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## VELS forums

The VCAA has organised a range of forums for Semester 1 designed to gather feedback on the impact of VELS on student learning and to review the level of support provided to schools, teachers, pre-service teachers and university pre-service teacher educators.



David Howes, General Manager, Curriculum, VCAA, discussing the direction for curriculum in Victoria at the graduate teacher forum.

## VELS graduate teacher forum

Around 150 graduate teachers from across Victoria attended the VELS graduate teacher forum on 27 January. The main goal of the day was to provide advice to new teachers about how to use the standards to plan effective teaching, learning and assessment activities and to raise their awareness of the support materials provided by the VCAA and DEECD.

Teachers participated in a range of hands-on workshops which involved using the VELS resources available on the VCAA and DEECD websites. For example, in demonstrating one approach to moderating student work, groups of teachers discussed annotated student work samples from the VELS assessment maps. Their discussion focused on what features of the work demonstrated progression in both skills and understanding and how these were related to the standards being addressed by the task.

Workshops also covered designing effective learning programs based on the standards. In groups, teachers selected elements of standards and developed the outline of a unit of work that would allow students to demonstrate their achievement of those standards. They looked at both the Interdisciplinary Learning and the Physical, Personal and Social Learning strands to identify complementary elements of standards that could be taught alongside those of the host domain.

Response from those attending was overwhelmingly positive. Meeting and discussing their concerns with other graduates as well as the VCAA Curriculum Managers helped to alleviate some of the nervousness about starting in schools the following day.

## VELS pre-service teacher educator forum

The VCAA held a forum with pre-service teacher educators from Victorian universities at the end of February to discuss how the VELS is covered within teacher training programs. The collegiate nature of the day allowed for open and in-depth discussion about both the philosophy underlying the structure of the VELS and the direction for the curriculum in Victoria.

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# Update on the National Early Years Learning Framework

## What's happening in Victoria and throughout Australia?

The VCAA and Office for Children and Early Childhood Development are developing the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) for children from birth to eight years. This is designed to be consistent with the National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) currently being developed by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments, led by Victoria.

## Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF 0–5)

After extensive consultation a third version of the EYLF is now available for review online on the Department of Education, Employment and Work Place Relations (DEEWR) website.

The Australian Government has provided this online forum for early childhood educators and others with an interest in early childhood to access and trial the Framework. Practitioners are able to register, take part in online discussions and provide feedback directly to the Government on the framework and the supporting documents (Parent and Practitioner Handbooks) at: [www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx)

Currently the Framework is being trialled in 29 sites across Australia including four services in Victoria. Charles Sturt University are leading the trialling process and developing the support documents for the Framework. The Victorian locations include four services with representation from two stand alone kindergartens.

## Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF 0–8)

### Trialling – Round 1

An additional 13 sites have been identified in Victoria from the Practitioner Advisory Group to extend the trialling of the EYLF and supporting documentation from 16 March until 22 April 2009. The sites represent a variety of early childhood settings, including stand alone kindergartens and long day care centres, both community and privately managed, in metropolitan (seven Northern/Western, two Southern, one Eastern regions) and three rural locations (Hume, Loddon Mallee and Grampians regions).

The additional trials will be managed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). The trials will use a case study approach consistent with the methodology used by the Charles Sturt University Consortium in the national trial approach.

Feedback from the online discussion and the trialling process both nationally and in Victoria will inform the final draft of the Framework which will be released in July this year and implemented in 2010.

Work on the VEYLDF is progressing.

A cross department Core Writing Group has been established with representation from:

- Office for Early Childhood Development
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
- Office for Government School Education
- Office for Policy, Research and Innovation
- Additional advice on learning within the 5–8 years is being provided by a sub group from the Practitioner Advisory Group.

Targeted consultations on the draft paper are being planned for April 2009.

The VEYLDF will be developed by July 2009 with extended trialling (Round 2) from July to October 2009.

Implementation of the VEYLDF begins in January 2010.

