Victorian Curriculum F–10

Revised curriculum planning and reporting guidelines

December 2015

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority at http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/index.aspx

Contents

Victorian Curriculum F–10: Revised curriculum planning and reporting guidelines

Summary

These guidelines provide advice for Victorian schools on the development of whole-school curriculum plans and reporting student learning achievement based on the Victorian Curriculum F–10. Specific sectoral requirements related to curriculum provision and reporting are the responsibility of and published by the relevant sectoral authorities.

The school curriculum is a statement of the purpose of schooling. It defines what it is that all students have the opportunity to learn as a result of their schooling, set out as a series of learning progressions. Enabling students' progress along this learning continuum is the fundamental role of teachers and schools.

The content of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 includes both knowledge and skills. These are defined by learning areas and capabilities. This curriculum design assumes that knowledge and skills are transferrable across learning areas and capabilities. The capabilities enable students to develop particular values, dispositions and self-efficacy to become 'successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens'.[1]

There is a distinction between the curriculum and a school's teaching and learning program.

The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills that are required by all students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship.

As such, the curriculum is the foundation of schools' teaching and learning programs which are the school-based plans for delivering, expanding and extending this common set of knowledge and skills in ways that best utilise local resources, expertise and contexts. Schools have considerable flexibility in the design of their teaching and learning program. This enables schools to develop particular specialisations and areas of expertise and innovation while ensuring the curriculum is delivered.

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 has been designed on the assumption that it is a statement of the common set of learning, not the whole-school teaching and learning program for every school. This is to ensure there is time for schools to include in their teaching and learning program areas that reflect school or systemic priorities and for students to pursue specific interests and develop particular expertise.

These guidelines set out an approach to curriculum planning and provision structured by broad stages of schooling.

At the Foundation stage (Prep–Year 2), schools focus on five curriculum areas: English, Mathematics, The Arts, Health and Physical Education and Personal and Social Capability.

---

[1] Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2008, *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, Melbourne.

http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf (accessed 7 December 2015).

Schools then broaden their focus and ensure that in each two-year band of schooling at the Breadth stage (Years 3–8) student learning includes each of the curriculum areas, with a focus on English, Mathematics and Science.

In the Pathways stage (Years 9–10), schools ensure students both receive a broad education and begin to plan their senior secondary program of study, which they can commence in Year 10.

There is not a centrally prescribed single template for reporting student achievement to parents.

Schools will be expected to report student achievement to parents every year in English, Mathematics and Science (from Year 3 onwards) against the achievement standards set out in the Victorian Curriculum F–10, including an indication of student progress against the age-related expected level of achievement. For the other learning areas and capabilities, schools should report against the Victorian Curriculum F–10 achievement standards and in relation to what has been taught in a particular semester or year and to individual learning targets.

In reporting student learning progress to parents, teachers and schools should clearly identify the areas of strength and areas for improvement for each individual student. Reports to parents should not rely on generic pre-populated comments often available in commercial reporting software packages.

The school's teaching and learning program reflects the vision, direction and purpose of each individual school as determined by the engagement of teachers, students, parents and the local community. For this reason, schools should publish their own teaching and learning program as part of the information they provide to current and prospective students and parents and to the local community.

Key points

The following are the key points set out in these guidelines.

(a) Defined curriculum content is the basis for student learning.

(b) Curriculum planning will be based on two-year bands of schooling rather than each year level.

(c) Schools should develop and publish a whole-school curriculum plan that documents their teaching and learning program.

(d) Schools must report student learning against the achievement standards in the curriculum.

(e) Schools will be able to report student learning to students and parents in formats that best suit local school communities rather than through a single centrally prescribed format.

Introduction

1. The curriculum is a statement of the purpose of schooling.

2. The curriculum defines what it is that all students have the opportunity to learn as a result of their schooling. According to Marzano, the provision of a 'guaranteed and viable curriculum' is one of the factors that has most impact on student learning[2].

3. A high-quality curriculum is not a collection of disconnected items of knowledge but rather a set of progressions that define increasingly complex knowledge, skills and concepts grouped and defined by learning areas and capabilities.

4. This identification of the purpose of schooling through the definition of what is to be taught and learnt provides a necessary framework for decisions about the structure of the teaching and learning program at each level of whole school, curriculum area, individual year level and units of work.

5. It unclutters the curriculum by making clear what is most important for all students to learn.

6. It enables teachers to identify the point of learning progression of each individual student and to plan for the appropriate next steps in learning.

7. Subsequent decisions about how this progress of student learning is reported to students themselves, to parents and carers, and to sectoral authorities are critical. This reporting provides the means to identify where and what kinds of interventions are necessary to support student learning.

8. Engaging in this learning process is the responsibility of students.

9. Enabling students' learning progress is the role of teachers and schools. It is enabled through effective pedagogy, assessment and reporting, as illustrated here.
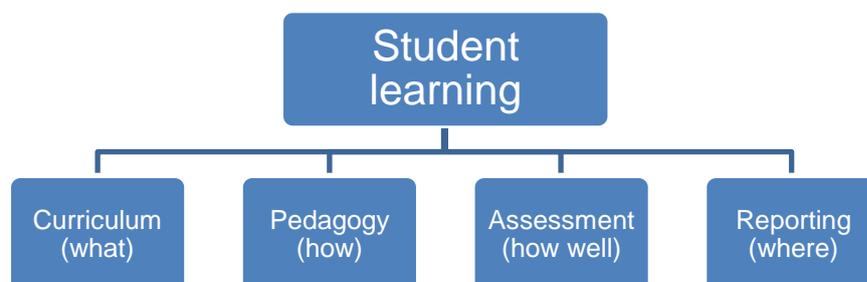
10. In this representation, student learning is produced, shaped and affected by four connected components. Each of these components plays a separate and distinct role in the process of student learning and each is interconnected with all of the others.

11. The first is the **curriculum** that defines *what* it is that students should learn, and the associated progression or continuum of learning.

12. The second is **pedagogy** that describes *how* students will be taught and supported to learn.

---

[2] Marzano, R 2003, *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA.

13. The third is **assessment** that identifies *how well* a student has (or has not) learnt specified content.

14. The fourth is **reporting** that explains to the student and the teacher *where* a student is on a learning continuum at the end of a specified period of schooling, and where this places them in relation to their own learning goals and/or the learning of their peers.

15. These guidelines focus on the first and fourth components, curriculum and reporting.

16. The school curriculum is the subject of considerable public debate.

17. Some argue that any attempt to mandate content in the contemporary school curriculum is immediately out-of-date. It is argued that the definition of curriculum content (declarative knowledge) is a dated concept, rendered obsolete by the now-ubiquitous access provided by digital technologies to information. The only curriculum appropriate for such an age, it is argued, is one based on defining the skills of information gathering, synthesising and evaluating; problem-solving; team work; creativity and innovation (procedural knowledge).

18. Others propose that the content of the curriculum should be self-directed by the learner, a view popularised through the work of Professor Sugata Mitra and Sergio Juárez Correa.

