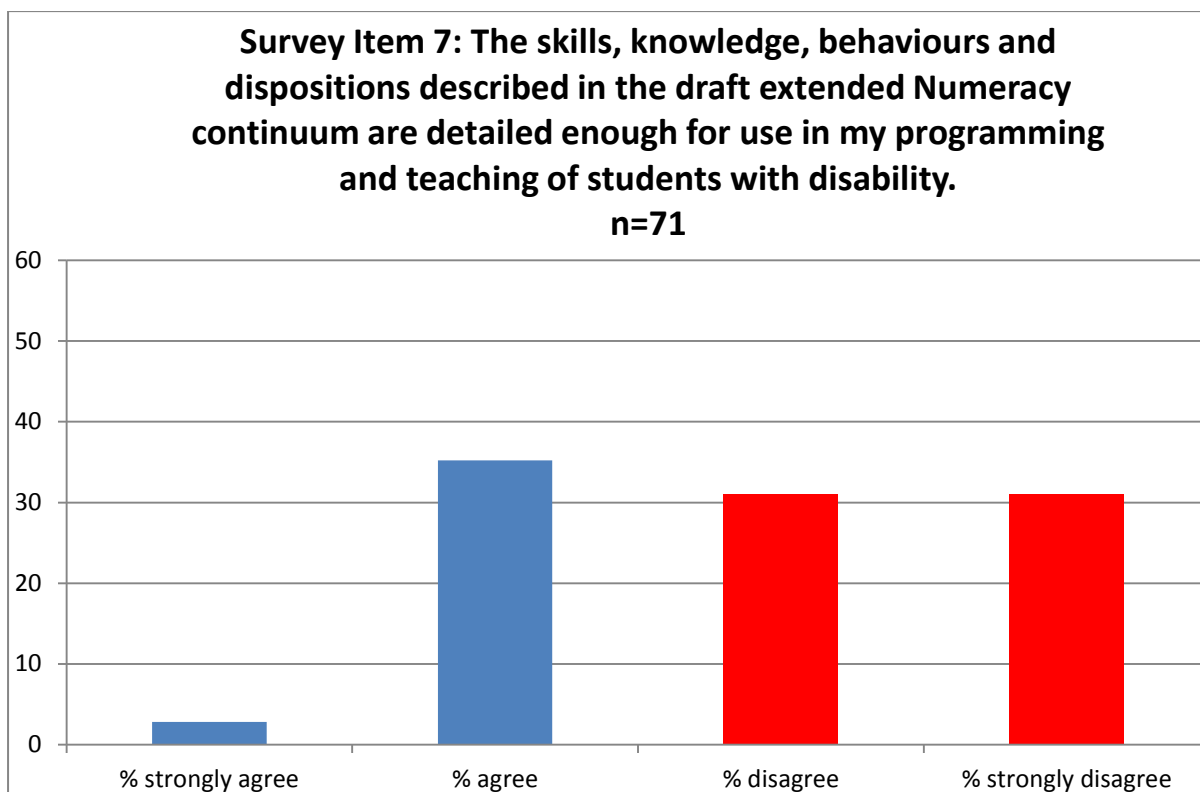
Level 1 will need to be broken down into the developmental stages prior to this. (Aspect)

Consideration should be given to the expressed level of difficulty in some elements at Level 1. (AASE)

There was considerable feedback suggesting the level descriptions require more detail (see Figure 10), possibly by way of examples, to ensure a clear and unambiguous progression in complexity of skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions along the continuum:

It would be hard on the basis of the current draft for teachers to assess student progress and identify the implications for appropriate content and pedagogy ... (APPA)

Figure 10



There was some concern that the relationship of the Numeracy continuum to the *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* is not clear:

Using different organising elements in the continuum to those used in the Australian Curriculum Mathematics may cause confusion as teachers move from one document to another. (NSW Department of Education and Communities)

Some respondents suggested that development of more teaching and learning examples illustrating use of the extended Numeracy continuum would help teachers of students with disability.