**For further information, publications and links visit our website at:**

[www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/earlyyears/index.html](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/earlyyears/index.html)

## NAPLAN test sequence and timing

### Test sequence for Year 3

Test	Date 2009	Test session time	Introduction and practice questions	Test time allocation
Language Conventions	Tuesday 12 May	Before recess	10 minutes	40 minutes
Writing	Tuesday 12 May	Before lunch	15 minutes	40 minutes
Reading	Wednesday 13 May	Before recess	10 minutes	45 minutes
Numeracy	Thursday 14 May	Before recess	10 minutes	45 minutes

### Test sequence for Year 5

Test	Date 2009	Test session time	Introduction and practice questions	Test time allocation
Language Conventions	Tuesday 12 May	Before recess	10 minutes	40 minutes
Writing	Tuesday 12 May	Before lunch	15 minutes	40 minutes
Reading	Wednesday 13 May	Before recess	10 minutes	50 minutes
Numeracy	Thursday 14 May	Before recess	10 minutes	50 minutes

### Test sequence for Year 7

Test	Date 2009	Test session time	Introduction and practice questions	Test time allocation
Language Conventions	Tuesday 12 May	Before recess	10 minutes	45 minutes
Writing	Tuesday 12 May	Before lunch	15 minutes	40 minutes
Reading	Wednesday 13 May	Before recess	10 minutes	65 minutes
Numeracy (calculator)	Thursday 14 May	Before recess	10 minutes	40 minutes
Numeracy (non-calculator)	Thursday 14 May	Before lunch	10 minutes	40 minutes

### Test sequence for Year 9

Test	Date 2009	Test session time	Introduction and practice questions	Test time allocation
Language Conventions	Tuesday 12 May	Before recess	10 minutes	45 minutes
Writing	Tuesday 12 May	Before lunch	15 minutes	40 minutes
Reading	Wednesday 13 May	Before recess	10 minutes	65 minutes
Numeracy (calculator)	Thursday 14 May	Before recess	10 minutes	40 minutes
Numeracy (non-calculator)	Thursday 14 May	Before lunch	10 minutes	40 minutes

## VELS Mathematics assessment maps and NAPLAN

The VELS Mathematics assessment maps: [http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/maps/maps\\_domain/maths/index.html](http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/maps/maps_domain/maths/index.html) include samples across Levels 3 to 6 that are based on collections of related items from the Victorian AIM 2004 – 2007 tests covering the dimensions Number, Space, Measurement, Chance and Data and Structure.

The 2008 NAPLAN tests were conducted in May and released in December: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/naplan/testing/testpapers.html](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/naplan/testing/testpapers.html)

To support teachers in linking NAPLAN Numeracy test material to the VELS Mathematics assessment maps, the VCAA is progressively incorporating relevant items from the NAPLAN 2008 Numeracy tests into existing samples as applicable, with some revised samples for Level 5 available from early April 2009.

## NAPLAN frequently asked questions

### What is NAPLAN testing?

As with AIM tests, NAPLAN tests assess student knowledge and skill in numeracy, reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar. The results of the tests provide information for students, parents, teachers and principals about student achievement which can be used to inform teaching and learning programs. NAPLAN tests provide point-in-time information regarding student progress across Australia in literacy and numeracy and are intended to complement teacher judgment and the wide range of formal and informal testing programs that are already used in schools. As with all single assessments, NAPLAN test results are not intended to be used in isolation from other school-based assessment programs. Schools should ensure that, along with whole-school planning for delivery of the VELS curriculum, a variety of assessment tasks is used to assess student learning.

### Why did NAPLAN replace AIM tests?

Prior to 2008, States and Territories conducted their own literacy and numeracy tests, often at different times of the year. In Victoria, NAPLAN tests replaced the previous Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) English and Mathematics assessment program (and the earlier Learning Assessment Project) which had been in operation since 1996.

To establish national consistency in reporting student achievement in literacy and numeracy, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in July 2006 determined that national testing for all Australian Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students would commence in 2008.

