



ACT Curriculum Taskforce Newsletter for ACT Schools

Newsletter 15 – Semester 2 2014

The journey so far....

Since 2011, ACT schools have embraced the landmark *Australian Curriculum* and developed a range of innovative approaches to delivering the curriculum to suit their structure, context and the needs of their students.



Phasing in the *Australian Curriculum* as the ACT's curriculum remains an ongoing commitment for all ACT schools and its implementation remains on schedule.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has now published all subject learning areas of the Foundation to Year 10 *Australian Curriculum*. All schools in Australia now have access to the same content.

ACARA has also improved the functionality of the *Australian Curriculum* website' making access to the curriculum and resources to support its delivery easier for teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

The website offers improved navigation with many new features, and is becoming known around the world as a state of the art digital publication.

This edition of the ACT Curriculum Taskforce newsletter showcases the approaches of two of our schools to implement the *Australian Curriculum*.

The first example outlines a whole school Professional Learning Community (PLC) approach to implement the *Australian Curriculum* at Palmerston District Primary School.

The second example describes how teachers at Alfred Deakin High School work in teams to set assessment tasks based on the *Australian Curriculum* Achievement Standards and provide timely feedback to students during the formative assessment process.

Case Study 1

Meeting the learning needs of all our students at Palmerston District Primary School



Palmerston District Primary is a Professional Learning Community where teachers work together to analyse student assessment data to inform the development of programs that meet the needs of all students.

During each term teaching teams collect and collate student assessment data. Teaching teams meet and analyse this data to determine what students have learned and what is required to extend their learning. Teams refer to the *Australian Curriculum* Achievement Standards and Content Descriptors to plan robust and balanced learning for all students.

A school planning template designed for each year level is used to scope and plan the teaching program. This template includes essential questions and the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin the unit. Teachers identify the specific learning tasks/experiences/lessons required to engage and support all students in their learning, whether they need consolidation or extension.

Throughout the teaching of each learning area or subject, teachers continually refer to the *Australian Curriculum* annotated work sample portfolios to guide their decisions about the quality of students' achievement.

Using a Professional Learning Community approach to implementing the *Australian Curriculum* at Palmerston has enhanced discussions about pedagogy between teachers. Teachers share best practice to engage all students and meet their individual learning needs.



Case Study 2

Using feedback in shaping mathematics assessment for students at Alfred Deakin High School

Alfred Deakin High School (ADHS) has taken a whole school focus to improve how quality feedback is provided to students, with an emphasis on formative assessment. Adopting this whole school focus, the Mathematics team has implemented the *Australian Curriculum* with a substantial redirection of assessment practices in Mathematics at ADHS.



The fundamental change in assessment practices includes providing students with a range of opportunities to demonstrate their learning based on explicit outcomes drawn from *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics* Achievement Standards. Formal assessment tasks are generated collaboratively by the Mathematics team and are generally common for a whole cohort of students.

Process for change

Students at ADHS receive no marks or scores on tests or other tasks. This has presented a number of challenges in terms of manageably providing meaningful feedback to students about their achievement. The process developed for providing student feedback on assessment includes:

- The Mathematics teaching team align tasks with particular learning outcomes based on the Achievement Standard.
- Teachers mark student responses to the assessment item giving an indication of correct/appropriate or incorrect/inappropriate responses and an indication of areas the students need to revisit.
- When all the class responses have been marked, teachers indicate a student's achievement on a five point scale (Limited/Partial/At Standard/Above/Well Above).
- Ideally marked work is discussed individually with students. Areas of strength and areas for improvement are identified and a plan made to address any issues. This plan may include some structured revision and then a supplementary assessment item or re-sit so that the student is able to demonstrate that they are at 'standard' on the particular outcome.

Each learning outcome is assessed in a variety of ways, which includes summative term tests supported by recorded teacher observations and a number of formative tasks such as a group or homework task, or a quiz. Grades are then determined through teachers reviewing student performance across all the learning outcomes for the Semester.

Into the future

This new approach has presented several challenges including collection of evidence, consistency of assessment and communicating achievement with students and parents. ADHS staff look forward to continuing to improve assessment practices and enhance student learning outcomes.

Annotated work sample portfolios available on the Australian Curriculum website

The Australian Curriculum website provides teachers with annotated work sample portfolios to support them to make 'on-balance' judgements about student achievement.



An on-balance judgement requires teachers to use a portfolio of evidence to inform their professional judgement about the level of knowledge, skill and understanding the student has demonstrated in relation to the Achievement Standard.

A portfolio of evidence includes a collection of students' work based on a range of assessment tasks. Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement.

To support teachers' on-balance judgements, annotated work samples are available for each learning area/subject on the Australian Curriculum website. The work sample portfolios have been selected, annotated and reviewed by classroom teachers and other curriculum experts.

At the moment, several ACT schools are contributing to the development of annotated work sample portfolios and include:

- Calwell High School and Campbell High School: Geography and Civics and Citizenship
- Macquarie Primary School: The Arts

Did you know that ACARA recently published updated portfolios of annotated work samples on the Australian Curriculum website?

218 samples have been added, making a total of 1039 work samples in the 132 portfolios for English, Mathematics, Science and History.

Annotated work sample portfolios can be accessed for each learning area/subject page on the Australian Curriculum website: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>



The ACT Curriculum Taskforce was convened to support cross-sectoral implementation of the Australian Curriculum in the ACT. The work of the ACT Curriculum Taskforce is supported by the Australian Curriculum Implementation Committee.