2.4 Personal and social capability continuum

All respondents commented on the incomplete presentation of the Personal and social capability continuum (Years 2, 6 and 10 only) and how this negatively impacted on their ability to comment. However, the relevance of this capability in relation to students with disability was strongly supported.

2.4.1 Strengths

The current descriptions are seen as clear, succinct and useful for teachers. Respondents stated:

This was by far the most impressive part. I feel like the students with disabilities are finally getting acknowledged. (assistant principal, NSW)

This is great. It is clear and well formatted. I am very excited to start implementing it as an integral part of my program. Fantastic. (support class teacher, NSW)

The continuum was viewed as encompassing all areas of social and emotional development:

APPA congratulates ACARA on the very important initiative represented in the development of the Personal and social capability continuum. The draft is comprehensive and represents an excellent contribution to the field ... (APPA)

The General Capability of Personal and social capability is of most importance to students with ASD [autism spectrum disorder] and work on these capabilities will assist them to become successful learners. Developing the skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management will help students with ASD engage with the curriculum. (Aspect)

It is acknowledged that each level of the personal and social capability continuum can apply to students with a disability at any point in their schooling. (AASE)

Respondents highly valued this capability for the education of students with disability and were concerned that it could be overlooked. Recommendations included further development of the Advice materials and the development of more examples to emphasise the central importance of this general capability to students of all ages with disability:

[Personal and social capability] to be more prominently discussed earlier in the advice and provide greater clarity about the central importance of this capability in the education of students with disability and its role in program planning and student support. (APPA)

It will be important to emphasise to teachers that age appropriate experiences will need to be provided to students with a disability to ensure that they are able to develop and extend their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in this important area. (AASE)

... this continuum ... will need to be supported by examples and strategies in order to provide comprehensive guidance to teachers. (Positive Partnerships, NSW)

2.4.2 Matters for improvement

Close to 60 percent of online survey respondents did not consider that the current form of the Personal and social capability continuum provided a progression that is inclusive of students with disability (see Figure 11).

