

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM:
PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ON ISSUES AND
CONCERNS SURROUNDING IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

The creation and implementation of the Australian National Curriculum placed Australia as the first federation in the world to implement a national curriculum. Thus it was a major and significant curriculum reform and provided the impetus for this study. As such it was deemed important to investigate teachers' perspectives on the ways in which the reform would influence their professional practices.

It was considered that unless data were captured, analysed and reviewed during the introduction of the Australian Curriculum a significant opportunity for analysis and review would have been lost to Australian education. Thus, working from the assumption that it was imperative that researchers capture the essence of the newly released Australian Curriculum from a schools' and teachers' perspective, this thesis critiques the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, in particular, the four Phase 1 subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and History. Further, teachers were asked as to whether they felt well prepared to implement a new Australian curriculum. Such a perspective, it is argued, should ensure that any required curriculum renewal in higher education teacher education programs are aligned with the reform and are authentic and reliable.

The study begins with an examination of the curriculum conceptualisations on which the current Australian Curriculum is founded. In the absence of any official theoretical model of the curriculum reform, a model is presented which argues that the Australian Curriculum is a hybrid curriculum predominately reflecting a duality of a Reconstructionist curriculum conceptualisation along with a Third Way political ideological influence in its underlying philosophy, but with a reflection of essentialism in its design and development. The model proposed is thus presented as a complementary pluralistic model. The development of the model provides a conceptual framing of the study.

Past attempts at national curricula collaboration in Australia are then reviewed including an examination of the backgrounds to these attempts; followed by an examination of the justifications and processes surrounding the current initiative. Using a survey (N=235) to gather data from teachers in Independent Schools throughout Australia perspectives, issues and teacher concerns surrounding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum were

determined. Five major interrelated propositions emerged from the analysis of the data. The first was that teachers of History and Science in Independent Schools in Australia in the main are not confident that their training enables them to integrate the literacy and numeracy capabilities of the Australian Curriculum into their teaching to the level required by the Australian Curriculum. Secondly, the inadequate preparation of teachers in Independent Schools in Australia for the inclusion of each of the three cross-curriculum priorities into their disciplines was identified by teachers as problematic. Thirdly, that teachers in Independent Schools in Australia rate the knowledge and associated pedagogy they received in their Pre-Service Education much lower for the Phase 1 subjects of History (in particular) and Science than they did for Mathematics and English. The lack of alignment between teachers' perceived needs and the Pre-Service Education in History methodology has been noted and discussed. Fourthly, that teachers in Independent Schools in Australia overwhelmingly endorsed inquiry learning as the optimal pedagogy for implementation of the reformed Australian Curriculum. The final proposition was that teachers indicated, that while the ability to teach differentially is being addressed to some degree in on-going professional development and through post graduate studies, it is not being addressed to the same extent in pre-service education courses.

In the closing sections of the thesis recommendations are presented. These included those related to the minimum standards for teachers of History; a review of pre-service programs in Science; the need for an explicit focus on pedagogy to support differentiated teaching; the application of numeracy, literacy and ICT capabilities across all subject areas; and the support required to implement the Asia cross curriculum priority successfully.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Signed: _____

Date: 12th November, 2015

John Robert Rose

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Finally, to my immediate family who have encouraged me, supported me, and in many ways shared the journey with me, I thank you for your continued love, affirmation and moral support throughout.

Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAMT	Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers
AATE	Australian Association for the Teaching of English
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACC	Australian Curriculum Coalition
ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACE	Australian Certificate of Education Australian College of Educators
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACSA	Australian Curriculum Studies Association
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTHTA	Australian Capital Territory History Teachers' Association
AEC	Australian Education Council
AEF	Asia Education Foundation
AEU	Australian Education Union
AITSL	Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ASEP	Australian Science Education Project
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSCNEPA	Curriculum Standing Committee of National Education Professional Associations
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language or Dialect

ESA	Education Services Australia
EU	European Union
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HTAA	History Teachers' Association of Australia
HTANSW	History Teachers' Association of New South Wales
HTASA	History Teachers' Association of South Australia
HTAV	History Teachers' Association of Victoria
HTAWA	History Teachers' Association of Western Australia
IDEAS	Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
JSSP	Junior Secondary Science Project
LDP	Language Development Project
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MCVTE	Ministerial Council for Vocational & Technical Education
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
NCB	National Curriculum Board
NCET	National Committee on English Teaching
NPDP	National Professional Development Program
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
QHTA	Queensland History Teachers' Association

QLD	Queensland
QSA	Queensland Studies Authority
SA	South Australia
SCSEEC	Standing Committee on School Education and Early Childhood
SEMP	Social Education Materials Project
SES	Socio Economic Status
SOSE	Study of Society and the Environment
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
THTA	Tasmanian History Teachers' Association
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UbD	Understanding by Design
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

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Publications arising from the Thesis

Rose, J. (2015). Consultation and the Australian Curriculum. *Professional Educator*, 14(1), 25-26.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

1.0 Introduction

The Australian National Curriculum is expected to be one of the most significant curriculum reforms in recent decades. Under the Rudd/Gillard Labor governments (2007-2013) the Australian Curriculum was a focal point of that government's 'educational revolution' – a bold initiative which would make Australia the first federation in the world to implement a national curriculum. Given this, it was deemed important for researchers to engage with the curriculum reconstruction as it was rolled out in order to examine the implications for the design and development of syllabi, school-based programs and practices as well as for the reconceptualisation of pre-service teacher education programs in particular to accommodate this new curriculum. This is the impetus for this study.

In order for pre-service teachers to graduate as work-ready and able to engage with the Australian Curriculum; as well as to assist practising teachers to take up the curriculum changes, it appears imperative that researchers capture the essence of the newly released Australian Curriculum from a schools' and teachers' perspective. Such a perspective should ensure that any required curriculum renewal in higher education teacher education programs, whether under graduate or post graduate, are aligned, authentic and reliable.

If teacher education programs in Higher Education Institutions are to continue to be designed to prepare teachers for service, there needs to be a thorough investigation of the design and implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Of particular value would be any lessons learnt from schools in relation to curriculum design, teaching and learning, and assessment. Unless data is captured, analysed and reviewed, as this study intends, during the introduction of those processes, a significant opportunity would have been lost to Australian education.

1.1 A Personal Perspective

Becker (1998) in a paper on gender and mathematics has noted that qualitative research has considerable potential for developing new insights and understandings about important phenomena. He cautions, however, that there are problematic ethical and personal judgment issues that might not be evident in quantitative research. Consequently researchers must declare their own perspectives 'so that readers of their research can judge their conclusions in that light' (Becker, 1998, p.255). This section, therefore, will provide a brief autobiography of the researcher to place the thesis in its appropriate context, in order to facilitate the judgment to which Becker refers.

Beginning my career as a teacher and educationalist in 1965 I spent the first thirty-six years within the Victorian state education system in a variety of roles (mostly school-based) including classroom teacher, special assistance resource teacher, regional curriculum consultant, principal liaison officer, and, for a number of years, a principal. During that time, I was involved in a number of 'projects' and innovations at a school, state and federal level, all with a strong emphasis on either curriculum development or school and classroom processes. During this time I took the opportunity to write for primary education magazines mainly writing articles on implementing aspects of the curriculum in the classroom or at a whole school level. I also authored nineteen books, mainly student workbooks or resource books for teachers in the fields of Spelling and Reading, with one series of workbooks on Spelling (*Practise Your Spelling Skills*) having more than thirty reprints and going to print in three editions over a period of 27 years.

Six years were also spent as a part-time contracted lecturer at Deakin University in its formative years, being involved in two units for off-campus students, namely '*Curriculum Design and Development*' and '*Classroom Processes*'. Other opportunities that came my way while with the Victorian Department of Education included performing assessments of Independent Schools for the Registered Schools Board of Victoria; advising and assisting a newly established International school in Indonesia in the design of curriculum and issues surrounding school governance unique to that particular school; and having a place on the Ministerial Advisory Committee for the establishment of the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

These thirty-six years with the Victorian Department of Education were followed, purely by chance and unplanned, by fourteen years at a multi-campus Independent school in regional Victoria where positions held included Head of Junior School and later Head of Higher Education and Staff Development (my current position). Among the other portfolios I have at this independent school is a recent one of overseeing the implementation of Phase 1 of the Australian Curriculum over four campuses working closely with the school's Directors of Teaching and Learning in English, Mathematics, Science, and the Humanities. This has given me an appreciation of and support for the concept of a national curriculum, while at the same time arousing a degree of concern over a number of issues surrounding both the process and the product, particularly the readiness of teachers to implement such an innovation and the level of support for them to do so.

From an academic point of view, during the time-frame of my career, after completing an initial two-year Trained Primary Teachers' Certificate, I have tried to put into practice my belief that teachers need to keep up to date and should adopt a philosophy of continuous self-improvement. Consequently I have, in each case while working full-time and studying part-time, completed a Bachelor of Business degree, a Bachelor of Education, a Graduate Diploma of Educational Administration, and a Master of Education degree.

This section has provided a brief overview of my involvement in schools, my interest in curriculum development, and my involvement at a school level with the Australian Curriculum. It has thus provided an insight into my personal motivation for the thesis and the context within

which the current investigation is to be conducted. This is elaborated on in further sections of this chapter that explain the study in greater detail.

1.2 Research Problem and Questions

As mentioned in Section 1.0 the Australian Curriculum is expected to be one of the most significant curriculum reforms in recent decades, although there had been previous attempts to establish a national curriculum. Furthermore it is considered imperative that researchers capture the essence of the newly released Australian Curriculum from a schools' and teachers' perspective. Thus three key questions emerge, namely:

- What is the history of curriculum reform at a national level in Australia?
- How is the current national curriculum development process positioned in relation to the earlier attempts at restructuring the school curriculum in Australia?
- What are the perspectives of teachers in Independent Schools concerning curriculum reform and the implementation of the national curriculum and what are the ramifications of this for pre-service teacher education in Australia?

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Project

The aims and objectives of this study are aligned to the three key questions. Thus the aims and objectives are to:

- analyse the history of national curriculum collaboration and development in Australia;
- investigate and review the roll-out of Phase 1 of the Australian Government's national curriculum amongst selected schools with reference, where applicable, to earlier attempts; and
- investigate the national curriculum implementation processes from teachers' perspectives as well as the impact on, and implications for, Independent Schools.

1.4 Significance/Contribution to the Discipline

Despite various attempts over the past 35 years, no government has successfully introduced a national curriculum in Australia. In fact McIntyre (2009) has made the observation that attempts to develop a national curriculum over that time are evidenced by the Australian educational landscape being littered with the wreckage of earlier models. With the current initiative, for the first time, Australian schools and teachers are faced with the implementation of a national curriculum – at least, at the time of writing, with the four subjects designated in Phase 1, namely English, Mathematics, Science and History. Thus the major demonstrable

outcomes from this study will be an improved knowledge base of the design and implementation issues facing schools in relation to the Australian Curriculum, particularly considering that Phase 2 and Phase 3 are still to be rolled out; and recommendations to ensure that the demands of the Australian Curriculum and the provision of pre-service teacher education are in alignment.

1.5 Theoretical Framework and Methods

Whilst the past 35 years have seen numerous attempts at national curriculum reform and collaboration in Australia, these have invariably failed largely due to the constitutional reality that the States have responsibility for the curriculum. These past attempts will be considered in the context of Federal-State relations and will be explored in terms of corporate federalism, coercive federalism and cooperative federalism. Past attempts at national collaboration will be examined and through a literature review in the following chapters scholarly works will be compared and contrasted, and issues and variables surrounding earlier endeavours identified. Thus the historical context of the pursuit of a national curriculum may provide insights into the current situation and how this may differ from previous attempts.

In order to understand the history of the development of a national curriculum in Australia, it is necessary to consider the dichotomy of the constitutional responsibility for education entrusted to the States on the one hand and the Commonwealth government aspirations for a growing nation with changing economic challenges and a growing population on the other. Once this has been considered, it is possible to trace the development of a national curriculum in Australia in various stages. Four major periods of development will be considered beginning in 1968 leading up to the current collaborative National Curriculum exercise that was initiated under the Rudd Labor Government in 2007.

This is an interpretive study. Teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the National Curriculum will be uncovered by adopting a mixed methods approach to research and guided by the symbolic interactionist theoretical approach as a framing discourse (O'Donoghue, 2007). Thus, with this approach, the researcher is the primary data-gathering instrument using survey questions aimed at understanding the issues around the implementation of the National Curriculum from the perspectives of teachers in Independent Schools. Quantitative data will be collected simultaneously to provide a better understanding of the research problem and the questions to be addressed. Furthermore, the examination of documents and other records will be utilised to obtain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 20). Thus this research focuses on two types of data: document analysis and survey results.

Documents are a significant resource for research in education (Arthur, et al, 2012, p. 214; Silverman, 1993, p. 89). To study and consider the new National Curriculum documentary data will be considered in this research. In considering the first two key research questions, that is, what is the history of curriculum reform at a national level; and how is the current national

curriculum development process positioned in relation to the earlier attempts at restructuring school curriculum in Australia, documents will be used extensively as a data source.

Furthermore, to investigate and consider the new national Australian Curriculum holistically and comprehensively, to study it in its complexity, and to understand it in its context, documentary data will be considered in the design and implementation stages of this research project (Punch, 2009, p. 161). Documents from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) are one source, particularly the initial *Shaping Papers*, the *Curriculum Design* (2009a) paper which was the blueprint for the writing teams, and the various *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (2009) documents that were initially produced for English, Mathematics, Science and History. Additional documents that will be considered are those that came out either before or during the implementation stage of the Australian Curriculum project and were published online only. Other sources to be perused and analysed are the various submissions made by a variety of professional institutions, interest groups and individuals during the consultation phases, along with media releases and other public documents.

