

**Review of the *Curriculum Framework* for curriculum, assessment and reporting purposes in Western Australian schools, with particular reference to years Kindergarten to Year 10**

**Perth, Western Australia  
August 2009**

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*David Andrich, Chapple Professor of Education,  
The University of Western Australia*

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Mr John Firth, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, member of the former Interim National Curriculum Board and now a member of the Australian, Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, was consulted and his advice considered.

However, the contents of the final report are the responsibility of the author.

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# Preface

This report has been prepared as a result of the expert review authorised by the Minister for Education, Hon. Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA, on 11 March 2009.

The review focuses on curriculum, assessment and reporting policies and procedures in Western Australian schools.

The review process involved consultation with experts from the Catholic Education Office, the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA), the Department of Education and Training (DET), universities and a range of school types. Experts from professional teaching groups and unions also contributed to the process.

The review was established because of changes to Commonwealth and State education policies, especially those made since the introduction of the *Curriculum Framework* in 1998.

Also acknowledged are the new directions in Commonwealth and State relationships in the development of these policies.

Other significant recent developments have included the raising of the school leaving age in Western Australia to the end of the year in which students turn 17 and the gradual introduction of new courses for Years 11 and 12 students for the Western Australian Certificate of Education.

The report has been prepared during the transitional period between the development of the Interim National Curriculum Board and introduction of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

# Terms of reference

- To review the *Curriculum Framework* for curriculum, assessment and reporting purposes in Western Australian schools, with particular reference to years Kindergarten to Year 10.
- To advise on the relationship between the *Curriculum Framework* and proposed national curriculum.
- To consider the impact of any proposed changes on teachers and schools in Western Australia.

# Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to those people (listed in Appendix 1) who gave generously of their valuable time in being interviewed.

Gail Taylor, Executive Officer, and Cindy Chan, Administrative Support Officer, Curriculum Council of Western Australia, and Natalie Carmody, Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia, provided support in preparing the report.

# Letter of transmittal

Hon. Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA  
Minister for Education  
Level 19, Governor Stirling Tower  
197 St George's Terrace  
Perth WA 6000

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting to you the report of the review of Kindergarten to Year 10 curriculum, assessment and reporting in Western Australia.

In preparing this report, I have consulted with people with a wide range of knowledge and interest in education in Western Australia. In addition, I have held discussions with Mr John Firth, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, a former member of the Interim National Curriculum Board and a current member of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

The recommendations contained in the report are compatible with and supportive of the substantive changes that appear to be emerging in national curriculum.

However, one recommendation is concerned with the possibility that ACARA might centralise its activities in Sydney at the expense of the retention of expertise in the States and Territories. It suggests that you consider requesting that this expertise be utilised in the jurisdictions rather than being transferred to Sydney.

I have not addressed the direct resource implications of the recommendations, although inevitably there will be resource implications, especially in relation to professional development.

I am confident that you will find the report useful.



David Andrich  
Professor of Education  
The University of Western Australia

31 August 2009

# Introduction

This section summarises the approach taken to meet the terms of reference for the review of the *Curriculum Framework* in Western Australia.

First, the terms of reference were interpreted to imply that specific content being taught under the *Curriculum Framework* was outside the scope of the review. However, this interpretation has not precluded general comments about the relationship between the *Curriculum Framework* and content.

Second, given the present planning for a national curriculum, the emphasis was on what could be learned from the process of implementing the *Curriculum Framework* in Western Australia in introducing the national curriculum.

The review involved examining documents associated with the *Curriculum Framework* and its implementation, and interviewing people who could provide a range of perspectives on this process. In particular, these included current principals and curriculum leaders from different kinds of schools - city and country, and public and private.

In addition, because the matter of early career teachers had emerged as an issue, university teacher education providers were consulted.

Finally, a group of primary school students was interviewed.

Because previous studies concerned with implementing the *Curriculum Framework* had surveyed wide-ranging and extensive sources, it was considered that perspectives from a small group of people would be sufficient to complement those arising from the earlier studies, notably *Investing in Government Schools: Putting Children First* (Robson, 2001 [subsequently referred to as 'Robson']); *the Literacy and Numeracy Review: The Final Report* (Louden, 2006 ['Louden']); and *Evaluation of the Curriculum Improvement Program* (Louden, W., Chapman, E., Clarke, S., Cullity, M. & House, H., 2006 ['Louden, et al.'])

In reviewing the *Curriculum Framework*, both in the interviews and in the documents studied, the theme of expertise at the school level emerged as being central. Expertise, therefore, has become the major theme and frame of reference in this review.

A subsidiary theme is concerned with the expertise of teachers in the content of learning areas.

In this review, expertise at the school level is referred to in terms of the resources of the school. A very highly-resourced school has:

- a substantial size;
- a principal who is experienced, is confident in a position of leadership and has been at the school for some period of time;

- a stable and experienced teaching staff who have time to reflect on broader issues of curriculum implementation;
- staff who have dedicated time to provide support and leadership in curriculum and professional development;
- ready access to external professional development; and
- a stable student population in terms of background and attendance, with parents who actively support their children's schooling.

A modestly-resourced school demonstrates characteristics that are opposite to some or all of those above.

In Western Australia, schools range across the whole spectrum between highly resourced and modestly resourced, with varying degrees of resources in each of the six aspects listed above. These features are independent of the qualifications and commitment of principals and teachers in any particular school. It is assumed throughout this report that all teachers are professionally qualified and committed to their profession.

The Interim National Curriculum Board has summarised the considerable body of research literature that distinguishes experts' ways of solving problems from those of novices:

*Experts solve problems more quickly and efficiently than novices not only because they can call on automated responses honed through considerable experience but because they represent problems in ways that facilitate solutions. The problem representations of experts depend on deep knowledge and understandings within the domain from which the problems are drawn. (The shape of the national curriculum: a proposal for discussion, October 2008, p.7)*

A highly-resourced school with considerable expertise can solve problems in general, and those associated with implementing the *Curriculum Framework* in particular, in ways that are not possible for a modestly-resourced school. It is anticipated that, depending on the form it takes, the same may apply to implementing the national curriculum.

The observation that there are schools that (in terms of their capacity to implement curriculum change) are 'modestly resourced' is not considered a fault of the schools; instead, it is provided simply as a description of inevitable circumstances that need to be taken into account.

# Background to the *Curriculum Framework*

The *Curriculum Framework* is a 326-page publication (including the front and back covers, which have relevant material) published in 1998 by the then newly-established Curriculum Council and has a foreword by the then Minister for Education (and current Western Australian Premier), Colin Barnett.

The implementation of the *Framework* in all schools in Western Australia is mandated by legislation.

The *Framework* has 13 overarching learning outcomes and 66 more specific outcomes distributed across eight learning areas. In addition, there are five clusters of core values that include 32 more specific values.

The *Framework* was developed following extensive consultation in Western Australia and is based on seven governing principles:

- an encompassing view of curriculum;
- an explicit acknowledgement of core values;
- inclusivity;
- flexibility;
- integration, breadth and balance;
- a developmental approach; and
- collaboration and partnership.

Each of these principles is elaborated succinctly in one or two sentences. These principles are readily agreed upon, and, as is noted later in this report, there are considerable advantages in having these principles articulated.

The background for the writing of the *Framework* began much earlier, when, in the Hobart Declaration (1989), the Australian Education Council articulated the *Common and Agreed National Goals of Schooling*. Work followed on the development of statements and profiles under the direction of the Australian Education Council (AEC), the then national council of ministers, and was managed by the AEC Curriculum and Assessment Committee.

Every State and Territory education authority contributed to the writing process. Each jurisdiction then adapted the statements and profiles to suit its policies. In Western Australia, these adaptations were known as ‘Student Outcome Statements’. The first version of the Statements was published by the Education Department of Western Australia in 1994.

In Western Australia, two further reports were commissioned by the government, one chaired by Robert Vickery (1993) and the other by Therese Temby (1995). Following the latter report, the Curriculum Council was established by legislation in 1997 (*Curriculum Council Act, 1997*) and membership of the Council formalised.

At the national level, the Adelaide Declaration (1999) endorsed collaboration among the States and Territories and the Commonwealth.

There are four excellent publications describing the development and implementation of the *Curriculum Framework*: the *Framework* itself; *An introduction to the Curriculum Framework: a guide for school based curriculum planning* (Curriculum Council, 1998); and two papers by the then Chair of the Curriculum Council, Professor Lesley Parker (Parker, 2001, 2003).

### **Distinguishing features of the *Curriculum Framework***

The orientation of the *Curriculum Framework* is distinctively outcomes focused. The *Framework* claims to be distinguished by a major shift in school curriculum from a focus on educational inputs and time allocation toward one that emphasises the desired results of schooling (*Curriculum Framework*, p.6). It stresses that it is neither a curriculum nor a syllabus but a 'framework'. This has had a major implication for its implementation.

This perspective is elaborated: the focus is shifted from what is being taught, and the time allocated, to an emphasis on what individual students actually know, understand, value and can do as a result of teaching and learning programs they experience (*An introduction to the Curriculum Framework*, p.6).

Thus a distinguishing feature of the *Framework* is that the outcomes are to be achieved by all students, with variable amounts of time to be taken by different students in achieving them, rather than having a fixed time for teaching and having variable outcomes.

Inevitably, therefore, the outcomes are highly generalised and are processes and skills oriented at the expense of content. As shown in the reports on the actual implementation of the *Curriculum Framework*, having variable time and fixing the outcomes proved troublesome in different ways.

