BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

English
Years K–10 Draft Australian Curriculum

Consultation Report

Contents

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Teachers and stakeholder representatives in NSW welcomed the opportunity to participate in an extensive consultation process facilitated by the Office of the Board of Studies and responded positively to the notion of a national curriculum. In response to the *English Years K–10 Draft Australian Curriculum*, teachers, stakeholder representatives and online survey respondents consistently identified the following key overarching matters:

1. The learner is not at the centre of the curriculum.
2. There is an absence of a unifying theoretical framework, informed by established evidence-based research on effective teaching and learning in English.
3. The organisation of the curriculum around three discrete 'strands' – Language, Literature and Literacy – is conceptually flawed and therefore restricts the potential for an integrated, holistic, developmental and learner-centred approach to English.
4. The draft document is not inclusive of the full range of students.
5. The mandatory content descriptions require meaningful sequencing, balance and continuity within, across and between strands and years, and should be expressed in terminology that is appropriate and consistent.
6. The predominance of content descriptions which focus on lower-order cognition narrows the breadth, depth, richness and rigour of English evident in current NSW English syllabuses.
7. The organisation of the content according to *strands* and the organisation of achievement standards according to *language modes* is highly problematic for authentic assessment and reporting in English.

1.2 Structure and content

Participants at all English K–10 teacher and stakeholder representative meetings throughout NSW expressed a range of other serious concerns flowing from and related to the key matters set out above, including:

- the atomising of the content and processes of English
- the absence of learning outcomes
- a perceived lack of recognition of the centrality of metacognition in student learning
- the need for a clear continuum of learning K–10 that articulates with English Years 11–12
- the need for recognition of the recursive nature of teaching and learning
- the developmental inconsistencies in content requirements across and within the years of schooling
- the proposed implementation timeline and resourcing
- the implications of these matters for effective teaching, learning, assessment, reporting and student engagement and achievement
- the segmentation into years of schooling instead of stages of learning.

1.3 Conceptualisation of the subject

Teachers and stakeholder representatives were forthright in their view of English as a discipline with a long tradition of theory, research and practice informing curriculum development. They were therefore very concerned that the draft document appears to position English as merely a 'service subject' for literacy in the curriculum, undermining its disciplinary integrity, scope and rigour.

Further, there was a consistent view in the consultations that the draft document places undue emphasis on an untheorised view of language as a separate body of knowledge to be transmitted: as a consequence, teachers believed that the draft document devalues the role of the student as an active, developing *user* of 'language in context', and also diminishes literary experience, purpose and audience, creativity, the imagination, affective and recursive learning, process and enjoyment.

1.4 Language modes and text requirements

Of particular concern to secondary teachers is the absence of the *viewing and representing* language modes in the draft document. According to teachers, this absence reflects the regressive nature of the draft curriculum since it does not adequately integrate and recognise the centrality of these modes for student learning in the 21st century.

In addition, secondary teachers questioned the diminution of the role of literature: removing the mandating of types of texts would have serious implications for planning and programming, building capacity for achievement in Years 11 and 12, the quality of student experience and universal student entitlement in English.

1.5 Challenge and rigour

Participants at all English K–10 teacher and stakeholder representative meetings voiced the strong belief that the *English Years K–10 Draft Australian Curriculum* is too teacher-centred, too content-driven and structurally fragmented with insufficient recognition of the historical models of English that invest current NSW curriculum and pedagogy with quality, challenge and rigour.

Participants concluded that the draft document is limited and reductionist in its view of the learner and the subject, is set at a lower conceptual level than the NSW English syllabuses and, as such, is an inferior curriculum document.

Recommendations to ACARA

1. *Redesign the document so that it is based upon a theoretical framework with the learner at the centre of the curriculum.*
2. *Revise and re-sequence the content descriptions throughout the document to ensure an explicit continuum of learning and explicit coherence between content, assessment and achievement standards.*
3. *Revise the draft document to ensure it is inclusive of all learners in its breadth, depth, relevance and rigour.*

2   Background Information

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) released the draft K–10 curriculum for the four Phase 1 learning areas on 1 March 2010. The curriculum for English, mathematics, science and history was released in electronic format on a consultation portal for a period concluding 23 May 2010. The consultation portal allowed for response to an online survey as well as opportunities for specific feedback regarding individual content statements. During the consultation period ACARA conducted a trial of materials with 150 schools (25 in NSW), general forums in each state (including a stakeholder meeting on 25 March at the Wesley Centre), and subject-specific national meetings held in Sydney in April.