A number of people will be surveyed. This will be preceded by a trial survey with a group of professionals in order to refine questions and make amendments if required prior to distributing the final survey. With the survey data collected a range of approaches will be used to analyse the data, such as affixing codes, noting reflections, identifying similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups and common sequences. This phase will be guided by well accepted practices of data analysis. This should facilitate the elaboration of a small set of generalisations that cover any consistencies to be discerned and then confronting those generalisations with a formalised body of knowledge in the form of a set of recommendations. Use will be made of the software program SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to assist with the data analysis.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

At the time of writing the Australian Curriculum is being introduced in three phases. In Phase 1, curricula have been developed in the four disciplines of English, Mathematics, Science and History. This was the original remit of the National Curriculum Board, effectively delivering on the Australian Labor Party (ALP) pre-2007 election promise. However, following the acceptance of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) a second stage saw the further development of the Australian Curriculum in Geography, The Arts, and Languages Other Than English (referred to simply as 'Languages'). These were commonly known as Phase 2 subjects. This left a third group of learning areas, notably, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Design and Technology, Health and Physical Education, Economics, Business, and Civics and Citizenship. These were the Phase 3 subjects to be developed in the final stage of the Australian Curriculum.

This study will be limited to the design and implementation of Phase 1 disciplines only: that is, English, Mathematics, Science and History. Limiting the study to the implementation of

Phase 1 subjects allows the study to be completed within an acceptable and reasonable time frame as well as providing an improved knowledge base for schools for implementation of the later phases.

Furthermore, as most states and territories were committed to ‘substantial implementation’ of the Phase 1 subjects by 2013, (two years later than originally intended), this study likewise is limited in its temporal scope to the period 2007 – 2013 with reference to design and implementation issues.

Additionally, due to differences in implementation schedules in the various states and territories, and more particularly the difficulties in gaining access to government-employed teachers in states experiencing a change of government during that period, this study is confined to teachers working in Independent Schools throughout Australia. The exception to this is New South Wales. As New South Wales delayed implementation of the Australian Curriculum beyond 2013, the surveys were distributed to Independent Schools in the remaining seven states and territories.

1.7 Chapter Outline and Structure – An Overview of the Thesis

This chapter has provided an introduction to this thesis, with a description of the researcher’s personal interest in the investigation and the perceived need to engage with the curriculum reconstruction as it is being rolled out as the impetus for the study. The research problems and key questions were detailed in section 1.2 with the resultant closely aligned aims and objectives being presented in section 1.3. The next two sections of this chapter described firstly, the significance of the project and how it can contribute to the education community in particular, and secondly the theoretical framework and the methodology used in the research project. Finally, in section 1.6 the scope of the project and the limitations were noted, providing the parameters for the rest of the thesis. Six chapters follow this introduction. The first (chapter 2) provides the conceptual framework for the study, to be followed by a chapter that focuses on the research methodology. A history of national curriculum cooperation in Australia is then presented in Chapter 4, followed by an examination of the current initiative in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 presents the results of the data collection and an analysis of these results leading to an elaboration of a small set of generalisations and recommendations enveloped within a formalised body of knowledge. At the conclusion of Chapter 6 a summary will be provided.

Chapter 2, *Building a Nation – Curricula Conceptualisations of the Australian Curriculum*, laments the omission by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) of a theoretical framework by which the nature of curriculum can be understood. Thus this chapter will attempt to dissect both the Australian Curriculum as it is published online and the documents on which it is based to provide a valid interpretation of the curricula conceptualisations of the Australian Curriculum. A model has been produced by the researcher which will argue that the Australian Curriculum is a hybrid curriculum. This model forms the conceptual framework for the study. Furthermore, it is will be argued in this chapter that the Australian Curriculum predominately reflects a duality of a Reconstructionist curriculum

conceptualisation, along with a Third Way political ideological influence in its underlying philosophy, but with a reflection of essentialism in its development and design. The model proposed is thus presented as a complementary pluralistic model.

The research methodology will be the focus for Chapter 3. It provides a rationale for using a mixed methods design, including an interpretivist approach to research, and of the symbolic interactionist theoretical approach within it, used to uncover teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. The research methods in regards to the document analysis and the survey are discussed, as is the nature of the study population and theoretical sampling.

Chapter 4, *A History of National Curriculum in Australia*, will begin by looking at the responsibility for education in Australia and then consider four periods of time starting with 1968 – 1988, which is generally regarded as the advent of National Curriculum development in this country. It will consider the involvement of the Commonwealth government during this period in the allocation of funds to education and explore a number of major projects of that era including the Australian Science Education Project, the creation (and demise) of the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra, the Social Education Materials Project, the Language Development Project, and the championing of the concept of a Core Curriculum by the Curriculum Development Centre.

The second period to be examined in this chapter is from 1989 to 1993, when a National Curriculum almost became a reality based on common Profiles and Statements, only to be thwarted on state lines and political allegiances. The major policy statement by Minister Dawkins at that time will be examined along with the role of the Australian Education Council and the release of the Hobart Declaration. A comprehensive assessment will be made of the demise of this attempt at national collaboration in curriculum reform to provide an insight into comparisons with the 2007 – 2013 initiative.

The third period, 1993 – 2003, will consider what was salvaged from the previous period and explore some of the initiatives from that time, including the work of the Curriculum Corporation, the release of the Adelaide Declaration, and the national Discovering Democracy project.

The final period to be examined in this chapter is from 2003 leading up to the Federal election in 2007. It considers the then Coalition Government's intention to re-enter the arena in a major way and to facilitate the creation of a national curriculum. Thus this chapter examines the moves to form an Australian Certificate of Education for Year 12 students throughout the nation, and the later arguments by the Coalition for a national curriculum beyond the senior years alone and the parallel intention of the Labor opposition to create a national curriculum if elected. The differences between the Coalition and Labor ideologies and justifications for a national curriculum will be examined also.

Throughout this chapter, for each of the periods, comments will be provided on the validity and legitimacy of the migratory argument, which is often used as a reason for a national curriculum.

Chapter 5, *The Australian Curriculum – the Current Initiative: 2007- 2013*, will examine in detail how the current Australian Curriculum has been created and implemented during Phase 1. It will consider the work of the interim National Curriculum Board (NCB) and the establishment of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). Responses, both negative and positive, to the process and the product will be presented. Many of the issues raised in this chapter, if appropriate, will then be re-visited in Chapter 6 when the survey responses are analysed.

Chapter 6, *Results, Analysis and Recommendations*, will begin by providing a profile of the respondents. The remainder of the chapter will discuss the interrelated theoretical propositions that emerge from the analysis of the data. Finally, arising from this analysis, a set of recommendations will be presented with the discussion concluding with suggestions for further areas of investigation. The thesis then concludes with a summary.

Chapter 2

Building a Nation – Curricula Conceptualisations of the Australian Curriculum

2.0 Introduction

The Australian Curriculum is a major reform in school curriculum. Yet during this reform process involving drafting, consulting, reviewing, publishing and implementing, what has been missing has been a framework by which the nature of curriculum can be understood. Marsh (2012), for one, lamented that although well respected academics were assigned the task of developing curriculum for the four core learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and History, what was missing, and is still missing, was a well-argued conceptual framework and rationale for the Australian Curriculum (Marsh, 2012, p. v). ACARA recognised this in 2009 when in their *Shape Paper Consultation Report* (ACARA, 2009d) the comment was made that ‘concerns were also raised about the perceived absence of an overarching conceptual structure for national curriculum’ (ACARA, 2009d, p.9). Consequently, to attempt to pinpoint a specific curriculum conceptualisation on which the Australian Curriculum has been founded is probably an exercise in futility. The Australian Curriculum, it will be argued, is a hybrid curriculum. It is an amalgam of what Print (1993) refers to as curriculum perceptions and characterisations of curriculum. These various perceptions and characterisations, as they are evidenced in the Australian Curriculum, are discussed later in this chapter. Additionally, a case will be argued that, along with these perceptions and characterisations, the Australian Curriculum reflects predominantly a duality of a Reconstructionist curriculum conceptualisation along with a Third Way political ideological influence in its underlying philosophy, but with a reflection of essentialism in its development and design. This view of the Australian Curriculum as a complementary pluralistic model (after Cheung and Ng, 2000) is represented in Figure 2.1.

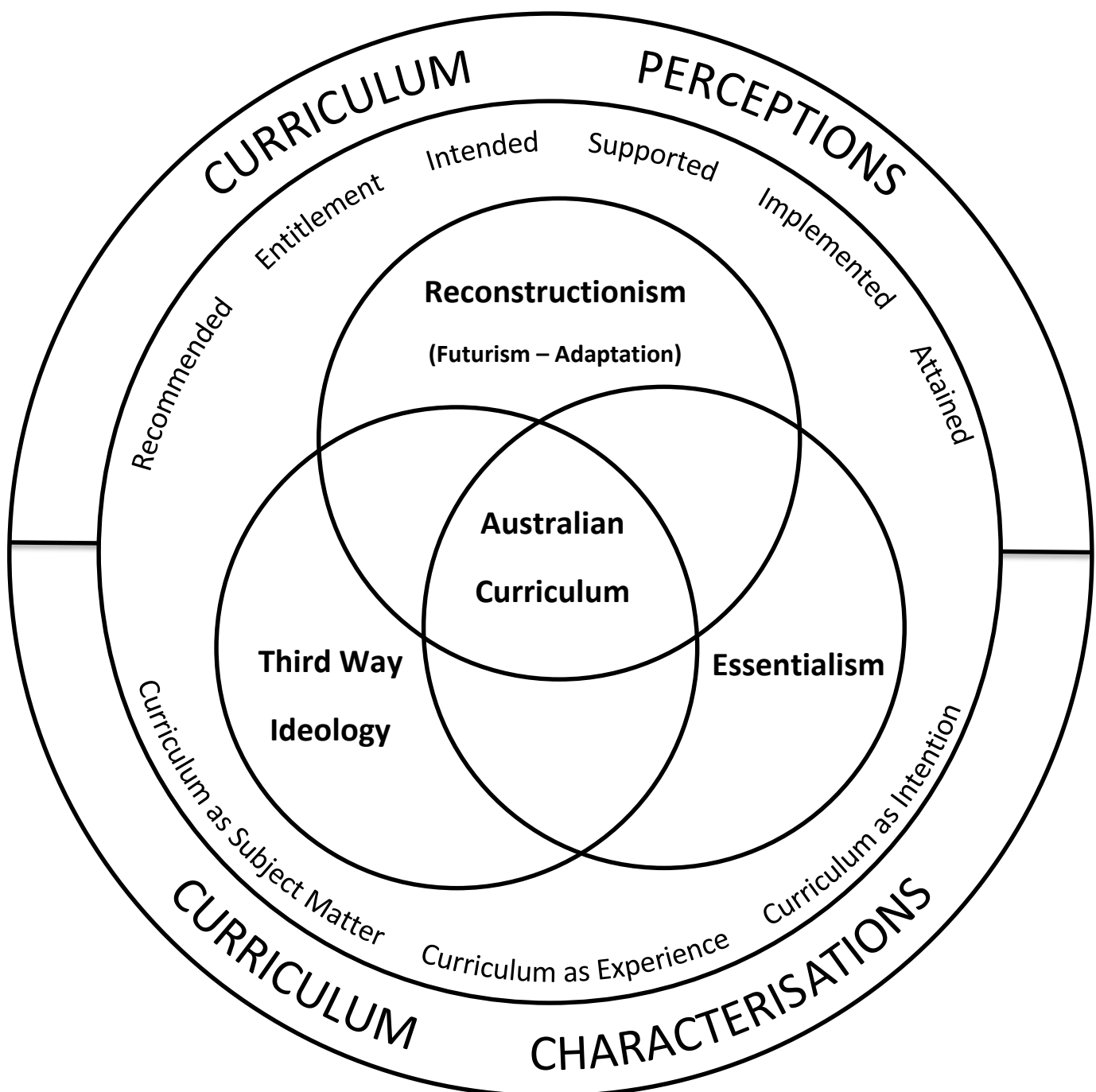
Interestingly Brown (2006), in an evaluation of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework introduced nationally in 1993 (and revised in 2007) states that ‘the contest over the place of the traditional canon of Western knowledge, versus the role to re-engineer society, is actually endorsed by the curriculum – both camps can find support for their views in the official curriculum’ (Brown, 2006, p. 171). It is contended here that the same argument can be put forward for the Australian Curriculum – that an amalgam of curriculum ideologies can be identified. As Marsh and Willis (2007) have pointed out, when we look at curriculum approaches ‘no categories are mutually exclusive’ and thus should not be seen as representing conflicting allegiances but rather as ‘different ways of connecting thought and action within curriculum work based on particular interests and experiences’ (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 71). However, before developing this complementary pluralistic argument, it is necessary to commence with some background observations leading up to this.

The first observation when considering the context of the Australian Curriculum is that on one level, curriculum is a construct of society. Professor Phillip Hughes, in the foreword to Print’s book on Curriculum Development and Design (1993), posits that curriculum is a statement of what a society values – what it wants to continue, what it wants to change, and what it wants

to renew (Print, 1993, p. v). Notions of this type can be traced back to Tyler who claimed that a combination of learners' needs and subject specialities, along with contemporary societal values, determined the educational purposes the school should seek to attain (Tyler, 1949; see also Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 72). Likewise Kemmis, Cole and Suggett in the mid-1980s claimed a strong relationship amongst education, curriculum and society. In the preface to a report they prepared for the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education the lead writer, Kemmis, states:

The... school 'belongs' to its community and society more generally; its distinction from society is in the intrinsically inquiring, critical role that is the mark of an *educational* institution; it does not conceive itself merely as a training institution for society. (Kemmis, Cole & Suggett, 1983, vii).

Figure 2.1. A complementary pluralistic model of the curriculum framework of the Australian Curriculum (Rose, 2012)



Later in that report, the authors acknowledge that schools cannot take the primary responsibility for changing society but concede that they do have some role. As they state ‘schools are social institutions; by creating some forms of school life rather than others, they create forms of life which, to greater or lesser degrees, reproduce or transform society’ (Kemmis, Cole & Suggett, 1983, p. 3).

