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NIER/JICA International Symposium: *Primary and Secondary education in the Global Age*

Tokyo 30 August 2013

Designing a curriculum that supports 21st century learning



Australian Curriculum view of 21st century skills

- □ Are they unique?
 - > Most have been important for centuries
 - > Development and use in technology-rich environments is new
- □ 'General capabilities' rather than '21st century skills'
 - > Literacy
 - > Numeracy
 - > Information and communication technology capability
 - > Critical and creative thinking
 - > Personal and social capability
 - > Ethical understanding
 - > Intercultural understanding
- □ Key questions
 - > Do we have developmental continua for these capabilities?
 - > What content would be required for their development?

Australian Curriculum view of knowledge disciplines

- Central place for content
 - > Preserving the disciplines
 - · Disciplines are the result of several millennia of human effort
 - Research on expertise shows importance of deep, domain-specific knowledge
 - Transfer of learning across domains is limited expert research chemists are like novice political scientists!
 - > Attending to some current, cross-curriculum priorities
 - · Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
 - · Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
 - Sustainability
- □ Can the same content serve the general capabilities?
 - > Content descriptions as the key elements of the curriculum
 - > Content elaborations for teachers who would like more
 - > Achievement standards with annotated samples of student work

Curriculum development process

- □ Shape of the Australian Curriculum
 - > Initial version when only some learning areas to be included
 - > Current version covers the entire curriculum
- □ Shape Papers for Learning Areas
 - > Initial Advice Paper considered at National Forum
 - > Draft Shape Paper approved by ACARA Board for consultation
 - > Final Shape Paper approved by ACARA Board to shape curriculum
- □ Curriculum
 - > Draft Curriculum approved by ACARA Board for consultation
 - > Revised Curriculum approved by ACARA Board for consultation
 - > Final Curriculum approved by Ministerial Council

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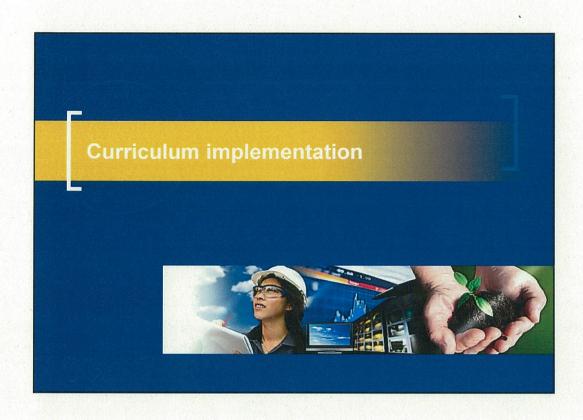
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International benchmarking of the Australian Curriculum

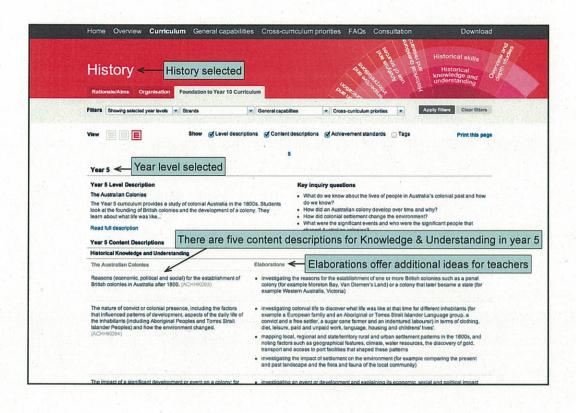
Learning areas	Systems against which development compared	
English	Canada (Ontario), England, New Zealand, US (California)	
Mathematics	Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore, USA (National Council of Teachers in Mathematics Standards, American Statistical Society Guidelines)	
Science	Canada (Ontario), Finland, Singapore	
History	Canada, England, Finland, Hong Kong, Ireland, Singapore	
Geography	Canada (Ontario), England	
The Arts	Canada (Ontario), England, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, Singapore, USA (National Art Education Statement, Framework for 21st Century Skills)	
Languages	English-speaking systems: England, Scotland, American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages Others: Canada (Ontario), Finland, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore	
Health & Physical Education	Canada (Ottawa), England, Finland, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden (Outdoor Education)	
Technologies	England, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, USA (Standards for Technological Literacy)	
Civics & Citizenship	Not provided yet.	
Economics & Business	Not provided yet.	

