Video transcript

Adapting a unit of work – Level 1 Case Study ‘Bev and Kev’

**Karen Rogers:**

Hello, my name's Karen Rogers. I'm the literacy leader and the Victorian State Manager at the Primary English Teachers Association Australia. I'm the writer of the unit of work that we'll be sharing with you in this video. This short video is designed as a companion for the VCAA case study focused on an adapted Level 1 teaching and learning unit for the Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0 English, also known as English Version 2.0.

The purpose of the video is to demonstrate the processes and thinking that were undertaken to adapt the original unit of work to the revised Victorian Curriculum F–10 English Version 2.0. Through this case study, we'll show the relationship between Version 1.0 of the English curriculum, the learning experiences in the unit, and the revised Version 2.0 of the curriculum to support teachers to understand the impacts for them on the teaching and learning that they are designing. We'll then consider some implications for planning, and adapting existing units of work based on our experience of adapting this case study unit.

The unit of work was designed to focus on the content descriptions and achievement standards of Level 1 of the Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0 English, and to incorporate opportunities for differentiating to meet the needs of learners working towards and beyond Level 1. To facilitate engagement with the text, the unit relies on the teacher to read the book aloud to students and to guide learning through discussion and text response. The unit is based on the popular picture book ‘Bev and Kev’. The text is a simple narrative about friendship and inclusion and provides opportunities for exploring text structure, and text connections, and for building comprehension.

**Annelise Balsamo:**

My name's Annelise Balsamo. I'm the English Curriculum Manager at the VCAA, and I manage the revision to the English curriculum. The important structural update to the curriculum in Version 2.0 is the removal of the language modes, Reading and Viewing, Speaking and Listening, and Writing as an organising feature of the curriculum content or the content descriptions.

As you can see here in the table on the right, taken from the structure section of the English Version 2.0 curriculum, content descriptions in Version 2.0 are now organised by the strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. The removal of the language modes acknowledges the work that teachers do in making connections across the curriculum, supporting students to engage with the content and skills encountered while reading, viewing, and listening, the receptive modes, and apply that learning when creating meaning through speaking and writing, the productive modes. As such, the revisions are conceptual and do not require teachers to create whole new teaching and learning units, but rather to update and adapt their current units, to consider multiple language modes when engaging with the content and skills in their classroom.

**Karen Rogers:**

While updating the unit for this case study, the opportunities for engaging with the curriculum content in multiple ways and through more than one language mode became evident. These opportunities will form the basis of discussion in this presentation. To demonstrate the connections, we can use the example of the Text structure and organisation sub-strand within the Language strand.

When reading, it is important to understand text structure as it supports the reader to make meaning from the text and to consider the text's purpose and the author's intent. As a writer, an understanding of text structure is important to be able to organise writing in a way that conveys the intended message and author's intent, and when speaking and listening, an understanding of the ways to structure spoken language to ensure that the message is received clearly and as intended is also important. Content within this sub-strand can and should be engaged with multiple times and using multiple lenses as a reader, and viewer, as a writer, and as a speaker, and listener.

**Annelise Balsamo:**

To support an understanding of the structural changes, we've put together an overview of Version 1.0 and Version 2.0, focusing specifically on the Level 1 curriculum. You can see here that in Version 1.0, the content is organised into 3 language modes of Reading and Viewing, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. Within each of those language modes, content is then further organised into the strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. Each strand is then grouped into sub-strands, for example, Text structure and organisation and Phonic and word knowledge.

In the example of Level 1, we can see that there are 5 sub-strands for Reading and Viewing, 4 for Writing, and 8 for Speaking and Listening, resulting in 36 content descriptions altogether. In comparison, you can see that English Version 2.0 is a more streamlined curriculum. The content is organised using the 3 strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. In the same way as Version 1.0, the strands are organised into sub-strands, including Text structure and organisation and Phonic and word knowledge. You'll see the number of content descriptions has been reduced to 30 across the 3 strands for Level 1, and this is not due to the removal of any content, rather a reduction of duplicated content descriptions.

This again acknowledged the skills of the teacher in engaging with the content such as text structure and organisation in multiple ways across the curriculum. While the language modes have been removed from the curriculum content organisation, they still feature as the organising structure for the achievement standards, and this is in recognition that the language modes are the means by which students demonstrate the knowledge and skills they develop through their engagement with curriculum content.

Victorian teachers are accustomed to an explicit connection between the content descriptions and the achievement standards through the language modes. With the removal of the language modes from the content descriptions, the connection is less clear. In order to support teachers through this change, we have produced 2 distinct ways teachers can see that relationship.