19. This renewed focus on the 'what' of learning is welcome. The attention of most education reform is on the 'how' of learning, finding new ways to engage students in the process of learning. Of course this is of critical importance: without an effective 'how' of learning, the 'what' of learning becomes irrelevant. Without, however, a clear and considered specification of what students should learn, the how is a process without purpose.

20. These guidelines are based on two clear propositions:

    - The first is that it is essential for educators to define a minimum and limited set of declarative and procedural knowledge and skills that all students should acquire, irrespective of their personal inclinations. This is not to limit what students can learn. Rather, it is to ensure that every young person is able to develop the foundational knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable future self-directed learning, social development and active and engaged citizenship.

    - The second is that the rise of digital technologies has generated a higher level of demand for the capacities to access, analyse and synthesise information, that is, to transform information into knowledge. This in turn means the definition of the knowledge and skills essential to develop these capacities has become more not less important.

21. These guidelines are based on the proposition that the content or the *what* of the curriculum, both procedural and declarative knowledge, can and needs to be explicitly defined rather than left as an implicit component of the learning experience.

22. There is a further argument that the *what* of learning cannot be separated from the *how*; that the process of learning itself constitutes procedural knowledge.

23. The argument is often made that the curriculum is over-crowded, with too much content included. The basis of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 is that it provides a curriculum design that identifies the knowledge and skills that are important for

effective citizenship and social engagement. It provides a map of progression of learning that guides teachers in their engagement of students in deep learning in each curriculum area and so privileges the importance of depth of learning rather than superficial exposure to an ever-expanding breadth of content.

24. Reaching a determination about what it is that students should learn is no simple process, as the views cited earlier illustrate. It is a challenge that has been met in different ways at different times.

Section 1: Curriculum Design

Context

A brief history of curriculum development in Victoria

1. There are widely divergent views on both the nature and content of the school curriculum.

2. In 1872, the *Education Act* set out a list of subjects to be taught 'which included reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, drill and (where practicable) gymnastics, and sewing and needlework in addition for girls'.[3]

3. The curriculum remained centralised through the first half of the twentieth century, in part through the long-standing prescription of the eight Victorian School Readers.

4. The 1970s saw a major shift away from a centralised, prescribed curriculum to a strong focus on school-based curriculum development. This emphasis on school-based curriculum development was maintained and reaffirmed in the 1988 Victorian Curriculum and Organisation Framework, although this document also emphasised the importance of what it termed a 'balanced curriculum' that gave attention to seven curriculum areas:

   - Language and mathematics
   - The world and its people
   - Participation in the Australian environment
   - Literature and the arts
   - Personal fulfilment
   - Technical competence, and
   - Science, technology and the environment.

5. These Frameworks documents were the precursor to a new, mandated primary and lower-middle secondary school curriculum, the Victorian Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF), which was introduced in 1995 and drew on the work first undertaken to develop an embryonic national curriculum, the National Statements and Profiles.

6. The CSF was implemented from 1995 to 2000, when it was reviewed and republished as CSFII. The revisions attempted mainly to address the criticisms that had emerged in the implementation of the original CSF that the documents did not have a sufficient degree of specificity to enable accurate judgments of student achievement to be made.

7. In 2003, work began on the development of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), which would 'identify and develop a broad framework of "essential learnings" for all Victorian students'.[4]

---

[3] Sweetman, E, Long CR, Smyth, J 1922, *A History of State Education in Victoria*, Education Department of Victoria, Victoria.

[4] Department of Education and Training 2003, *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*, Victoria.

8. This was largely in response to a view that in CSFII the curriculum had become too atomised and too detailed, which in turn had resulted in a loss of the key ideas in each subject. CSFII was also criticised on the grounds that it gave insufficient attention to those areas of generic skills, interdisciplinary learning and personal and social capabilities, that sat outside the more traditional subject disciplines but were regarded as the new 'learnings' essential for the twenty-first century.

9. The VELS was published in 2005 and was based on the premise that there are three components of any curriculum that are necessary to enable students to meet the demands of the contemporary, globalised world:

   - the processes of physical, personal and social development and growth

   - the branches of learning reflected in the traditional disciplines, and

   - the interdisciplinary capacities needed for effective functioning within and beyond school.

10. It was an important new framework that not only mapped out student progress in interdisciplinary learning and personal and social capacities as well as discipline-based learning areas, but also gave them equal status in the curriculum as discrete areas of learning.

11. Shortly after the publication of the VELS, work re-commenced at the national level on a national curriculum. A new National Curriculum Board was established in 2008, which expanded to become the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in 2009.

12. The third iteration of national goals of schooling were agreed to and set out in the 2008 Melbourne Declaration.[5] In a statement that clearly reflected the influence of the VELS, the Melbourne Declaration set out the framework for a new national curriculum that would include:

   - a solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built

   - deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications, and

   - general capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.

13. The Melbourne Declaration set out eight learning areas as the basis for the curriculum:

   - English

   - Mathematics

   - Sciences (including physics, chemistry, biology)

---

[5] Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2008, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, Melbourne.

http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Au stralians.pdf (accessed 7 December 2015).

- Humanities and social sciences (including history, geography, economics, business, civics and citizenship)

- The arts (performing and visual)

- Languages (especially Asian languages)

- Health and physical education

- Information and Communication Technology and design and technology.

14. It also stated that 'a focus on environmental sustainability will be integrated across the curriculum and all students will have the opportunity to access Indigenous content where relevant', and that one of the goals of schooling would be to enable students to 'communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia'.

15. This was the blueprint for the Australian Curriculum, which has since been developed using the following design structure.

Learning areas	General capabilities	Cross-curriculum priorities
English Mathematics Science Humanities and Social Sciences (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business) The Arts (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts) Technologies (Design and Technologies, Digital Technologies) Health and Physical Education Languages	Literacy Numeracy Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Critical and Creative Thinking Personal and Social Capability Ethical Understanding Intercultural Understanding	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia Sustainability

Implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Victoria

16. Responsibility for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum remains with each of the States and Territories.

17. There are five key factors that have shaped the approach taken to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Victoria.

18. The first is that the development of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 should be informed but not limited by the development of the Australian Curriculum. Where necessary, changes have been made to the design and content of the curriculum to reflect Victorian standards, priorities and reforms.

19. The second is the Victorian government's view that schools should retain their primary responsibility for the development and provision of teaching and learning programs, not through a rules-based approach but by building on Victoria's history of school-based curriculum development.

20. The third is that the relatively decentralised approach taken to curriculum provision in Victoria has not always been accompanied by a sufficient level of advice and support to schools to enable the development of system-wide high-quality teaching and learning programs. This has led to wide differences in the quality of teaching and learning programs.

21. The fourth is that the implementation of the new curriculum should drive a new focus on the establishment of higher expectations of student achievement for every student.

22. The fifth is that the curriculum should, as far as possible, enable the learning of every student. To this end, the Victorian Curriculum F–10 includes Levels A to D for students with disabilities.

23. These factors have together led to the development of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 as a single coherent curriculum for Prep to Year 10 that incorporates the Australian Curriculum and ensures the maintenance and strengthening of particular Victorian priorities and approaches to teaching and learning that can be summarised as follows:

   (i) The learning areas or disciplines are the cornerstone of the curriculum.