### ***Examples of outcomes (Curriculum Framework Progress Maps Overview, Curriculum Council, 2005)***

It is useful in this review to have at the forefront an appreciation of the way outcomes are articulated. The simplest way is with some examples. Thus two of the Overarching Learning Outcomes are:

3. *Students recognise when and what information is needed, locate and obtain it from a range of sources and evaluate, use and share it with others.*

9. *Students interact with people and cultures other than their own and are equipped to contribute to the global community.*

Each of these is elaborated briefly in the *Curriculum Framework*, showing how students might achieve them, including the content that might be used. However, the outcomes themselves do not specify content.

There are eight learning areas: The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, Languages Other than English, Mathematics, Science, Society and Environment, and Technology and Enterprise. These areas arose from the National Declarations. Each learning area is articulated in terms of outcomes in related aspects. Thus in English, these outcomes are:

*Speaking and Listening; Viewing, Reading; Writing; Understanding Language; Attitudes, Values and Beliefs; Conventions and Processes and Strategies. (Curriculum Framework, 84)*

In Mathematics, the 19 outcomes are grouped into seven clusters:

*Appreciating Mathematics; Working Mathematically; Space; Measurement; Chance and Data; Number, and Algebra. (Curriculum Framework, p.180-181)*

In the *Framework* the outcomes are described broadly. To help teachers to plan to teach the breadth and depth of the outcomes, support materials, such as the Progress Maps, further subdivide each outcome into three or four aspects. Each of these outcomes and the aspects are structured into eight levels of achievement. For example, an aspect of Reading is Use of Texts, defined in terms of outcomes as:

Students demonstrate increasing sophistication, complexity, variety and control when making meaning from written texts.

For achievement at Level 4, the student:

*Interprets and discusses ideas, information and events in texts containing some unfamiliar concepts and topics,*

and for Level 5:

*Identifies, discusses, compares and justifies own interpretation of challenging ideas and issues presented in texts containing complex language structures and features.*

An aspect of Measurement is to understand units and direct measure, defined as:

*Students decide what needs to be measured and carry out measurements of length, capacity/volume, mass, areas, time and angle to needed levels of accuracy.*

For achievement at Level 4, the student:

*Selects appropriate attributes, distinguishes perimeter from area and time from elapsed time, and chooses units of a sensible size for the descriptions and comparisons to be made.*

and for achievement at Level 5, the student:

*Takes purpose and practicality into account when selecting attributes, units and instruments for measuring things and uses the relationship between metric prefixes to move between units.*

## The approach to implementation

At the outset, it was understood that implementation of the *Framework* would take some time: schools were given from 1998 until 2004 to do so. It was also anticipated that other publications beside the *Curriculum Framework* and *An introduction to the Curriculum Framework* would follow. That implementation should begin with an examination of current practice was also made explicit. This was an important aspect of the process and its success, it will be argued, is related to the resources of the school.

Robson (2001) made recommendations regarding the substantial resources needed to implement the *Framework*, including creating structures in the Education Department. Many publications (for example, guidelines, overviews, 'getting started' manuals and suggested professional development approaches) were produced.

In contrast to the implementation of the *Curriculum Framework*, which was expected to take a substantial amount of time, there is a strong demand that a new national curriculum be complete, including syllabuses, before it is implemented.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

**THAT THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN ANY LEARNING AREA BE IMPLEMENTED ONLY WHEN IT IS COMPLETE.**

## Role of schools

In documents concerned with the *Curriculum Framework* and its implementation, substantial reference is made to the role of schools and school leaders. For example, the *Framework* states:

*Implementing the Curriculum Framework means that when teachers and **schools** design and develop learning and teaching programs to suit the needs of their students, they must ensure that these programs include learning opportunities ...*

*How the **school** structures learning opportunities in terms of time and the range of courses and programs provided, remains the school's responsibility. (Curriculum Framework, p.9, emphasis added)*

*The outcomes-focused approach will provide **schools** with more flexibility to enable teachers to develop different learning and teaching programs to help their particular students achieve the outcomes. (Curriculum Framework, p.14, emphasis added)*

The publication *An introduction to the Curriculum Framework: a guide for school based curriculum planning* also stresses the role of schools.

*An introduction to the Curriculum Framework* (Curriculum Council, 1998) is the first in a series of documents designed to assist **schools** to become familiar with, and to get started in using the *Curriculum Framework*. *It is intended for use by teachers and school*

*administrators working together as curriculum leaders on whole **school** planning for implementation of the framework. (p. iii, emphasis added)*

This document is intended for teachers and **school** administrators working on whole-**school** curriculum planning, which involves all staff working together to identify, plan for and implement commonly-agreed targets.

*Leadership in managing curriculum change is provided by the principal, deputies, senior teachers and others with key responsibilities. (Curriculum Framework, p.3).*

*An introduction to the Curriculum Framework: a guide for school based curriculum planning includes case studies of how four schools introduced the Framework into their programs.*

# The first term of reference

To review the *Curriculum Framework* for curriculum, assessment and reporting purposes in Western Australian schools, with particular reference to years Kindergarten to Year 10.

## Curriculum

### *Advantages*

The *Curriculum Framework*, together with its explicit articulation of the principles of learning, was seen to have the following advantages, in no particular order of importance:

- a single document that contains principles governing the learning in all years of schooling and learning areas for all schools provided a coherence to their teaching;
- the formalisation of learning as a progression from Kindergarten to Year 12, implicit in the pre-*Curriculum Framework* era, gave each teacher an overview of students' learning in earlier years and their expected learning in subsequent years;
- the provision of links across the learning areas and the subsequent need for interaction among staff teaching in the different learning areas in secondary schools helped to form a unified school approach to teaching;
- the use of a common language across learning areas and across the 12 years of schooling enhanced communication among all the teachers in a school. In addition, it could be seen as a language of the teaching profession, already discussed by Andrich (2005). It gave the profession a language of its own that was not readily accessible to the community in general. As noted later, this also had disadvantages;
- the explicit inclusion of values provided for many a rationale and basis for the whole of education. Some considered that the summary in the back cover did not do justice to the contribution of values in the *Curriculum Framework*. Private schools that already had explicit values components in their curriculums found the values in the *Framework* to be compatible; and
- the explicit acknowledgement of the diversity of students—their abilities, their backgrounds, and what they brought to school—assisted in legitimising a variety of teaching strategies.

### *Disadvantages*

The major difficulty that seems to permeate and govern the considerable problems in implementing the *Curriculum Framework* is that it demands a very highly-resourced school in the terms defined above. Such schools are effectively only the larger public and private schools in Perth and in one or two major regional centres, with very few primary schools having such resources.

In referring to the extensive opportunities and responsibilities of a school, which were summarised above, it was implied that all schools had the resources for the purpose.

In the course of the interviews and the reading of reports, it became evident that the process of implementing the *Framework* by a highly-resourced school could readily begin by first examining, as recommended, the school's existing program. Because they had considerable confidence in these teaching programs, such schools could identify those outcomes that they were teaching well and those that might need strengthening. Most importantly, where they had some doubt in interpreting the *Framework*, they had the confidence not to jettison their own programs: they did not allow the doubt to create confusion.

This successful approach required a high level of teaching expertise in general, and a high level of school expertise in translating a generalised curriculum structure into specific teaching programs.

Most schools did not have this expertise.

That is not to say that modestly-resourced schools did not work hard, and were not successful in implementing all or part of the *Framework*. However, it did mean that, given their relative lack of expertise, they had to work extremely hard and often felt overwhelmed by the task.

Robson (2001, p.54) pointed out that teachers were not traditionally prepared for the curriculum development that is required with an outcomes approach within a general *Curriculum Framework*.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**THAT IN INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM, IT IS NOT ASSUMED THAT ALL SCHOOLS ARE HIGHLY RESOURCED AND THAT THE RELATIVELY MODEST RESOURCES OF THE MAJORITY OF SCHOOLS BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IMMEDIATELY THE CURRICULUM IS IMPLEMENTED.**

One of the major challenges for the less than highly resourced schools was that because the *Framework* was so general, its successful implementation could take many forms. In part as originally anticipated, and in part as a consequence of the problems that were noted by Robson (2001), many documents contributing to implementing the *Framework* and associated professional development were produced. Some of these are identified in the list of references at the end of this report.

However, the opportunity to interpret the *Framework* in various ways is not limited to schools: it extends to the staff of the Department of Education and Training, the Curriculum Council, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools. As a consequence, documents that were developed to help in the implementation of the *Framework* were not always consistent with one another or with previous related documents, adding to the difficulties. Again, confident in their interpretations and teaching programs, highly-resourced schools were able to ignore inconsistencies.

A disadvantage of the *Framework* is its size. Although it might have been very difficult to provide as comprehensive a document within a smaller compass, its sheer size, together with its new language, made it difficult to absorb for most schools.

The advantage of recognising diversity also had the complementary disadvantage of allowing multiple interpretations.

In the extreme case, some teachers claimed that they were being advised in professional development meetings to provide different programs of study for each student. In highly-resourced schools, which already had mechanisms for recognising differences in the learning rates and backgrounds of students, this unworkable extreme position was not taken. However, in the less-resourced schools, with less-experienced teachers, this position was not always dismissed, adding to the stress on teachers.

The demanding nature of the *Framework* led to other disadvantages, in particular an emphasis on the process outcomes and a reduction in the explicit teaching of content.