This notion of curriculum as a construct of society is often expressed in terms other than those with a subject or discipline orientation. Kelly, A (2009), for example, argues that the focus in a democracy should be on ‘the promotion of freedom and independence of thought, of social and political empowerment, of respect for the freedom of others, of an acceptance of variety of opinion, and of the enrichment of the life of every individual in society regardless of class, race or creed’ (Kelly, A. 2009, p. 8).

Another point to consider is that any *prescribed* curriculum, such as the Australian Curriculum, to a degree takes away from the professional teacher the responsibility for curriculum development. In that sense a national curriculum is a systemic curriculum. It has been argued that this places a greater emphasis on the teacher as a technician, that is, a ‘receiver’ or ‘implementer’ of curriculum rather than the teacher as a professional (Print, 1993, pp. 17-18; Kelly, A. 2009, pp. 237-238). Kelly, in critiquing the British National Curriculum process, goes a step further stating that when the teacher is viewed as an operative rather than a decision-maker, someone whose role is merely to implement the judgements of others, the result is that *learning* is promoted but not *education* (Kelly, A. 2009, p. 131). Despite this, the role of the teacher is vital as he/she still maintains the responsibility of interpreting and implementing – and possibly modifying – the curriculum, and so requires a deep understanding of the curriculum itself and the process that nurtured its development. It will be argued later that this teacher autonomy is a characteristic of what Luke, Weir and Woods (2008) refer to as ‘informed professionalism’ – a necessary prerequisite for a high-quality, high-equity education system.

This chapter then, in light of the strong interactions amongst society, teachers and curriculum, will analyse key conceptions of curriculum over time; examine the philosophical underpinnings of such conceptions and position the development of the Australian Curriculum in relation to each of these.

2.1 Curriculum Perceptions – A cursory Glance

Print (1993, pp. 3-7), in discussing the nature of curriculum in terms of curriculum perceptions and the characterisations of curriculum, provides a useful starting point as background to considering a curriculum conceptualisation of the Australian Curriculum. He maintains that ‘different people perceive a school’s curriculum in different ways and sometimes in multiple ways depending upon the context in which the concept is used’ (Print, 1993, p. 3). Cheung and Ng (2000) refer to this multimodal perception of curriculum as ‘complementary pluralism’ and

state that alternative curriculum orientations can be mutually complementary rather than mutually exclusive (Cheung & Ng, 2000, p. 367).

Seven common perceptions, outlined by Print (1993), are discussed below with a short reference to the current Australian Curriculum process. The seven perceptions include the ideal or recommended curriculum, the entitlement curriculum, the intended or written curriculum, the available or supported curriculum, the implemented or enacted curriculum, the achieved curriculum, and the attained curriculum. Each of these will now be dealt with in turn as the chapter unfolds.

2.1.1 The ideal or recommended curriculum. Print defines this as ‘what is proposed by scholars as a solution to meet a need and consequently perceived as the most appropriate curriculum for learners’ (Print, 1993, pp. 3-4). The assumption here, of course, is that the ‘need’ is one that is identified and articulated by scholars and/or policy makers, although Print (1993) does not express an opinion on this. There is little doubt that the Australian Curriculum could be perceived by many as a recommended curriculum. The curriculum content is proposed by scholars, at least by those ordained by ACARA, and it is intended to meet a need, that being to achieve the goals stated in the Melbourne Declaration. The proposal to design a curriculum that meets the goals of the Melbourne Declaration is discussed in greater detail later.

2.1.2 The entitlement curriculum. Print (1993, p. 4) defined this as the curriculum that society believes learners should be exposed to as part of their learning to enable them to become effective members of that society. The term ‘entitlement curriculum’ was first coined by Her Majesty’s Inspectors in England in the late 1970s early 1980s, arguing that every student had an *entitlement* to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum – in effect an augmented version of a liberal curriculum (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1996, p. 82).

ACARA certainly touted the Australian Curriculum in terms of an entitlement. In the ACARA Information Sheet *A curriculum for all young Australians* it is stated:

The Australian Curriculum focuses on an ***entitlement for all students*** while acknowledging that the needs and interests of students vary. As a result, the curriculum sets out what is expected for all students to learn as well as articulating additional learning options. (ACARA, n.d. emphasis added).

Likewise in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 2.0* (ACARA, 2010a, p. 9) ten propositions are listed that shape the Australian Curriculum. The first of these is couched in terms of entitlement:

The Australian Curriculum recognises the ***entitlement of each student*** to knowledge, understanding and skills that provide for successful and lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community. (ACARA, 2010a, p. 9. emphasis added).

Clearly, the Australian Curriculum was written to take account of the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are entitled to learn in terms of learning areas, general capabilities, and cross-curriculum priorities, as well as providing through the achievement

standards an expectation of the quality of their learning in terms of extent of knowledge, depth of understanding and sophistication of skills.

While an entitlement curriculum, according to Print's definition above, defines a curriculum to which learners should be exposed, allowing them to become effective members of society, implicit in this definition is a strong commitment to equity. A national curriculum, couched in terms of entitlement, ideally secures for all students, irrespective of social background, gender, culture, race or differences in abilities or disabilities, access to the learning (in terms of knowledge, understandings and skills) necessary for their development as active, informed and responsible citizens. With the Australian Curriculum, the Phase 1 subjects (English, Mathematics, History and Science) along with Health and Physical Education from Phase 3, are to be entitlement subjects from the Foundation Year to Year 10. All other subjects have an entitlement from Foundation to Year 8, and could be offered beyond then as electives.

2.1.3 The intended or written curriculum. Print (1993, p. 4) equates this concept of curriculum with a syllabus. It is, fundamentally, what should be taught by teachers. Again this perception of curriculum is evident in the Australian Curriculum. *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 2.0* states quite clearly that 'the curriculum is important in setting out what **will be taught**' (ACARA, 2010a, p. 6, emphasis added) and 'the Australian Curriculum is presented as a continuum that makes clear to teachers what is to be taught across the years of schooling' (ACARA, 2010a, p. 9). The first four disciplines included in Phase 1 of the Australian Curriculum – English, Mathematics, Science and History – specify curriculum content in each area. Furthermore, a set of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are outlined.

While this approach to the Australian Curriculum has been justified in terms of ensuring continuity and avoiding unnecessary repetition for students, the obvious syllabus orientation of the Australian Curriculum has also drawn criticism. Much of this criticism has centred on the perceived lack of connection between the stated goals of the Australian Curriculum and the curriculum itself. Acknowledging that *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* describes both recent and significant changes economically, technologically, globally and environmentally; and the resulting implications for education, Reid (2009) states:

So far so good. However, given that this is the first national curriculum, one expects that these sentiments will be followed with an argument about how the curriculum should be shaped to deliver these ends, canvassing such questions as: what kind of knowledge should be in it?, how important is it to move across traditional knowledge boundaries?, how and why should knowledge be organised? (e.g., subjects or learning areas), what theories of learning will form the basis of curriculum, and so on. Instead we are simply told the curriculum will comprise Mathematics, Science, English and History. (Reid, 2009, p. 7).

The argument that Reid is putting forward is a reflection of the limited value of an intended curriculum presented in the form of a syllabus. That is, there is a possibility of a serious disconnect between the curriculum itself and the stated aims and goals of schooling. Often a syllabus, with its focus on academic content, pays too little attention to the values and beliefs

on which the curriculum is founded, as has occurred in this instance in the design stages and the writing of the Framing Papers.

2.1.4 The available or supported curriculum. This orientation, according to Print (1993, p. 4), is the curriculum which can be taught in schools through the provision of appropriate resources, both human and material. This is a perception of curriculum which has been contentious in reference to the Australian Curriculum. While ACARA has been responsible for developing curriculum content and achievement standards, state and territory school and curriculum authorities are responsible for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, including the allocation of time and other resources (ACARA, 2010a, p. 9). This was the agreement adopted at the start of the national curriculum process when all state and territory governments were Labour governments. However, during the process Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland all elected non-Labour governments, with Tasmania returning a minority government. This changed the level of complexity of the situation. ACARA continued to follow a process based on it being the provider of an on-line curriculum, but with the actual implementation and resourcing being an individual state or territory responsibility. In September 2011, ACARA chair, Barry McGaw stated that it had never been ACARA's role to manage implementation, adding:

The states and territories made that clear early. They're the ones who run the schools and employ the teachers. The education ministers asked us to play a coordinating role and we're doing that. (quoted in Milburn, 2011b, p. 17)

This drew a response from Norm Hart, President of the Australian Primary Principals Association who expressed the concern that teachers, through a lack of professional development, would not be adequately prepared to implement the curriculum. He continued:

There's no national implementation plan for the professional development of teachers to emphasise what should be done first. We could well end up with an Australian Curriculum in name only. At this stage it's a fear rather than a prediction. But when we ask our national executive council what support from the government, Catholic and independent sectors looks like, they say it's variable. In some sectors there's quite a deal of resources going into professional development, in others it hasn't been considered yet. (quoted in Milburn, 2011b, p. 17).

Earlier, there had been strong criticisms from teacher associations such as the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) over the lack of development of national resources. The lead story of the June 2011 edition of the independent journal *Education Review* ran under the banner of 'Teachers criticise lack of curriculum support'. In this story, AATE President Guy Bayly-Jones was quoted as saying 'the view from the government, and ACARA, is that professional learning support is a jurisdictional responsibility. However, we're not hearing news of highly organised, systemic approaches from the states and territories that are designed to address the issues we are aware of' (quoted in O'Keeffe, 2011, p. 7).

In August 2011 the NSW government announced that it would delay introducing the Australian Curriculum into its schools by at least a year. The federal government's refusal to contribute to the cost of training teachers in the new Australian Curriculum was a reason given by the NSW Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli. Mr Piccoli was quoted as saying that without any commonwealth money, the national curriculum would have to compete with other priorities in the NSW education budget (Ferrari, 2011). The response from the Federal Minister for School Education, Peter Garrett, was to accuse the NSW government of jeopardising the education of the state's students adding that 'there is no justifiable reason for this eleventh-hour backdown; all states and territories have agreed that it is their responsibility to implement the new curriculum, not the Australian government's' (quoted in Ferrari, 2011).

The outcome, however, was a concession by the federal government. In the first instance, funding was provided by the Commonwealth to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to provide an on-line interactive professional learning program called 'Leading Curriculum Change' for 2000 teachers across the country. This program was targeted to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively lead curriculum change, particularly local implementation of the Australian Curriculum. This was followed by a major press release from Minister Garrett announcing that \$41.2 million would be allocated to develop a series of online resources to assist teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum. These resources would be available to all teachers and would cover the seven subjects included in phases one and two of the Australian Curriculum (Garrett, 2011). In addition to that funding, further online professional development support for teachers to assist them in the delivery of the Australian Curriculum as it was to be rolled out over the coming years was also promised.

2.1.5 The implemented (or enacted) curriculum. The implemented curriculum is 'what is actually taught by teachers in their classrooms as they and their students interact with the intended and available curricula' (Print, 1993, p. 4). It is this aspect of the curriculum that places so much emphasis on the role and actions of the teacher, as it is through the teacher, to a large extent, that the curriculum becomes the reality of the pupils' experience. How closely or otherwise the intended curriculum matches the implemented curriculum is largely in the hands of the classroom teacher. Kelly, A (2009) comments on this situation thus:

The difference (between the intended and the enacted curriculum) may be conscious or unconscious, the cause of any mismatch being either a deliberate attempt by the teachers or others to deceive, to make what they offer appear more attractive than it really is, or merely the fact that, since teachers and pupils are human, the realities of any course will never fully match up to the hopes and intentions of those who have planned it. Both of these distinctions are important and we would be foolish to go very far in our examination of the curriculum without acknowledging both the gaps that must inevitably exist between theory and practice and the predilection of some teachers, and more especially national planners, for elaborate 'packaging' of their wares. (Kelly, A. 2009, p. 11).

With a prescribed curriculum, such as the Australian Curriculum, no choice is really available to teachers as to whether they wish to implement it or not. This, according to Marsh (2009, p. 93) is a major concern for teachers as they gain most of their intrinsic satisfaction from being successful in using a particular approach and materials with their students. While the Australian Curriculum is being explicit in stating that pedagogy will remain each teacher's prerogative, a considerable period of time is still required for teachers to become familiar with the new curriculum and become confident in its use. Tied closely to this is teachers' commitment to change. It is a well-known, but largely unsubstantiated catch-cry in the education profession that teachers resist change that is imposed upon them. Commitment to change depends, as Marsh (2009) points out, on the capacity and will of teachers. Marsh (2009) refers to teachers who are willing to conform to the new curriculum and who embrace it with enthusiasm as 'consonant' users; while those who are unwilling to conform and are reluctant as being 'dissonant' users. The extent to which teachers are either 'consonant' or 'dissonant' will determine to a large extent the gap between the Australian Curriculum as it is intended and the Australian Curriculum as it is enacted.

2.1.6 The achieved curriculum. This is generally defined as what students actually learnt as a result of their interaction with the implemented curriculum (Marsh & Willis, 2007; Print, 1993) and is sometimes referred to as the experienced curriculum. While this is of utmost importance, it is to a very large extent not within the scope of this thesis, which focuses more on *how* teachers implement the Australian Curriculum, and from that what changes, if any, need to be made to teacher education courses. What can be said here is that to be experienced or to achieve, the curriculum must first be enacted or implemented and this can only be done in the classroom itself. Further to this, experience is individual, ongoing, and unpredictable (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 5). The issue of what students actually learn from their interaction with the Australian Curriculum will no doubt be the focus of other researchers as this national initiative unfolds and progresses.