   (ii) The knowledge and skills now categorised as capabilities require explicit attention in the development of teaching and learning programs within the curriculum.

   (iii) The curriculum is a developmental learning continuum rather than a series of distinct learning blocks.

   (iv) The content of the curriculum (the 'what') is mandated through the learning areas and the capabilities, but the provision of the curriculum (the 'how') is a matter for local schools and their communities.

Learning-area based disciplines

24. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 maintains the central place of disciplines in the curriculum through the learning area structure. Disciplines have been defined as:

   a field of inquiry about some aspect of the world – the physical world, the flow of events over time, numeric structures, and so on. A discipline of knowledge offers a lens through which to view the world – a specialized set of techniques or processes by which to interpret or explain various phenomena. Beyond that, a discipline also provides a sense of community for people with a shared special interest as they seek to stretch the limits of what is already known in that field.[6]

25. Ivor Goodson famously argued in the early 1980s that school 'subjects' were the product not of a consensus about what was most important to learn but a result of 'competing efforts to accumulate status, resources and territory'.[7] More contemporary arguments are that a discipline-based approach to curriculum design is dated and therefore mistaken, the product of an understanding of schooling based on an earlier age now made redundant by Google. Why, it is argued, should required learning be

---

[6] Beane, JA 1995, 'Curriculum Integration and the Disciplines of Knowledge', *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 76, No. 8.

[7] Goodson, I 1987, *School Subjects and Curriculum Change*, Routledge, 3rd Edn. Foreword by McLaren, P.

specified and mandated when (a) information multiplies so rapidly, (b) the knowledge relevant for the future has not yet been created and (c) information is readily available through a click on a search icon in ways inconceivable just two decades ago?

26. The structure of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 is a clear and deliberate reaffirmation of the importance of a discipline-based approach to learning, where disciplines are regarded as both enduring and dynamic.

27. The enduring nature of the learning areas and their disciplines rests in the different epistemologies or ways of understanding and associated skills they provide for learners. That is, each of the learning areas provides and is defined by a unique way of seeing, understanding and engaging with the world. The dynamic nature is in the constantly developing content with which students engage in and through the learning areas.

28. The reaffirmation of the importance of the disciplines is evident in the following observations from arguably the most significant educational sociologist of the past 50 years, Michael Young:

> *Subjects and disciplines have a long history, taking us back 150 years and earlier ... However, this … is as much an argument for rather than against a subject-based curriculum. The relative stability of subjects and their boundaries is partly why parents trust schools and partly why employers … prefer subject-based … qualifications when recruiting new staff. It is also why new fields of knowledge take on many of the features of subjects and their links with disciplines if they are successful in becoming part of the school curriculum.[8]*

29. The learning areas are used as the basis of the current regulatory curriculum requirements for all registered schools as set by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA):

> *A framework must be in place for the organisation, implementation and review of a school's curriculum and teaching practices and to ensure that, taken as a whole, the learning areas are substantially addressed.*

> *The eight learning areas are:*

> - *English*
> - *Mathematics*
> - *Sciences (including physics, chemistry and biology)*
> - *Humanities and social sciences (including history, geography, economics and business, civics and citizenship)*
> - *The Arts*
> - *Languages*
> - *Health and physical education*

---

[8] Young, M 2012, *The Curriculum - 'An entitlement to powerful knowledge': A response to John White,* New Visions for Education Group.

http://www.newvisionsforeducation.org.uk/2012/05/03/the-curriculum-%E2%80%98an-entitlement-to-powerful-knowledge%E2%80%99-a-response-to-john-white/ (accessed on 7 December 2015).

- *Technologies (including digital technologies and design and technologies)[9]*

30. This does not mean that schools are required to structure their teaching and learning programs and timetables based on 'subjects'. In the Foundation stage of schooling (Prep–Year 2), for example, schools may choose to structure teaching and learning programs around the five outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF):

   - Children have a strong sense of identity

   - Children are connected with and contribute to their world

   - Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

   - Children are confident and involved learners

   - Children are effective communicators[10].

   This can support and facilitate the joint development of learning programs between early childhood providers and schools and can inform the development of effective transition statements to support children's learning as they move from early childhood to school settings.

31. In the Breadth Stage of schooling (Years 3–8) schools may choose to adopt a vertical structure, to include an elective structure or to design their curriculum around an integrated inquiry-based approach to learning.

32. Neither does it mean that all students must undertake learning to the same level of complexity or demand in each of the learning areas (this is discussed further in the section on Reporting, paragraphs 15–19).

33. It does, however, mean that all students should have the opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills defined by each learning area. This is particularly important when the curriculum is structured using an inquiry-based approach. This approach can risk an exclusive focus on constructing engaging learning contexts at the expense of clearly defining learning objectives drawn from the learning area.

34. Further, learning opportunities can be provided by the school directly or in partnership with an external provider or providers, especially where expertise is required that may not be directly available through the school in areas such as Languages, The Arts and Technologies. This may mean the teaching and learning program is delivered out of normal school hours, such as through Saturday morning community language schools. Schools are encouraged to fully utilise such partnerships and to develop them as an integral part of the school's teaching and learning program, consistent with current teaching workforce regulations.

---

[9] Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority 2014, Guide to the Minimum Standards and Other Requirements for School Registration, Melbourne.

http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/schoolguide.doc (accessed 7 December 2015).

[10] Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2011, Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, Melbourne.

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf (accessed on 7 December 2015).

35. Whatever the mode of delivery, schools should be able to demonstrate how the teaching and learning program includes the content of the learning area.

36. This means that when an elective structure is in place, schools should be able to demonstrate how the school timetable ensures every student is able to access the full range of the curriculum and not completely 'self-select' out of particular learning areas.

Conceptualisation of capabilities

37. A key innovation of the VELS valued by Victorian educators is the representation of the kinds of learning now characterised under the category of 'capabilities' as discrete and identifiable knowledge and skills that can be taught, learnt and assessed. Both the Australian Curriculum and the new Victorian Curriculum F–10 build on and further develop this conceptualisation.

38. This conceptual framework is reflected in the design of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 by the positioning of the capabilities as areas of learning in their own right rather than simply indicating how they might be drawn out in different learning areas.

39. There is a view that acknowledges the development of these capabilities as an important role of schooling, but regards them either as forms of pedagogy or as attributes that students acquire through a process of osmosis. That is, if the right conditions of learning are put in place and the right learning experiences provided, students will naturally pick up, acquire and develop these attributes. And of course for many students this is the case.

40. But this same argument was used for many years in relation to the acquisition of literacy skills, assuming that if the right learning conditions were put in place, all children would learn to read. That view has been almost universally rejected in favour of one that recognises the importance of explicit instruction within a context of rich, meaningful learning conditions.

41. The Victorian position on the capabilities is precisely the same and is supported by a well-established body of research: the capabilities are a set of discrete knowledge and skills, not a statement of pedagogies, and students benefit from explicit instruction in these areas.

42. For this reason, the symbols used on the Australian Curriculum website to indicate opportunities in the curriculum for students to acquire the general capabilities have not been included in the Victorian Curriculum F–10. Rather, the capabilities are represented in the curriculum as distinct areas of learning for the purposes of curriculum planning, assessment and the reporting of student achievement.