ACARA has an established timeline that includes further curriculum refinement to follow the consultation period, with the release of the final curriculum in September 2010.

The NSW Minister for Education and Training has asked the Board of Studies to lead consultation in NSW in order to provide advice about the quality and suitability of the curriculum for NSW schools.

Consequently the Board of Studies conducted a coordinated set of consultation activities to engage teachers and stakeholders and to seek their feedback. The consultation program consisted of a curriculum mapping activity, teacher meetings in regional and metropolitan venues, video conferences, subject area stakeholder meetings, and a series of stakeholder meetings that focused on whole school issues and the implications for assessment, reporting and certification.

The NSW English consultation consisted of:
- curriculum mapping undertaken by three expert practitioners in the learning area on 2 and 3 March
- full-day stakeholder meeting held at the Board of Studies on 8 March 2010, in which the representative views of a range of stakeholder organisations were presented
- a video conference targeting teachers on 18 March 2010
- afternoon meetings with teachers at
  – Campbelltown on 9 March
  – Tamworth on 11 March
  – Goulburn on 15 March
  – North Parramatta on 16 March
- an online survey on the Board of Studies website for the period 8 March to 30 April 2010.

Professional associations and schooling sectors conducted a range of activities during the consultation period to inform feedback to the Board.

Consultation meetings and the online survey responses clearly highlighted the high value NSW teachers and stakeholders place on the organic nature of, and the theoretical basis underpinning, the NSW English syllabuses; students learning about language by using language in meaningful contexts; the central place of literature in English; the strong integration of content, process, texts, assessment and reporting; and the explicit continuum of learning from Kindergarten to Year 12.

3   Summary of Respondents

3.1   Consultation at teacher and stakeholder meetings

6 teacher and stakeholder meetings

Stakeholders	34		Teachers	243

3.2   Online survey respondents

206 online survey responses

Years of schooling:

Kindergarten to Year 6	56		Years 7 to 10	150

Sector:

Government	105	Independent	62	Catholic	32
Other	7				

Response from:

Parent	15	Principal	15	School Executive	38
Student	19	Teacher	95	Other	24

Number of people contributing to the response:

1	161	2	9	3	5
4	2	5	5	6 or more	24

4   Summary of Key Matters Raised

Key matters raised for English arising from consultation
1. The learner is not at the centre of the curriculum
2. There is an absence of a unifying theoretical framework, informed by established evidence-based research on effective teaching and learning in English
3. The organisation of the curriculum around three discrete 'strands' – Language, Literature and Literacy – is conceptually flawed and therefore restricts the potential for an integrated, holistic, developmental and learner-centred approach to English
4. The draft document is not inclusive of the full range of students
5. The mandatory content descriptions require meaningful sequencing, balance and continuity within, across and between strands and years, and should be expressed in terminology that is appropriate and consistent
6. The predominance of content descriptions which focus on lower-order cognition narrows the breadth, depth, richness and rigour of English evident in current NSW English syllabuses
7. The organisation of the content according to *strands* and the organisation of achievement standards according to *language modes* is highly problematic for authentic assessment and reporting in English

5   Analysis

5.1   Rationale

Overall Comments

Aspects of the rationale in the English draft document received a positive response from teacher and stakeholder representatives in general. Participants at meetings indicated that the intent of this section was appropriate but could be strengthened by making prominent the place of the student as an active and participatory learner at the centre of the curriculum.

Importantly, teachers called for a clear statement about the rationale for adopting a three-strand structure, and how these strands could be integrated.

Teachers raised concerns about the inconsistent and unclear use of the term 'create' in the rationale and throughout the content descriptions.

Participants at teacher and stakeholder representative meetings advocated a wider focus than on Asia, arguing that this would strengthen, reflect and extend intercultural understanding as an aim of the curriculum.