A NAPLAN Project Reference Group (PRG), comprising senior Test Managers from each state and territory as well as representatives from the Catholic and independent school sectors, is responsible for the development of the NAPLAN tests.

### What is the VCAA's role in NAPLAN testing?

Unlike the AIM program, the VCAA is not directly responsible for the production of NAPLAN test questions. However, it is responsible for ensuring that all proposed test items are fair and reasonable for Victorian students and consistent with the VELS. The VCAA utilises its own curriculum and assessment expertise as well as experts from the DEECD, Catholic and Independent sectors when reviewing proposed NAPLAN test items. Through its active participation on the PRG, the VCAA ensures that the needs of Victorian students are thoroughly

considered throughout all stages of the NAPLAN testing program.

The VCAA is also responsible for the successful implementation of NAPLAN in all Victorian schools. It manages the printing, delivery, return, scanning, and marking of the tests, and the reporting of NAPLAN results to parents and schools. The VCAA also ensures that Victorian schools are kept up-to-date at all times with NAPLAN related information.

### What is the best way to prepare students for NAPLAN tests?

The best NAPLAN preparation that schools and teachers can provide students is to ensure that their teaching and learning programs are based on VELS.

Past NAPLAN test papers and NAPLAN sample questions can be downloaded from the VCAA and NAPLAN websites and used to ensure that students are familiar with the format and response types in the tests.

Schools and teachers should ensure that students, while taking the NAPLAN tests seriously, should not feel overwhelmed by the experience.


### What is the relationship between NAPLAN tests and the VELS?


NAPLAN test items are developed with reference to the national Statements of Learning, which were agreed to by Ministers of all Australian states and territories in August 2006. These statements reflect the core elements of the curriculum documents used in the different states and territories and, although the National Assessment Program scale is not explicitly linked to the curriculum continuum of any single jurisdiction, all NAPLAN test items are consistent with the learning progression described in the VELS.

When the final composition of the tests is established, the VCAA matches the test items to a VELS skill descriptor which is then published in the NAPLAN Reporting Guide. This Guide is provided to all schools and is also published on the VCAA website.

Following are some NAPLAN 2008 tests items with their matching VELS skill descriptor.

Sue has \$2.25. She needs 35 cents more to buy this drink.



Write your answer  
in the box.
 

How much does the drink cost?     \$

VELS Skill descriptor: Carry out simple money calculations

Which sentence has the correct punctuation?

- "Your dog, I said has wrecked my garden."
- "Your dog," I said, "has wrecked my garden."
- "Your dog," I said, "Has wrecked my garden."
- "Your dog," I said, "has wrecked my garden."

VELS Skill descriptor: Uses a capital letter, commas and speech marks

The VCAA Assessment maps for English and Mathematics include student work samples from AIM test items, with annotations informed by VELs. These provide an indication of how such items, and hence similar NAPLAN items, can be related to the VELs English and Mathematics standards.

### How can the NAPLAN Data Service be used to support teaching and learning programs in schools?

The VCAA provides a comprehensive NAPLAN Data Service for all Victorian schools that includes a range of online NAPLAN reports.

The NAPLAN Data Service provides an Estimated VELs equivalent score for some NAPLAN test outcomes. These scores are derived via a common person equating study, and work best for Reading and Numeracy where test similarities are greatest. The NAPLAN Data Service reports these Estimated VELs equivalent scores where applicable; allowing schools the choice of displaying some reports against either the National Achievement Program scale (National report) or the Estimated VELs equivalent.

Reports within the NAPLAN Data service provide results data at national, state, school, sub-group and student levels. These data provide schools with a powerful means of identifying and analysing particular areas of strength and weakness. Item level data is also included, enabling teachers to analyse student response patterns within a class or sub-group. This information can assist the development

of teaching programs and strategies. From 2009, trend data will be progressively included in the Data Service, further assisting schools in measuring growth and improvement.

To assist schools in interpreting their NAPLAN data, the VCAA provides a series of professional development workshops across the state, free-of-charge to all schools. These workshops are usually conducted from October to December.