43. This is not to propose that a capability such as Critical and Creative Thinking can or should be assessed in a form separated from the discipline-based learning area in which students are engaged. Rather, it is to argue that the metacognitive capacities that students develop and demonstrate in different, specific, discipline-based contexts can be assessed and an on-balance judgment made about the level of achievement when measured against the Critical and Creative Thinking continuum.

44. The proposal that schools should assess and report on the areas of learning defined by the capabilities, and previously by the Interdisciplinary and Personal, Physical and Social Learning strands of the VELS, is sometimes challenged. However, as Masters notes:

[There are] concerns about the extent to which the current school curricula are developing the knowledge and skills necessary for work and life in the 21st century. Employers in particular, have expressed concerns about how well prepared school leavers are for today's workplaces and have emphasised the need for employees who can work collaboratively in teams, use technology effectively and create new solutions to problems. These concerns have led to new levels of effort to identify, develop and assess a broader range of skills and attributes within the school curriculum … : ways of thinking (including creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and learning); ways of working (including communication and collaboration): tools for working (including information and communications technology and information literacy); and skills for living in the world (including citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility). Inherent in initiatives of this kind is the view that assessment has a pivotal role to play in focussing the attention of schools and school systems on the development of broader life skills and attributes.[11]

45. It may be argued that this position sits in opposition to that advocated by Michael Young, cited earlier at paragraph 28. This, however, is the precise strength of the structure of the Victorian Curriculum F–10: it provides a conceptual model that enables the curriculum to include both learning areas and capabilities rather than setting up a false binary between these two categories of knowledge and skills.

46. There are at present seven general capabilities listed as part of the Australian Curriculum:

   - Literacy

   - Numeracy

   - Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability

   - Critical and Creative Thinking

   - Personal and Social Capability

   - Ethical Understanding

   - Intercultural Understanding.

47. The conceptual position that informs the structure of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 is that four of these capabilities – Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical, Intercultural, and Personal and Social Capability – are constituted by a discrete set of knowledge and skills that are not fully incorporated in any one of the learning areas.

48. Literacy, Numeracy and ICT skills and knowledge apply across the curriculum but are not defined only within English, Mathematics and Digital Technologies.

49. Given the inclusion of a Literacy stand in English, the proficiencies of *Understanding*, *Fluency*, *Problem Solving*, and *Reasoning* in Mathematics, and the now embedded nature of ICT across all learning areas, it is unnecessary to define literacy, numeracy and ICT as distinct curriculum areas.

---

[11] Masters, GN 2013, 'Reforming Educational Assessment: Imperatives, principles and challenges', Australian Education Review, Australian Council for Educational Research, pp. 4-5 http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=aer (accessed on 7 December 2015).

50. There is considerable research that sets out the importance of the teaching of literacy and numeracy and ICT in the context of the different learning areas. It is therefore both appropriate and necessary that the literacy, numeracy and ICT requirements for each discipline be embedded in the curriculum of each discipline.

51. The Literacy, Numeracy and ICT general capabilities are therefore treated within the Victorian Curriculum F–10 construct as teaching and learning resources but not as curriculum areas against which teachers should report student progress. Student progress in these areas will be reported against the achievement standards of the English and Mathematics and student learning in all curriculum areas will require utilisation of ICT.

Curriculum as a developmental continuum

52. A key difference between the Victorian Curriculum F–10 and the Australian Curriculum is that where the Australian Curriculum is organised by Year Levels, the Victorian Curriculum F–10 design is structured by levels of learning.

53. This decision was not made from a pedantic desire for a point of difference with the Australian Curriculum. Rather, it reflects and is deliberately designed to reinforce and maintain a fundamental approach to both curriculum design and pedagogy that has characterised all curriculum documents in Victoria going back to the Frameworks documents through the CSF, CSF II and the VELS, and is the basis of the NAPLAN assessment and reporting program. That is, the curriculum should be regarded as a developmental continuum or progression of learning.

54. This is particularly true in the learning areas of English and Mathematics and, increasingly, Science, where there is a well-established evidence base about how learning typically progresses.

55. How the curriculum is conceptualised effects what happens in the classroom, especially when consideration is given to the consistent empirical evidence that shows that in any mixed-ability class there is typically a five-year range of achievement apparent. In an Australian Council for Educational Research study, Meiers reported that 'the top 10% of students in … each year [a]re working at

approximately five year levels ahead of the bottom 10%'.[12] This was more recently confirmed by a Grattan Institute report which asserted that 'at any given year level there is a five to six year difference between the most advanced and the least advanced ten per cent of students'.[13]

56. This means that, for example, not all the students in a typical Grade 5 class will be studying the Level 5 curriculum. Some will still be acquiring the curriculum knowledge and skills at levels below that, some will be acquiring the knowledge and skills defined for that level, and some will be acquiring a level of knowledge and skills well beyond that nominally defined for Grade 5.

57. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 is therefore not set out according to nominal year levels that equate to particular school grades but to developmental levels that point to current levels of achievement and allow for appropriate planning for expected levels of achievement. In this, the Victorian Curriculum F–10 design facilitates the increased focus in Victorian schools on the concept of the development of personalised learning programs for all students, where the curriculum delivery is planned in relation to the actual learning level of each student rather than their assumed level of learning. This is consistent with Vygotsky's now widely-cited concept of the 'zone of proximal development'[14], recently re-expressed by Masters:

> *It is well understood at the level of the classroom that successful learning is more likely when individual learners are given learning opportunities appropriate to their current levels of achievement and learning needs* (2013, p. 2).

58. The importance of this approach has recently been reiterated in the Grattan Institute report, *Targeted Teaching*:

> *Working together, teachers should assess what each student knows now, target their teaching to what they are ready to learn next, and track each student's progress over time.* [15]

59. This does not mean, however, that the learning expectations of any students should be lowered.

60. In relation to the foundational curriculum areas of English, Mathematics and Science, there is clear evidence about the level of learning achievement that is necessary for students to continue their learning progress. These are set out in the achievement standards for these learning areas. It should be the goal of every school to ensure that the progress of every student is monitored against these achievement standards in order to ensure that every student can continue their learning progression.

---

[12] Meiers M 2004, 'Growth in Literacy and Numeracy: A Longitudinal Study on the ACER Longitudinal Literacy and Numeracy Study (LLANS)', *Paper presented to the American Educational Research Association 2004 Annual Meeting*, San Diego, April 12-16.

[13] Goss P, Hunter J, Romanes D & Parsonage H 2015, *Targeted Teaching: How better use of data can improve student learning*, Grattan Institute.

[14] Vygotsky LS 1978, *Mind in Society*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.

[15] Goss P et al., *op. cit.*

Cross-curriculum priorities

61. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 design does not represent the Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability) as distinct or separate areas of learning. This should not be interpreted as meaning they are regarded as unimportant. The reverse is the case.

62. The knowledge and skills that students should be expected to develop about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders histories and cultures has a particular and enduring importance.