Figure 11

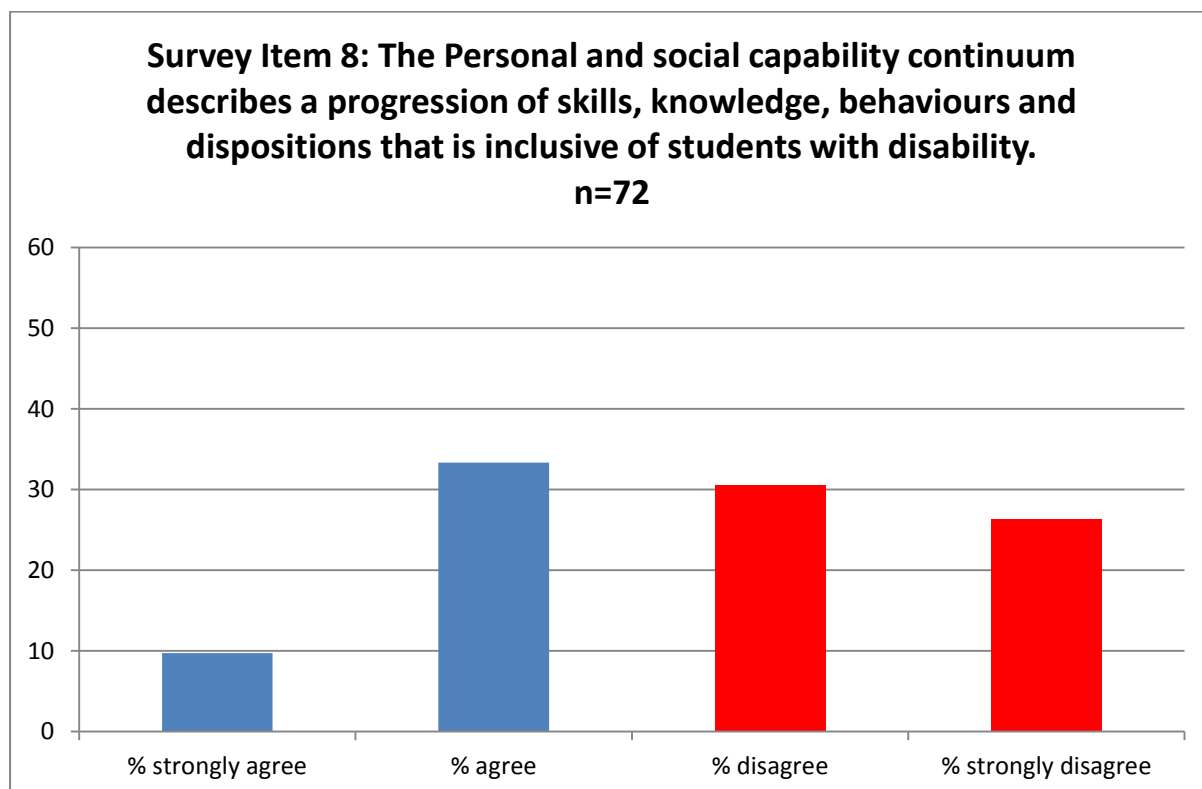
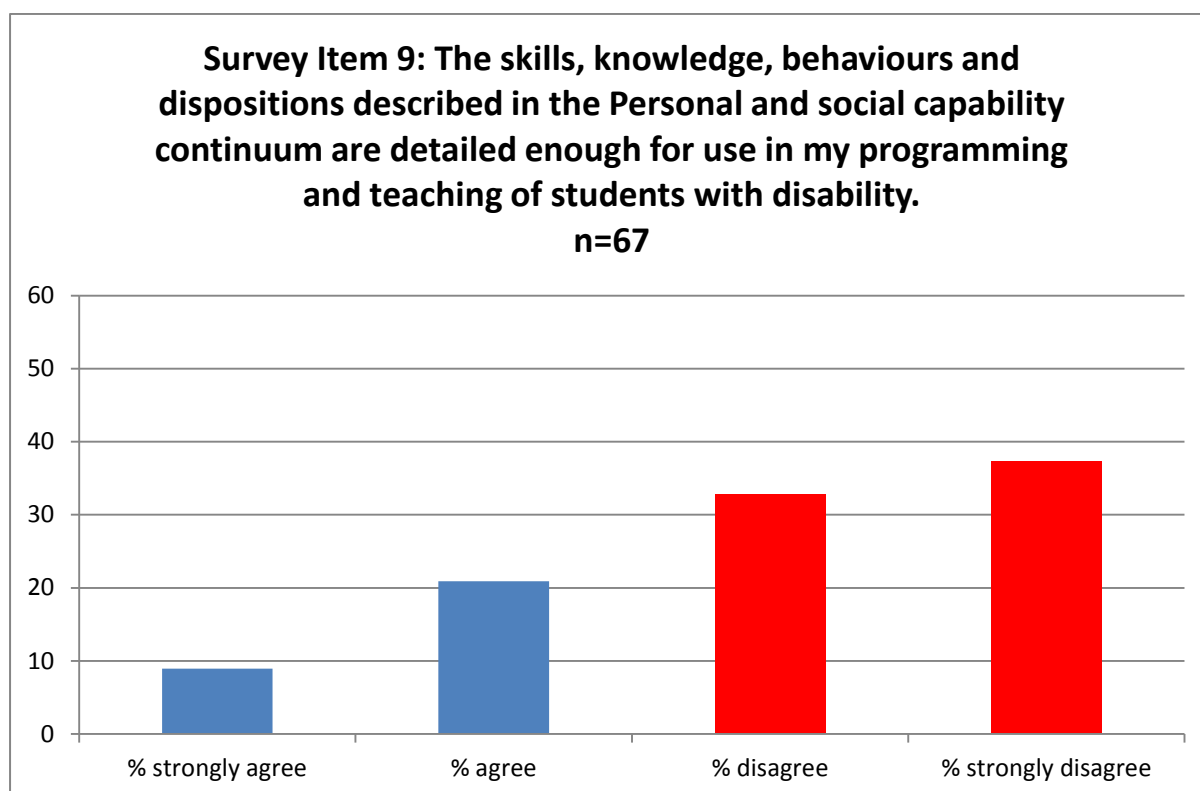