Summary of feedback	**Source/s**
• The draft document asserts that the strands are 'interrelated', but a clear statement outlining how they can be *integrated* is required. The rationale would be a suitable location for such an explanation and for the explication of the theoretical models underpinning the document.	Teacher consultation meetings Stakeholder consultation meeting Online survey responses DET AHISA
• The draft document appropriately acknowledges Australia as a linguistically and culturally diverse country and also asserts the importance of English in enabling Australians to participate in many aspects of Australian life. However, these notions are not apparent in the content of the draft document, as evidenced by the mandated emphasis on Asia.	Teacher consultation meetings Stakeholder consultation meeting DET
• There was concern about the inconsistent use of the term 'create': in the rationale the term is used to refer to the language mode of visual/ multimodal language, while in the content descriptions it is used more generally to refer to creating different types of texts.	Stakeholder consultation meeting DET

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• The suggestion was made that the rationale would benefit from the inclusion of words such as 'flair' to underscore student enjoyment and ability in English.	Stakeholder consultation meeting
• Concern was expressed about what was perceived to be an undue emphasis on Asian perspectives, with participants preferring an inclusiveness of all cultures which more accurately reflect the diverse nature of Australian classrooms.	Teacher consultation meetings Stakeholder consultation meeting Online survey responses DET IEU

5.2   Aims

Overall Comments

Consultation responses generally agreed that an appropriate selection of aims has been identified in the draft document. Participants were concerned, however, that these aims are not adequately addressed in the overall structure and content of the draft document and could be strengthened by a more explicit emphasis on the learner and a more expansive and holistic conceptual view of the discipline of English.

Importantly, responses highlighted the need to incorporate a view of English that addresses its crucial role in developing the personal lives of learners through a sustained immersion in integrated language and literary experiences.

Responses also expressed the need to strengthen the draft document's focus on student engagement and enjoyment, the place of audience and purpose, and links to 'real life' experiences of students. An issue identified at all meetings was the need for clarification of the term 'Standard English'.

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• An appropriate number of aims has been selected and if strengthened, these aims could broadly reflect the purpose and role of teaching and learning in English.	Teacher meetings Stakeholder meetings
• There is a lack of clarity about the term 'Standard English'.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses CEC AHISA Teachers Federation
• There is not enough focus on enjoyment, wonderment, imagining.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses AHISA IEU
• There is a need to strengthen the role of audience and purpose and make more explicit the relevance of English and its links to real-life experiences of students.	Teacher meetings x 3 Stakeholder meeting IEU

5.3   Organisation of Content

Overall Comments

Concern was expressed at each of the teacher consultation meetings and in survey responses regarding the absence of content description organisers. This concern highlighted the need to include consistent content description subheadings with corresponding and consistent numbering to ensure alignment within and across strands, and across the years of schooling.

A strong view of meeting participants was that the omission of the viewing/representing language mode forfeited a potential organisational mechanism for content as well as a method for assessing student learning. This response was based on our understanding of the increasing centrality of digital and electronic texts in the lives of students for the purposes of both information-gathering and entertainment, and as a powerful means of engaging student interest and promoting learning.

Teachers also expressed the view that the organisation of content in the draft document positions the learner predominantly as a passive recipient and therefore does not incorporate due recognition of the learner as an active, developing producer of language. Comments also focused on the difficulty of aligning the content of the K–10 document with the unit structure of the senior courses.

The online format was considered to have possibilities for future integration of programs and resources, although the current format does not realise this potential.

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• Content descriptions do not match up or cohere across years (headings and numbering). For example, Literacy strand #2 heading variously appears as: – Kindergarten 'Purposes of Texts' – Year 1 'Reading strategies' – Year 3 'Comparing languages' – Year 4 'Oral communication skills' – Year 5 'Comprehension strategies' – Year 6 'Discussing and responding' Content description numbering shows Literature strand #3 heading variously as: – Year 7 'Discussing and responding' – Year 8 'Cultural contexts' – Year 9 'Recognising and responding' – Year 10 'Appreciating' Some content does not match the year of schooling: – Year 7 Literacy #16 'Multimodal' 'Build repertoire of ICT resources including use of design and editing	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET AHISA IEU Teachers Federation

Summary of feedback	Source/s
software and equipment for creating specific texts for a range of purposes and intended effects' (pp 61–62) whereas in Year 9, students are simply required to 'Use ICT and digital sources such as databases and search engines for researching information and refining ideas' (p 76).	
• The omission of the language mode 'viewing/representing' diminishes the opportunity to organise content around this mode, assess student performance in this dimension, engage students and incorporate digital and electronic texts in purposeful and relevant ways.	All teacher meetings (secondary) Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses CEC DET IEU
• The online format and use of filters has the potential to assist in the development of teaching/learning programs, particularly for K–6.	Teacher meetings

5.4   Content Descriptions

5.4.1   Overall Comments

At all teacher and stakeholder representative meetings, participants expressed strong concerns about the breadth, depth and sequencing of the content, concluding that the cognitive level of the draft document was not commensurate with NSW English syllabuses.