Additional information about NAPLAN is included in the article 'Analysing NAPLAN Data' available at: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcaa/prep10/naplan/schools/analysingnaplandata.pdf](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vcaa/prep10/naplan/schools/analysingnaplandata.pdf)

### How can On Demand tests be used to support teaching and learning programs?

The On Demand system contains Adaptive and Linear Tests in English and Mathematics. Adaptive tests are available as 60-question general tests or as single-dimension 30-question tests in Reading, Writing Conventions, Spelling, Number, Space and Measurement, chance and data. Linear Progress Tests are available as single-dimension 30-question tests in Reading and Number.

Adaptive tests can be used to identify the general ability of students in relation to the VELs scale. They deliver sets of questions to students that vary according to student ability. Depending on the responses given in previous questions, the system presents progressively easier or more difficult questions to the student. These tests can be used for example as pre- and post-testing to measure student improvement following teaching interventions.

Progress Tests target a narrow VELs range, providing a VELs progression point approximation based on the student's raw score. Progress Test reports help identify areas of student need regarding expected curriculum outcomes for the VELs range.

## NAPLAN exemptions

In certain circumstances, students may be granted an exemption from the NAPLAN 2009 tests. The principal may only grant an exemption to:

- students with intellectual disabilities
- students who have been learning English for less than one year.

Students can be exempted from one or more of the NAPLAN 2009 tests.

Schools must ensure that a Record of Exemption form is completed for all students that have been exempted. The form must be signed by both the principal (or delegate) and the parent/carer of the student. Schools need to discuss exemptions with parents well in advance of the tests.

Completed forms are to be returned to the VCAA together with the test booklets at the end of the NAPLAN

testing period. Please note that unless a completed form is received, an exemption will not be officially recognised.

For detailed information regarding eligibility for an exemption from the NAPLAN 2009 tests please refer to page 8 of the *Principals' and NAPLAN Coordinators' Guide 2009*.

The Record of Exemption form can be found:

- on page 22 of the *Principals' and NAPLAN Coordinators' Guide 2009*
- on the VCAA website at: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/)

The form is also available in the following languages other than English:

Arabic, Bosnian, Cambodian, Chinese/Cantonese, Chinese/Mandarin, Hindi, Persian, Samoan, Serbian, Sinhalese, Somali, Spanish, Turkish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

## Delivery of the NAPLAN test packages

Delivery of the NAPLAN test packages to schools will begin on 30 April 2009. Authorised Staff should be briefed about the pending arrival of the test package and sign for them upon arrival. If test packages have not been received by 6 May, please contact the help desk immediately on freecall 1800 648 637 or email: [vcaa.naplan.help@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vcaa.naplan.help@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Test packages will include test booklets for all NAPLAN tests (including spares), Reading magazines and Writing stimulus materials, Test Administration Guides and pencils. The package will also include information pamphlets which can be distributed to parents prior to the commencement of the NAPLAN tests. Authorised staff should be briefed about the pending arrival of the test packages and sign for them upon delivery.

Schools should document the receipt, tracking, storage, distribution and collection of the test materials in the Test Materials Security Log that will accompany the test packages.

Secure materials will be packed separately in tamper evident bags within the test package. The Packing Slip should be used to check that the correct quantity of materials has been provided. The number of test booklets and other test materials included in the package is based on the pre-enrolment and census data provided for each year level. Extra copies of all materials are provided to allow for new enrolments. If insufficient quantities of materials are delivered, the principal/NAPLAN Coordinator should complete the form to request additional materials as soon as possible. The Request for Extra Materials form can be found in the Test Administration Guide and online at: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/)

In 2009, the VCAA will provide each school with a Sample Test Pack containing copies of the 2009 NAPLAN tests that can be retained at the school for the school's records and future reference. Please note that schools are to return all test booklets including booklets that are unused, except for the Sample Test Pack. The test booklets in the Sample Test Pack are NOT to be used by students on NAPLAN test days.