Figure 12 shows that 70 percent of online survey respondents felt the Personal and social capability continuum is insufficiently detailed for use in their programming and teaching of students with disability. Comments on the online survey and in the written submissions suggested this was, in part, due to Foundation and Years 4 and 8 not having descriptions at the time of consultation. Some respondents recommended the development of additional descriptions in keeping with the Literacy and Numeracy continua:

It will be important to add further advice about pre-Foundation progress and indicators ... (APPA)

Figure 12



APPA recommended that the final version of the Personal and social capability continuum and any supporting materials should be subject to further consultation.

2.5 Teaching and learning examples

2.5.1 Strengths

The written commentary in the online survey responses demonstrated strong support for the teaching and learning examples as providing useful illustration of the intent of the Advice materials. Many respondents thought the examples provided a useful model for assisting teachers in meeting the diverse needs of all students and recommended that more examples should be developed.

This section is great — just what mainstream teachers need ... (specialist school teacher, ACT)

The examples supplied are very good. We will be keen to see some lower primary examples soon ... (primary school teacher, NSW)

These are excellent. I would like to see many more similar examples, particularly linked to specific disabilities as defined by teachers and health professionals. (consultant, Vic)

This is a start and more examples should continue to be developed to reflect a wide range of students and their personalised learning experiences ... (AASE, SA)

Good concept to have examples — very exciting! (Catholic Education Commission NSW Special Education Advisory Group)

The examples illustrate how the general capabilities can be used ... (specialist school teacher, Qld)

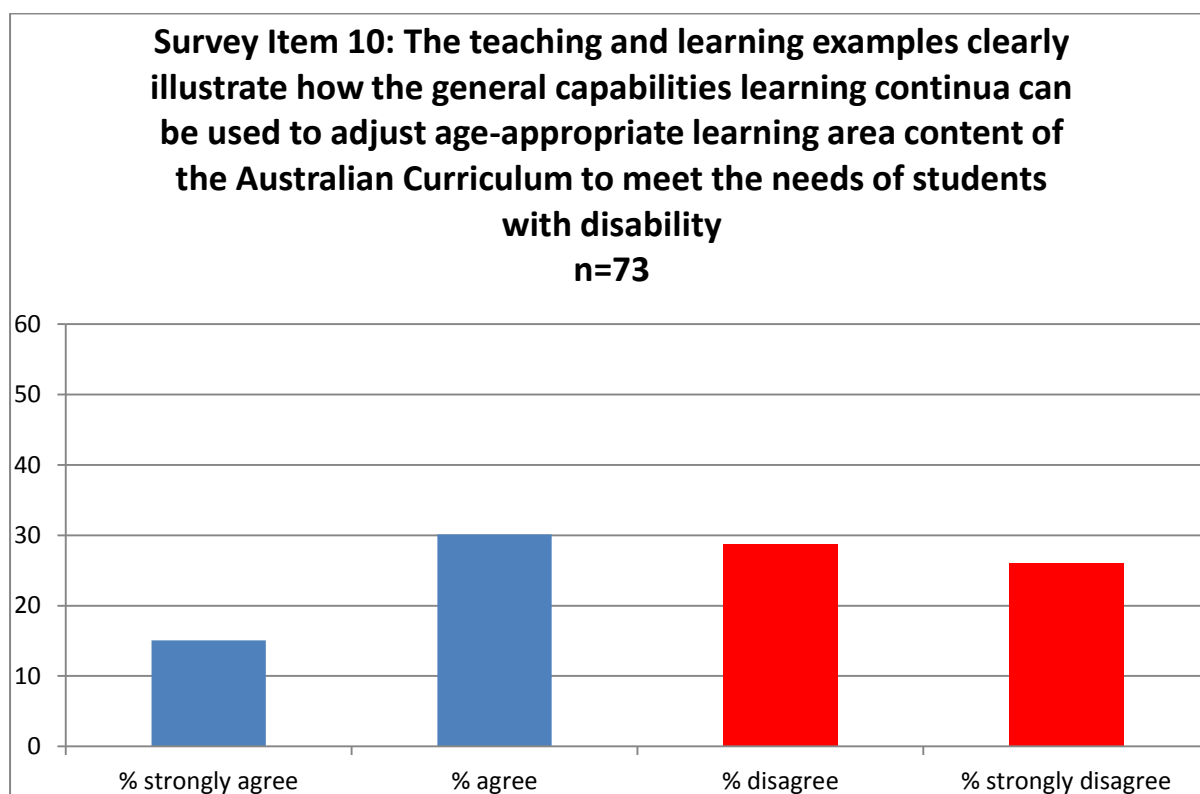
The examples make it very clear that the Australian Curriculum can be and should be adjusted for students with disability and the general capabilities are an integral part of the Australian Curriculum. (secondary school teacher, Qld)