It was noted earlier that a distinguishing feature of the *Framework* was the shift from so-called ‘inputs’ (for example, what was being taught and how much time was being devoted to it) to ‘outcomes’ (what students knew, understood and valued).

The implication was that variable amounts of time could be devoted by each student to each outcome, but that all outcomes would, nevertheless, be achieved by all students. This expectation, together with professional development programs that emphasised interpretation of the outcomes approach, seemed to de-emphasise the teaching of content.

Experienced teachers had existing lesson plans that they could draw on to continue teaching content. For the less-experienced teachers in less-resourced schools, the *Framework* was difficult to translate into teaching programs, and, in particular, into programs with sound content.

One of the reactions to the generality of the *Framework*, and the consequent difficulty in translating it into specific teaching and learning programs, was to have syllabuses produced.

There was substantial comment in Loudon (2006), some eight years after the introduction of the *Curriculum Framework*, that more explicit syllabuses were required:

*There was strong support for kindergarten to Year 7 syllabuses that describe the knowledge, skills and understanding expected of children in each phase of schooling.*

*Some participants in the forums supported syllabuses that would provide structure and direction for teachers, especially graduate, re-entry and inexperienced teachers (Louden, 2006, p.10)*

The Loudon Taskforce stated:

*...that more explicit syllabuses should be provided, new resources for writing in the later years of primary school should be produced, and access to quality professional development should be increased.*

*The Taskforce also recognises that the goal of providing explicit syllabuses must be balanced against the possibility that such syllabuses may be unsuited to some student, teacher or school contexts. This issue can best be addressed through the production of quality classroom level support materials that teachers can use or modify for their context.*

(Louden, 2006, 11)

Among other factors, one of the reasons for the above recommendations was that all eight learning areas were present in all years from K to 12. Because no official weighting was given, it was left to schools to decide the allocation of time to each of these learning areas (*Curriculum Framework*, p.10).

Many considered that literacy and numeracy should be given greater teaching time than the other learning areas, but others wanted guidance on these weightings.

Thus the need for syllabuses which were very explicit about what students needed to be taught in the domains of literacy and numeracy, together with suggested time allocation for this teaching, were among the recommendations in the Louden report.

These recommendations were in direct contrast to the original assumptions in the implementation of the *Framework*, whereby schools were assumed to have the capacity and flexibility to produce syllabuses of their own.

The recommendations in Louden for more specific guidance than the *Curriculum Framework* provided, reflected the lack of expertise in schools to create their own syllabuses. In addition, the case for more professional development was again made strongly.

Unfortunately, these syllabuses are considered by many as being still too general.

The national curriculum is intended to consist of content and achievement standards. It is being developed year by year and will include elaborations with the intention that all teachers can understand the requirements. However it is recommended that the Minister ensures that the national curriculum includes clear syllabuses. Where these may require further support materials, then these should be developed in Western Australia.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**THAT EXPLICIT SYLLABUSES, INCLUDING CONTENT, BE DEVELOPED FOR THE LEARNING AREA COMPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

Schools have used other compatible documents and programs to help devise specific programs. One that was well received was First Steps (literacy [Ministry of Education, 1990-1995] and numeracy [Education Department of Western Australia, 2003]), for the primary years of schooling.

First Steps was developed by the Education Department in conjunction with operational research carried out internally and under contract by the universities. It has since been successfully commercialised. First Steps materials are detailed in terms of the sequence of

teaching and learning of content and have excellent information for diagnosing misunderstandings of students. They provide opportunities for teachers who do not have strong mathematics or language backgrounds to improve their own knowledge of content. The detailed resource material for teachers is a major characteristic of this program.

In the context of the second term of reference, I shall consider explicitly the need for professional development in content.

## **Assessment**

The *Curriculum Framework* states that assessment should be valid, educative, explicit, fair and comprehensive. These principles are widely agreed upon and having them articulated is helpful as a point of reference. However, the *Framework* itself does not prescribe any particular structure of assessment.

Again, this has left a great deal to interpretation.

In the Outcomes and Standards Framework (Education Department of Western Australia, 2005), each outcome in each learning area was described in terms of eight levels of increasing achievement. In particular, students' proficiency was assessed and reported directly as a level. Those who used the recommended approach of placing a student into a level in a learning area from judgements made over time did not find it easy to make these judgements. As a result, many attempted to place each piece of work a student produced into a level.

There was also an expectation that each level in each aspect in each outcome would, in some sense, be comparable in standard across all learning areas. Thus Level 4 in Technology and Enterprise was to be equivalent in intellectual demand to Level 4 in English and Level 4 in Mathematics. This was effectively proclaimed by decree and was not demonstrated empirically.

Andrich (2005) considered in detail the problems in assessment arising from the approach whereby all assessments were assigned directly to levels. Such assessment is to be discontinued in public schools from 2010, so I will not describe the problems in detail here.

In summary, the approach is too time consuming, thus distracting teachers from teaching, and is too crude to provide fine enough detail for diagnosing problems and providing feedback.

Andrich (2005) recommended that instead of assessing directly against levels, more traditional approaches to marking, referred to as 'analytic marking', be adopted. In analytic marking, the marking keys and protocols arise from the tasks that are set for students to consolidate and assess their learning, and are not referenced to levels in generic terms. That report gave examples of such a marking key in the assessment of writing.

A possible advantage of having a comprehensive curriculum framework is that a school can design guidelines for assessment that are common across the learning areas. During the present review, an example of such assessment was witnessed in one well-resourced school. However, such a design is consistent with analytic marking and is not confined to direct marking of performances against levels.

## Reporting

From the perspective of reporting to parents and students, there are three major disadvantages that arise from direct marking against levels:

- the levels are relatively crude: eight levels for 12 years of schooling is not fine enough to provide feedback and to recognise progress;
- the language, which, as indicated earlier, is the language of the profession, is too opaque and complex for communicating with parents and students; and
- it creates a conflict between two organisational structures, both of which are essentially arbitrary: firstly, the eight levels in each learning area, in each outcome and in each aspect, are an administrative convenience rather than a naturally-occurring structure; and, secondly, the administration of schooling in terms of Year levels is an administrative convenience. There is strong support for only one of these structures (Year levels) being the main organisational structure for reporting.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

**THAT REPORTING TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS BE REFERENCED TO PROGRESS IN YEARS OF SCHOOLING.**

Since 2007, there has been a national imperative to report in grades ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’ and ‘E’ for each year level.

It could be argued that this imperative was a reaction to the opaqueness of reporting in terms of levels. From results of sound analytic marking of performances—whether extended assignments, invigilated tests or any other form of assessment— it is relatively easy to rank order the proficiency of students.

In order to give the grades, combinations of methods can be used to find cut-points in this rank order. One of these is to consider the distribution of students in the National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests to guide the proportion of students in each school who might justifiably be awarded the different grades. Complementing this information can be exemplars of work at each grade level provided by the Curriculum Council.

For communicating with parents, it seems that complex reporting in terms of outcomes is counterproductive. Teachers indicated that parents generally wished to know if their children were learning at a rate commensurate with those of their peers in a particular Year level, and if not, where the weaknesses are and what might be done about them. Work produced by the students, together with assessments against explicit marking keys, can be tangible evidence of difficulties and allow extra support needs to be determined.

Generally, however, it seemed that parents trusted the teachers in their grading and in their recommendations. Parents did not need complex descriptors of achievement in terms of the

language of the profession, which they did not understand. Some schools have adopted reporting styles that attempt to be more suitable for parents and children.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**THAT THE CURRICULUM COUNCIL ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO REPORT INFORMATION TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS THAT COMPLEMENTS THE GRADES ‘A’ TO ‘E’ IN A WAY THAT MINIMISES THE DEMAND FOR SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION.**

### ***The Curriculum Framework and legislative requirements***

Returning to the use of the *Curriculum Framework* in schools, there is a full range of uses, from it being in the background to it being in the foreground.

In the former schools, the *Framework* has been mainstreamed through other documents and processes (for example, Progress Maps and the Outcomes and Standards Framework). In the latter, it is used to govern the teaching programs directly and used as a checklist to ensure that outcomes are achieved.

It seems that the major contributions of the *Curriculum Framework* are found in its articulation of seven principles, 13 overarching learning outcomes, phases of development, functions of assessment, and values. These are found in the first 39 pages of the original publication and on the inside of the back cover. They are sufficiently general that any specific syllabus in the related eight learning areas can be accommodated. And, although general, they give a coherence and purpose to a curriculum as a whole.

It is unnecessary to jettison these features in implementing the national curriculum.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

**THAT, NOT WITHSTANDING RECOMMENDATION 7, SCHOOLS MAY CONTINUE TO SET THEIR TEACHING OF DISCIPLINE AREAS OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM WITHIN THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING, THIRTEEN OVERARCHING LEARNING OUTCOMES, PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT, FUNCTIONS OF ASSESSMENT AND VALUES DESCRIBED IN THE *CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK*.**

The specific content taught in the eight learning areas is likely to be accommodated within the *Curriculum Framework*; however, the articulation of each of these areas in the *Curriculum Framework* might become redundant.

The above observations draw attention to the present situation in which the implementation of the *Curriculum Framework* by each school is mandated by legislation. Without considering the current problems in demonstrating that these general outcomes are being implemented, and anomalies such as the difference in the demonstrated degree of compliance required of private and public schools, it seems evident that with the advent of the national curriculum, the legislative requirement that the *Curriculum Framework* be implemented will have to be removed.

**RECOMMENDATION 7**

**THAT THE LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT THAT SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT THE *CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK* BE REMOVED.**

This recommendation leads to the second term of reference.