Equally as intense were responses that questioned the validity of structuring the curriculum content according to three strands. Participants were strongly of the view that the conceptualisation of English in this way could result in a regressive segmentation of the subject in the classroom, reducing the rich totality and integration of learning to a series of compartmentalised experiences. Participants were also of the view that the content descriptions resemble a checklist for teaching, rather than cohesive and meaningfully sequenced content for learning. Furthermore, a need for greater clarity about the distinction between the Language and Literacy strands and how they are integrated was identified.

Specific concern was raised about the lack of a unifying structure to synchronise the *receptive and productive* dimensions of the subject: there was a consistently expressed view that the draft document is too content-driven and does not satisfactorily account for the necessary integration of *process and content* in effective teaching, student engagement and achievement in English.

Participants at all meetings and in online survey responses argued that the content presented in the draft document is an uneven, reductionist and insufficient representation of essential content in the discipline of English. They questioned how the content in its present form could be enriched in order to develop meaningful, engaging and relevant teaching and learning programs.

Teachers were concerned about the difficulty in identifying 'access points' and 'pathways' through the content as a starting point for designing student-centred, integrated programs. In particular, responses identified a biased emphasis on the Literacy strand and a concomitant weakening of the study of literature in the Literature strand.

Teachers commented on the lack of explicit connection between the proposed content and students' 'real lives', especially in terms of the low-level ICT content and skill requirements expected in the draft document and in terms of the undervaluing of visual texts and oral communication.

The attempt to structure content descriptions according to numbers and subheadings raised questions and strong concerns: teachers were uncertain about the logic of the numbering of content descriptions, since the numbering does not appear to follow an identifiable sequence within strands or across years. Teachers questioned whether or not the numbering of content descriptions implied a hierarchical ordering of content which would in turn impact upon the capacity to program for recursive and integrated learning experiences for a diversity of students.

Similarly, teachers noted that the content description subheadings do not cohere in a sequenced manner, either within strands and Years or across Years. These content descriptions are unequally weighted and there is a predominance of lower-order content.

As a result, the content descriptions lack a clear continuum of learning and development.

All meetings identified the issue of mandatory content descriptions and optional content elaborations, pointing out that many content descriptions cannot stand alone without the content elaborations.

Teachers also contended that Aboriginal languages and Aboriginal English should be treated as separate topics and defined in the glossary. In addition, texts from a broad range of cultural traditions are not represented in the content of each strand and in particular the Literature strand. Furthermore, the focus on texts from the Asian region narrows rather than broadens the notion of cultural diversity. The valuing of oral traditions is restricted to Aboriginal culture.

All meetings raised concerns about the disjunction between content, [the absence of] assessment and achievement standards and the implications of this lack of clarity for programming, assessment and reporting.

All participants raised concerns about resourcing and professional development with regard to the proposed content in the draft document.

5.4.2 Primary teacher responses

While primary teachers at these meetings were generally positive about the substance of the overall content, they did not feel that the curriculum reflected the integrated nature of the primary classroom due to the structural framework based on the three strands. Primary teachers were generally confident that most of the essential content of the subject had been included, particularly with the specification of grammar in Years 3–6, although the sequencing of this content did not lend itself to developing a continuum of learning. Further, primary teachers expressed concern at the amount of content in the draft document, but welcomed the emphasis on literary texts in the primary years.

Concerns were raised concerning smaller primary schools with mixed-age classes with regard to programming across the strands and years, along with the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions. This concern was also expressed for programming for the differentiated primary classroom, with a number of participants expressing a view that the task of catering for the full range of students will be very difficult for primary teachers.

5.4.3 Secondary teacher responses

The overall response from secondary teachers was that the Years 7–10 content has a narrow focus with few examples of content that would engage, excite and meet the needs, interests and capacities of the full range of students, including gifted and talented students, students for whom English is not their first language, students with disabilities and students with learning difficulties.

Secondary teachers were concerned at the inadequate and at times confusing scope and sequencing of content in the draft document. They pointed to specific examples of content, such as 'The Impact of English in Asia' which was seen by some as unclear and by others as

'Anglo-centric'. All secondary teacher meetings voiced a strong opinion that the curriculum will require extensive revisions and support documents to facilitate implementation.