63. The identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a priority does not represent the addition of further content into the curriculum. Rather, it provides a design for thematic learning that enables students to make connections about what they learn in separate learning areas of the curriculum and to construct a coherent understanding of this fundamental component of Australian history and culture.

64. Student learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures will be supported through the development of support materials in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc (VAEAI) and through the development of the VAEAI Centres for Cultural Learning.

65. Similarly, student learning about Asia and Australia's place in Asia, and Sustainability, is embedded in the curriculum of the learning areas. For example, in relation to Sustainability, learning about the interpretation of statistical data is in Mathematics, learning about ecosystems is in Science, learning about analysis of argument is in English and History, learning about effective responses to the environment is in The Arts, learning about the design of innovative solutions is in Technologies, and so on. Support materials to assist teachers and students in making these connections across the curriculum will be developed.

*　　*　　*

66. The Victorian Curriculum F–10 design provides a structure for a curriculum that includes both discipline-based learning areas and capabilities.

67. There remains the question about the extent to which the same teaching and learning program developed from this curriculum should be mandated for all students.

68. It is a question that goes to the heart of curriculum design policy and is reflected in different ways in different international jurisdictions. Some, such as France and many of the states in the United States, set highly prescribed teaching and learning programs for every school through the mandated use of set text books that prescribe exactly what every student will learn and in what order. The apparent advantages of this are clear, in that it appears to guarantee every student receives the benefit of the same learning. Whether it actually contributes to better learning outcomes, however, is less clear. The 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) data for Reading, for example, had Australia ranked 9, the United States 17 and France 22.

69. Others, such as New South Wales, set a more prescribed, detailed syllabus-style curriculum than Victoria. Yet others, such as Finland, set a curriculum that is broader and prescribes less detailed content than Victoria.

70. The challenge is to reconcile the twin demands of providing a learning program that maintains a focus on a common entitlement to core knowledge and skills and high expectations of every student while also allowing students opportunities to develop and pursue areas of individual interest and expertise.

71. This issue has come into greater focus in recent years as a result of advances in knowledge about effective teaching and learning, particularly in relation both to the importance of identifying and building on students' actual rather than assumed existing knowledge and the impact on student learning of high expectations on the part of teachers.

72. Another perspective on this issue is that of innovation and personalisation. If too much of a school's teaching and learning program is taken up meeting all the requirements of a common curriculum, opportunities for innovation and personalisation can be stifled. These include opportunities for schools to structure their teaching and learning programs differently (for example, to provide specialist programs) and to offer opportunities for students to pursue particular areas of interest or expertise. Too little emphasis on a common curriculum, however, creates a risk that students or schools will pursue areas of ephemeral interest rather than enduring value and that core fundamental requirements for all further learning will be given insufficient attention.

73. The following guidelines are proposed as a framework that provides an effective balance between ensuring that every student is provided with the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to which they are entitled and that schools are provided with the flexibility to develop innovative teaching and learning programs that best meet the needs of individual students.

Curriculum Planning Guidelines

74. The guidelines in this section are based on the structure of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 as set out in the following table.

Learning areas	Capabilities
The Arts • Dance • Drama • Media Arts • Music • Visual Arts • Visual Communication Design English Health and Physical Education The Humanities • Civics and Citizenship • Economics and Business • Geography • History Languages Mathematics Science Technologies • Design and Technologies • Digital Technologies	Critical and Creative Thinking Ethical Intercultural Personal and Social

75. Full school curriculum plans and implementation (that is, reporting student achievement against the learning achievement standards set out in the Victorian Curriculum F–10) should be in place in all schools from the start of the 2017 school year.

76. Whole-school curriculum plans should be based on a stages of schooling approach based on three stages: Foundation (Prep–Year 2), Breadth (Years 3–8) and Pathways (Years 9–10).

77. This maintains a focus on the importance of the provision of the whole curriculum to every student, but across stages of schooling rather than at every year level.

78. This approach should not be interpreted as meaning schools should be required to provide these areas of learning as discrete timetabled subjects. Rather, the focus should be on ensuring that the teaching and learning program as a whole provides the content set out in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 and enables the reporting of student achievement against the achievement standards. The way in which the school curriculum is structured and delivered is a matter for an individual school or network of schools.

79. Schools should engage with parents and their local communities in developing the teaching and learning program and should document and publish their teaching and

learning program. This enables opportunities for learning outside the immediate school environment to be identified and incorporated in the teaching and learning program.

80. Decisions about the teaching and learning program within that structure and individual student learning programs are the responsibility of the school principal and teachers.

81. This is particularly the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Schools must ensure that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student has an individual learning plan.

82. If a school proposes for any student an individual learning program that departs from the provision model set out in the whole-school curriculum plan, that decision should be made in conjunction with the student and the student's parents/carers, and must be approved by the school principal.

83. While this applies to all students, it is also consistent with schools' responsibilities set out in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Disability Standards for Education, which in Parts 6.1 and 6.2: Standards for curriculum development, accreditation and delivery, include that:

- Education providers must take reasonable steps to ensure that a course/program is:
  - designed to enable learners with disabilities to participate in learning experiences (including assessment and certification)
  - planned in consultation with the learner and associate, and
  - has taken into consideration whether the disability affects the learner's ability to participate in the learning experiences on the same basis as learners without disabilities.

- Learners with disabilities have the right to:
  - participate in courses and programs that are designed to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, including relevant supplementary programs, on the same basis as learners without disabilities
  - have reasonable adjustments to ensure they are able to participate in education and training on the same basis as learners without disabilities.

Foundation Stage (Prep–Year 2)

84. The following are proposed as the essential elements of every school's curriculum plan for the Foundation Stage (Prep–Year 2). They can be structured within a teaching and learning program based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) outcomes (Identity, Connection, Wellbeing, Confidence and Communication) and provide both a common core and flexibility for schools to draw on the full structure of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 to build a teaching and learning program that meets local needs and expectations.

(a) A structured teaching and learning program in English and Mathematics at each year level

(b) Substantial attention to Health and Physical Education

(c) Substantial attention to The Arts

    (d) Substantial attention to Personal and Social Capability

    (e) A learning program that draws on the curriculum areas of:

- Humanities – History and Geography

- Languages

- Science

- Technologies – Design and Technologies and Digital Technologies

- Critical and Creative Thinking

- Ethical Capability

- Intercultural Capability

Breadth Stage (Years 3–8)

85. In the Breadth stage (Years 3–8), students should have the opportunity to engage with the full structure of the Victorian Curriculum. Schools should provide:

    (a) A structured teaching and learning program in English, Mathematics and Science at each year level

    (b) Substantial attention to Health and Physical Education

    (c) A Languages program

    (d) A Humanities program that includes in each two-year band of schooling History, Geography and Civics and Citizenship and, from Year 5, Economics and Business

    (e) An Arts program that in Years 3–4 includes all five Arts disciplines and at Years 5–6 and 7–8 consists of at least two Arts disciplines, one from the Performing Arts and one from the Visual Arts

    (f) A Technologies program that includes in each two-year band of schooling both Design and Technologies and Digital Technologies

    (g) A learning program that includes in each two-year band of schooling each of the capabilities:

- Critical and Creative Thinking

- Ethical

- Intercultural

- Personal and Social Capability.