# The second term of reference

**To advise on the relationship between the *Curriculum Framework* and proposed national curriculum.**

Before proceeding to examine the possible relationship between the *Curriculum Framework* and the national curriculum, an observation regarding the latter needs to be made.

When the various jurisdictions are in control of their respective curriculums, even with a consensus on principles behind these curriculums, there is a greater opportunity to experiment and take risks, and a greater opportunity to have an excellent curriculum and a greater opportunity to make a mess.

If the latter occurs, it might be confined to one or two jurisdictions. Excellent curriculums can be adopted by other jurisdictions, and those with problems can be avoided.

However, in the case of a single national curriculum, a mess will affect the whole country.

I do not believe that there are many reasons why work at the national level has a greater chance of being excellent than work at the State and Territory levels: similar people, with similar qualifications and explicit or implicit agendas, work at all levels.

However, there are three factors that might help the developers produce an excellent national curriculum:

- they realise that they are responsible for the whole country;
- they have a greater pool of resources; and
- they can use the experiences of the States and Territories which, over the last two decades, have been implementing curriculum based on the National Declarations.

While not presented as a recommendation, it is imperative that the curriculum, syllabuses, illustrative lesson plans, programs of teaching and learning, materials for the assessment of learning and relevant professional development be so well prepared that even if the national curriculum is not mandated, schools will see them as so good that they will take them up voluntarily.

This must be the operational criterion of the success of the national curriculum.

Because of the rapid developments at the national level, many aspects of this report will have been anticipated by the time it is published. In addition, ACARA has already taken over the Interim National Curriculum Board.

## **Background: The Interim National Curriculum Board**

At the national level, the Interim Board has been developing national curriculum for all students from Kindergarten to Year 12. The development of continua of learning in literacy and numeracy will be a foundation for this work ([www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)).

The subjects to be developed first are English, mathematics, science and history. It is planned that these will be implemented in schools from 2011, resulting from the programs being completed in 2010. They will be followed by geography, languages and the arts.

The approach to curriculum development was articulated by the Interim Board in the document *The shape of the national curriculum: a proposal for discussion*. The website is kept up-to-date with information and documents. Extensive consultation, as occurred in the development of the *Curriculum Framework*, is being, and will continue to be, conducted at a national level.

The *Curriculum Framework* was derived from the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations. The National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (adopted by education Ministers in Melbourne, December 2008, and known as the Melbourne Declaration), governs the development of the national curriculum and was also derived from the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations. Therefore, the *Curriculum Framework*, in principle, should be compatible with the national curriculum.

In particular, the general expectations of students are written in terms of outcomes.

One of the concerns of the Interim Board was the articulation of the curriculum, and in this respect it had already anticipated one of the disadvantages of the form of the *Curriculum Framework*: indeed, the difficulties in language experienced in the *Framework* seem to have been common among the States and Territories.

In the *Initial advice* paper in the National Mathematics Curriculum, it stated:

### ***Finding clear and succinct ways to describe the curriculum***

*The form of presentation of the curriculum will be critical to its successful implementation. The experience of many users of curriculum documents in the various jurisdictions is that they are too long, complex, written in convoluted language, with ambiguous category descriptors in which it is difficult to identify key ideas. The Australian Primary Principals Association (2000) noted the high workload demands that current curriculum specifications place on teachers. (Interim National Curriculum Board, National mathematics curriculum: initial advice, p.12)*

### ***The role of content***

Another issue of concern anticipated by the Interim Board is content. The first principle and specification for the development of the national curriculum is:

*The Curriculum should make clear to teachers what has to be taught and to the students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them. This means that curriculum documents will be explicit about knowledge, understanding and skills and will*

*provide a clear foundation for the development of the teaching program. (Interim National Curriculum Board, The shape of the national curriculum: a proposal for discussion, p.4)*

The above enunciation contrasts with the *Curriculum Framework*, in which this task was left initially to the schools.

This difference in emphasis is explored further in the document:

*Deep knowledge and skills*

*25 Solid foundations need to be built more generally in English, mathematics, the sciences and history but the K-12 curriculum sequence must also provide the means for students to develop deep knowledge and skills. In the selection of content, the Board will need to deal with the rapidly expanding bodies of knowledge that can create problems for curriculum development.*

*26 At times, the expansion of knowledge has led to the curriculum becoming overcrowded as the competing claims for priority have been dealt with by compromise rather than by rigorous evaluation to determine what to include and what to exclude. The result is a volume of curriculum content that cannot be covered adequately in the time available. The Board will develop a national curriculum that provides for rigorous, in-depth study and will prefer that to breadth wherever a choice needs to be made.*

*27 At other times the expansion of knowledge has created a sense that any choice of content will necessarily be relatively arbitrary. This, in turn, has led to the view that it would be better to focus on the processes used in particular domains of knowledge rather than on knowledge itself and to choose the content simply as the vehicle to develop students' understanding of the processes. The result is a focus on scientific investigation rather than science, a focus on historical method rather than history, and a variation in content across schools that is arbitrary or even idiosyncratic.*

*28 That kind of separation of content and process is not helpful and will be avoided in the development of the national curriculum.*

It may be that the above sentiments are, in part, a reaction to the way in which the jurisdictions, including Western Australia, interpreted the Hobart and Adelaide Declarations on the development of curriculum.

Whatever the reasons, I strongly support the integration of content and process skills in all learning areas.

In particular, I support the judicious selection of content by the curriculum and syllabus writers who have more time and expertise than most teachers, especially in modestly-resourced schools. Experienced teachers will inevitably adapt content to suit their students while not disadvantaging them.

This leads, however, to the second main theme of this report—the knowledge of content by teachers, especially those in less-resourced schools and in particular those responsible for Years K to 10—the Years on which this report focuses. Because of its implications for teachers in Western Australia, this theme is developed under the third term of reference.

Although the plan to write the curriculum documents clearly and to have content incorporated explicitly in these documents, is presented well and convincingly, Paragraph 31 seems to offer the opportunity to undermine this aim:

*31 The national curriculum will not be just a core around which other things will need to be developed by schools or systems. It will be complete in its specification but will allow for additions. There will be scope, as there is in state and territory curricula, for teacher professional judgement about what to cover and in what sequence, about how to reflect local and regional circumstances and about how to take advantage of teachers special knowledge and teachers' and students' interests.*

Although it is only one paragraph, the statement that teachers will be able to use their professional judgement about ‘... what to cover and in what sequence, about how to reflect local and regional circumstances...’ is reminiscent of the approach to the *Curriculum Framework*.

Paragraph 31 may need to be considered again, lest the different jurisdictions interpret it differently in terms of the latitude they give to the schools.

## **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**THAT THE EXPLICIT CONTENT TO BE TAUGHT BE PRESENT IN ALL CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS, AND WHERE IT IS NOT PRESENT IN ANY NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEARNING AREA, IT BE PRODUCED FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS.**

## **Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)**

In May 2009, ACARA issued a paper, *The shape of the Australian curriculum*, which further outlines the principles and guidelines for curriculum development established by the Interim National Curriculum Board. This paper was a proposal for discussion.

## **The National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)**

The national assessments of progress in literacy and numeracy were put into place before a national curriculum in general, or a national curriculum in either in literacy or numeracy, was available.

In addition, the results of NAPLAN are increasingly high stakes, with the intention to publish results, reward success on the tests and give support to those that perform poorly.

Among a number of possible observations about NAPLAN, two are worth considering:

- a national curriculum in literacy and numeracy now effectively exists and progress to a national curriculum is a waste of time and resources.

- to the degree that there is not an explicit national curriculum to Year 9, the NAPLAN tests will define the national curriculum.

I will consider NAPLAN from four related perspectives: the consequences of making it competitive; its capacity to deliver what the system experts believe it can deliver; the need for a national curriculum of which NAPLAN tests cover a subset; and the resources of a school.

At the outset, I stress that I consider that, used constructively, NAPLAN is an important contributor to the information a school has about the learning of its students.

However, I also consider that it should not be the sole—or even the main—basis for assessing the quality of education a school provides.

### ***Competition and the use of NAPLAN***

The intention of the Australian Government to publish results, reward success on the tests and give support to those who perform poorly on the tests, inevitably makes the tests high stakes and brings to the foreground the element of competition. Summary comparisons with other schools in their own and other jurisdictions are already available to schools, without the information being made public.

There are many examples of this information being used effectively in schools.

For example, in Western Australia all school sectors have engaged seriously and systematically with Western Australian Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (WALNA), Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) and NAPLAN data.

Public schools have participated in what has become known nationally as the Data Club since 2000, while all Catholic primary schools (2004) and most independent schools (2005) have engaged in a project called Numeracy and Literacy Data (NuLitData).

Each year, researchers (Louden and Wildy, 2000, 2001, 2002; Wildy, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008) are given access to the data sets, aggregated to the school level, with the challenge of representing the data in forms that assist classroom teachers and specialists to make judgements about students' progress and the effectiveness of their interventions, as well as allowing school principals access to review student progress over time and across cohorts.

Significantly, the analysis includes comparisons with the State as a whole, and with like schools within the State, in addition to 'value-added' measures.

These analyses are presented in interactive disk formats that allow users to select from a range of representations, school years, calendar years and tests. The projects in Western Australia are unique in that principals and curriculum leaders and, increasingly, classroom teachers, participate in workshop sessions in which they interrogate their data to make interpretations grounded in the contextual information they bring. Participants are taught about the statistics used in the analyses and how to avoid unwarranted interpretations.