2.1.7 The attained curriculum: Print, (1993, p. 4) defines this as 'the measurement of student learning (usually through a testing process) which reveals those learnings acquired by students'. As with the achieved curriculum mentioned above, this is not within the scope of this paper. However, having said that, it is very clear that with the Australian Curriculum, the attained curriculum will be assessed based not on the implemented curriculum, but on the intended curriculum. *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 2.0* states quite clearly that assessment will take place at different levels and for different purposes, but will include ongoing formative assessment, summative assessment (for reporting to parents), annual testing of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 conducted as part of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), and periodic testing of specific learning areas within the Australian Curriculum as part of the National Assessment Program (ACARA, 2010a, p. 24). The three portfolios for ACARA are clearly, curriculum, assessment and reporting.

Supporting this argument that the concept of the attained curriculum is evident in the Australian Curriculum, is the interest expressed by Julia Gillard, when Minister for Education, in the ideas of Joel Klein. Klein is a former high-profile lawyer in the USA who became Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education with responsibility for more than one million students

in more than 1420 schools. Klein believed that effective teaching must be performance based; that teachers should be judged on their students' results, that is, what they attained, and that there should be systems in place to measure and track the impact of teachers on student achievement. He maintained that teachers in disadvantaged schools who raised the standards of their students should be given bonuses, and from time to time the work of all teachers should be assessed.

These views were taken up by Gillard and reiterated in her 'education revolution' rhetoric, however her endorsement of these views did not go without opposition:

Her inclination towards Klein's views has attracted a storm of criticism from teachers' organisations and other educational bodies. Demonstrable achievement on the part of teachers, they say, is not the whole educational story. It is not a measure of how, and what, a student learns. They argue that Klein's approach fails to take into account the different needs of students, and so measurable classroom performance cannot be the only indicator of teacher effectiveness. (Kent, 2009, pp. 265 -266).

However, such criticism did not sway Gillard from her goals. According to Kent (2009), one of the earlier Gillard biographers, Klein's overriding conviction that disadvantaged students will never have real educational opportunity unless there is genuine political commitment to change the way teachers are trained, rewarded and retained, ties closely with Gillard's social inclusion agenda as well as her pragmatic approach (Kent, 2009, p. 265).

2.2 Curriculum Characterisations – Also a cursory Glance

Print (1993, pp. 5-7) also discusses the nature of curriculum in terms of characterisations of curriculum, and this also provides a useful starting point as background to considering the curriculum conceptualisation of the Australian Curriculum.

Definitions of curriculum are legion. Marsh (2009), drawing on the work of Portelli (1987), tells us that there are more than 120 definitions of the term curriculum appearing in the professional literature 'presumably because authors are concerned about either delimiting what the term means or establishing new meanings that have become associated with it' (p. 4). He continues, using Portelli (1987) again, to note: 'Those who look for a definition of curriculum are like a sincere but misguided centaur hunter, who even with fully provisioned safari and a gun kept always at the ready, nonetheless will never require the services of a taxidermist' (Portelli, 1987, p. 364 quoted in Marsh, 2009, p. 5).

And so some scholars (e.g. Schubert, 1986; Print, 1993) prefer to look at curriculum in terms of characterisations rather than definitions, based on the premise that characterisations provide a broader conceptualisation. A characterisation can also provide the means by which curriculum is perceived or viewed, facilitating the understanding of the concept (Print, 1993, p. 5). The characterisations explored by Print (1993) include curriculum as subject matter, curriculum as experience, curriculum as intention, curriculum as cultural reproduction, and

curriculum as *currere*. Each of these constructs will be analysed briefly below and then will be used as a lens through which to critique the Australian Curriculum.

2.2.1 Curriculum as subject matter: Print (1993, p. 5) makes two important but related observations about this characterisation of curriculum. The first is that curriculum as subject matter is the most traditional image of curriculum. Curriculum is portrayed as a body of content to be taught; such content having been generated from a history of accumulated wisdom acquired through the traditional academic disciplines. The second observation is that this characterisation of curriculum has become so indelible in people's understanding of curriculum that it has developed into an apophthegm. As Print (1993, p. 5) states 'it has become axiomatic with the term itself'.

This characterisation of curriculum as subject matter is certainly evident in the Australian Curriculum documents. Despite the rhetoric of the Australian Curriculum being a curriculum for the 21st century and the attempts to make that rhetoric reality, one of the most vociferous criticisms of the Australian Curriculum has been its traditional subject/discipline base. As Print (1993, p. 5) observed, most school curricula in Australia developed from subjects or from a subject base. The Australian Curriculum endorsed that approach. However, it was this 'silo' approach to curriculum development focusing on subjects or disciplines that attracted a degree of criticism. Reid (2010, p.31) observed that 'on the basis of what is on offer to date, it seems that a curriculum is simply a number of stand-alone subjects' and that with these discrete subjects there was 'little obvious connection'. In reference to Phase 1 of the Australian Curriculum being the release of curriculum documents for English, History, Science and Mathematics he continued:

This impoverished view of curriculum has led to a process where, rather than describe the whole curriculum at the outset, *curriculum development has become a process of drip-feeding subjects... Surely a curriculum for the 21st century should be more than a series of disconnected subjects...* (T)here should be coherence across the whole curriculum. Official curriculum documents should spell out the whole of an intended curriculum – what is in it, what weighting is given to each section, what is core and elective, how assessment and reporting will work, and so on – with the whole having an overall coherence and integrity. What is being called the national curriculum has none of this. (Reid, 2010, p. 31. emphasis added)

A similar criticism had been made of the National Curriculum process for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Suggesting that what was offered in the British National Curriculum was simply a reconstitution of the subjects included in the 1904 Regulations, Goodson and Marsh (1996) were to comment that 'historical amnesia allows curriculum reconstruction to be presented as curriculum revolution' (Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p. 157). Returning to the Australian Government's Education Revolution, in the Second Reading Speech for the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority Bill 2008 (Gillard, Oct, 2008b) the then Minister for Education stated that all young Australians would have access to 'the highest quality education' and that the government was 'rebuilding a modern, high quality education system'. What eventuated to some extent was that the characterisation of curriculum

as subject matter remained as the cornerstone of this rebuilding process – a bitter disappointment for many forward-thinking educationalists.

2.2.2 Curriculum as experience: Two perspectives of the curriculum as experience tend to be dominant. The first, as advocated by John Dewey (1916), clearly focuses on the enhancement of the learner's personal growth and situates the role of the teacher as a facilitator in this process. Dewey's perspective is based on the premise that learners should strive to monitor their thoughts and actions through experiencing a curriculum and then reflecting upon that experience. However, being a concept of curriculum that focuses on the experiences of the individual learner, Lovat and Smith (2003, p. 19) raise an interesting question concerning this experiential notion of curriculum when they ask whether one person can plan the experiences of another. They answer this themselves:

If you accept the inherent individual and existential nature of experience, however, it is not possible for someone else to plan your experience. Someone might plan an activity in which certain assumptions are made about what the planner might *like* the learners to experience... BUT... each individual will experience the activity differently... some not experiencing anything of what the planner hoped for! (Lovat & Smith, 2003, p. 19).

A more recent analysis, according to Print (1993, p. 5) portrays curriculum as the set of experiences learners encounter in educational contexts. Some of these experiences are planned through the curriculum while other highly significant experiences occur as a result of the 'hidden curriculum'. The hidden curriculum refers to the way in which cultural values and attitudes are transmitted through the structure of teaching and the organisation of the school; that is, the messages students pick up through the experience of being in school, not just from the things they are explicitly taught. One definition of the hidden curriculum is that it is the:

Beliefs, values, and attitudes which an educational institution passes on to its students not by way of formal teaching but informally and frequently implicitly or unconsciously. The demands the hidden curriculum puts on students to conform to its expectations may influence attitudes to authority, work, gender roles, dress standards, social class, and many other aspects of behaviour. Textbook bias is an example of a hidden curriculum. (Penguin Macquarie, 1989, p. 156).

Perhaps with a degree of exaggeration, Brian Jackson (1973), writing about child poverty, said:

I leave it to you. Spend only a day with a child at school, and you'll see that it is the secret messages that get across. The open messages are just the fancy wrapping. (Jackson, 1973, p. 232).

One of the earlier writers to discuss the hidden curriculum in any detail was Philip Jackson in his seminal work *Life in Classrooms* (1968). Jackson argued that what is taught in schools is more than the sum total of the curriculum, and he marks out three aspects of the hidden curriculum: crowds, praise and power (Jackson, 1968). Cornbleth (2011), however, advocates that two sources of hidden curriculum messages can be distinguished: the structural (or

organisational) and the cultural. The structural includes time scheduling of classes and the time allocations, so that a subject that is timetabled for six periods a week is assumed to be more important than one that is scheduled for only two periods. Whether subjects are core or elective, and a school's grading or grouping policies are further examples of structural sources of the hidden curriculum. Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford (1997) put this well when they state that students learn through the hidden curriculum that:

English is not mathematics and mathematics is not science and science is not art and art is not music. And art and music are minor subjects and English, history and science major subjects. And a subject is something you take and, when you have taken it, you have 'had' it, and if you have 'had' it, you are immune and need not take it again. (Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 1997, p. 65).

Cultural aspects of the hidden curriculum would include student cliques, rituals and celebrations, intergroup relations (within and between teachers and students) and teacher expectations of various groups of students (Cornbleth, 2011). So while a national curriculum, or any curriculum for that matter, may set out a range of educational experiences for students to encounter, there will be a set of other 'hidden' experiences that will also occur. To this extent there is an element of Print's (1993) 'curriculum as experience' within the Australian Curriculum. This can be evidenced in the choice of subjects for Phase 1, namely, English, Mathematics, Science and History; the 'entitlement' of some subjects/disciplines to Year 10 while others are electives after Year 8; and the nominal time allocations to the various subjects as suggested by ACARA.

2.2.3 Curriculum as intention: This conceptualisation of curriculum has been discussed previously (see 2.1.3). To expand, Print (1993) states that with curriculum as intention, a comprehensive planning of learning experiences for students, predetermined before they start that curriculum, is the best way to address learner needs (Print, 1993, p. 6). He further contends that this view of curriculum has two variations. One emphasises what students *should* learn and is determined through the development of aims, goals and objectives. The other focuses on what students *must* acquire which is evidenced in the learning outcomes of the curriculum. The first variation is relevant for students commencing a curriculum; the second with students exiting the curriculum.

Lovat and Smith (2003) in their examination of the curriculum as intention, alert us to the fact that there may be ideological reasons why certain groups want to restrict their concept and definition of curriculum to curriculum as intention only. One possible explanation that they put forward for this is that schools within a system may not be achieving what it is that the system intends should happen successfully (Lovat & Smith, 2003). They continue:

...any discussion, writing or analysis of any aspect of curriculum is inescapably **political**. It is not possible to discuss any aspect of curriculum without talking about power, who has it, who does not, and the manner in which power is distributed or shared in any curriculum situation. (Lovat & Smith, 2003, p. 16).

Kelly, A (2009) concurs stating that in the current social and political climate the flavour of curriculum debate has become increasingly and strongly political. In a stinging attack on the 'politically motivated quangos' which now control the school curriculum to a large degree, Kelly claims these holders of power 'reconstruct themselves – or, at least, rename themselves – almost annually, along with their use and abuse of devices' to achieve political goals (Kelly, A. 2009, p. 19). He further argues that education and politics are inextricably interwoven with each other, that curriculum issues cannot be discussed productively in a political vacuum (Kelly, A. 2009, p. 188) and that central control inhibits (and in some cases stifles) debate and leads to a de-intellectualisation of the debate around curriculum (Kelly, A. 2009, p. 235). Seddon (2001) adds that educational provision is no longer shaped and governed by curriculum, but is increasingly an outcome of identity politics (Seddon, 2001, p. 320).

There can be little doubt that the Federal Labor government believed that schools and the curriculums they enacted were not achieving what they saw as desirable and essential. In the January prior to the 2007 Federal election, Kevin Rudd (then Federal Labor Opposition leader) and Stephen Smith (then Shadow Minister for Education and Training) released a directions paper on the critical link between long term prosperity, productivity growth and human capital investment (Rudd & Smith, 2007b). This paper, a forerunner to the release of specific policy statements in education, argued for new education policies. Such policies would allow businesses to grow to compete in global markets, provide productivity growth for future prosperity, and provide social dividends including building a fairer society (Rudd & Smith, 2007b, p. 5). This paper was, in fact, the justification for the education revolution, including the implementation of an Australian Curriculum, once the Rudd government was elected.

2.2.4 Curriculum as Cultural Reproduction: One viewpoint of curriculum is that it should reflect the culture of a particular society (Print, 1993, p. 6). Through the curriculum, salient knowledge and values are passed on from one generation to the succeeding generation. This, of course, assumes that there is consensus on what the predominant values and knowledge that are worthwhile enough to be passed on, are. While Basil Bernstein has suggested that pedagogy is a 'uniquely human device for both the production and reproduction of culture' (Bernstein, 2004, p. 196), it has been argued that through the curriculum the knowledge that is 'reproduced' in schools creates a stratified social order and perpetuates the values, ideas and dispositions of dominant social classes (see, for example, Apple, 2005; Giroux, 1981; Handelsman, 2011; Karabel and Halsey, 1978).

Educators such as Apple (2005) and Giroux (1981) have been prominent in arguing that knowledge reproduced in this way creates a stratified social order and perpetuates the values and interests of a dominant social class. Apple (1978) attests that the view that what is taught in schools is objective knowledge, and further, describes the idea that teachers are nonpartisan public servants standing above the clash of political interests as indefensible and ingenuous. He therefore continued to pose two basic questions. The first question he asked was 'What are the manifest and latent social functions of the knowledge that is taught in schools?', and followed this up with, 'How do the principles of selection and organisation that are used to plan, order and evaluate that knowledge, function in the cultural and economic reproduction of class relations?' (Apple, 1978, p. 372). In posing these questions Apple established an

argument to demonstrate the linkages between the curriculum (in terms of both form and content), the system of economic production, and the maintenance of class relations. As Bowers (1980, p. 268) succinctly summarised the issue: ‘cultural transmissions, of which school knowledge is an important part, not only are shaped by the mode of economic production, but in turn reproduce in the consciousness of people the ideas, values, and norms that maintain the relations of reproduction.’