86. This does not mean that schools are required to construct a learning timetable based on these curriculum areas. It does, however, mean that the content set out in the learning areas and capabilities must be provided. This approach is intended to emphasise that the purpose of curriculum planning is to ensure students are able to engage with and learn the defined content.

Pathways Stage (Years 9–10)

87. In the Pathways stage (Years 9–10) students should have the opportunity to engage with the full structure of the Victorian Curriculum F–10. The school curriculum plan should demonstrate how, across these years of schooling, schools will provide:

    (a) A structured teaching and learning program in English, Mathematics and Science at each year level

    (b) A Health and Physical Education program

    (c) A Languages program

    (d) A Humanities program that includes in this band of schooling History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business

    (e) An Arts program that includes in this band of schooling learning in at least one Arts discipline

    (f) A Technologies program that includes in this band of schooling both Design and Technologies and Digital Technologies

    (g) A learning program that includes in this band of schooling each of the capabilities:

    - Critical and Creative Thinking

    - Ethical

    - Intercultural

    - Personal and Social Capability.

88. The school curriculum plan should recognise that in these years of schooling some students begin to focus on areas of specialisation related to both their future schooling and intended pathways beyond school.

89. This can include commencement of aspects of their senior school qualification, including Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications.

90. The learning program for these Pathways Years can therefore be based on the curriculum areas set out in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 or, where a student has already demonstrated achievement of the knowledge and skills at Level 10, senior secondary studies drawn from equivalent curriculum areas.

91. The learning program for Years 9–10 (Pathways Stage) may also, therefore, reflect different intended levels of achievement. Where a school specialises in the Arts, for example, or provides a specialised pathway in the Arts, it is to be expected that students who participate in that learning program will demonstrate a higher level of achievement in the Arts than those who do not.

92. Schools may also choose to use the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) as an alternative curriculum design for students in Year 10. Foundation VCAL is structured around four strands:

    - Literacy and Numeracy Skills

    - Industry Specific Skills

    - Work Related Skills

- Personal Development Skills.

93. This is intended to provide a structure that, for some students, will enable greater attention to be placed on the foundational learning skills of literacy and numeracy as defined in English and Mathematics in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 and that in turn will enable better access to the senior secondary curriculum.

94. It will remain a requirement that schools report the learning achievement levels of students undertaking a Foundation VCAL program at Year 10 against the Victorian Curriculum F–10 achievement standards for English and Mathematics and that students are provided with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in the other six learning areas in the context of their VCAL program.

Section 2: Reporting Student Achievement

Context

1. Reporting student achievement has, until recently, changed remarkably little over the past 100 years. Following is a reproduction of a student report from a Victorian regional school in 1923. It includes many elements identical to contemporary reports: a five point scale of achievement, data on attendance, a distinction between formative ('Home work' and 'Work in class') and summative ('Examination work') assessment, comments from the teacher, the signature of the principal (using the embryonic technology of the rubber stamp!) and an account of achievement subject by subject. The report also represents an attempt to address the demand for both standards-reference reporting (through the use of grade) and norm-referenced reporting (through the use of a rank order).

2. The current reporting requirements are based on the Education Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth government and require that schools report student achievement to parents twice a year using a five-point scale or equivalent. Schools must also comply with this requirements of the VRQA:

   > *A school must ensure that there is ongoing assessment, monitoring and recording of each student's performance and provide each student and parent with access to accurate information about the student's performance. Access to information must include at least two written reports to parents per year.[16]*

3. The difficulties in determining the most effective ways of reporting student achievement are a product of attempts to meet competing demands.

---

[16] Victorian Registrations & Qualifications Authority 2012, *Arrangements for School Review Bodies*, Melbourne

http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/SchlRevBodies_1.pdf (accessed 7 December 2015).

4. Most parents and students want a report that provides an objective measure of student achievement against a scale that presents clear information about learning progress.

5. But parents and students often also want further information, typically about how the location of an individual student's progress matches against the 'normal' expectations of that student's age group and about how the individual student compares to their peers in their class or year level. The report illustrated earlier attempts to reconcile these demands by providing both a grade (nominally the objective or standards-based measure) and a rank (the norm-referenced measure).

6. The individual report students receive following the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests is also an attempt to reconcile these demands, by providing both standards-referenced and norm-referenced information about student achievement. See the example following:
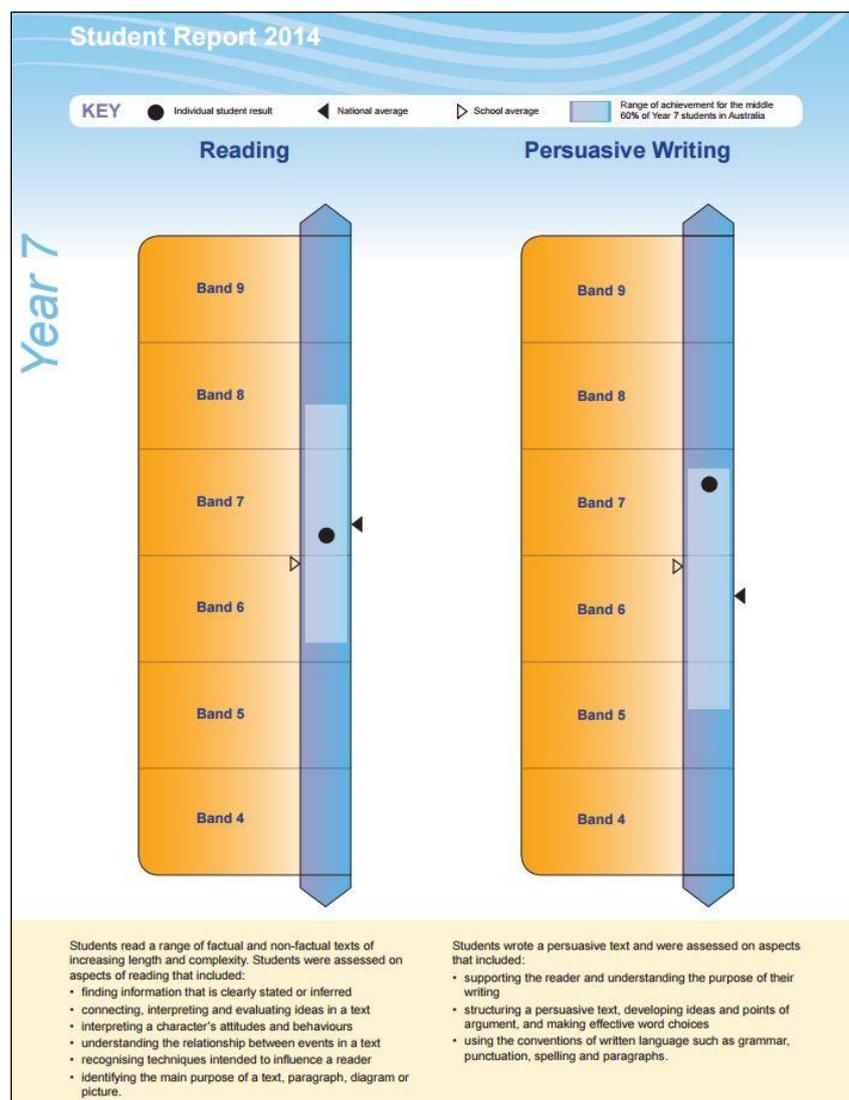
7. Most parents and students also want a report that is easily understood. The attraction of the A–E method of reporting is that it is apparently a simple and effective method. The problem, however, is in establishing comparability. What one teacher regards as work that deserves a B grade (or, as in the report cited earlier, work that is 'of more than average quality, but not first class') will not always be the same as the view held

by another teacher. Moderation processes to ensure comparability are well established, but to be effective these are often both expensive and time-consuming.