Participants in the workshops are supported as they 'tell the story' of their schools' achievements, using terminology sensibly and meaningfully. There is no doubt that participants are benefiting from debating with their school colleagues and peers the extent to

which they can make the claims they do and positioning their claims within their schools' improvement processes.

This work should be examined with a view to increasing support and, where necessary, expanding it. The most powerful evidence that the NAPLAN results are important to schools is that they are using the information voluntarily.

Public competition can generate energy and, if it is used with moderation and within some rules or guidelines that can be enforced, be a positive factor in focusing teaching and learning. However, unbridled competition, such as that which shifts work from cooperation to competition or generates suspicion, the breaking of rules or cheating, is destructive. Cheating includes distorted teaching to the test.

The challenge for schools is to prevent the publication of the NAPLAN results becoming detrimental to the goals of education. It is essential that the making of results public be monitored and reviewed for its harmful elements and, if this is not done at the national level, it must be carried out in Western Australia. For validity and credibility, this monitoring should be carried out independently of the public and private educational bureaucracies.

If it turns out that the destructive elements outweigh the advantages, then this information must be introduced to the discussion of assessment and reporting practices.

It may be that the way in which NAPLAN results are used voluntarily by schools, Data Club and NuLitData at present, with support and follow-up by systems where performances are deemed to be inadequate, is best.

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**THAT THE EFFECTS ON SCHOOL PROGRAMS OF THE PUBLISHING OF NAPLAN RESULTS BE MONITORED COMPREHENSIVELY AND INDEPENDENTLY.**

### ***Capacity of NAPLAN***

Except in writing, NAPLAN tests are in short-answer or multiple-choice formats. They provide an excellent adjunct to the assessment that schools carry out with their students.

One of the many advantages of such tests is that they can prevent schools from becoming isolated in considering their standards. They can focus attention on possible deficits in learning and provide examples of professionally-constructed tests.

There are, however, two potential shortcomings of NAPLAN that require consideration: their depth and breadth.

Within the time that can be devoted to a test (for example, 45 minutes), the number of independent, relevant, discrete pieces of information that can be obtained across the continuum of achievement is limited.

Therefore, it is important that evidence from NAPLAN is not over-interpreted.

Given the number of tests that are conducted—reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy—the sampling of the curriculum is necessarily attenuated. It is also evident that aspects of numeracy are weighted substantially less than aspects of literacy. In fact, in Years 3 and 5, the time taken to assess numeracy is approximately 25% of the time taken to assess literacy (45 minutes compared to 125 minutes), and in Years 7 and 9 it is approximately 30% (80 minutes compared to 185 minutes). This may be merely convenient administratively. Numeracy needs a greater proportion of assessment time and ideally an equal time.

Even within NAPLAN, Western Australia should argue for the broadening of assessment. For example, in three successive years, the writing assessment will require the writing of a narrative in all years. This is educationally unsound, as it reduces the emphasis on other writing skills, especially from Year 5 onwards. More sophisticated writing must be assessed in Years 5, 7 and 9. In addition, with more time in assessing numeracy, more sophisticated problem solving may be assessed.

As the content and skills that need to be learned in schools cannot all be assessed by NAPLAN, schools must be given the responsibility, recognition and rewards for teaching other necessary content and skills. These limitations are further justification for Recommendation 9.

If publishing NAPLAN results is distorting the curriculum unduly, this distortion needs to be addressed. In that case, the current work that shows schools how to use the results of NAPLAN productively might need to be reinforced and possibly monitored.

## **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**THAT THE CURRENT SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE DATA CLUB AND NULITDATA PROGRAM FOR THE USE OF NAPLAN RESULTS IN SCHOOLS BE REINFORCED.**

### ***National curriculum and NAPLAN***

NAPLAN tests can only assess the subset of the required learning of students. Therefore it is necessary to have a clear statement of all the required learning for different Year levels and different discipline areas so that, despite the effects of competition mentioned above, NAPLAN does not become the de facto curriculum. A clear national curriculum, together with recommended time allocations for the teaching of its different elements and support for teachers, will be a necessary adjunct to NAPLAN.

### ***Resources of a school and NAPLAN***

The potential effect of NAPLAN in the longer term can be extrapolated from its recent effects, and can be related to the resources of the school.

Highly-resourced schools provide a curriculum of which the assessments of NAPLAN are a subset and that subset can be taught well. Therefore, although these schools should take the NAPLAN testing into account, at the same time they should not be dominated by it. In

particular, they can help students to prepare for the formats of the tests without this preparation being at the expense of studies and learning in other areas.

In schools that are not well resourced, it is likely that, in addition to preparing for the format, the NAPLAN content needs to be taught. The *Curriculum Framework* (and the vagaries of its interpretation) means that the content of the NAPLAN tests is likely not to be taught as well as in better-resourced schools. In such schools, the NAPLAN tests fill a syllabus vacuum for teachers.

That there might be schools in the public system for which there is such a vacuum is demonstrated by the lesson plans leading up to the NAPLAN tests provided by the Department of Education and Training (2009). The lesson plans are very focused, and, in terms of making explicit a program of teaching, are very clear. Perhaps they can be a guide to the kind of lesson plans that can be provided in the national curriculum across all areas, especially for the modestly-resourced schools.

Taking this perspective a step further, it might be useful to consider the possible consequences of detailed syllabuses, programs of study and even ideal lesson plans, with relatively clear assessments as in NAPLAN.

Because teachers could not create these themselves in the less well-resourced schools, they would adhere to those detailed syllabuses very closely.

As teachers become more experienced and confident, and perhaps move to better-resourced schools, they will be able to teach the curriculum and the syllabus while deviating from the lesson plans provided in various, educationally-important ways. That lessons prepared by professionals can be a major support for teachers (especially those who are inexperienced) is exemplified by a sequence of 21 lessons in astronomy for Years 9 and 10 students provided by Scitech.

The Western Australia Association of Primary School Principals has placed information on its website ([www.wappa.asn.au](http://www.wappa.asn.au)) regarding the effects that NAPLAN tests can have in distracting teaching across the whole school curriculum.

That possibility is not contradicted in this report. However, it is qualified by suggesting that the effect varies inversely with the resources of the school. Therefore, one (although perhaps not the only) way of minimising the distorting effect is to increase the resources of a school.

## **RECOMMENDATION 11**

**THAT, IN CONSIDERING THE NEEDS OF MODESTLY-RESOURCED SCHOOLS, THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN EACH DISCIPLINE AREA INCLUDE (OR OTHERWISE MAKE AVAILABLE) ILLUSTRATIVE SEQUENCES OF LESSON PLANS.**

# The third term of reference

**To consider the impact of any proposed changes on teachers and schools in Western Australia.**

## Tired of change

A recurring theme in reaction to the advent of the national curriculum is that the teachers are tired of what seems to be constant and relentless change.

Some of the impression of change arises from the numerous documents that are produced. Although many of these documents are intended to elaborate rather than change the implementation of the *Curriculum Framework*, when the information seems contradictory, or is contradictory to the interpretation already made by a school, there is an inevitable feeling that this is another change.

In addition, from time to time there are real changes.

Therefore, with the implementation of the national curriculum, it is important to recognise where changes are unequivocally necessary. It is clear in the preambles to both the national curriculum and to the *Curriculum Framework* that the same National Declarations are invoked.

Therefore, in principle, the national curriculum and the *Curriculum Framework* should be compatible almost in their entirety.

This implies that the implementation of the national curriculum need not, and should not, create the impression of wholesale changes to the implementation of the *Curriculum Framework* in its general form. Thus those schools that have mainstreamed the *Framework* and no longer consider it closely may need only to revisit it and check where there might be differences between the national curriculum and the *Framework*.

Those schools that do look at the *Framework* closely every year may simply check where the national curriculum deviates from it. Of course, because of the possible broad interpretations of the *Framework*, there will be local differences between its implementation and the requirements of the national curriculum.

Schools that have emphasised process skills while minimising content in the teaching of discipline areas provide an important example of a situation in which there will be a range of differences.

Recommendation 6 is relevant to the above relationships.

## Professional development

The Interim National Curriculum Board has indicated explicitly that professional development relating to the implementation of the national curriculum will be the responsibility of the jurisdictions:

*56. Professional development of teachers, principals, and other curriculum managers in schools will be essential for the implementation of the national curriculum. It will be the responsibility of the jurisdictions and schools, not the National Curriculum Board, but the Board will seek to collaborate in the process. (Interim National Curriculum Board, *The shape of the national curriculum: a proposal for discussion*, p. 11)*

### ***The Western Australian College of Teaching (WACOT)***

One of the main functions of WACOT, in registering all teachers in Western Australia, is to ensure their ongoing professional development. Therefore, it is expected that reference to professional development will intersect with the work of WACOT.

At present, as I understand the operations of WACOT, it has limited capacity to enforce professional development. It has a recommendation in its recent submission to the government regarding the review the *Western Australian College of Teaching Act 2004* that:

*The Board recommends that the Act and its Regulations be amended to facilitate the College's capacity to influence the quality of the professional learning available to teachers.*

This recommendation is taken to mean that WACOT should have the capacity to recognise specific professional development programs, and to articulate the kinds of learning that it would recognise. If this is the intention of this recommendation, and because professional development is so important, this recommendation is strongly supported.

It is acknowledged that a variety of providers have contributed to general professional development of teachers. For example, the Western Australian Primary Principals' Association (Rice, J., Shortland-Jones, B. & WAPPA, 2009), has produced substantial professional development materials for implementing integrated literacy.