Importantly, secondary teachers concluded that the content in the draft document does not adequately build capacity for learners moving into Years 11–12. Teachers noted in particular that the content does not prepare students for the current NSW English Extension 1 and Extension 2 courses.

5.4.4 Grammar

The inclusion of grammar as explicit content provoked comment from secondary teachers in particular, with teachers expressing a view that the grammar included in the draft document is a confusing mixture. Different types of grammars, such as traditional grammar (for example: syntax, parts of speech) and functional grammar (use of terms such as 'nominalisation', 'cohesion') were cited. Other participants noted potential ramifications and costs for teacher professional development and the clear need to ensure the approach to the teaching of grammar is contextualised and based on a consistent model (eg traditional, functional, transformational).

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• The strands present a fragmented view of the subject, prevent integrated teaching and learning, are unbalanced in content, and do not place the learner at the centre of the curriculum.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET AHISA IEU
• Too much content was a concern for primary teachers who will be required to implement numerous syllabuses simultaneously.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses CEC AHISA
• Too much content and repetition of content undermines the potential for depth of learning experiences and authentic assessment of the full range of student achievements in English.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses CEC DET AHISA
• The organisation of the content does not enable the aims of the curriculum to be fulfilled.	All teacher meetings DET
• Higher-order thinking skills to organise, synthesise and reflect on learning, as well as plan for future learning, are not sufficiently represented.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• Much of the content appears to be arbitrarily sequenced with no clear progression of learning or a continuum of learning apparent. For example: – Year 2, Language #6 'Cohesion' is used to indicate 'Written language needs to be independent of the immediate setting' (p. 22) but its derivation 'cohesive' is used differently in Year 6, Language #11, as 'Cohesive links can be made in texts by omitting or replacing words' – Year 6 Literature uses the term 'Creating'. What is the difference between this use of the terms and 'Creating texts', used in the same year but in the Literacy strand? – What is 'boundary punctuation'? Year 1, Literacy, #8, p. 17) – 'Attitudinal vocabulary' is an arbitrary term (Year 1, Language #3, p. 15) – Teaching handwriting in Year 7 was considered by respondents to be an anomaly, particularly when it is addressed in Year 6 and is considered in the light of the 'laptops in schools' policy.	All teacher meetings (7–10) Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET AHISA IEU Teachers Federation
• The lack of guidance on text requirements for each Year of schooling poses practical, pedagogical and philosophical problems. A requirement that in Years 7–10, students study two prose fiction texts, a selection of poetry, two nonfiction texts, film, drama and media etc would ensure that students' basic entitlement to experience a wide range of rich textual experiences is not forfeited. Teachers lamented the absence of a mandatory requirement for the study of Shakespeare in Years 9–10 (especially in terms of building capacity for Years 11 and 12).	All teacher meetings (7–10) Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• Content is too narrow to engage the *full range of students* and does not lend itself to differentiation in teaching and learning. The comparatively brief number of content descriptions in the Literature strand and the under-representation of the language mode of speaking in Years 7–10 points to an imbalance in content, depth and focus. It should be noted that a significant number of meeting participants strongly argued that the Literature strand is the most conducive strand to engage and enhance the imaginative capacities of students. Many of the content descriptions in the Language strand appear dry and decontextualised from explicitly meaningful purpose.	All teacher meetings (7–10) Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET AHISA Teachers Federation
• The richness of the study of Literature is diminished in the draft document as evidenced by the brevity of this strand in comparison to the other strands in Kindergarten, Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET Teachers Federation
• The language mode of speaking is not sufficiently represented in Years 7–10. In Years 7 and 8, the scope is limited to planning, rehearsal, humour and anecdotes. In Year 9, no content description of 'Oral Communication Skills' is included, while Year 10 also limits the scope to protocols in formal presentation and discussion.	All teacher meetings
• Some content descriptions are unclear without the elaborations. For example: – Year 2 (Language #6) 'Written language needs to be independent of the immediate setting' – Year 5 (Language #14) 'Visual design involves informed choices in creating coherent and effective images' – Year 7 (Language #1) 'Impact of English as a language in Asia'.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET AHISA IEU

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• Concern was expressed that the content descriptions appear to have been designed as testing items for NAPLAN and will therefore be used by teachers as checklists in the classroom, driving the curriculum.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses CEC
• Support documents will be necessary to clarify content descriptions such as: – Year 7 Literature, #2 'Cultural Contexts', 'Recognise the richness of other cultures, making connections and looking for commonality between the cultural contexts in their world and the cultural contexts represented in literary texts' (p. 55) – Year 7 'English in Asia' – 'The Impact of English as a language in Asia'.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses CEC DET AHISA

5.4.5   Online survey data

• 42.4% of respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' that 'the content descriptions focus on the essential learning for the subject'.