An early case study in this field (Anyon, 1981) provides evidence to support a cultural reproductive theory of curriculum, that is, that the existing economic and political structures are perpetuated through the knowledge that is taught in schools. In her study, Anyon collected data on school knowledge from five primary (elementary) schools which were differentiated by social class in two districts in New Jersey, USA. Although there were several similarities in curriculum among the schools in this study – indeed, all schools were bound by the same state requirements – dramatic differences existed in students’ experience of the curricula in these schools, leading Anyon to conclude that the curriculum reproduced the maintenance of social class (Anyon, 1981, pp. 3 – 42). Three decades later, Luke (2010b), in reference to Anyon’s research, described it as a ‘landmark work’ that ‘presented a carefully detailed description of the school-level sociological processes of social class reproduction in curriculum and instruction’ (Luke, 2010b, p. 167).

Other examples of writers who support this theory include Willis (1977), who used ethnographic methods in studying how an English secondary school struggled with working-class ideology and conflict (cited in Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 123). From an Australian perspective, the seminal work of Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett (1982) in their study of fourteen-year-old students and their families in two capital cities – Sydney and Adelaide – further adds to this. Their conclusion was that working-class families were disadvantaged by the education provided by society and that the structures of inequality in society were confirmed and reproduced by schooling (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982). Bluntly put:

The simplest...answer to the question ‘why educational inequality?’ is that the schools are designed to produce it. They are set up to ‘sort and sift’, to give elite training to the children of the rich, to prepare others for the assembly line, and to legitimate the results...To produce educational inequality is the proper business of schools performing their function of reproducing an unequal social order. (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982, pp. 189 – 190)

This function of cultural reproduction through the curriculum is often seen as a veiled process. Bourdieu (1973) puts it quite forcefully when he states:

(A)mong all the solutions put forward throughout history to the problem of the transmission of power and privileges, there surely does not exist one that is better concealed... than that solution which the educational system provides by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of class relations and by concealing, by an

apparently neutral attitude, the fact that it fills this function. (Bourdieu, 1973, pp. 487 – 488)

There can be little doubt that one of the basic cornerstones of the Australian Curriculum is the provision of equity in schools, which is the antithesis of the conceptualisation of curriculum as cultural reproduction and ostensibly the entrenchment of class structure. It will be argued later in the section dealing with Third Way ideology, that equity became a dominant factor in the Rudd government's educational program, at least at a rhetorical level, as equity was overshadowed by the economic imperative. However, there can be little to suggest that curriculum as cultural reproduction is represented in the Australian Curriculum. The Melbourne Declaration clearly stated that equity was to be promoted and that all school sectors and governments needed to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 15).

2.2.5 Curriculum as '*currere*': This characterisation views curriculum as a process of providing continuous personal meaning to individuals (Print, 1993, p. 6). The root of such a characterisation lies in the word *currere* or the infinitive 'to be running' and so it is a characterisation based not on the 'racecourse' but on the 'running of the race'. That is, curriculum is seen as a personal experience. Curriculum as *currere* represents a move from curriculum as a noun to a verb and in doing so broadens the meaning of curriculum (Doll, 2002, p. 43). As Print (1993) states: 'this characterisation emphasises an experiential perspective to learning and hence to the curriculum – the curriculum is the interpretation of lived experience' (p. 6). *Currere*, it is claimed, also refers to an existential experience of institutional structures (Marsh, 2009, p.255).

The term *currere* was introduced by Pinar (1974) but was elaborated on and developed in the mid-1970s by Pinar and Grumet (1976), so that a *currere* oriented curriculum begins with the personal experiences of the student but goes beyond that by asking the student to reflect on what is happening as they move through that experience and progress through the curriculum. Doll (2002) attempts to summarise this by stating that 'in simple terms, *currere* is the self's exploration of its experiences...; in more complex terms, it is the relation of the self to the self in the self's evolution within the world' (Doll, 2002, p. 44). A more succinct view of the method of *currere* is provided by Marsh (2009), who states that it is 'a strategy for self-reflection that enables the individual to encounter experience more fully and more clearly, as if creating a highly personal autobiography' (Marsh, 2009, p. 255). This conceptualisation of curriculum facilitates movement away from institutionalised curriculum, that is, curriculum development that serves the interest of powerful entities such as the state; a factor that has been attributed to Pinar (Schubert, 2009, p. 139). To this extent there is little to suggest that curriculum as *currere* is a feature of the Australian Curriculum.

Having considered where the curriculum perceptions and curriculum characterisations, as summarised by Print (1993), have impacted the Australian Curriculum, let us now turn our attention to the main argument that the new national Australian Curriculum is an amalgam of a Reconstructionist conceptualisation of curriculum and a reflection of Third Way ideology in its concept with a stronger essentialist curriculum orientation in its design.

2.3 The Australian Curriculum – Cloaked in Essentialism?

An argument could be made that the current exposition of the Australian Curriculum, with its foundations in the Melbourne Declaration, has a conceptual commitment to essentialism. Essentialism is a traditional philosophy underpinning curriculum design that implies teaching and learning focus on things that are essential to success in life (Ellis, 2004, p. 109). Essentialism arose as a reaction to progressivism in education with a strong foundation in the USA. Prior to this, progressivism had been a dominant educational philosophy which focused on the whole child rather than on content or the teacher (Cohen, 1999). It was an educational philosophy founded on the firm belief that students should test ideas by active experimentation; that they should be active rather than passive and ‘experience the world’ (Cohen, 1999). Progressivism was the antithesis to traditional education which had emphasised formal methods of instruction and mental learning (Knight, 1998, p. 98). The comment by Arthur Bestor, one of the major advocates of essentialism in the 1950s, that ‘the men who drafted our [the USA] constitution were not trained for the task by field trips to the mayor’s office and the county jail’ (quoted in Perkinson, 1977, p. 93) is indicative of the critique by essentialists of the contribution to education made by progressivism.

Essentialists do not have a singular philosophic base. Knight (1998, p. 113) contends that the underlying philosophies of essentialism are idealism and realism, which implies a more conservative viewpoint of education with the role of schools being to ‘transmit tested facts and truth’ (Knight, 1998, p. 113) rather than concerning itself with innovation or ‘educational frills’. With a philosophical base of idealism and realism, the curriculum foci for essentialists are essential skills and what have been classified as the essential subjects of English, arithmetic, science, history, and foreign languages (Ornstein, 2003, p. 6). Thus the curriculum has a dual emphasis on back to basics and excellence in education – which is clearly reflected in the Australian Curriculum. It further implied, particularly at the time of the launching of *Sputnik* in 1957, that the essentialists were advocating that schools should prepare young people ‘to enter an intensive and rigorous professional or technological course of study’ (Knight, 1998, p. 114). Knight (1998, p. 113) further asserts that essentialism forms the main stream of popular educational thought in most countries.

Perennialism, which advocates that the aim of education is to ensure that students acquire understandings about the great ideas of Western civilisation, is another traditional philosophy that is often discussed alongside essentialism. While Ellis (2004) concedes that essentialism and perennialism are both traditional philosophies of education, he acknowledges that there are considerable differences between the two (Ellis, 2004, p. 113). Kneller (1971, pp. 60 – 61) concurs, listing three pivotal differences, these being:

1. That essentialism, being more concerned with the adjustment of students to their physical and social environment than perennialism, is less intellectual.
2. Essentialism is more willing to accept and use the positive contributions of progressivism in its pedagogy.

3. Essentialists see the great works of the past as one of many possible sources for the study of present problems whereas the perennialists place a far greater emphasis on these works.

Knight (1998, p. 118) adds another difference stating that the major thrust of perennialism has traditionally been directed at higher education. Perennialists were concerned with the cultivation of the intellect through a demanding curriculum centring on the laws or principles of science and the great works of art and literature (Cohen, 1999). Conversely, the essentialists have been primarily concerned with the primary and secondary levels of education. Essentialists believed that schooling should be practical, preparing students to become valuable members of society. A focus on teaching students to read, write, speak and compute logically was emphasised. Thus it can be argued that there is, by extension, a stronger interconnectedness between essentialism and the curriculum conceptualisations driving the Australian Curriculum, than there is with perennialism.

Other writers, however, do not make this distinction (Chiarelott, 2006) and there is a danger of discussing essentialism almost as a synonym for perennialism. To do this here would mean applying the more rigid interpretation of this academic rationalist conceptualisation to an analysis of its influence on the Australian Curriculum. The observations that are cited below are based on the first mentioned viewpoint that recognises the differences between the two, and thus reflect an essentialist stance.

One of the claims of essentialism is that its advocates are more inclined to embrace newer additions to the curriculum such as technology than are classical humanists, for example, as they more readily accept that when society changes so must the course of study. Essentialists also have a greater focus on the national interest. Ellis (2004) elaborates on this when he states that essentialists provide a ‘modern view of academic disciplines with all that entails’ as against a ‘timeless view of virtue’ (p. 113).

The essentialists call for basics, standards, testing, and a core knowledge curriculum and it is these features that align this conceptualisation of curriculum with the Australian Curriculum. Added to this is the view held by essentialists that the curriculum should be set or planned by those in authority as opposed to a progressive learner-centred stance. As Ellis (2004) states:

Essentialists...agree that students are not capable of deciding what they should study. A curriculum must be put together by experts and carried out by people of authority. Students need to learn the knowledge, skills and values that conscientious adults have decided are needed for future success. Essentialists...view schooling as the training ground for adult life. (Ellis, 2004, p. 113).

This view reflects Print’s (1993) conception of a ‘recommended’ curriculum; one that is written by experts for students to follow. As mentioned earlier the curriculum content of the Australian Curriculum has been proposed by scholars, at least by those ordained by ACARA, and it is intended to meet a need; that being to achieve the goals stated in the *Melbourne Declaration*.

With an essentialist curriculum, assessment is characterised by the use of letter grades, marked papers and standard tests. Much of this can be found in the philosophy of the Australian Curriculum with its Achievement Standards and its insistence on a reporting framework based on an A – E scale. Alongside this, of course, is the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN); another of ACARA's shared responsibilities. NAPLAN commenced in Australian schools in 2008 and is a program whereby all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are assessed on the same days using national tests in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy. While ACARA is responsible for the development of the NAPLAN tests, the administration is an individual state function; for example, in Victoria the NAPLAN tests are implemented by the Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority (VCAA). Rizvi and Lingard (2010), while discussing Bernstein's three message systems of schooling, that is, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation, postulate that the current major concern for testing and accountability has extended this. They state:

Increasingly, systems of education around the world have begun to steer their systems using standardised testing regimes, both national and international. Indeed, it could be argued that testing now constitutes a fourth message system, through which central policymakers seek to steer local practice through various demands and structures of accountability. Indeed, testing has become a central element in policy regimes. (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 94).

It can be argued that this is the situation in Australia and that this is reflected strongly in the work of ACARA both through NAPLAN and the Australian Curriculum. In doing so, it therefore mirrors an essentialist philosophy to a certain degree.

The Australian Curriculum also exhibits a further characteristic of essentialism in that the curriculum is organised into separate subjects. The Australian Curriculum is subject or discipline based and thus the observations made by Brown (2006) in his analyses of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework that this structure provides a basis for orienting school content around the time-tested content of academic disciplines hold true in the Australian context also. As Brown (2006) states:

These (scholastic disciplines) are based fundamentally on the conception that curriculum should deliver, to young citizens, the important knowledge and content, brought down across the centuries, that are so valuable we wish all citizens to know them – herein lies the cultural canon of twenty-first century Western urban-industrial nations. (Brown, 2006, p. 169).

Usually an essentialist curriculum is cited as an academic education providing students with a broad, liberal subject-based education that includes mathematics, science, history, geography and various elements of English with an emphasis on grammar and literature. It is possibly no coincidence that the four Phase 1 subjects of the Australian Curriculum were Mathematics, Science, History and English, with Geography a Phase 2 discipline. It is also relevant to note that the Australian Curriculum in English re-focused on grammar and was constructed with

three strands, one of which was literature. This clearly reflects a strong ideological commitment to essentialism in the design of the Australian Curriculum. Haralambous (2011) opines that the weightiness of the content description in the ACARA curriculum documents suggests essentialism but one that is at odds with the reconstructionist orientation of the *Melbourne Declaration* (Haralambous, 2011, p. 4).

The essentialist curriculum can also be described as Janus-like, looking at the future with an eye on the past. Ellis (2004) is helpful in developing this observation. He states:

It [an essentialist curriculum] is a future-oriented curriculum in that it asks ‘what knowledge and skills will students need to prepare them for future life?’ But it is also a past-oriented curriculum in that it advocates a return to the ‘higher standards’ of the past. (Ellis, 2004, p. 118).

Similar sentiments were expressed about the Australian Curriculum by the then Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, in her Second Reading Speech for the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority Bill 2008. Minister Gillard stated that the new national curriculum would be future-oriented and that it would ‘equip our young people with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to compete internationally and thrive in the globalised economies of the future’ while also stating that ‘it will be grounded in the best of the traditional disciplines’ (Gillard, 2008c). Haralambous (2011) described this in a maritime metaphor as two contrasting philosophical cargoes jostling with each other for focal attention, stating that ‘while progressive features, bearing the momentum of a large wave, push towards the shoreline of the global world, conservative elements form an undercurrent pulling the curriculum back towards past national traditions and strengths’ (Haralambous, 2011, p. 1).

Essentialists generally advocate a number of character qualities which are also in tune with those underpinning the Australian Curriculum. The qualities espoused by essentialists include respect for others, individual rights and responsibilities, an adherence to democracy, and the virtues of effort and self-discipline. It is claimed that the essentialists have ‘a clear view of social/moral propriety and issues of character development’ (Ellis, 2004, p. 123). Mirroring these qualities are those found in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, the document that guided the curriculum development work of ACARA (ACARA, 2010a, p. 4). Table 2.1 briefly identifies four character qualities fundamental to essentialist thinking along with similar extracts from the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*.