Another example is that of Scitech, which produces professional development programs alone or in cooperation with other organisations on a fee-for-service basis.

Such voluntary general professional development needs to continue. However, in addition, this report focuses on two areas because they seem most pertinent to the present circumstances in Western Australia:

- professional development in assessment, an area that is independent of any changes to the curriculum; and
- professional development of teachers in content knowledge.

## ***Assessment***

In the first term of reference, a brief summary was presented and a contrast drawn between the procedures for assessment in which proficiency based on some evidence was assessed directly against levels and that which first involved analytic marking.

It was stressed that analytic marking involved marking keys and protocols that arose directly out of tasks given to students to consolidate their learning and to assess their proficiency. An integral part of analytic marking of proficiency is the design of tasks themselves. The assessments from the same tasks and marking keys have multiple roles.

An example of the difference between analytic marking and marking in generic levels in the assessment of writing in Years K to 9 is provided in Andrich (2005). Analytic marking keys for assessing performances can be used for a whole range of learning areas, from solving mathematical problems through reporting investigations to performing in the arts. Most importantly, details obtained from analytic marking keys should be fine enough to give constructive feedback to students. In addition, they can be used to rank students' performances and to identify cut-points when grades from 'A' to 'E' are required. The methods by which the marks can be used for different purposes should be an integral part of the professional development in constructing marking keys.

I understand that the Curriculum Council has embarked on professional development for teachers in constructing assessments and analytic marking keys in Year 11 and 12.

## **RECOMMENDATION 12**

**THAT THE CURRICULUM COUNCIL CONTINUE AND EXTEND ITS SUPPORT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS IN CONSTRUCTING ASSESSMENT TASKS, ANALYTIC MARKING KEYS AND IN THE MULTIPLE USES OF ASSESSMENTS.**

Although there are important generic skills in constructing learning and assessment tasks, creative tasks are most likely to be produced by people who also have substantial content knowledge.

This statement leads to the second major theme of this report, that of content knowledge of teachers.

### ***Content knowledge and teachers of students in years K-10***

There are three converging factors that make content knowledge an important theme in this report:

- the statement by the Interim National Curriculum Board that content will become an integral component of teaching and learning;
- the requests by teachers reported by Robson (2001) and Loudon (2006) for detailed syllabuses; and
- concerns about the effects of the advent of NAPLAN testing.

The concerns for the adequate preparation of students for the NAPLAN tests have had the effect of generating programs that prepare students for both the format and the content of the tests (Department of Education and Training, 2009). It has been suggested already in this report that these programs are most helpful for inexperienced teachers and those with less than adequate content knowledge, and that they may be seen to fill a vacuum in curriculum support. That is, although such programs are not needed for experienced teachers and for those that have sound knowledge of content, they are valuable for the less experienced, especially in the least-resourced schools.

It is generally considered that knowledge of content, together with pedagogical skills obtained from pre-service studies in education, will provide teachers with the capacity to teach for understanding. Clearly, the preparation is only a start, and being an experienced teacher means having increased one's pedagogical skills and content knowledge over the years of teaching.

### ***Content in initial teacher education***

The above discussion could lead to the assumption that more content should be crammed into pre-service teacher education programs. Inevitably, there would be less time for developing pedagogical skills and studying education. I do not suggest that studies in pedagogy and education should be reduced. Indeed, existing programs such as the one-year Diploma in Education are known to be too short for the purpose.

Instead, it is simply recognised here that the content knowledge of graduates, especially that of Years K-7 teachers (and, increasingly, that of Years 8-10 teachers) is not sufficient for the demands made of them. This knowledge cannot be developed in the pre-service programs.

With some minor variations, a typical four-year primary teacher education program has something like half of the studies in elective subjects (units that can also form part of a degree in arts or sciences) and the remainder in education and pedagogy. It cannot be very different. There are eight subject learning areas in the primary curriculum and they will continue in the national curriculum in one form or another.

With a typical workload in most universities of four units of study per semester, even if every learning area were to be included in the content of a teacher education program for the equivalent of two years of study, each student would study only two units of content in each learning area.

In addition, there are areas that students have not studied, even to Year 12; for example, languages other than English, the arts, mathematics and science (and particular disciplines within science). This suggests the need to emphasise content in professional development programs for teachers, especially those who are less experienced.

Part of being an experienced teacher is the development of one's content knowledge. However, even for experienced teachers—especially those teaching outside their specialties—there seems not to be a systematic approach to the development of content knowledge.

In addition, some content knowledge that can be adapted into the curriculum, changes. All teachers need support in updating their knowledge in the areas they teach.

References to content knowledge here refer mainly to primary teacher education programs. However, the advent of the middle school and the expectation that teachers may teach in more than one area up to Year 9 (and perhaps Year 10) in secondary schools raises similar questions.

Clearly, a teacher who has a degree in some discipline area does not need professional development in the content of that area but may need professional development in the content of the other areas that he or she is required to teach. Similarly, if the teacher moves from teaching primary to secondary students, there are likely to be areas in which that teacher needs professional development in content.

The need for some teachers to improve their content knowledge in the areas in which they teach has been recognised in the past, and in that sense this observation is not new. It has been apparent at times when there has been a shortage of secondary specialist teachers and various approaches have been tried to improve their content knowledge.

The argument here is not specific to any learning area in which there might be an apparent shortage of teachers: it is that the continuing professional development of content knowledge is necessary for K-10 teachers in general and it needs to be mainstreamed. Further, this is not reflective of problems with either the teacher education programs or on the graduating teachers themselves.

### **RECOMMENDATION 13**

**THAT THE NEED FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CONTENT KNOWLEDGE IN THE LEARNING AREAS BE EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGED.**

#### ***Approaches to professional development in content***

Many excellent professional development programs already involve content. For example, First Steps implicitly integrates the teaching of content to teachers. Another is the sequence of lessons in astronomy provided by Scitech mentioned earlier. This is one way of providing professional development in content knowledge and should continue to be used.

A third example is the Primary Connections science program, which was delivered to many schools in the 1990s. It had a series of topics with structured lessons that teachers without science training could use. District offices often had coordinators who delivered professional development. It has recently been relaunched as a partnership between the Australian Academy of Science and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Primary Connections promotes linking the teaching of science with that of literacy to enrich the learning experience for students (AAS & DEEWR, 2009). These approaches to learning content have the advantage of also providing teachers with lessons to teach.

However, if content is to be delivered explicitly, it will be necessary to consider the best formats in consultation with teachers, especially those in the least-resourced schools.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14**

**THAT A PROJECT BE CONDUCTED TO ESTABLISH POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CONTENT AREAS OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR TEACHERS OF K-10 STUDENTS.**

A different and more formal approach, which already has infrastructure to support it, is the provision of relevant units of study by universities to teachers to take as professional development. These units of study can include assessments that provide evidence of relevant professional development.

Such enrolments may also contribute toward undergraduate or higher (for example, Master of Education) degrees. Enrolment in this form of professional development may be voluntary or on the recommendation of a principal.

WACOT includes, as one of four elements, reference to content in Standard 2 for continued registration. However, this is the only clear reference to content in the context of nine standards and 36 elements across these standards.

This is a small weighting. By way of contrast, the New South Wales Institute for Teachers, a counterpart of WACOT, explicitly recognises undergraduate and postgraduate studies in educationally-relevant degrees for mandatory accreditation. WACOT makes only a passing reference to further study as being relevant.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15**

**THAT FURTHER STUDY FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE OR POSTGRADUATE DEGREE BE RECOGNISED AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CONTINUING TEACHER REGISTRATION.**

In addition to possibly being required for continuing registration by WACOT, the approach should encourage and reward teachers for engaging in professional development. It may be appropriate to have a salary increase associated with the acquisition of each additional relevant university degree.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16**

**THAT A SALARY INCREMENT BE GIVEN FOR EACH RELEVANT DEGREE, BEYOND THE INITIAL TEACHING QUALIFICATION, EARNED BY A TEACHER.**

## **The national curriculum and initial teacher education**

The Interim National Curriculum Board expects the introduction of the national curriculum to have an impact on initial teacher education programs:

*57 The implementation for teachers, principals and other curriculum will have implications for initial teacher education as well. Teachers of subjects included in the national curriculum would be able to move more easily between States and Territories and teacher education will be able to adopt a more national perspective.*

Initial teacher education departments in universities in Western Australia make explicit two complementary points that are relevant to the above expectation:

- although they are educating future teachers in Western Australia, they are graduating students whose qualifications are recognised, not only in other Australian jurisdictions, but also in other English-speaking countries; and
- they use, both illustratively and for the explicit preparation of teachers, the *Curriculum Framework* and other documents such as the Student Outcome Statements and Progress Maps and the Outcomes and Standards Framework.

With the implementation of the national curriculum, the preparation of students in a local context for registration that goes beyond that context will continue.

Teacher education students are required to spend specified periods in schools, and the period depends on the qualification. With the minimum time specified, there are some minor variations among university departments. These departments made the point that in using the time of students in the schools efficiently and effectively, they needed to understand and prepare students thoroughly for the local context. They considered that the Department of Education and Training did not keep them informed of important and relevant changes that affected their preparation of students for school experience. Often, they learned of some new edict through a media report or from students returning from their school experiences.