These were used as a basis for planning and preparing for the ACARA Trial Schools Project. They were helpful in identifying the way in which the new curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of students with special needs. (secondary trial school)

2.5.2 Matters for improvement

Fifty-five percent of online survey respondents considered that the teaching and learning examples did not clearly illustrate how the general capabilities learning continua can be used to adjust age-appropriate learning area content of the Australian Curriculum to meet the needs of students with disability (see Figure 13).

Figure 13



There was concern that the examples do not consistently promote learning area integrity in planning teaching and learning for students with disability. There was some suggestion that the examples could be strengthened by more faithfully illustrating the process outlined in the flowchart on page 4 of the draft Advice materials:

Only the mathematics example demonstrates finding the relevant learning area content, as identified as being the first step in the planning process. (NSW Department of Education and Communities)

The examples ... could be accompanied by video segments which will demonstrate to teachers the full planning process, commencing with students' chronological age. (AASE)

At this stage they do not clearly illustrate how the general capabilities can be used. Each example uses only one general capability as a point of access. In Science there could be numeracy and literacy as points of access and in history literacy, numeracy and social emotional. Teachers need to understand that any or all or none may be the point of access to age appropriate content for the students ... (Association of Independent Schools of NSW)

The examples are disappointing. They are not placed in context, so the reader is left to work out the circumstances and conditions under which the teaching might occur. They do not represent high quality pedagogy in each field. They are uneven in the extent to which they properly reflect the content of the domain: the History examples are barely historical at all ... (APPA)

There were some recommendations that the examples could reflect a broader range of students with disability and that they need to take account of all educational settings:

The examples may be useful for an experienced teacher, but for a classroom teacher with little training or experience working with students with disabilities, the examples are too restrictive and limited in scope for the range of students they are meant to target. (Qld Department of Education, Training and Employment — Disability Services Support Unit)

ASEPA recommended that work samples be annotated to provide the context of the teaching and learning activity, a description of the student, adjustments made and links to individual plans.

There was strong opposition from specialist schools and speech pathologists to the examples relating to students at the pre-intentional level of the Literacy continuum, and in particular to the suggestion that the teacher 'assigns meaning' to a student's reflex response. The following statements were made in reference to the *Hating Alison Ashley* English example:

... [it is] entirely inappropriate to suggest the reflexive response should be assigned meaning of liking the story ... (Speech Pathology Australia)

For those students still functioning at the pre-intentional level the suggestion of interpreting a student's behaviour as their response to the book is condescending. (Aspect)

Chapter 3: Strengths, key issues and actions

3.1 Draft Advice for teachers: Using the Australian Curriculum to meet the learning needs of students with disability

3.1.1 Strengths

- The advice is useful, clear and logical.
- Links to legislation and research are strongly supported.
- Section on adjustments is well worded, clear and practical.
- The emphasis on the three dimensions of the curriculum design provides flexibility for teachers to personalise learning for all students.
- For the majority of respondents, age-appropriate curriculum content as the starting point for planning was considered a strength.