8. The way in which schools and teachers have attempted to address this in the past is by placing less emphasis on summative forms of reporting such as grades and more emphasis on descriptive reports that attempt to describe the work a student has completed over the reporting period and the learning they have demonstrated through that work.

9. When done well, descriptive reporting can provide rich information about student progress. Descriptive reports have also, however, been criticised on the grounds that they are opaque, do not provide any information about the level of student achievement in relation to their peers, and can be both repetitive and de-personalised (the same report being written for many students in the same class, or reports that are overly reliant on software-based comment banks).

10. An example of the 2014 mandated reporting format is provided here:

Semaphore College

STEVEN BARDEN
VSN: 200912345
Year 3 Semester 1

Learning Area		Rating	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Health and Physical Education		B			○--●		
Interpersonal Development		D		○--●			
Personal Learning		C			●		
The Arts		B		○------------●			
English	Reading and Viewing	C			●		
	Writing	C			●		
	Speaking and Listening	C			●		
Mathematics	Number and Algebra	A				●	
	Measurement and Geometry	B				●	
	Statistics and Probability	C			●		
Science		A				●	
Information and Communications Technology		A			○--●		
Design, Creativity and Technology		C		○------●			

Work habits

	Needs Attention	Acceptable	Very Good	Excellent
Effort			●	
Class Behaviour		●		

As new Australian Curriculum subjects are introduced and taught in AusVELS, your child will receive an achievement grade only at the end of the first semester, and an achievement grade and representation of six months progress at the end of the year.

Ratings:
A Well above the standard expected at this time of year
B Above the standard expected at this time of year
C At the standard expected at this time of year
D Below the standard expected at this time of year
E Well below the standard expected at this time of year

Legend:
○ Your child's achievement 12 months ago
● Your child's achievement this semester
•••• Your child's progress
▨ The expected level of achievement

This format is designed to strike a balance between these competing demands:

- Schools must report student achievement twice a year to parents.
- Each report must include information about each of the learning domains.

- Each report must show actual individual student achievement and that achievement *in relation to the standard of achievement expected of that student's year level cohort*. This is done through a graphic representation of student achievement in relation to an age expected level of achievement.

- It is also expected that the report will include individual comments in relation to student learning progress.

- It also includes information about student behaviour and effort in class.

11. This mandated reporting format, however, has meant that, with the exception of the individualised learning plans for students with learning disabilities, reporting student achievement has been based on a one-size-fits-all approach that has not always provided every parent with a simple, common sense report that provides up-to-date and relevant information about student progress.

12. This report format has been specifically criticised on three grounds. The first is that the use of the A–E scale, where C represents a 'satisfactory' or 'expected' level of achievement, does not sufficiently recognise student work at a high level. This can be the case where the link made between the teaching and learning program and reporting in some schools is interpreted to mean students cannot achieve a B or an A result unless they undertake an accelerated learning program. Similarly, especially for students with additional learning needs, this model of reporting may not adequately reflect the progress a student has made. For some students, while they may have made considerable learning progress in a year, the letter grade they receive will still be a D or E because their level of achievement is not at the nominally expected level for that cohort. One result of this model is that many students receive the same grade year after year in a way that does not adequately reflect the learning progress they have made. This is one example of the observation made by Masters:

    > [A]ssessment results usually fail to convey the progress that individuals are making in their learning (most clearly illustrated when a student is awarded the same grade year after year) (2013, p. 4).

13. The second is that this report format only provides for a comparison of student achievement in relation to the expected level of achievement for that age or year-level cohort. It does not provide the capacity to measure student achievement against individual learning goals or targets.

14. The third is that it does not give sufficient attention or prominence to both extra-curricular participation and achievements and student self-assessment.

15. A further set of issues relates to the curriculum proposals discussed in Section 1 of these guidelines.

16. If schools are provided with more flexibility in relation to curriculum provision, then necessarily more flexibility will be required in relation to the reporting of student achievement in the learning areas and capabilities, other than English, Mathematics and Science, which are required to be taught and reported on annually.

17. Reporting student achievement against the Victorian Curriculum F–10 achievement standards in English and Mathematics should be provided for every student each semester and this reporting should include information about the age-related expected level of achievement, except in specific instances of individual students where this has been determined by schools in partnership with parents.

18. Reporting student achievement against the Victorian Curriculum F–10 achievement standards in Science should be provided for every student every year from Year 3 onwards, and this reporting should include information about the age-related expected level of achievement, except in specific instances of individual students where this has been determined by schools in partnership with parents. Schools can report against the Science achievement standards earlier than Year 3 if this is part of the teaching and learning program for the Foundation stage (Prep–Year 2).

19. The rationale for this position is that literacy, numeracy and now scientific knowledge and skills are the necessary foundations of successful life-long learning, and the English, Mathematics and Science achievement standards serve as accurate indicators of learning achievement in literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge and skills respectively.

20. As schools begin to develop and provide different learning pathways, however, this will mean that the progress and extent of student learning in other curriculum areas will differ.

21. If schools are to develop teaching and learning programs that are both differentiated between schools (for example, one school may place greater emphasis on a languages program while another may specialise in sport and physical education) and between students (for example, providing some students the opportunity to progress more quickly in their learning in particular areas), then a correlate must be that not all students will be expected to achieve the same level of attainment in all curriculum areas.

22. For example, students participating in a bilingual program may be expected to reach a higher level of achievement in Languages than students not participating in that program. In this instance, it is more appropriate to set different goals and expectations for these two cohorts than apply the same expected standard to both.

23. Similarly, a school may choose to provide students with the choice of whether to pursue sustained study in one of the disciplines within The Arts or to undertake a learning program made up of different Arts disciplines. Again, it is self-evident that the expected level of achievement within particular disciplines will be different according to the choices students have made.

24. The level of attainment will depend to a significant degree on the time-on-task provided through the teaching and learning program. For example, the level of language attainment for students in a school that provides a bilingual program in German is likely to be higher than the level of language attainment achievable by students studying German for 150 minutes per week.

25. This principle will hold true at both the cohort and individual student level.

26. The expected level of achievement for a cohort will in part be determined by the teaching and learning program, which includes decisions about opportunities for learning and time allocated to different curriculum areas.

27. The expected level of achievement for an individual can also vary, both from the cohort and across curriculum areas, depending on aptitude in different areas, prior learning experiences and particular learning needs. Expected levels of achievement can, in some circumstance, also vary within curriculum areas, especially in the early stages of learning. For example, some students progress more quickly in learning oral language than print language in English.