The VCAA is seeking feedback from schools on the administration of the NAPLAN 2009 program. For this purpose, enclosed with the test materials is the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) Feedback Survey. Your time in completing this survey would be appreciated and will assist the VCAA in improving processes for the future. Please return this survey with all other test materials at the end of the testing period.

## Security measures and audit visits to schools for NAPLAN testing

The 2009 NAPLAN tests are fast approaching. By now your school should have all of its preliminary security requirements in place. The Statement of Compliance has been completed indicating that your school now has a secure double locked location where it will store the NAPLAN Test Books until the testing cycle is over.

The online Registration of Authorised Staff is complete. The courier will ask for this person when the test packages arrive at your school. This will ensure an authorised staff member signs for the test materials; they also have the responsibility of locking them up in the double locked secure location.

Included in the Test Materials Package delivered in May your school will receive the NAPLAN 2009 Test Materials Security Log. This document consists of four parts and each needs to be completed to ensure security is maintained while the test books are stored at the school.

Part 1 is a Tracking Record Sheet that needs to be completed when the test materials are delivered to your school and picked up by the courier.

Part 2 is a Receipt and Distribution Record that is used to ensure your school has enough test books for each student and that the test books distributed to students during the test are returned and accounted for.

Part 3 is the NAPLAN Staff Access Register. This will record the names and responsibilities of each staff member who is authorised to access the secure locked area where the test materials are stored.

Part 4 is the Staff Access Log. This part must be completed by two people each time the test materials are accessed.

Throughout 2009 the VCAA will continue to conduct observation visits and security audits of randomly selected schools throughout Victoria. The main focus of these visits is to:

- Check security arrangements for the test materials at the school.
- Review relevant documentation.
- Provide advice on the conduct of the tests.

All schools participating in either the observation visits or the security audits will be notified prior to the visits taking place. Good Luck with the administration of your NAPLAN test.

## February 2008 to February 2009

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### Victorian Essential Learning Standards

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>

#### Sample units

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Harm minimisation – Health and Physical Education and Thinking Processes

##### Level 6

Ace – Health and Physical Education and Personal Learning

Road safety – Health and Physical Education and Communication

#### P–10 Curriculum and Standards

Thinking Processes – Glossary

### Domain Support

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### Cross-curriculum perspectives

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### Teaching and learning activity

Information and Communications Technology – Level 6  
Refining search techniques

### Parent information page updated

### Whole School Curriculum Planning updated

VCAA Curriculum Managers and university pre-service educators discussed how different domains are covered within pre-service teacher training courses. This was based around contemporary academic and research issues, what extent this is taken up in the VELs, and how they assist pre-service teachers to consider these issues as part of their training.

It is anticipated that future dialogue will lead to stronger links between the universities and the VCAA to ensure that pre-service teacher training courses best provide graduate teachers with the necessary skills required as they commence their teaching careers.

## VELS impact evaluation forums

Over 100 participants attended the first VELs impact and evaluation forum on 27 March. The purpose of these forums is to discuss the impact the introduction of the VELs has had on Victorian schools, identify any common issues schools have faced with implementing the VELs, and to discuss successful implementation strategies.

Participants included principals, curriculum coordinators and teachers from a cross section of Victorian schools along with representatives from the VCAA, DEECD, the Catholic Education Offices and the independent sector.

The first forum aimed to identify whether the introduction of the VELs has led to a change in school structures and modified teacher practice and how any impact on student learning outcomes could be assessed.

Discussions on the day covered the journeys each school had been through, highlighted the positives that implementing the VELs has had within these schools as well identifying hurdles that have impeded implementation. Feedback from participants revealed that many schools have developed a strong team approach to planning with a greater focus on moderation and discussion about pedagogy within their schools.

The second forum on 21 May will build on these initial discussions with the aim of developing advice for schools on a range of strategies that have been successful in implementing the VELs effectively.



Maria James, Curriculum Manager, VCAA, leading a discussion of pre-service teacher educators



Robyn Douglass from the VCAA VELs Unit discussing how to plan multi-domain activities with graduate teachers

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The VCAA Bulletin is also available online at: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

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