3.1.2 Matters for improvement

Issues	ACARA's response
The document title (students with disability) conflicts with the key message within the document (all students). Need to communicate a consistent message.	<p>Once finalised the text will be placed onto the Australian Curriculum website, under the (to be developed) Student Diversity webpage; the document will not continue to have a separate life.</p> <p>The materials present specific advice on addressing the needs of students with disability, gifted and talented students, and students for whom English is an additional language or dialect, in the context of explaining how to address the needs of all students.</p>
Although the section on adjustments is supported, the materials could provide a more detailed explanation of how to make adjustments in relation to the Australian Curriculum, including when the general capability continua should be used.	<p>Revise flowchart and Advice materials to illustrate in more detail how the Australian Curriculum, including the general capabilities, can be used to make adjustments to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.</p> <p>Develop explicit links between the flowchart and the section on adjustments, including development of teaching and learning examples that model processes of adjustment.</p> <p>Develop video animation for the Australian Curriculum website, outlining the revised flowchart and how to navigate the three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.</p>
Despite strong support for age-appropriate curriculum content as the starting point for all learners, some respondents, particularly those in specialist school settings, questioned the relevance of this approach for students with	<p>The approach taken in the consultation materials will be retained.</p> <p>Revise Advice materials and flowchart to illustrate how adjustments can be made to age-equivalent</p>

Issues	ACARA's response
significant intellectual disability.	<p>learning area content so that all students, including those with significant intellectual disability, are able to participate on the same basis.</p> <p>Revise Advice materials and flowchart to clearly emphasise the role of the extended general capabilities continua in making adjustments to age-equivalent content for students with significant intellectual disability.</p>
There was concern that Advice materials may not be viewed as an integral part of the Australian Curriculum.	<p>The key role of the Australian Curriculum is to articulate what young people should learn. Implementation is the responsibility of school authorities, schools and teachers. The Australian Curriculum website will, however, include advice on the application of the Australian Curriculum to meet the needs of all students.</p> <p>Restructure the Australian Curriculum website to include a 'Student Diversity' tab on every page, with a direct link to the revised Advice materials.</p> <p>Key messaging on addressing student diversity to be incorporated in the introductory section of all learning area curricula.</p>
Greater reference could be made to existing best practice in relation to how teachers can meet the individual learning needs of the full range of students with disability.	Liaise with states and territories to develop links from the ACARA website to local and shared pedagogical resources for teaching students with disability.
A glossary would be useful to ensure consistent understanding of terminology.	Develop glossary.

3.2 Draft extended learning continuum for the Literacy general capability

3.2.1 Strengths

- The additional four levels are inclusive of all students.
- Clear evidence base to the additional four levels.
- Useful in goal setting and consultation with parents.

3.2.2 Matters for improvement

Issues	ACARA's response
The relationship between communication and literacy could be clearer.	Revise Advice materials to better explain the relationship between communication and literacy.
Use of the term 'reflex behaviour' at the pre-intentional level of communication is inappropriate.	Replace 'reflex behaviour' with 'behaviours that are not intentionally communicative'.
Examples of 'assigning meaning' to student behaviours at the pre-intentional level of communication were considered inappropriate.	Remove 'Note for teachers' from the first three levels of the Literacy continuum. Provide a clear explanation within the Advice materials about how a student's unintentional behaviours can be interpreted.
Additional Level 1 descriptions are too broad — require further detail or examples.	Develop descriptions for Foundation Year. A panel, comprising experts in literacy, special education, and early childhood, to review and revise extended Literacy continuum for clarity, coherence and detail in descriptions of skill development across Level 1 and the Foundation level. Develop teaching and learning examples to illustrate using the extended Literacy continuum descriptions in planning teaching and learning tasks — to include primary and secondary school contexts.