• 57.6% of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that 'the content descriptions focus on the essential learning for the subject'.

• 63.3% of respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' that 'the sequence of content is logical and appropriate to the students' stage of development'.

• 36.7% of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that 'the sequence of content is logical and appropriate to the students' stage of development'.

• 56.2% of respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' that 'the descriptions of content are specific enough to support teaching'.

• 43.8% of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that 'the descriptions of content are specific enough to support teaching'.

5.5 Achievement Standards

5.5.1 Overall Comments

Concern was expressed at each of the teacher and stakeholder meetings that the achievement standards are not aligned sufficiently with the strands. Standards are organised in terms of language modes, while the strands are organised in terms of Language, Literature and Literacy.

The achievement standards are not inclusive of all students.

Furthermore, a number of participants were of the view that the standards were too broad and vague to be useful or meaningful tools for reporting achievement.

At all meetings, participants expressed concern at the absence of outcomes-type statements to shape teaching and assess student learning. In addition, a strong view from all meeting participants was that the draft curriculum was too content-driven, and did not place the student at the centre of the teaching and learning endeavour.

Similarly, teachers argued that when coupled with a reading of the content descriptions, the central aim of the draft K–10 English curriculum is reduced to the transmission of content, rather than aspiring for the holistic development of the student as an effective communicator, lifelong learner and active citizen.

Teachers also expressed concerns about the possible loss of Life Skills courses, and the need to more fully consider the needs of students with learning difficulties or disabilities, students for whom English is not their first language, and gifted and talented students.

The achievement standards, according to the teacher responses, appear to conflict with aspects of the content, since the content is not organised around what student 'learn to' and 'learn about'.

Of significant concern were issues of assessment, reporting and credentialling and the limited nature of the achievement standards in providing teachers with clear guidance in these domains of their work. On this point, the achievement standards do not seem to accommodate the range of pathways for students to progress and achieve success in schooling.

Participants pointed to the discrepancy between the principles espoused in the *Shape Paper* and the substance of the draft curriculum, particularly in the areas of assessment, achievement standards, equity, rigour and inclusiveness.

Summary of feedback	**Source/s**
• Achievement standards, if well written, can provide a useful tool for teachers in determining student progress and achievement.	Teacher meetings
• Concern was expressed about the 'C' level performance in the achievement standards and the ramifications for students who do not achieve this standard. This was considered to be a regressive and minimalist shift away from current best-practice.	All teacher meetings AHISA
• 'C' level as an indicator of 'satisfactory' reverts to a 'pass/fail' system. The 'C' level model appears to constitute a reductive approach in comparison to current practice and institutes a lowest-common-denominator paradigm of learning and achievement.	Stakeholder meeting All teacher meetings
• Participants and respondents raised the question of how reporting will be undertaken for parents, particularly with regard to the A–E model.	All teacher meetings DET AHISA IEU
• The achievement standards prevent a breadth and richness of assessment that is currently evident in NSW syllabuses.	Teacher meetings
• The language mode of speaking is under-represented in the strands but appears in the achievement standards, resulting in confusion about how to 'fit' the content with assessment and reporting.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting IEU Teachers Federation

5.5.2   Online survey data

• 55.6% of respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' that 'the standards for each year of schooling represent an appropriate level of achievement'.

• 44.4% of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that 'the standards for each year of schooling represent an appropriate level of achievement'.

• 59% of respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' that 'the standards form a sound basis for guiding assessment and reporting'.

• 41% of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that 'the standards form a sound basis for guiding assessment and reporting'.

5.6   Catering for the full range of students

Overall Comments

Participants at teacher and stakeholders representative meetings strongly argued that the English K–10 draft document does not address the needs of the full range of students: students with learning difficulties, students with learning disabilities, students for whom English is not their first language, and gifted and talented students.

Participants believed that because the draft document in not inclusive of the full range of students there are fundamental implications for the quality of teaching and learning, student equity, catering for diversity, assessment and reporting and the capacity to plan and implement a differentiated curriculum.