The teacher education departments would very much appreciate a more formal relationship in which they could be informed of policy changes that might affect their preparation of students for their experiences in schools and even be involved in policy development. Given that the implementation of the national curriculum will rest with the jurisdictions, it is important that information be transmitted promptly and accurately to the teacher education providers. This would place them in a better position to decide which material was directly relevant to their students in general and which was relevant to each school experience in particular.

### **RECOMMENDATION 17**

**THAT A SIMPLE FORMAL STRUCTURE BE ESTABLISHED THROUGH WHICH TEACHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS IN UNIVERSITIES ARE INFORMED OF IMPORTANT POLICY DECISIONS THAT AFFECT SCHOOL PROGRAMS.**

### *School experience*

There are always concerns about the shortage of initial teacher education school experience placements. An anomaly seems to exist in the requirements for school experience. There are mandated minimum periods that initial teacher education students, depending on the qualification for which they are enrolled, must spend in schools. It is surprising, therefore, that there is no official requirement for registered schools that have the capacity to take these students to do so, nor is there any requirement that schools have formal support programs for students on placement.

The schools I visited were keen to have students. They encouraged and supported them to the extent that they could, but the system seems to depend entirely on the goodwill of teachers and principals.

This seems to be an anomaly that could be rectified by making the acceptance of placements an integral part of the registration of schools and the ongoing registration of teachers.

### **RECOMMENDATION 18**

**THAT THE ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY SCHOOLS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO TAKE STUDENTS FOR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE BE EXAMINED.**

Consideration could also be given to WACOT requiring experienced teachers to demonstrate the successful supervision of student teachers for continuing registration.

### *The first year of teaching*

The first year of teaching can be overwhelming. This state of affairs can be accommodated in a well-resourced school with few beginning teachers by means of reduced teaching loads and substantial mentoring. However, in a modestly-resourced school, the first year teacher often has a full load, and potential mentors are themselves heavily occupied with their own work.

Unreasonable teaching loads will not only affect the retention of the beginning teachers, but will also affect the students they teach in their first year. It is stated from time to time that more of the initial teacher education program could be spent in schools. However, the program is already short and that approach to preparing students better for the practical part of their work should be resisted.

Instead there needs to be more structured support for first-year teachers. This support should be seen as an investment in the improvement of the teaching profession, in both the short and long terms. It would better recognise the increasing demands placed on them by the expectations of students, parents and employers, the complexity of the society in which their students live and the growth of technology.

It would be helpful if, without reduction in their salaries, all first-year teachers had no more than 80 per cent of a full teaching load. Complementing the reduced load would be appropriate professional development support.

## RECOMMENDATION 19

**THAT FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS HAVE NO MORE THAN 80 PER CENT OF A FULL-TIME TEACHING LOAD.**

### *How to introduce the national curriculum?*

A factor that will affect all teachers in all States and Territories is the way in which the national curriculum is introduced and the degree to which it is ready for implementation.

An important insight from the implementation of the *Curriculum Framework*, which is captured in Recommendations 1 and 3, is that it should not be introduced before it is complete, that is, it should not be implemented with the expectation that there will be a plethora of documents following, ostensibly clarifying some previous points or interpretations.

The following features characterise a complete curriculum:

- There are exemplary lesson plans and programs for each subject area, without being the only ones that could be devised. However, they should be plans that less-experienced teachers in the least well-resourced schools can use directly.
- The exemplary lesson plans and programs include examples of tasks that can be used for consolidating and assessing learning, together with the marking keys of those tasks. Effectively, the publication of NAPLAN, in the specific areas of literacy and numeracy, provides this kind of information. However, if the teaching and learning is to be broader than that assessed by NAPLAN, teachers need examples that, even though illustrative, are as specific as are the NAPLAN assessments.
- There are professional development materials that support the less-experienced teachers in the least-resourced schools in content and, where relevant, in pedagogy. Consideration needs to be given to a balanced approach involving the provision of face-to-face and on-line professional development.

One way in which the national curriculum could be introduced in each discipline area is to begin with kindergarten and then have students progressing into successive years with the new curriculum. This is an extreme position that has potential problems for teachers working with two sets of syllabuses. The extent of the problems is likely to be a function of the experience of the teachers and the resources of the schools.

Alternatively, each learning area might be introduced to all students in all year levels. This is the other extreme position. Perhaps an ideal might be somewhere in between these two.

Whatever the method proposed by ACARA, it should consult closely with schools, and, in particular, with the modestly-resourced schools.

It should not have a process in mind that (as the *Curriculum Framework* did) assumes all schools are highly resourced.

If implementation is left to the States and Territories, then the Curriculum Council, the Department of Education and Training, AISWA and the Catholic Education Office will need to consult with the modestly-resourced schools in Western Australia regarding the process to be followed in this State.

## **RECOMMENDATION 20**

**THAT SCHOOLS, ESPECIALLY THE MODESTLY RESOURCED, BE CONSULTED REGARDING THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM WILL BE INTRODUCED.**

### **Relationship between the Curriculum Council, the education systems and ACARA**

As noted above, ACARA makes it clear that the implementation of the national curriculum and the professional development of staff will be the responsibility of the States and Territories.

Because of the pooling of resources, the national curriculum can be better than curriculums produced by each State or Territory alone. That inevitably means that some resources from the jurisdictions will be used at the national level. However, that does not have to imply that the current expertise in the jurisdictions should be lost and transferred to ACARA.

Indeed, this expertise needs to be consolidated within the jurisdictions, and especially in one as large as Western Australia. Rural and remote schools in this state complain that they are unable to access the support that they need simply because of the distance their staff have to travel and the expense involved.

This problem should not be magnified by centralising resources in Sydney.

Therefore, it is important that an effort be made to give extra support for regional schools and to ensure that the States and Territories do not simply become small branch offices of a large ACARA with little substantive, professional input into its operations.

Whether or not there is a danger of that happening will depend on how ACARA proceeds with its activities.

However, if there is a big central department and staff relocate to Sydney, it is a distinct possibility. If that happens, many schools in Western Australia will justifiably consider that they do not have access to the same degree of support as schools much closer to Sydney.

In addition to delegating and sharing work, the States and Territories have developed specific expertise that can be used by ACARA. For example, Western Australia has considerable experience in educational assessment, ranging from technical to policy matters. This expertise could be used by ACARA without it being relocated to Sydney. This might mean that ACARA has employees outside New South Wales.

## **RECOMMENDATION 21**

**THAT THE STAFF OF ACARA IN SYDNEY BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM AND THE EXPERTISE IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES BE RETAINED AND CONSOLIDATED.**

### **Roles of the Curriculum Council and the Department of Education and Training**

One of the inherent difficulties for all schools is the respective roles of the Curriculum Council and the Department of Education and Training in relation to implementing the *Curriculum Framework*.

Clearly, at one level, the task is that of the Curriculum Council, which oversees explicitly curriculum implementation in private and public schools. On the other hand, the work carried out by the Department of Education and Training, by the nature of its position, seems to go beyond that of simply administering the public school system. Perhaps some overlap is inevitable.

In addition, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools have their particular roles in helping to implement a curriculum.

## **RECOMMENDATION 22**

**THAT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM, THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE SYSTEM BUREAUCRACIES, AND IN PARTICULAR THOSE OF THE CURRICULUM COUNCIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING, BE MADE EXPLICIT.**

### **Nomenclature for the kindergarten year and the national curriculum**

Finally, a difference between the nomenclature of the kindergarten year in Western Australia and in the national curriculum needs to be taken into account. In the national curriculum, Year 'K', refers to the pre-primary year in Western Australia. Therefore, the national K curriculum is not designed to include K children in Western Australia. However, complicating the situation is the fact that K children in this State are generally in schools and because their capacities vary, some will be ready to engage with the Year K element of the national curriculum while others will not.

The national Early Years Learning Framework covers the years from birth to age five years, and is designed to guide teaching and learning programs in all childcare and preschool settings. This applies to the Kindergarten year in Western Australia and will align with the National Curriculum.

## **RECOMMENDATION 23**

**THAT AN EXPLICIT POLICY BE DEVELOPED FOR THE APPLICATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA OF THE K YEAR OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM.**

# **Appendix 1: Schools/organisations visited and persons interviewed**

## **Albany Senior School**

Dr Peter Havel, Principal  
Graeme Bell, Deputy Principal  
Steve Bergman, science teacher in fourth year of teaching

## **Association of Independent Schools of WA (Inc.)**

Valerie Gould, Executive Director

## **Baler Primary School**

Pauline Johnson, Principal  
Dennis Bussell, Deputy Principal  
Sue Bray, Deputy Principal

## **Carine Senior High School**

Paul Ganderton, Principal  
Rob Lawson, Deputy Principal  
Pauline Gibb, Deputy Principal

## **Catholic Education Office**

Ron Dullard, Director  
John Nelson, Project Officer for Research and Strategic Development  
Peter Hayes, Team Leader

## **Curriculum Council**

Professor Bill Loudon, Chair and Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor, The University of Western Australia  
David Wood, Chief Executive Officer  
Kerry Boyd, Curriculum Officer

## **Department of Education and Training**

David Axworthy, Executive Director, School Support Programs

## **Department of Education Services**

Terry Werner, Director, Higher Education and Legislative Review

### **Edith Cowan University**

Dr Grace Oakley, Program Director, Primary Education/Senior Lecturer  
Dr Fiona Budgen, Coordinator, Graduate Diploma of Education  
Cheryl Rowlands, Bunbury Campus Coordinator of Workplace Learning  
Pippa Nelligan, Professional Practice Coordinator, Primary  
Brenda Hamlett, Course Coordinator Primary/Lecturer  
Ralph Lunay, Lecturer, Primary