Table 2.1 Character Qualities. A Synchronisation of Essentialist Thoughts and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*

Character Qualities Fundamental to an Essentialist Worldview	Selected Goals as cited in the <i>Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians</i>
Respect for Others	Develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others. Relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships.
Individual Rights and Responsibilities	Accept responsibility for their own actions. Act with moral and ethical integrity. Participate in Australia's civic life. Are responsible global and local citizens.
Committed to Democracy	Have an understanding of Australia's system of government. Are committed to national values of democracy.
Effort and Self Discipline	Develop their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning. Able to plan activities independently. Motivated to reach their full potential. Embrace opportunities.

In summary, it would not be valid to represent the Australian Curriculum solely as an essentialist curriculum. However, it needs to be recognised that elements of an essentialist conceptualisation are clearly present in the documentation that has been produced by ACARA and accepted by MCEETYA – certainly at Phase 1. Characteristics of an essentialist curriculum are evident in the Australian Curriculum. The belief that when society changes, so must its curriculum; the focus on national interest; and a curriculum organised into separate subjects and set or planned by those in authority are some of those characteristics. So too are the advocacy of basics, standards, testing, the use of letter grades and a core knowledge curriculum; and a curriculum that ‘looks at the future with an eye on the past’. Added to this is the reality that the character traits and qualities that essentialists value are reflected in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* and, indeed, as capabilities embedded into the Phase 1 Australian Curriculum subjects, which gives credence to the claim that an essentialist conceptualisation is, to some degree, evidenced in the Australian Curriculum.

2.4 The Australian Curriculum and Third Way Ideology: Is There a Nexus?

The arguments for the evolving constructs of the Australian Curriculum are varied and are summarised in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 2.0* (ACARA, 2010a, pp. 5 – 6). They include a rationale for the need to become ‘Asia literate’, to be able to respond to

complex and global environmental pressures, and to appreciate the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Equally prominent notions in the rationales for current development of curriculum documents are the rapid and continuing advances in information and communication technologies, the need to contribute to the creation of a more productive, sustainable and just society, and a sense of global citizenship through global integration and international mobility (ACARA, 2010a, pp. 5 – 6). The nexus between globalisation and education is well documented (see for example Apple, 2010; Ball, 2008; Green, 2006; Neubauer, 2007; Rizvi, 2007; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Rizvi and Lingard (2010), for example, contend that the processes that now frame education policy are often constituted globally and beyond the nation-state, even if they are still articulated in nationally specific terms (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 3).

The response of many countries to the forces associated with globalisation has been to adopt a ‘Third Way’ political approach (Naidoo, 2000, p. 24) to deal with the many issues that globalisation brings. Third Way politics, according to Hamilton (2001), dominated the Left from the 1990s and was a term that was coined ‘as part of the reinvention of social democratic and labour parties in response to the wave of neo-liberalism that captured the world in the 1980s and early 1990s’ (Hamilton, 2001, p. 90). To Rizvi and Lingard (2010) ‘Third Way’ is a term used to describe a variety of political approaches to governance that embrace a mix of market and state interventionist philosophies (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 190). Leigh (2003, p. 10) attributes the growth of the Third Way in the late 1990s in large part to the publication of two seminal works: Anthony Giddens’ *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* and Tony Blair’s *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century*. Peter Wilby, editor of the *New Statesman*, links the Third Way to the economic and political revolution of the 1980s and suggests that for those from the non-Conservative side of politics, the Third Way enabled them to say ‘Well, now we have had this revolution, what do we do about it? How do we humanise it?’ (Wilby, quoted in Midgley, 1998). Hamilton (2001) stated:

Uneasy both with the harshness of Thatcherism and the untenability of socialism, advocates of the Third Way looked for a means of grafting traditional social democratic concern for equality and social justice onto an economic system based on free markets... As a political program, the Third Way implicitly accepts the two most important ideas of the First Way – that the principle objective of government should be to increase the rate of economic growth, and that the best way to achieve this objective is through the free operation of private markets. (Hamilton, 2001, p. 90).

Definitions of the Third Way in the literature are many with a number of variations (e.g. Bastow & Martin, 2003; Dickson, 1999; Giddens, 2008). However, using the pronouncements of Blair’s Labour Government in Britain (Blair, 1998) as a yard stick, it appears that it is a philosophy with three cornerstones, these being that a government should promote

- equal opportunity for all while granting special privilege to none;
- an ethic of mutual responsibility that equally rejects the politics of entitlement and the politics of social abandonment; and

- a new approach to governing that empowers citizens to act for themselves. (New Democrats On Line, n.d).

Hamilton's (2001) assessment of this argument is that the first two cornerstones, at least, are core principles of the modern Australian Labor Party (Hamilton, 2001, p. 91) and therefore would most likely be reflected in Labor Government policies. Certainly as far as Rudd's education revolution is concerned, Keating (2009) for one has described this as 'third wayish' (Keating, 2009, p. 5), while Rizvi and Lingard (2010) also claim that in the wake of the global financial crisis, Rudd has 'clearly articulated a third way position' (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 190). Prior to the election of a Labor Government in Australia, Kevin Rudd, in his maiden speech to the House of Representatives on 11th November 1998, made reference to the Third Way as the creation of a competitive economy while advancing the overriding imperative of a just society, although he added that the nomenclature (Third Way) was unimportant (Rudd, 1998). Jackman (2008) describes Rudd as a vocal advocate of reclaiming the radical centre by embracing the Third Way ideology (Jackman, 2008, pp. 81-82). She continues that after Labor's 2001 federal election loss Rudd 'called openly for his party to adopt the Third Way approach, citing Labor's consistent failure to win more than one-third of the seats in his home state as evidence of the crying need for a fundamental overhaul' (Jackman, 2008, p. 82). While conceding that the Australian Labor Party had plenty of other advocates of Third Way politics, including former leader Mark Latham, Jackman argues that what Rudd added was 'an implacably clinical style, honed by years of working at senior levels in the public service, that saw little value in an attractive philosophical position unless it could be converted into practical application' (Jackman, 2008, p. 82).

Anthony Giddens (2008), (now Lord Giddens), Director of the London School of Economics and one of the foremost writers on the Third Way, posits that governments exist to, among other things, promote the active development of human capital through its core role in the education system. He at times discusses this ideology in terms of moving towards a social investment state, advocating that the cultivation of human potential should as far as possible replace welfare and what he calls 'after the event' redistribution (Giddens, 2008, p. 101). He states:

Education and training have become the new mantra for social democratic politicians. Tony Blair famously describes his three main priorities in government as 'education, education, education'. The need for improved education skills and skills training is apparent in most industrial countries... Investment in education is an imperative of government today, a key basis of the 'redistribution of possibilities'. (Giddens, 2008, p. 109).

In a brief account of the 'intellectuals of New Labour' in England, Ball (2008) credits Giddens with taking part in the original Blair-Clinton dialogues on the Third Way from 1997 onwards; having a profound impact on politics; and having his advice sought by political leaders from numerous countries including Australia (Ball, 2008, p. 104).

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) likewise proclaim the pre-eminence of education, arguing that with a third way approach 'social and educational policies are not simply derived from economic policies but play an equally important role in the development of society that is both economically productive and socially inclusive' (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 190); while Olssen et al (2004) state that the dual mantras of Third Way politics are education and globalisation (Olssen, et al, 2004, p. 245).

The writings of the 19th century German philosopher and theologian, Georg Hegel (1770-1831), can be seen as underpinning Third Way ideological thought. In particular, the Third Way can be viewed as a spin-off from Hegel's dialectic interpretation of history: out of two conflicting positions a synthesis or settlement arises (see Miller, 1969, translation). Applying this to the Australian Curriculum, the two positions in question are these. First is the economic imperative of developing human capital to 'equip our young people with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to compete internationally and thrive in the globalised economies of the future' (Gillard, 2008c). Second is the desire for equity and improving the education and welfare of the disadvantaged: to paraphrase Gillard, to build an educational system equal to anything in the world for all Australians, regardless of their socio-economic background or geographical location. Based on this argument, it is evident that the Third Way conceptualisation is reflected in the current Australian Curriculum initiative through combining an economic rationalist priority or focus with an equally strong equity priority. In a more recent publication Giddens (2010, p. 73) states that the key force in human capital development obviously has to be education. He contends that education is the main public investment that can foster both economic efficiency and civic cohesion. He continues by asserting that education is not a static input into the knowledge economy, but is itself being transformed by it. This has important implications for an analysis of the Australian Curriculum.

A major feature of the Australian Curriculum has been the embedding of capabilities. Initially these were ten in number - literacy; numeracy; information and communications technology; thinking skills; creativity; self-management; teamwork; intercultural understanding; ethical behaviour; and social competence. These were later reduced to seven when thinking skills and creativity were combined to become critical and creative thinking, and likewise self-management, teamwork and social competence were morphed into personal and social competence. ACARA made it clear in their development of the Australian Curriculum that:

...21st century learning does not fit neatly into a curriculum solely organised by learning areas or subjects that reflect the disciplines. Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities that apply across subject-based content and equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world. (ACARA, December 2010a, p. 18).

This approach is mirrored in the Third Way writings on education. Giddens (2010, p. 74) puts it succinctly, but clearly, when he states that education needs to be redefined to focus on capabilities that individuals will be able to develop throughout life. From a business perspective Deidre Eastburn, chairperson of the National Education Business Partnerships Network, a

group that represents 150 business/school partnerships in the UK, stated that she welcomed the Third Way ideology in education because basic skills were seen to be more than just functional literacy and numeracy. These included skills that enabled people to join a work team, and demonstrate both initiative and the attitudes required to be part of an organisation (Eastburn, quoted in Midgley, 1998). These thoughts are echoed by many academics, teachers and educational commentators. Professor Guy Claxton from the University of Winchester, for example, states that it is not enough to leave school with a clutch of examination certificates. He writes, 'You have to have learnt how to be tenacious and resourceful, imaginative and logical, self-disciplined and self-aware, collaborative and inquisitive' (Claxton, 2010, p. 3). The UNESCO Kronberg Declaration (2007) endorsed this greater emphasis on capabilities, predicting that over the next twenty-five years educational institutions (referred to in the report as knowledge acquisition and sharing institutions) will need to focus more closely on the development of social and emotional abilities and skills, and come to a wider, value-based concept of education. The report also stated that the importance of acquiring factual knowledge will decrease, whereas the ability to find one's way in complex systems and to find, judge, organise and use relevant information creatively, as well as the capability to learn, will become crucially important (UNESCO, 2007, p. 2). Wescombe-Down (2009) likewise, in presenting arguments against content-based teaching practices and 'pedagogical abuse', states that learning in schools is 'about the development in our students of beliefs, values, skills, confidence and knowledge-acquisition processes that form the platform upon which they can build for the remainder of their lives' (Wescombe-Down, 2009, p. 20).

The concept of a range of general capabilities embedded into the Australian Curriculum was not without precedent. The genesis of general capabilities can be traced back to the development of work-related key competencies and competency-based schooling in many Western nations in the 1990s when generic employability skills were identified as crucial attributes to enable successful participation in the labour market. This was an era when the teaching of generic employability skills had been identified globally as significant to a country's economic security, and its importance as a capacity-building tool for labour markets into the future was highlighted (Cushnahan, 2009).

This trend reflected policy proposals explicitly outlined in an OECD publication *Education and the Economy in a Changing Society* (OECD, 1989). The educational changes proposed by this document included, amongst others, the conceptualisation of skills as competencies; the emphasising of competencies as nationally recognised, work related, documented, transferable skills; and the prioritisation of outcomes such as positive attitudes to innovation, team-work, and productivity (Soucek, 1992, p. 37). In Australia, this direction was espoused in two major reports, commonly referred to as the Finn Report (1991) and the Mayer report (1992). Soucek (1992) comments on these and their relevance to competencies thus:

The notion of work-related educational competence underpins the thinking of all major educational policy documents commissioned by the Australian Education Council (AEC) which emerged in the wake of the 1989 OECD's educational policy statement. There are, however, two key documents that deal specifically with the issue of work-related competency standards in Australian schools. These are the Report of

the Australian Education Council Review Committee, *Young People's Participation in Post-compulsory Education and Training* (the Finn Report), published in July, 1991, and the Mayer Committee Report, *Employment-related Key Competencies: A Proposal for Consultation* (the Mayer Report), published in May, 1992. Whereas the Mayer Report looks specifically at the key competencies in the post-compulsory schooling, that is, from the Year 11 onwards, the Finn Report took a broader view and included in its considerations the primary and secondary schooling years. Thus among other things it recommends that key competencies, which are explicitly employment related, be incorporated into the school curriculum from Year 4 onwards, and through the key competencies present in school subject profiles from Year 1. (Soucek, 1992, p. 37).

Soucek (1992) listed the key areas of competence as language and communication; using mathematics; scientific and technological understanding; cultural understanding; problem solving; and personal and interpersonal (Soucek, 1992, p. 39). Table 2.2 highlights the congruence between these competencies and the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum some two decades later. So it can be argued that the positioning of capabilities in the Australian Curriculum, although not entirely a new concept but one predicated on earlier competencies, reflects a Third Way orientation, which also emphasises the development of capabilities.

Table 2.2. An alignment of the Finn/Mayer competencies to the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum.