The rationale and aims of the draft document are not realised in the content, achievement standards and structure of the curriculum.

Participants also pointed to the problematic nature of a year-by-year structure, particularly in the context of equitably catering to the needs, interests and capacities of the full range of students.

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• The breadth and depth of the content does not address the needs of students with special education needs, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, students for whom English is not their first language, and gifted and talented students.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET AHISA IEU

5.7   General capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions

5.7.1   Overall Comments

Concern was expressed at each of the teacher and stakeholder meetings that due to the decision to identify 'Literacy' as a structural component (strand) and organiser in the K–10 English framework, a view may develop in schools and throughout the wider community that the responsibility for the literacy development of students rests solely with English teachers. This was considered to have the potential to undermine the 'literacy across the curriculum' policy that has been successful in NSW schools for many decades.

Teachers called for a more explicit integration of general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions within the curriculum itself to ensure the literacy demands of the curriculum are distributed across the subject areas.

There was concern expressed that the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions appear to be underdeveloped and presented in more of a draft form than the content descriptions. Feedback argued that the Indigenous history and culture dimension needs greater specificity in the content descriptions and elaborations and that the explicit reference to gender will strengthen the general capabilities (CEC). In addition, a wider focus than Asia was also recommended at the meetings.

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• Strengthening of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions will enable teachers to develop effective integrated programs.	Teacher meetings
• Concern was strong regarding the apparent institutionalising of a view that English teachers carry sole responsibility for literacy development.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses
• Teachers lamented the lack of interdisciplinary emphasis in the cross-curriculum dimensions, perceiving this absence as a lost opportunity to develop a 21st-century curriculum, particularly in terms of creativity, arts-informed inquiry modes and imaginative capacities.	Teacher meetings
• A wider focus than on Asia alone is required to develop authentic intercultural understanding.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses DET
• Teamwork and social competence should not be conflated since they are distinct capabilities.	Stakeholder meeting Online survey responses

5.7.2   Online survey data

- 59.6% of respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' that 'there is appropriate emphasis given to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions in the content descriptions'.

- 40.4% of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that 'there is appropriate emphasis given to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions in the content descriptions'.

- 64.1% of respondents 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed' that 'the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions are represented in authentic ways'.

- 35.0% of respondents 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that 'the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions are represented in authentic ways'.

5.8   Other comments

5.8.1   Issues relevant to the K–12 continuum and implementation timelines

At all meetings, participants voiced concerns about the difficulties in being asked to provide feedback on the suitability of the K–10 draft document without having seen the Years 11–12 draft document. Teachers and stakeholder representatives value the concept of a *K–12 continuum* and considered this should be a fundamental principle informing curriculum development.

At all meetings, participants were concerned about the appropriateness of the timelines for consultation and proposed implementation, contending that the curriculum development processes appear to be unnecessarily rushed and may therefore compromise the quality and integrity of the proposed curriculum.

5.8.2   Issues relevant to the accessibility, readability and format of the draft document

At all meetings, participant raised issues about the online format of the document. While teachers welcomed the idea of online materials, there were particular concerns that:

- the components of the curriculum were difficult to initially access within the current website menus
- the presentation and layout of the document was difficult to manage and navigate
- when printed in black and white, the document is difficult to read
- the online format does not lend itself to constructing a continuum of learning
- the draft document is difficult to print in its entirety, leading to questions about whether or not all teachers will be working from the same document
- practical and material conditions in the workplace may prevent all teachers from having equal access to the same documents and this may lead to inconsistencies in practice
- the diagrammatic representation depicting the relationship between strands, language modes and meaning was considered ambiguous
- some teachers may access and download only those Years/aspects of the curriculum that are relevant to them, therefore preventing a holistic engagement with the K–10 (and K–12) curriculum.

Teachers welcomed the potential for an appropriate filtering system to assist in planning and programming, but considered the current web design could be enhanced for ease of access and use.

The inability to fully download the Glossary was raised by teachers.

5.8.3 Other issues

At the time of the release of the K–10 draft document, media and others' misrepresentations of English education, English syllabuses and English teaching and learning caused concern for participants. Many teachers expressed the view that, contrary to media reports asserting, for example, that 'grammar will return to the English curriculum after being absent for 30 years', 'grammar is already in the NSW English syllabuses'.

While no participant in the meetings or in the online survey disputed the inclusion of grammar, the view that 'grammar shouldn't be an end in itself' permeated the meetings, as did the concern that the draft document should be grounded in evidence-based research and built on the successful professional capital of the English teaching profession.