28. In order to encourage both the pursuit of excellence in the curriculum areas where students excel and the maintenance of effort in areas where they do not, the capacity to provide and report on student achievement measured against individual learning goals and targets is very important. As Masters points out, 'the fundamental purpose of assessment is to establish where students are in their learning at the time of assessment' (2013, p. 6).

29. Given this range of variables, schools should have the capacity to report against both what has been taught and, where appropriate, against individual learning targets rather than against the same nominal norm-referenced standard across all curriculum areas.

30. This flexibility should be extended to enable schools to vary the way they report student learning across the curriculum. Two different approaches are illustrated below.

31. Where Example 1 maps student achievement against a learning continuum of five achievement standards, Example 2 describes how well a student has mastered a particular aspect of learning within that continuum.

32. The teacher is still able to use the continuum of learning set out in the curriculum to identify the next stage of learning progression for each individual student, but the focus for the purpose of reporting student achievement is on the extent to which a particular set of knowledge and skills has been demonstrated (the quality of work within an expected range of achievement) rather than on each student's progression on the continuum of learning.

Example 1:

Learning area	ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS				
	2	3	4	5	6
ENGLISH					
Reading and viewing			○→●		
Writing		○→●			
Speaking and listening			○ →	●	

Example 2:

LEARNING AREA	DEMONSTRATED LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS				
	Excellent	Very good	Good C	Moderate	Minimal
HISTORY	A	B		D	E
Goldfields unit		✓			

33. Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach to reporting, this proposal locates decision making about reporting student achievement at the school rather than the system level, and provides schools with the capacity to adjust their reporting to reflect their teaching and learning program. This is consistent with the view put by Masters:

Once information is available about where a student is in his or her learning, that information can be interpreted in a variety of ways, including in terms of the kinds of knowledge, skills and understanding that the student now demonstrates (criterion- or standards-referencing); by reference to the performance of other students of the same age or year level (norm-referencing); by reference to the same student's performances on some previous occasion; or by reference to a performance target or expectation that may have been set (2013, p. 7).

34. A further set of challenges to previous practice has emerged in recent times through the rapidly increasing use of digital technologies to provide students and their families and carers with online access to examples and portfolios of student work and ongoing assessment of student progress by students themselves and by teachers.

35. This, it is argued by some, has rendered the concept of twice-yearly reports to parents obsolete.

36. There remains, however, value in providing summative assessments as well as formative assessments, particularly in relation to tracking student progress. Student progress in learning is often better determined over a longer period of time as this provides important opportunities for consolidation of learning that are not available through single task assessments that by definition form the basis of formative assessments.

37. Schools will be free to develop protocols to provide parents and carers with ready access to assessments of student work and to student work itself through online digital technologies. There will remain, however, a requirement that schools provide a summative report of student learning to parents and carers twice a year.

38. Schools should work with their parent communities to determine the format of reporting student achievement that will both meet the requirements set out in these guidelines and provide meaningful information about student learning progress in an accessible format (see paragraph 47 below).

39. Where schools make use of student reporting software packages, principals should ensure that every report provides individualised rather than generic comments on the learning progress of each student.

40. Schools will be encouraged to report to parents on extra-curricular activities undertaken by students including programs such as debating, school productions, leadership programs, sporting endeavours and community service and engagement. This will not, however, be a mandated component of the school report. In part, this is in order to avoid diminishing the importance of such activities by providing an incentive for students to participate for the sake of certification rather than genuine commitment and engagement.

41. Similarly, consistent with increasingly common practice, schools will be encouraged to include self-assessment by students as part of the process of reporting to parents. Self-assessment can be a powerful tool for learning. As with the reporting of extra-curricular activities, however, making self-assessment a compulsory part of the reporting process can lead to an emphasis on compliance rather than the authentic use of self-assessment as part of the process of learning.

Reporting Guidelines

42. Schools should report student achievement against the set of achievement standards set out in the eight learning areas and four capabilities of the Victorian Curriculum F–10, consistent with the whole-school teaching and learning plan.

43. The exception will be the Foundation Stage (Prep–Year 2), where schools should report on only five curriculum areas: English, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, The Arts and Personal and Social Capability. This is in order to ensure that schools focus on the core priorities in the Foundation Stage (Prep–Year 2): literacy, numeracy, physical movement and activity and health knowledge, engagement in The Arts and developing the capacity to manage themselves and to learn and manage social relationships in the social environment of the school.

44. Schools are responsible for reporting student achievement against the content of the curriculum. This does not mean that schools are constrained in how they structure or deliver their curriculum. Approaches such as using the VEYLDF outcomes as a teaching and learning structure in the Foundation Stage (Prep–Year 2), inquiry-based learning, integrated curriculum units, team teaching, vertical structures and other innovations will all be possible. Schools will be accountable for reporting against the content of the curriculum, not the delivery of a particular curriculum structure.

45. The reporting of student achievement will be consistent with the proposals for curriculum provision. That is, it will not be mandatory for schools to report each semester on each curriculum area. Schools should, however (with the exception of the Foundation stage), report on student achievement in each learning area and capability in the course of each two-year band of school, in accordance with the whole-school teaching and learning plan.

46. The exception to this general principle will be that reporting student achievement against the common achievement standards in English, Mathematics and Science should occur for every student every year (while the teaching and learning program in F–10 should include the F–10 Science curriculum, reporting student achievement against the Science achievement standards can commence in Year 3), and that this reporting should include information about the age-related expected level of achievement, except in specific instances of individual students where this has been determined by schools in partnership with parents to be unnecessary.

47. Schools now have a much greater degree of autonomy and flexibility in determining how they report on student achievement to parents. A single common report format is no longer mandated.

48. Rather, schools have the flexibility to determine, in partnership with students, parents and the local community, the timing, frequency and format of the reports.

49. It is important that schools have the flexibility to report against individual learning goals in individual learning areas and capabilities as well as against age or year-level cohort expected levels of achievement where that is determined by a school community to be desirable. This is because it is essential that schools provide reports to parents that accurately reflect the progress each student has made in their learning. The use of generic comment banks should therefore be avoided.

50. For English and Mathematics, schools should provide disaggregated reports that indicate levels of achievement by language mode in English (Speaking and Listening,

Reading and Writing) and by strand in Mathematics (Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability). Schools can also choose to provide disaggregated reports in areas of their own choice, for example, reporting student learning separately for Health and for Physical Education.

* * *

51. This set of guidelines about reporting can be summarised as follows:

(a) Schools should ensure their reports on student learning are clear, individualised and provide accurate information about student learning progress related to the Victorian Curriculum F–10.

(b) Schools should report, both to parents and, where directed, to the relevant sectoral authorities, on student achievement in English, Mathematics and Science against the common achievement standards, indicating the level of attainment reached by each student and the age-expected level of attainment (except in specific instances of individual students where this has been determined by schools in partnership with parents to be unnecessary).

(c) Schools will not be required to report student achievement against all learning areas and capabilities each year, but should, following the Foundation stage (Prep–Year 2), report student achievement against all curriculum areas in each two-year band of schooling.