In this first model, the connections between the achievement standards and content descriptions documents, we have tables that link each achievement standard extract, signalled by a consistent sentence stem (in this case, ‘When interacting with others …’), to all content descriptions connected to the meaningful teaching and learning of that skillset. Through these documents, teachers can plan for their teaching and learning to map directly into achievement and assessment.

While these documents link specific content descriptions to each of the achievement standard extracts, it is important to note that many of the same content descriptions will map across more than one achievement standard extract. Most of the skills and content in English can be taught and learned across more than one language mode, and this experience of transference across language modes will assist in building students' capacity, understanding and confidence.

The second way we have made this connection explicit is through graphic organisers. These graphic organisers are published in the Learning in English section of the English Version 2.0 curriculum. They show the relationship between the sub-strand and strands and the achievement standards. The middle of the graphic is the consistent sentence stem that tracks across each level of the achievement standards. In this example, we can see the first sentence stem of 2 in the Reading and Viewing achievement standard, that sentence stem ‘When reading and viewing texts ...’ Each sub-strand relevant to developing those skills in students radiates from this central point. Teachers can then choose an explicit focus in their planning, but can be assured that all the skills indicated here are either explicit or implicit when they're teaching their students.

**Karen Rogers:**

So what has been the impact on teaching and learning when adapting this unit of work? Let's look first at some examples from the original unit. The complete original unit and the Version 1.0 curriculum links can be found in the appendix of the case study document that can be downloaded from the VCAA website.

As can be seen here, the learning experiences outlined in the original unit provided multiple opportunities to think about text structure, and organisation, the way that narratives commonly feature characters who experience some type of problem, or complication, followed by a resolution. These elements when combined helped to drive the story. The first encounter with text structure occurs when students are invited as readers and viewers to make a prediction about their characters and their feelings and the reason that their relationship is important to the story.

As shown on this slide in the original unit, this learning experience aligned to the Literacy strand of Reading and Viewing, which involves reading comprehension. Learners engage with text structure in the second learning experience, but this time they're invited to develop their knowledge and skills through the mode of Speaking and Listening. The aligned content description comes from the Literature strand of Speaking and Listening, as it involves students discussing their response to the characters in the text and how they help to tell the story.

Finally, learners are invited to engage with text structure as writers, with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the common elements and structure of a narrative through creating a written summary. Of course, each of these learning experiences relies on knowledge and skills from more than one of the language modes, but this relationship is implicit within the teaching and learning outlined in this original unit.

This slide shows the same learning experiences, this time in the adapted unit. When making text predictions in the adapted unit, we can see that the curriculum alignment has changed, in line with Version 2.0 of the curriculum. Rather than being solely focused on students as readers, the aligned content description, VC2E1LE03, from the Literature strand, ‘discuss plots, characters, and settings through a range of literary texts’, invites students to consider the elements and structure of a narrative as a reader, and then to use their skills as communicators to share their response to the text.

Content from the Language strand is aligned to the second example learning experience. The content description that relates here is ‘explore how types of texts are organised according to their purpose, such as to recount, narrate, express opinion, inform, report and explain’. The richness offered by this content description allows students to explore the way that text can be structured and highlights the important connection between structure and purpose. While this connection was implicit in the original unit, the connection can be viewed more explicitly in the adapted unit as students are given the opportunity to notice the text structure, to discuss the impact, and then to apply their learning as writers in the assessment section that follows.

You'll notice that the final example we have highlighted has a changed focus in line with the revised curriculum. By identifying this learning experience as a possible summative assessment opportunity, the unit acknowledges the interrelationships between all the language modes. To complete this task, students need to draw on their knowledge of text structure to make meaning as a reader, and to represent their thinking as a writer.

From this case study, there are several implications and recommendations for planning with Version 2.0 of the English curriculum. It is possible and highly recommended to adapt existing units to align to Version 2.0. A key shift in thinking is to be more explicit in making the link between the language modes by engaging with the content through a variety of different language mode lenses. This may be within one learning experience, where students engage with the content as readers, viewers, speakers, listeners and writers, or it may involve several learning experiences or multiple exposures in which the content is visited and revisited each time from a different language mode perspective.

The language modes of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing are still key components of the curriculum. However, in the revised curriculum, it may be beneficial for the teacher to see these as the means by which students can demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge and skills in the areas of language, literature and literacy. We hope that this case study has provided you with the knowledge required to continue the fantastic work you do, planning quality English learning for your students.