### **Gibbs Street Primary School**

Roy Reynolds, Principal  
Sue Horoch, Teacher/Curriculum Coordinator

### **Great Southern Grammar School**

Linda Luff, Director of Studies  
Mike Giles, Deputy Principal  
Emma Franklin, English teacher/ Curriculum Coordinator, Middle School

### **Hale School**

David Bean, Deputy Headmaster/Director of Curriculum  
Jim Bausor, Director of Studies/mathematics teacher

### **Hedland Senior High School**

Carolyn Cook, Principal

### **Nedlands Primary School**

Garry Hewitt, Principal  
Students from Years 3, 5 and 7

### **Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning, Department of Education and Training, WA**

Margaret Waterton, Principal Curriculum and Policy Officer

### **Presbyterian Ladies' College**

Beth Blackwood, Principal  
Keith Anderson, Deputy Principal  
Kim Edwards, Deputy Principal

### **Sacred Heart College**

Ian Elder, Principal

### **St Cecilia's Primary School**

Paula Mckenzie, Principal  
Amanda Ramshaw, Deputy Principal

### **St Joseph's College**

Bradley Hall, Principal  
John Bova, Head of Middle School and Senior School/ English and the arts teacher

Mike Watson, Head of Junior School

**State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia**

Anne Gisborne, President

**Strelley Community School**

Kate McKenzie, Principal

**The University of Western Australia**

Associate Professor Di Gardiner, Director of Teaching/Secondary Graduate School of Education

**Western Australian Primary Principals' Association**

Steve Breen, President

**Western Australian Secondary School Executives Association**

Rob Nairn, President

**York District High School**

Alan Smith, Principal

Michael Mount-Bryson, Deputy Principal

**Other persons interviewed**

Assistant Professor Sarah Hopkins, Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia

Ms Helen House, Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia

Audrey Jackson, Director of the Association of Independent Schools of WA, 1997-2008

Professor Lesley Parker, former Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University of Technology and Chair, Curriculum Council, 1997-2003

Dr Suzanne Parry, Director, Western Australian College of Teaching

## Appendix 2: Timeline of Key Government Initiatives, Reviews and Reports

DATE	INITIATIVES, REVIEWS AND REPORTS
1989	<p><i>Hobart Declaration on Schooling.</i></p> <p>This declaration produced the first collaborative statement on goals for schooling for all Australian States and Territories. This declaration has since been superseded by the Adelaide Declaration (1999) and more recently by the Melbourne Declaration (2008).</p>
1992	<p>National curriculum, national profiles in eight learning areas developed. Work undertaken at the direction of Australian Education Council (AEC), the national council of Ministers of Education. Project managed by the AEC Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS), which included representation from Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand, Catholic and independent schools, parents, teachers, the AEC secretariat, ACER and Curriculum Corporation.</p>
1995	<p><i>Review of School Curriculum Development Procedures and Processes in Western Australia (Temby Report).</i></p> <p>Recommendation to create a Curriculum Council responsible for developing a K-12 curriculum framework for all schools and for specific assessment, moderation and examination functions for Years 11 and 12.</p>
1997	<p><i>Curriculum Council Act 1997.</i></p> <p>Focus: K-12</p> <p>Aims of <i>Curriculum Framework</i>: common curriculum direction, seamless curriculum, greater involvement by non-government schools and community.</p>
1998	<p><i>Curriculum Framework</i> released.</p>
1998	<p>Focus: K-12, whole-school planning</p> <p>Initial support materials developed and distributed to all schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <i>An introduction to the Curriculum Framework: a guide for school based curriculum planning</i></li> <li>· <i>Professional development guidelines</i></li> <li>· <i>Curriculum Framework support: list of resources</i></li> </ul>
1999	<p><i>Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first century</i> released. Supersedes the Hobart Declaration.</p>

DATE	INITIATIVES, REVIEWS AND REPORTS
1999	<p>New materials developed and distributed to all schools. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <i>Getting Started series</i>. One book for each of the eight learning areas.</li> <li>· <i>Guidelines for professional development using the Getting Started series</i>.</li> </ul> <p>(Focus: K-12)</p>
1999	<i>School Education Act 1999</i> .
October 1999	Focus shifts to the implementation of the <i>Curriculum Framework</i> in Years 11-12.
1999	<p>Pamphlets for use with parents, teachers new to WA. Four versions were produced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· A general version called: <i>The Curriculum Framework: an Overview</i>.</li> <li>· The other three versions included information specific to the policies of the independent schools, Catholic schools and public schools.</li> </ul>
2000	Implementation of the <i>Curriculum Framework</i> continues. Systems and sectors provided data for Council reporting on the implementation.
November 2000	<p>Focus: 11-12. Consultation starts on proposed changes for Years 11 and 12.</p> <p><i>Post Compulsory Education Review Discussion Paper</i> released.</p>
2001	<p>Focus: K-10; materials for next stage of implementation produced</p> <p><i>Making Progress</i> series developed – one for each learning area. Issued to school in files.</p> <p>Three types of materials were produced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <i>Understanding the Outcomes</i></li> <li>· <i>Focusing on Achievement</i></li> <li>· <i>Planning for Learning</i></li> </ul>
July 2001	<p>Focus: K-10</p> <p><i>Investing in Government Schools; Putting Children First</i>. (A. Robson)</p>
November 2001	<p>Focus: 11-12.</p> <p><i>Our Youth, Our Future - Post-compulsory Education Review</i> released.</p>
March 2002	Focus on the development of courses for Year 11 and 12 continues.

DATE	INITIATIVES, REVIEWS AND REPORTS
2003	<p>Focus: 11-12 Indigenous students</p> <p><i>Consultation related to post-compulsory schooling of Aboriginal students in Western Australia: report of a project undertaken during 2001 on behalf of the Western Australian Education and Training Council released.</i></p>
2003	<p>Focus: K-10</p> <p>At July 2003 MCEETYA meeting, Ministers for Education request that <i>Statements of Learning</i> be developed in English, mathematics, science, and civics and citizenship as part of consistency in national curriculum.</p>
2004	<p>Focus: K-10</p> <p>Emphasis in <i>Curriculum Framework</i> on developmental learning (p. 17) required a model for schools to use.</p> <p>Agreement reached for secretariat to establish consultation process to review <i>Student Outcome Statements</i> and Catholic Education Office Progress Maps for clarity, consistency and alignment with the <i>Curriculum Framework</i>.</p>
2004	<p>Changes to Years 11-12</p> <p>Aviation Course of Study professional development provided for 2005 implementation.</p>
2005	<p>English, Media, Engineering Courses of Study professional development.</p>
2005	<p>Five-year period for implementation of the <i>Curriculum Framework</i> ends.</p>
2005	<p>Focus: K-10</p> <p>Curriculum Council releases <i>Progress Maps</i> for use in independent and Catholic schools.</p> <p>Department of Education and Training releases the revised <i>Outcomes and Standards Framework</i> which superseded the <i>Student Outcomes Statements</i>. Revised edition is based on the Council <i>Progress Maps</i>.</p>
2005	<p>Focus: 11-12</p> <p>Legislation passed to raise leaving age to end of the year in which students turn 16 for 2007 and 17 for 2008. Students must be at school, in training or in employment (conditions apply).</p>

DATE	INITIATIVES, REVIEWS AND REPORTS
2005	Focus: 11-12 Andrich report to the Curriculum Council regarding assessment for tertiary selection.
June 2006	Focus: 11-12 <i>The Parliamentary Inquiry into Changes to the Post Compulsory Curriculum in Western Australia</i> by the Education and Health Standing Committee reports to Parliament on 29 June.
2006	Commissioned evaluation of Curriculum Improvement Plan Phase 2 by Bill Loudon, Elaine Chapman, Simon Clarke, Marguerite Cullity and Helen House.
2007	<i>Literacy and Numeracy Review</i> final report (Louden).
2006, 2007	Council reporting on the implementation of the <i>Curriculum Framework</i> continues using information provided by the systems and sectors. Annual <i>Curriculum Framework</i> implementation survey conducted.
2007	Focus: K-10 Continued work on national initiatives including the inclusion of <i>Statements of Learning</i> into state curriculum materials.
January 2007	The Australian Labor Party releases its education policy - <i>The Australian economy needs an education revolution: new directions paper on the critical link between long term prosperity, productivity, growth and human capital investment</i> .
2007	Focus: 11-12 Course juries established to review all WACE courses for Years 11 and 12.
January 2008	<i>Statements of Learning</i> to be integrated into all State and Territory curriculum documents.
2008	Interim National Curriculum Board established to produce national curriculum in English, mathematics, history and science.
2008	<i>Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians</i> released. Supersedes Adelaide Declaration (1999).

DATE	INITIATIVES, REVIEWS AND REPORTS
2008	WA school leaving age now end of students' 17th year.
2008	<p>National initiatives in early childhood policy, focus on the period from birth to age 8 and identify the need to establish a link between education and early age care centres.</p> <p>Release of draft <i>Early Years Learning Framework</i>. <i>The Early Years Learning Framework</i> is a key component of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care being progressed through the Council of Australian Governments' productivity reform agenda.</p>
May 2009	<p>Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) established.</p> <p>New Commonwealth legislation. ACARA supersedes Interim National Curriculum Board. Role broadened to include responsibility for assessment and reporting in addition to curriculum development. New curriculum areas identified to be included as part next phase.</p>

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