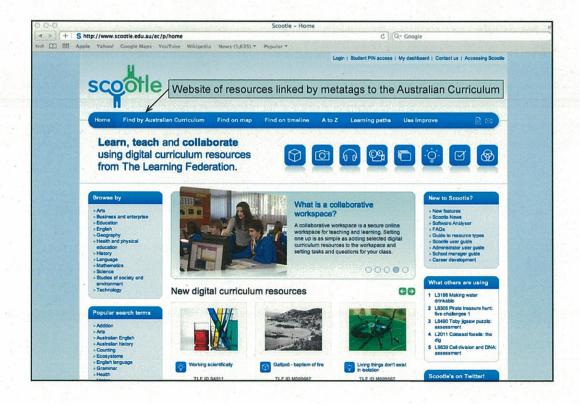
Current state of development of Australian Curriculum

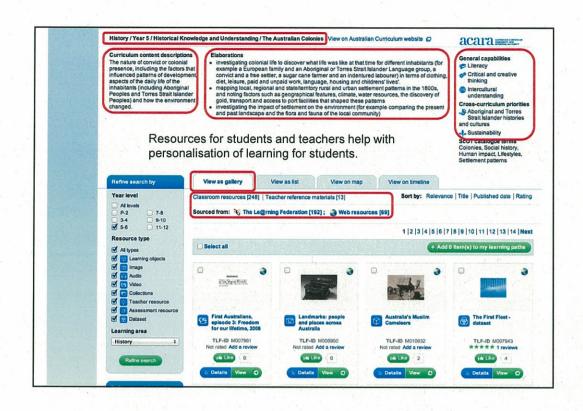
Learning areas	F-10	Senior Years
Phase 1		
English	Being implemented	Integration underway
Mathematics	Being implemented	Integration underway
Science	Being implemented	Integration underway
History	Being implemented	Integration underway
Phase 2		
Geography	Final version approved by Ministers	Integration underway
The Arts	Final version approved by Ministers	
Languages	Consultations on drafts underway	
Phase 3		
Health & Physical Education	Consultation on draft completed	
Technologies	Consultation on draft completed	V 7 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1
Civics & Citizenship	Consultation on draft completed	
Economics & Business	Consultation on draft completed	

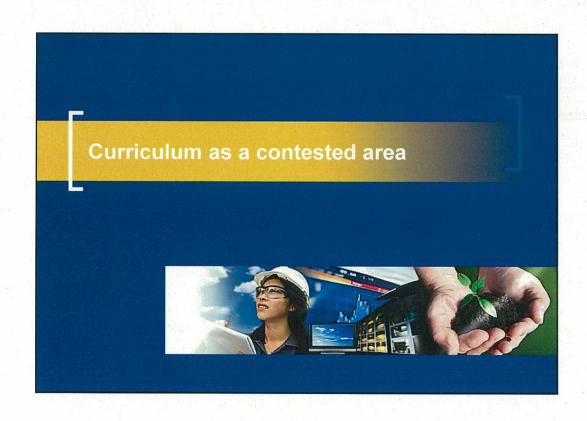












Curriculum as a contested area

Curriculum will always be contested ... it plays a powerful role in defining what knowledge and understandings are seen as of most worth.

There are many voices ready to engage in debate during and after the development phase. ... They never speak with one voice.

Strong guiding principle: The Australian Curriculum should set high expectations of student learning that match those in the highest performing countries.

This is probably a once-in-a-lifetime chance to move Australian school education ahead to new heights.

BUT, it will take more than curriculum reform. That is necessary but not sufficient.