3.3 Draft extended learning continuum for the Numeracy general capability

3.3.1 Strengths

- Format is simple, clear and user-friendly.
- Overall support for the extended Numeracy continuum*.

* Three organisations explicitly supported the extension by a single level as ensuring the content's integrity as numeracy.

3.3.2 Matters for improvement

Issues	ACARA's response
Number of additional levels is inconsistent with the Literacy continuum — some suggestion that further levels are required.	<p>A panel, comprising experts in numeracy, special education, and early childhood, to review the 'starting point' for extended Numeracy continuum and possibility of developing additional levels.</p> <p>Provide clear explanation within the Advice materials as to why the number of additional levels in Numeracy differs from the extended Literacy continuum.</p>
More detail is required — examples for each description could also reflect students with different needs and of different ages.	<p>Develop descriptions for Foundation Year.</p> <p>A panel, comprising experts in numeracy, special education, and early childhood, to review and revise extended Numeracy continuum for clarity, coherence and detail in descriptions of skill development across Level 1 and the Foundation level.</p> <p>Develop teaching and learning examples to illustrate using the extended Numeracy continuum descriptions in planning teaching and learning tasks — to include primary and secondary school contexts.</p>

3.4 Personal and social capability continuum

3.4.1 Strengths

- Clear and useful for teachers.
- An important capability in the education of students with disability.
- Encompasses all areas of social and emotional development.

3.4.2 Matters for improvement

Issues	ACARA's response
Number of additional levels is inconsistent with the Literacy continuum — some suggestion that further levels are required.	<p>A panel, comprising experts in personal and social capability, special education, and early childhood, to review the 'starting point' for the extended Personal and social capability continuum and possibility of developing additional levels.</p> <p>Provide clear explanation within the Advice materials as to why the number of additional levels in Personal and social capability differs from the extended Literacy continuum.</p>
Continuum has too many gaps (Foundation, Year 4 and Year 8 not developed at time of consultation).	<p>Develop descriptions for Foundation, Year 4 and Year 8 levels.</p> <p>A panel, comprising experts in personal and social capability, special education, and early childhood, to review and revise extended continuum for clarity, coherence and detail in descriptions of skill development across Level 1 and the Foundation level.</p>

3.5 Teaching and learning examples

3.5.1 Strengths

- Illustrate the intentions of the draft Advice materials.
- Support teachers in making adjustments to curriculum content for some students with disability.
- Provide a useful model for assisting teachers in meeting the diverse needs of all students (not just students with disability).

3.5.2 Matters for improvement

Issues	ACARA's response
Teaching and learning examples require revision to strengthen learning area integrity and to better reflect the diversity of students with disability.	Replace consultation examples with illustrations of adjustments that are clearly annotated in relation to specific learning area curriculum and, where applicable, to the general capabilities continua. Develop illustrations of adjustments for a range of students with disability, in primary and secondary school contexts, in specialist school, support class and regular school settings.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

There was overall support for the direction ACARA has taken to build on the three-dimensional design of the Australian Curriculum with a focus on the general capabilities of Literacy, Numeracy, and Personal and social capability. This model was supported as providing an inclusive curriculum for all learners, including students with disability.

The Advice materials were regarded as useful, clear and logical. However, further elaboration is needed on processes of curriculum adjustment, particularly in relation to using the general capabilities.

Further work is also required to review each of the Literacy, Numeracy, and Personal and social capability continua to ensure they incorporate sufficient detail and the appropriate number of additional levels to be inclusive of the diverse range of students with disability.

While the provision of teaching and learning examples was strongly supported, the current examples require further development to strengthen learning area integrity and to better reflect the diversity of students with disability.

It was acknowledged that successful implementation of the Australian Curriculum for students with disability is a complex process and is dependent on teachers' engagement with and understanding of all the materials, in particular the Advice materials. Redesign of the Australian Curriculum website will ensure visibility of access to Student Diversity advice materials from every webpage.