Finn/Mayer Competencies	Australian Curriculum General Capabilities
Language and communication	Literacy
Using mathematics	Numeracy
Scientific and technological understanding	Information communication technology (ICT) capability
	Intercultural understanding
Cultural understanding	Critical and creative thinking
Problem solving	Personal and social capability
Personal and interpersonal	

Likewise, equality of opportunity is a major platform in Third Way ideology, and this is very evident in the Australian Curriculum. Leigh (2003, p. 10) makes the point that there are five ideas that encapsulate the core of Third Way thinking, with one of these being equality of opportunity. However, with this ideology there has been a move away from what has sometimes been in the past an obsession with inequality, as well as a rethink as to what equality is. That does not mean that social democrats advocating a Third Way approach should accept that inequality is inevitable, but rather come to a realization that equality must contribute to diversity, not stand in its way. Fabian Commissioner on Child Poverty, Professor Ruth Lister (2010), makes the same point, commenting that:

A common counter-argument against greater equality is that it would stifle diversity and impose uniformity. In fact, it is *inequalities* that prevent the flourishing of human diversity and potential. Moreover, it is not just socio-economic inequalities associated with social class, which undermine equality of opportunity and social inclusion, but the inequalities stemming from diversity itself – notably inequalities associated with gender, ethnicity, aboriginality or disability. (Lister, 2010, p.4).

Under a Third Way program, equality is viewed in terms of inclusion while inequality is seen as exclusion, thus access to education provides one of the main contexts of opportunity. Ball (2008) maintains that in the British context, the vision of equality evident not only in educational policy but more generally within the Third Way, is that of ‘opportunity, removing barriers and providing possibilities for those with energy and talent’ (Ball, 2008, p. 181). He continues:

This is a manifestation of the political underpinnings of the Third Way which ... involves combining social solidarity with a dynamic economy, strives for equal opportunity not equal outcomes, promotes pluralism in welfare supply and concentrates on wealth and income creation, not their distribution. (Ball, 2008, p. 181).

Similarly, the manner in which the Third Way advocates equality has become more synonymous with equity, with ‘fairness’ or equality of opportunity being the preeminent focus. This mantra of ‘inclusion’ is one that arises consistently in the words of Australian Curriculum advocates. Former Opposition Labor leader Mark Latham has described the Third Way as having a ‘radical purpose: empowering people, changing the pattern of influence and control in society’ and ‘enabling the disenfranchised and the disadvantaged to do more for themselves in life’ (Latham, 2005, p. 97). It should be noted here that Julia Gillard, the Minister for Education who initially guided the early stages of the Australian Curriculum was, prior to the Rudd Labor election, a prominent Shadow Minister during the time of Latham’s ALP leadership. Latham had been a strong advocate of Third Way ideologies and expressed these in his writings, especially in *Civilising Global Capital* (1998) and his educational and schooling manifesto *What Did You Learn Today?* (2001). It could well be argued that Latham’s views in part influenced Gillard’s thinking; she being then a rising but young (in terms of parliamentary experience) politician. The downside here is that Latham’s advocacy of Third Way ideologies probably contributed to politicians disassociating themselves from the term, as Rudd did in his maiden speech. Leigh (2003) suggests that Latham, on resigning from the front bench in 1998, set out to become a ‘policy entrepreneur and media commentator *nonpareil*’ and made his name synonymous with the Third Way to such an extent that ‘virtually no other politician...was willing to use the term to describe their own political beliefs’ (Leigh, 2003, p. 12).

That equity became a dominant factor in the Rudd government’s educational program is self-evident. In a speech given at the 6th Annual Higher Education Summit in Sydney in April 2008 Julia Gillard, who in addition to being Minister for Education was also Minister for Social Inclusion, stated that ‘equity is important to our education and training systems in so many ways’ (Gillard, 2008d). She went on to say:

A nation that thinks of itself as essentially egalitarian can't sit by idly while those from disadvantaged backgrounds are denied the life opportunities that come from higher education – things like higher incomes, career progression, intellectual fulfilment and self-knowledge. Studies show that education is one of the strongest guarantees of individual prosperity, social mobility and economic security. (Gillard, 2008d).

Although addressing an audience of educators from the higher education sector and focusing on post school education, Gillard pointed out that this equity issue required a solution prior to university education. She stated:

Of course, we know that the reasons why students from disadvantaged backgrounds don't make it to higher education usually have their roots far earlier in life. Compelling international evidence tells us that unless children receive a good grounding in their early years, their educational progress will be held back. This means our approach to equity must be broad and deep. Efforts must start in the early years. (Gillard, 2008d)

This places a focus on more than just educational opportunities in schools. It presents a case for the re-focusing of research and public policy from education systems towards families and early childhood welfare and reflects Gillard's dual ministerial role of education and social inclusion. The 'cultural capital' of families is arguably decisive (Esping-Andersen, 2006).

Boyd (2014) claims that Gillard 'intimated that any educational revolution must be such that it not only improves the quality of Australian education, but also the equity of it'. Gillard continued in other speeches to espouse this third wayish notion of equity. For example, at the National Public Education Forum in Canberra in March 2009 she repeated her catchcry that 'disadvantage is not destiny', arguing that the government had a responsibility to every child in Australia to deliver them the highest quality education and stating that 'a global, knowledge-driven economy makes an excellent education for every child a necessity, not an optional extra' (Gillard, 2009). In this speech, Gillard cited the examples of three schools (Punchbowl Boys High School in Western Sydney; Debney Park Secondary School in Melbourne; and Cherbourg State Primary School in Queensland) praising the principals for having 'a commitment to equity in their DNA' which led them to challenge the status quo, to focus on the basics of literacy and numeracy for every child and to seek out partnerships with the wider community (Gillard, 2009).

Prior to his election as Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd had consistently espoused equality of opportunity. In his maiden speech to Parliament in 1998, he made a number of references, stating, among other things, that equality of opportunity begins in the school system; that government should have as its foremost guiding principle a commitment to equality of opportunity that is real rather than rhetorical; and that education is both a tool of social justice as well as a fundamental driver of economic development (Rudd, 1998).

Many of Prime Minister Rudd's speeches echoed similar sentiments. In the Sambell Oration delivered in October 2009, the first delivered by an Australian Prime Minister, Rudd stated that 'unless we make a priority of tackling entrenched social disadvantage, our economy will be weaker, not stronger', linking social disadvantage to poorer educational results, lower

productivity, worse health outcomes, shorter working lives and lower workforce participation (Rudd, 2009). He went on to say that:

Lifting the quality of education in our most disadvantaged schools, mandatory school testing, transparent reporting of school results, lifting teacher quality – all delivering the long-run payoff of higher school retention rates, leading to higher productivity and workforce participation in the long term...

These reforms are not a simple replication of classical Left demands for infinitely greater public spending. Nor are they about neo-liberal claims that the only good state is a non-existent state. No, the challenge of the responsible reforming centre of Australian politics is to harness personal responsibility with the support of the enabling state. To equip disadvantaged Australians with the capacity over time to take responsibility for their own lives... (Rudd, 2009, p.12).

Despite the rhetoric of equity, however, it is argued that the economic focus was far greater in the Australian Curriculum process. It has been asserted that the Third Way's ultimate objective is to utilise education to support a sustainable knowledge economy and that it has a distinct business orientation, aspiring to produce a specialist workforce which is highly trained to maximise economic return, thus vocationalising the curriculum (Maisuria, 2005, p. 144). Rizvi and Lingard (2010) stated that in Australia, despite the criticism by the Prime Minister of neoliberalism and its abundant failures, 'education policy is still conceptualised solely as contributing to economic productivity, with somewhat weaker acknowledgement and recognition of its social justice and social and cultural purposes' (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 201). This tended to reflect the earlier British experience. As Ball (2008, p. 150) has observed 'concerns about equity continue to be tagged on to the list of Labour's priorities rather than being central to their content or planning decisions about education'. Buchanan and Chapman (2011), in a critical examination of the Melbourne Declaration, put forward a strong argument that this document is underpinned by Human Capital theory, stating that it represents 'an economic reform agenda under the guise of educational improvement' (Buchanan and Chapman, 2011, p. 2). Building on Ball's (2008) assertion that the 'social and economic purposes of education have been collapsed into a single overriding emphasis on policy making for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect or sidelining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposes of education' (Ball, 2008, p. 11), Buchanan and Chapman declare that the policies for achieving the goals of the Melbourne Declaration – including the Australian Curriculum and the government's Digital Education Revolution – are 'a constellation of (sometimes contradictory) policy initiatives aimed at economic reform and achieving higher productivity and participation in the global knowledge economy' (Buchanan and Chapman, 2011, p. 3). In a similar vein, equity in access and outcomes, one of the five 'major areas of concern' listed by the secretary-general of the OECD on the establishment of a separate Directorate for Education by that intergovernmental organisation in 2002, has been rearticulated from concerns about social class correlations with educational performance to a greater emphasis on special needs education, gender and ethnicity (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006). This has relegated equity as a major concern, with a greater prominence given to 'a human

capital account of education, new forms of educational governance and a global space of comparative educational performance' (Rizvi & Lingard, 2006, p. 250).

Concurring with this, Reid (2009, p. 4) acknowledged the Rudd government's commitment to equity in the Australian Curriculum but conceded that this commitment was diluted by the dominance of the economic imperative. In recognising the presence of the equity factor, Reid commented that:

...(T)he Rudd government is foregrounding equity as a major goal of its education revolution. It is taking seriously the fact that too many students from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds have for too long been short-changed by the education system. The Howard government's emphasis on individual choice and education markets was always going to advantage those who have the largest helpings of economic, social and cultural capital. If it is a fundamental principle of a democratic society that all young people have an equal entitlement to a quality education, it follows that society must remove the barriers to successful participation in education. (Reid, 2009, p. 4).

Reid was, however, critical of the proposed Australian Curriculum for having only one reference to equity in its first *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper, counteracting ACARA's claim that equity would be taken seriously (Reid, 2009, p. 9). However ACARA, following the publication of Reid's paper, initiated a number of further developments. Included in these were presentations made at various forums by the Chair of ACARA, Professor Barry McGaw, in which he used the performance information from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) to point out Australia's ranking in various academic disciplines along with an analysis of this. One example of this is a lecture McGaw gave at Murdoch University's Banksia Association in August 2010. When speaking on social impacts on education and declaring that the socially advantaged students in every country are generally the educationally advantaged, he went on to say that:

Australia is a 'high-quality, low-equity' country, with a high average performance but a relatively steep social gradient. Canada, a country like Australia in many respects, is 'high-quality and high-equity'. Australia should aspire to be like it and others with a similar result. (Murdoch University, 2010).

McGaw's assessment of Australia as being 'high-quality, low-equity', however, is not universally accepted. Luke, Weir & Woods (2008), identify systems that achieve high average means in performance but with steep equity slopes, that is, 'high-quality, low-equity' systems, as being most developing countries as well as the USA, UK and Germany. Conversely they identify 'high-quality, high-equity' systems, that is, those that generate both high average means in performance but also flatter equity slopes, as being Finland, Sweden, Canada, Ireland and Korea. They conclude that Australia, along with New Zealand, is placed on the cusp between these two groups (Luke, Weir & Wood, 2008, pp. 41-42). On the other hand, Andreas Schleicher, who heads the Indicators and Analysis Division of OECD's Directorate of Education, places Australia in the 'high-quality, high-equity' category (Schleicher, 2007, cited in Luke, Weir & Wood, 2008, p. 42).

Luke, Weir & Wood (2008) identify a strong systemic equity focus as a factor contributing to high-quality, high-equity education systems, something for which the Labor Government, through the Australian Curriculum, is clearly aiming. To expand; Luke, Weir & Wood (2008) argue that high-quality, high-equity education systems are characterised by a balance of what they term ‘informed prescription’ and ‘informed professionalism’. They describe informed prescription as:

Informed prescription entails an economical syllabus that maps out essential knowledge, competences, skills, processes and experiences, parsimonious and appropriate testing systems for diagnostic and developmental purposes and systems’ accountability, and a *strong systemic equity focus on the potential of all learners to meet high expectations and standards*. (Luke, Weir & Wood, 2008, p. 1., emphasis added).

For most educators this would be self-evident. Informed professionalism likewise involves what would be expected, including:

- teacher autonomy to interpret the curriculum;
- the opportunity to integrate local curriculum planning into the prescribed syllabus;
- professional development activities and resources which are high in quality and ‘rich’;
- the capacity for school and classroom-based assessments; and
- the professional capacity to adapt curriculum for teaching and learning of identified equity groups. (Luke, Weir & Wood, 2008, p. 2.).

The concept of informed professionalism negates the argument (presented earlier) that a prescribed curriculum reduces teachers to technicians; as operatives or implementers. Marsh and Willis (2007) in the preface to their influential work *Curriculum: Alternative Approaches, Ongoing Issues* state that they base their work on a few basic assumptions. One of these is that ‘the most desirable educational experiences tend to arise when there is flexibility in translating plans into actions... In other words we believe that teachers need the ability to modify plans about what should take place in order to maximise the benefits of what does take place’ (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. xii). Reducing good classroom practice to one central maxim they advocate ‘precision in planning, flexibility in execution’ (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 4). With the Australian Curriculum intended to take account of 80 per cent of the curriculum in schools and pedagogy remaining the province of the teacher, the characteristics of informed professionalism are also evident in regards to teacher autonomy and the integration of local curriculum. Likewise, the characteristics of informed prescription are readily identifiable in the various ACARA curriculum documents and shaping papers.

In the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* papers produced for each of the Phase 1 disciplines (English, Mathematics, History, and Science), a separate section discussing equity was included to address that challenge. This was a further development that followed the publication of Reid’s 2009 paper. In the Mathematics paper, for example, there was a lengthy

discussion on equity and opportunity in three main sections, namely, the need to engage more students; ensuring the inclusion of all groups; and the challenge of creating opportunity. While it is not within the scope of this dissertation to delve into or expand on the points raised, it is useful to consider the section on inclusion as that is a core feature of Third Way ideology. One aspect discussed in the Mathematics Shaping Paper was the differential achievement among particular groups of students. Using the 2006 PISA results as an example, it was demonstrated that of the Australian students who achieved at the highest levels in mathematics in relation to their socioeconomic background, 6 per cent came from the low SES quartile while 29 percent came from the high SES quartile. Conversely, for those with relatively poor achievement at level 1 or below, 22 per cent came from the low SES quartile with only 5 per cent from the high SES quartile. It was noted that similar differences are evident when comparing non-Indigenous and Indigenous achievement, with differences also being noted between metropolitan, regional and remote students and, to a lesser extent, between boys and girls (ACARA, 2009c, p. 10). Clearly, with the inclusion of data such as this in the Shaping papers, government policy on equity was developing as a substantial platform in the Australian Curriculum. Having said that, this reinforces Lingard's views that transnational organisations such as the OECD who conduct the PISA assessments (along with other bodies such as UNESCO and the EU) now play an important role in 'forging educational policy at the level of national systems, and holding them accountable against international indicators and benchmarks of various kinds' (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. xii).

