Video transcript

English Version 2.0: Levels 7 to 10 revisions

Hi and welcome. My name is Annelise Balsamo, and I'm the English curriculum manager at the VCAA. Today, I'm introducing the Victorian curriculum F–10 English version 2.0, focusing specifically on levels 7 to 10.

This introduction will contextualise the curriculum and the revisions before going into detail about what has been revised in the content descriptions and the achievement standards.

But firstly, there are important elements of the revised curriculum where there have been no changes. The structure of the achievement standards organised by language modes has not been changed. The language in the strands for the content descriptions, language, literature and literacy has not been changed. And while there has been some refinement in the content descriptions and achievement standards for clarity and consistency, the overarching content and skills have not been significantly changed.

The English curriculum must balance the skills of literacy with the discipline, content and skills of subject English.

This dual function of the English curriculum creates a comprehensive curriculum that must be carefully unpacked in the development of teaching and learning programs for each level. It is worth indicating that the design of the curriculum document necessarily segments content and skills that in implementing in a classroom must come back together in cohesive and connected ways. This is essentially the difference between curriculum and teaching and learning plans and units of work and assessment tasks.

The curriculum lays bare the content and skills and the teaching and learning brings them together as students meaningfully engage with skills, content and texts.

The revision has created a curriculum that is more straightforward for teachers to implement in classrooms. It has addressed and simplified the complexity of the structure, creating clear progression of skills through every sub strand and creating clearer relationships across the content descriptions and between the content descriptions and the achievement standards.

Curriculum elements that have been revised include: revision of Rationale, Aims and Learning in English, in line with the Australian curriculum version 9.0,

revision of the content descriptions and sub strands and revision to the achievement standards.

The aims of the English curriculum remain centred on providing students with a curriculum that ensures they are literate across all the language modes, they understand and enjoy language in all its variations and engage with rich texts, including literature for ideas and information and of course, for pleasure.

The content descriptions are now organised by strand only and have been revised and refined. Some content has been merged for clarity and some content deleted due to duplication. The achievement standards remain organised by language modes. The introductory material includes graphic organises that illustrate the links between the content descriptions and the achievement standards in the absence of a common structure.

In addition, two sets of documents will be published alongside the curriculum.

One maps or the progression of skills across the levels and the other maps content descriptions directly to the relevant achievement standards.

The content descriptions are now organised by strand only. Language, literature and literacy. The revision to the structure of the content descriptions by strand only creates a greater fluidity between content descriptions and the language modes. For example, students understanding of punctuation enables them to make meaning of a text when reading, including reading aloud, and to create meaningful texts of their own.

All language modes—reading, speaking, and writing—are therefore involved when a student develops understanding of and skills to apply punctuation, and teachers are now invited to engage with punctuation in their classrooms in this way. Understanding punctuation is no longer fixed to the language mode of writing, as this is in the Victorian curriculum version 1. This revision highlights the richness of the curriculum, confirms the richness and depth of teaching and learning teachers and students are engaged within English classrooms, and provide scope for multiple exposure to content and skills in different contexts and across the language modes.

Victorian teachers are accustomed to the language modes as the organisational link between the content descriptions and the achievement standards, however, with the additional support documents, teachers will still be able to see these links clearly.

The revision of the curriculum and the removal of the language modes from the content descriptions now provides uninterrupted progression of skills across levels. We can see in these progression of skills under language for expressing and developing ideas in the language strand: Each row of content descriptions represents a key skill related to text. Each skill can be explored through different language modes rather than linked to one only.

This revision opens students to learning in different contexts.

The literacy strand has been reordered in the revised curriculum to sequence skills to reflect the way students engage with and develop literacy. The sequence begins with interacting with others in which the skills of oral communication and collaboration are highlighted, moves through skills of listening, speaking, reading, spelling and making meaning, word knowledge, deepens students engagement with text through comprehension analysis and interpretation: Text in context and analysing, interpreting and evaluating, and allows them to apply all these skills in the creation of their own texts.

The sub-strand of analysing, interpreting, and evaluating has been split in the revised curriculum to create a new sub strand of building fluency and making meaning. This is not additional content, but rather the highlighting of a progression of skills critical to the skills of reading and making meaning.

The phonic and word knowledge sub strand has been adopted from the Australian Curriculum version nine and further refined with the assistance of a noted Victorian literacy expert. This refinement ensures consistency and accuracy across this sub strand. In addition, the progression of skills integrates all the content descriptions rather than atomising them into individual cells to illuminate the connections of the key skills of reading and spelling.

So these revisions to the content descriptions have the following benefits:

Content descriptions can be taught across any and all of the language modes, it's a more flexible curriculum which will invite the transfer of skills and will confirm the depth and the breadth of what teachers are already doing in their classroom, there’s a clear continuum of learning mapped through uninterrupted progression of skills across level, there's also going to be a map of content descriptions into relevant achievement standards which will assist teachers with their teaching, learning and assessing and it will highlight the value of these multiple exposures of skills through different contexts.

The achievement standards remain organised by language modes, but they have been revised by identify key skill sets within each of the language modes. So each achievement standard begins with a sentence stem that remains stable across the levels so teachers can track the progression of skills. The information that follows each sentence stem is derived from the relevant content descriptions, but the detail is broad here rather than specific.

These matched sentence stems and consistent connection to progression of skills will provide further scope for planning, for differentiation across levels, both in teaching and learning and in assessment. A teacher is able to see clearly what comes prior to the level at which the teaching and learning is pitched and what will follow.

It is important to note that because the language modes have been retained as the organising structure of the achievement standards, reporting models will not need to be changed.

Documents that provide connections between the achievement standards and the content descriptions will be provided alongside the curriculum to map content descriptions to relevant achievement standards. In this example, the skills of interacting with others are mapped across the levels in the achievement standards and the content descriptions that a teacher would engage with to develop teaching and learning are listed below.

To further support teachers making meaningful connection between the student achievement and teaching and learning as set out in the revised curriculum. The learning in English section of the curriculum provides graphic organisers. Each achievement standard indicated by the stable sentence stem is connected to the key sub-strand from which teachers will draw content and skills for teaching and learning. It is important to note that sub-strands can connect to more than one achievement standard.

The revised curriculum maps directly into the VCE English Studies; VCE English and English as an additional language, VCE literature and VCE English language.

In this example, the key skills of selecting appropriate textual elements for purpose and audience when writing map directly to the new area of study in Unit one and Unit three of VCE English and EAL. We can see achievement standards that link to VCE literature, as well as VCE English and EAL, regarding analysis of representations from diverse historical, cultural and social contexts and the skills of interpretation.

Language that explores views and values as well as inclusive and exclusive language, finds connections in the VCE English Language study design.

With multiple models to map achievement standards to content descriptions, there will be less repetition in teaching and learning. The progression of skills are clearer through which to map, plan for, teach and assess this complex curriculum.

There is a clear continuum of learning across the levels. There's improved clarity and specificity to support all teachers in their assessment, including those out of field. And importantly, as the organisation of the achievement standards through language might has been retained, reporting models will not need to be reviewed.

Two progression of skills have been removed entirely from the curriculum.

The first is the progression of skills for developing word processing skills in the creating text sub strand. These skills are covered in the digital technologies curriculum and were removed due to duplication.

The second is the sub strand of language variation and change. This sub strand is represented both in the study of a wide range of texts, including spoken texts, and in the language for interacting with others sub-strand that explores the variety of language we use when in informal and formal interactions with others.