



Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders Leading Linking Learning

Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority
Level 13, Tower B,
280 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000

30 June 2021

RE: QASEL Feedback on Australian Curriculum Review

The Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders (QASEL) is the peak professional association for special education leaders across Queensland. QASEL members are Principals, Deputy Principals, Heads of Special Education Services (HOSES), Heads of Curriculum and other leaders and aspirants, who support students with disability, across all sectors of education in Queensland. Some members are based in special schools, many support students with disability and diverse learners in primary, secondary and early childhood settings.

QASEL welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed revisions, *which look to improve the Australian Curriculum (AC) by refining, realigning and decluttering the content so it focusses on the essential knowledge and skills students should learn and is clearer for teachers on what they need to teach.*

Below is a summary of feedback gained through a range of consultation activities with our members.

General capabilities literacy and numeracy

QASEL members have expressed concern about the lack of clarity regarding the impact on the revised curriculum on learners accessing a highly individualised curriculum (i.e. learners working at Literacy 1a-d and Numeracy 1a in the general capabilities). As a result of this lack of clarity, the opportunity to provide informed feedback has been lost.

The ACARA website currently states that *Literacy and Numeracy (General Capabilities) were not reviewed in this process as they have already been reviewed and improved as part of the online formative assessment initiative.* <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/consultation/general-capabilities/>

However, other information provided through consultation processes suggests that the Literacy and Numeracy General Capabilities will in fact be replaced by the Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions (LNLP).

When seeking clarity directly from Janet Davy and David deCarvalho, during a consultation meeting with the Queensland Principals' associations, we were informed that the General Capabilities would "remain for now" but that over time it was hoped that special schools would be "weaned off" the literacy and numeracy continuum and replace it with the LNLP.

This advice does not appear anywhere on the AC review website and in fact seems to be in direct conflict with advice provided on the ACARA website which highlights the difference *in scope*,

structure and intended use. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/how-are-the-progressions-different-from-the-general-capabilities-and-how-can-they-be-used/>

Anecdotally 50%-80% of learners in special schools currently access the Australian Curriculum through Literacy GC 1a-d and Numeracy GC 1a. So, the implications of any change would be significant for the special education sector.

If Literacy GC 1a-d and Numeracy GC 1a are lost and replaced with the LNLP there will be significant impact for special schools and all diverse learners accessing a highly individualised curriculum.

- Can we see all learners with the LNLP? Are they inclusive of learners currently at levels 1a-d Literacy and 1a Numeracy?
- Is there planned consultation regarding the GCs being “weened off” once we have had time to work with the LNLP?
- What is the impact on individual curriculum plans and reporting?
- Will special schools be faced with a complete restructuring of their curriculum assessment and reporting plans?
- Will the LNLP provide real guidance for teachers working with diverse learners accessing a highly individualised curriculum?

The opportunity to strengthen the curriculum advice for teachers supporting student who are not yet accessing the curriculum at a foundation level has been missed. Developmentally, this is the most important learning for any individual anywhere in the AC, such is its impact on the life trajectory of learners. Consultation around the changes to the AC for these learners has simply not been given high enough priority.

Inclusive Language

QASEL commends the improvements in the language of the curriculum to make it more accessible and inclusive (e.g. applying different locomotor skills to move from one point to another AC9HPFM01_E1). However most of these changes are within the elaborations and therefore rely on the teachers to investigate to gain that clarity and tend to centre on communication and physical barriers to learning (rather than the impact of cognitive impairment).

Health and Physical Education

QASEL notes, and welcomes, the addition of a section on “*Meeting the needs of diverse learners*” that references universal design for learning, in the Health and Physical Education learning area, and encourages consideration of a similar approach to all learning areas.

https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/7106/hpe_all-elements_f-10_consultation.pdf

Decluttering of the curriculum

While there are now fewer content descriptors it would appear that many have been merged or combined rather than removed. This potentially adds complexities and impacts on diverse learners’ access and achievement.

Improvements have been noted in how the curriculum is organised and presented, potentially improving access for teachers. However, while QASEL members felt that overall the AC has been *refined* and *realigned* it has not been *decluttered*.

Again, QASEL appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed revisions, and would welcome any future consultation opportunities.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ric Day".

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