Participants also questioned the validity of and rationale for mandating content such as 'English in Asia', yet not mandating what they consider to be at the core of English – texts.

Participants questioned the content with regard to ICT, with many teachers considering the need for a fuller integration of ICT at a higher skills and conceptual level coupled with a clear sequence of development of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• Some participants appreciated the potential inherent in the online presentation of the syllabus and the scope it gave for applying filters. Other participants argued for a printed document to ensure all teachers would be working from the same primary source (to avoid inconsistency and potential disadvantage to students).	Teacher meetings
• Many meeting participants indicated that the absence of a diagrammatic representation showing the content descriptions and their relationship and connections to the general capabilities and cross-curriculum dimensions impeded the overall coherence of the document.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting
• Many meeting participants indicated that the absence of headers or footers on each page signalling the year of schooling for that particular page contributed to the difficulty in navigating the document.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting
• K–12 continuum: respondents indicated the release of K–10 curriculum, without the senior years, makes it difficult to evaluate the suitability of the overall continuity and sequencing of the curriculum and the K–10 relationship with the senior years.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting Online survey

Summary of feedback	Source/s
• 'Grammar shouldn't be an end in itself.' Respondents indicated that grammar is more than a body of knowledge to be transmitted to students. Two examples cited were: 1. Year 5 Language #4 'Comment Adverbials' – 'Attitude towards a topic can be expressed through the use of adverbials'; and 2. Year 5 Language #9 'Adverbs' – 'details surrounding an activity can be specified by the use of adverbials'. Respondents asserted that knowledge of language should be utilised in purposeful contexts.	All teacher meetings Stakeholder meeting CEC
• A recommended reading list including reference to examples of Australian literature would be preferable to a list of mandated works.	NSW Secondary Principals' Council

6 Respondents

6.1 Responses from individuals and groups

Responses were received from the following individuals and groups:

- Catholic Education Commission of NSW
- Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- NSW Secondary Principals' Council
- NSW/ACT Independent Education Union
- The Scots School Bathurst and Lithgow
- St Andrew's Cathedral School
- NSW Teachers Federation

6.2 Stakeholder meeting at the Board of Studies on 8 March 2010

Name	Organisation
Jane Atalla	NSW/ACT Independent Education Union
Sue Bremner	Association of Independent Schools of NSW
Garry Brown	Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia
Karen Buck	Professional Teachers' Council
Joan Byrne	NSW/ACT Independent Education Union
Trevor Cairney	NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee
Robyn Christmas	NSW Parents Council
Andrea Connell	NSW Secondary Principals' Council
Kathy Coon	NSW Teachers Federation
Robyn Ewing	University of Sydney
Trish Gleeson	Catholic Education Commission
Geraldine Gray	Special Education Committee
Lisa Hanford	Independent Primary Schools Heads Association of Australia
Sarah Humphreys	Australian Association for Special Education NSW Chapter
Maureen Jarvis	NSW Secondary Principals' Council
Gary Johnson	NSW Secondary Principals' Council

Name	Organisation
Katherina Lathouras	Professional Teachers' Council; Association of Independent Schools of NSW
Linda Lorenza	Bell Shakespeare
Anne Lovatt	Catholic Education Commission
Jacqueline Manuel	University of Sydney
Julie McLeod	Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards
Vicki O'Rourke	NSW Department of Education and Training
Lisa Peterson	English Teachers' Association
Cate Pinnington	Special Education Committee
Meree Reynolds	Australian Association for Special Education NSW Chapter
Wayne Sawyer	University of Western Sydney
Robert Smith	Committee of Chairs of Academic Boards
Sue Stacey	Association of Independent Schools of NSW
Karen Stanton	NSW Teachers Federation
Vicki Steer	Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia
Rosemary Torbay	NSW Teachers Federation
John Turner	NSW Department of Education and Training
Michael Windred	NSW Primary Principals' Association

6.3   Teacher meetings

Venue	Date	K–6	Years 7–10	Unspecified	Total
Campbelltown Golf Club	9 March	2	6	41	**49**
UNE Tamworth	11 March	11	17		**28**
Trinity Catholic College Goulburn	15 March	4	12	7	**23**
Tara Anglican School	16 March	11	24	98	**133**
Years 7–10 video conference to Wollongong	18 March		10		**10**