The following quotes are from two specialist school teachers who participated in the trial schools project, commenting on their positive experiences in providing their students with learning opportunities drawn from the Australian Curriculum that they would not previously have considered possible:

The result of the trial for my students was positive in that the students all achieved learning goals from the teaching and learning program that I otherwise would not have given them access to ... Respect is the main emphasis that jumped out at me. (specialist school teacher)

Engaging in the trial caused us to expand on what we were originally concentrating on ... A very rich and different unit and experiential activities resulted. I believe using the Australian Curriculum will enable us ... to 'think outside the square' as far as choosing topics to develop units of rich experiential learning activities! (specialist school teacher)

Appendix 1

Online Survey Items

For Items 1–10 respondents could choose from ‘Strongly agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly disagree’. They could also include a comment in response to each question.

Items 11–15 were open-ended, providing opportunity for comment and directed specifically at teachers who had trialled the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability.

Draft Advice for teachers: Using the Australian Curriculum to meet the learning needs of students with disability

1. The purpose of the Advice materials is clear.
2. The structure of the Advice materials is logical.
3. The Advice materials clearly describe how to use the Australian Curriculum to meet the learning needs of students with disability.

Draft extended learning continuum for the Literacy general capability

4. The draft extended Literacy continuum describes a progression of skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions that is inclusive of students with disability.
5. The skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions described in the draft extended Literacy continuum are detailed enough for use in my programming and teaching of students with disability.

Draft extended learning continuum for the Numeracy general capability

6. The draft extended Numeracy continuum describes a progression of skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions that is inclusive of students with disability.
7. The skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions described in the draft extended Numeracy continuum are detailed enough for use in my programming and teaching of students with disability.

Personal and social capability continuum

8. The Personal and social capability continuum describes a progression of skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions that is inclusive of students with disability.
9. The skills, knowledge, behaviours and dispositions described in the Personal and social capability continuum are detailed enough for use in my programming and teaching of students with disability.

Examples of teaching and learning activities to meet the learning needs of students with disability in English, mathematics, science and history

10. The teaching and learning examples clearly illustrate how the general capabilities learning continua can be used to adjust age-appropriate learning area content of the Australian Curriculum to meet the needs of students with disability.

If you have trialled the draft Australian Curriculum materials for students with disability please describe the adjustments (if any) made to enable students with disability to access and participate on the same basis as other students:

11. Adjustments to learning area content weren't necessary.
12. I made adjustments to learning area content that aligned with my students' chronological age (year level).
13. I made adjustments to learning area content that aligned with my students' chronological age by drawing on content earlier along the F-10 learning sequence.
14. I made adjustments to learning area content that aligned with my students' chronological age by referring to the general capabilities learning continua.
15. I made adjustments to learning area content to incorporate goals from an individual plan.

Appendix 2

List of written submissions

The providers of submissions are listed below. Names of individuals who made submissions are not listed, in line with privacy laws.

State and territory education authorities

Board of Studies NSW

Brisbane Catholic Education Office

Catholic Education, SA

Department of Education, Tas

Department for Education and Child Development, SA

Department of Education and Communities, NSW

Department of Education, Training and Employment, Qld (Disability Services Support Unit; and Speech-Language Therapy Services)

Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC)

Queensland Studies Authority

School Curriculum and Standards Authority, WA

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

Teacher professional associations

Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)

Australian Special Education Principals' Association (ASEPA)

Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders (QASEL)

Special Education Curriculum Cluster (SECC), Qld

Special Education Principals' and Leaders' Association, NSW

Education stakeholders (other than authorities or teacher associations)

Australian Association of Special Education (AASE)

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

Peak bodies and other organisations

Family Planning, Vic

Media Access Australia

Scope, Vic

Speech Pathology Australia

Universities

University of Melbourne

Schools

Beenleigh Special School, Qld

Clifford Park Special School, Qld

Nepean School, Vic

Noble Park Special Developmental School, Vic

Individuals*

Seven responses

* Due to privacy laws, individuals cannot be named.