This focus on equity was further expanded in July 2011 when ACARA called for expressions of interest for membership of the Australian Curriculum Equity and Diversity Advisory Group. This group was formed to assist ACARA by providing advice from equity and diversity perspectives on both curriculum developments and information materials. The call was for members who had expertise about students from diverse contexts across Australia including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students for whom English is an additional language or dialect
- Students from rural and remote contexts
- Students from low socio-economic settings
- Students with disability
- Students with diverse personal or cultural backgrounds or religious affiliations
- Gifted and talented students
- Students with a combination of equity and diversity needs.

The Equity and Diversity Advisory Group first met with ACARA in August 2011 where they discussed the issue of inclusivity in relation to the Australian Curriculum. However, given all this, it should be noted that the view that a National Curriculum can contribute to equity is a contested one. A.V. Kelly (2009), for example, has stated that 'perhaps the most salient

absurdity is the simplistic assumption that equality of educational opportunity is to be secured by the provision of one common curriculum for all pupils' (Kelly, A.V. 2009, p. 229). He links the moves for a national curriculum (in the British context) to what he calls 'the simplistic desire for some form of comparative standards between schools' as advocated by politicians (Kelly, A.V. 2009, p. 229). In an unsubstantiated claim, he makes his views quite explicit: 'the rhetoric is often that of equality; the reality is the central planner's desire for a basis for comparison, evaluation and rankings' (Kelly, A.V. 2009, p. 229). Notwithstanding this, it appears that there are sound arguments to suggest that Third Way ideological thinking underpins vital aspects of the Australian Curriculum and is amongst the key conceptualisations on which the Australian Curriculum is founded.

2.5 A Social Reconstructionist Conceptualisation of the Australian Curriculum

Social Reconstructionists claim that the school curriculum should effect social reform and help produce a better society for all (see for example, Chiarelott, 2006, p. 24; Eisner & Vallance, 1974, p. 10; McNeil, 1996, p. 33; Print, 1993, p. 52; Schiro, 2008, p. 7). It is a conceptualisation that places a high value on the relationship between the curriculum and the political, economic, and social development of society. To achieve this, the needs and betterment of society are placed above the needs of the individual.

The nineteenth century socialist and utopian ideals were, according to Ornstein and Hunkins (1998, p. 50), the base from which reconstructionist theories and philosophies emerged, with a major impetus for their popularity being the effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Developed at that time as a movement that was disillusioned by the outcomes of progressive education, the call was for a 'society-centred education that took into consideration the needs of society (not the individual) and all classes (not only the middle class)' (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998, p. 50). Brameld (cited in Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998, p. 51) asserts that reconstructionism is 'a crisis philosophy, appropriate for a society in crisis' and that the curriculum had to be transformed to coincide with a new social-economic-political education by incorporating realistic reform strategies. It was a movement that, not satisfied with an analysis, interpretation and evaluation of problems as a part of the curriculum, demanded commitment and action to address those problems. It was a strong call for change agents – these being identified as students and teachers – and that through the curriculum, educators would effect social change and ultimately a more just society. Thus for many reconstructionists a genuine learning opportunity needed to fulfil three criteria. First it had to be *real*. Second, it required *action*. Finally, it needed to teach *values* (McNeil, 1996, p. 36).

Eisner and Vallance (1974) contend that there are two distinct branches of social reconstructionism which embrace both a present and a future orientation. From the literature, however, there are others who discuss three forms of social reconstructionist theory (see for example, McNeil, 1996, p. 34; Print, 1993, p. 52 - 53). The three perspectives are generally known as adaptation, social reconstructionism and futurism although McNeil (1996, p. 34)

refers to them as critical inquiry, revolution, and futurism. There are similarities and commonalities among the three forms. For example, Print (1993) contends that:

All three perspectives seek to foster a sense of critical discontent within learners in schools, though they differ considerably as to how extensive that should be. Certainly all three favour students being more critically aware of their environment at large and hence being able to facilitate societal reform. (Print, 1993, p. 53).

Considering each of these forms in turn we can observe differences in both orientation and degree of scale in relationship to societal change and in turn relate this to the Australian Curriculum.

Futurism: Curriculum futurologists advocate making deliberate choices about the kind of society and world we are to live in in the future. It is grounded in promoting probable futures based on studying trends and predicting or estimating the social consequences of the identified trends. In his seminal article published in 1971 the late Harold Shane, Professor of Education at Indiana University, provided a macro view of education as an agent of general social change. In it he provides a social reconstructionist set of educational goals which promotes a curriculum that plans the future rather than plans *for* the future (Shane, 1971, pp. 581 – 584). Writing almost twenty years later, Shane (1989) presented a list of what was, at that time, a sample of twelve global and national (USA) developments, ranging from rapid population growth, to pension and Medicare costs for an ageing population, to a crisis in child care. He then succinctly encapsulated the futurists' worldview by stating:

In view of the well-nigh incredible proliferation of change in global society and in our technologies, the inhabitants of this planet must supplement and extend our understandings of the new environments that surround us. We must develop 'educated foresight', the ability to understand the variety and the nature of the rapidly germinating techno-social climates of the 20th century... Once we comprehend the scope and significance of these developments, we can project their influence in the coming decade, then conceive the responses our society will be obliged to make. In other words, we will be learning to exercise educated foresight, with all its implications for curriculum planning and academic content. (Shane, 1989, p. 4).

Shane's writings, like those of other futurists, rejects fatalism – the notion of what will be, will be. It is predicated on a belief that while educators cannot foresee exactly what will happen in the future, that they can make informed projections about what is possible and probable. From that, with planning, they believe they can increase the probability that the stated preferences become reality through a process of reconstruction. Brameld (cited in Thomas, 1999, p. 261) expressed his view that social scientists identify the malady; utopians the direction for reconstruction; and experientialists a method for realising the vision. Thus, curriculum for social change, in the opinion of Brameld, would 'incorporate utopian reflection, social analysis, and democratic deliberation' (Thomas, 1999, p. 261). Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) provide an array of forecasting techniques including simulation, trend forecasting, intuitive forecasting, the Delphi procedure, scenario writing and force analysis (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998, p. 385

- 387). They also make a wide sweeping generalisation that, as educators do not create programs or engage students in them for the present, and certainly not for the past, then all educators are futurists (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998, p. 382).

Social Reconstructionism: Proponents of social reconstructionism see society as neither desirable nor a given, and so consequently a primary role of the school is to reconstruct society for the better (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 106). More specifically, it identifies what is wrong with society in comparison with the way it should be rather than contemplating what is wrong with the student vis-a-vis the way society actually is. By taking this approach social reconstructionists would advocate that the curriculum can then be designed with a view to correcting what is wrong with society (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 106). Print (1993) sees such a curriculum as serving as an agent for substantive social change rather than a bastion of the status quo (Print, 1993, p. 53). He further contends that 'by making students critically aware of their environment at large... societal reform will be facilitated in the future through students who are both knowledgeable of societal problems and motivated to resolve them' (Print, 1993, p. 53). Viewing education as a social process through which society can be reconstructed, social reconstructionists work from three assumptions. First, that society in its current form is unhealthy; second, that something can be done about this involving developing a vision of a better society; and third, that action to make the vision a reality is necessary (Schiro, 2008, p. 6).

A complimentary curriculum orientation to this form of social reconstructionism, which advocates action and knowledge as going hand in hand, and requires a two-way participation of the school in the life of the community and the community in the school is the socially-critical orientation, as articulated by Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (1983). As they state:

The socially-critical orientation is less sanguine about the improvement of society. If changes are to be wrought in our social structures ...then individual virtue and individual action will be insufficient to bring them about. They must be brought about by collective action capable of confronting unjust and irrational social structures... Education must engage society and social structures immediately, not merely prepare students for later participation. It must engage social issues and give students experience in working on them – experience in critical reflection, social negotiation and the organisation of action. (Kemmis, Cole, & Suggett, 1983, p. 9).

While justifying the role of a school as a mechanism for social change through critical thinking, action and critical self-reflection, Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (1983) also acknowledge schools as being places where students can develop social life through considered action and 'where some of the demands of participation in social life are relaxed in order to provide time for learning' (Kemmis, Cole and Suggett, 1983, p. 10).

Social Adaptation: With social adaptation the curriculum provides experiences that enable students to fit into an ever-changing society successfully. Eisner and Vallance (1974) view the adaptive stance in terms of social issues and change being a crucial context for personal development. In the context of the social relevance of curriculum, they see social adaptation as

being an approach that seeks a better 'fit' between the individual and society. Eisner and Vallance (1974) state:

(The Social Adaptation perspective) foresees enormous changes in society and asks that the curriculum provide the tools for individual survival in an unstable and changing world. This survival-oriented basis to the relevance issue defines relevance in personal terms, advocating a curriculum that would make the individual better able to keep up and function effectively in a rapidly changing world. (Eisner and Vallance, 1974, p. 11).

Eisner and Vallance (1974) go on to describe the proponents of social adaptation as being conservative, wishing to effect smooth change by seeking 'survival instruments', and being far less aggressive than the social reconstructionists (Eisner and Vallance, 1974, p. 12). McNeil (1996) takes a similar stance. He contends that the approach of social adaptationists 'is to give students information and prescriptions for dealing with situations rather than to seek fundamental change in the basic structure of society underlying the problems' (McNeil, 1996, p. 51). He further contends that social adaptation 'helps students fit into a world they never made' (McNeil, 1996, p. 34). Thus the integration of programs dealing with issues such as poverty, social injustice, sex education, AIDS, responsible drinking, and so on into the curriculum are indicative of this social adaptation stance. It is a stance that determines what students need to learn and achieve to, as McNeil (1996) puts it, 'protect themselves in the real world to fit into society as it is' (McNeil, 1996, p. 51). In a similar vein, student service projects where students may be involved in environmental clean-up days, tree plantings, volunteering at nursing homes, etc., are generally viewed as examples of social adaptations rather than as examples of improving the real world in the sense that other social reconstructionists would view it. From this perspective, reform is viewed as being small in scale, slow and minimally disruptive (Print, 1993, p. 53).

Having briefly examined three forms of social reconstructionism, the question has to be asked as to whether there is any evidence of these curriculum orientations ever being adopted, and to what extent are the theories and underlying philosophies of social reconstructionism evident in the underlying curriculum conceptualisation of the Australian Curriculum? Print (1993, p. 54) contends there is little evidence of complete social reconstructionist school curricula in practice. He provides examples of significant social and often controversial issues being integrated within existing school subjects, claiming that this is one way that social reconstructionists have made an impact on school curricula (Print 1993, p. 53), and acknowledges the creation of some specifically created courses such as those on women's studies and peace studies (Print 1993, p. 54). He further contends that despite the lack of social reconstructionism in practice, there exists an extensive literature in the field, and, in doing so, places the work of former federal Minister for Education, John Dawkins, an early proponent of national collaboration in education (see Chapter 4), in that category.

Perhaps a more obvious contribution of social reconstructionists can be found in the work of many writers, academics and left-of-centre politicians. The works of Michael Apple, Thomas Popkewitz, Henry Giroux, Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire, Jurgen

Habermans, Robert Young and the futurologist Harold Shane are well-known examples of social reconstructionist writing. A more obvious example of reconstructionist practice in education can be found with most of the Labor ministers for education at state and federal levels. Certainly John Dawkins took a social reconstructionist stance, at least in his early days as minister, towards the Commonwealth's involvement in education, even if tempered by some pragmatic, economically influenced political considerations. (Print, 1993, pp. 54 – 55).

Skilbeck (1975) is one who would not concur with Print's assessment that there is little evidence of social reconstructionist school curricula in practice. On the contrary, Skilbeck provides the examples of the nation-building by the states of Germany, based on the writings of Fichte, following the conquering by the armies of Napoleon; and the 1930s attempt at nation building in the Soviet Union as two examples of the reconstructionist conception of education being utilised by established societies undergoing major upheavals (Skilbeck, 1975, p. 28). Karabel and Halsey (1978) concur with the example of the Soviet Union and state that revolutions do not merely make educational change possible, they require it (Karabel & Halsey, 1978, p. 551).

They *must* transform the educational system and bring it into harmony with a new institutional and ideological framework. Failure to do so may undermine the revolution, for it is the educational system that is responsible for the moulding of future generations. (Karabel & Halsey, 1978, p. 551).

To the Soviet Union example Karabel and Halsey (1978) would add Cuba and China. The creation of a 'new socialist man' was, they believe, the foremost educational objective of the Cuban revolutionary leadership, while in China educational change was seen as a crucial instrument in the struggle to build socialist consciousness (Karabel & Halsey, 1978, p. 552). Both are valid examples of a social reconstructionist conceptualisation of curriculum being adopted in practice.

Skilbeck also considers the education curricula of the republic of Tanzania when that country gained its independence, the curricula of Israel, and the modernisation programs launched in Spain and Portugal in the late 1960s as further examples of reconstructionist curricula in practice (Skilbeck, 1975, p. 28). Likewise, McNeil (2009) offers the Los Angeles Leadership Academy as an example of a public middle school that exposes students to social injustices in the world and where students, as part of the curriculum, actively engage in social protests aimed at securing better working conditions for marginalised peoples (McNeil, 2009, p. 29). Other examples of a reconstructionist curricula in practice, cited by McNeil, include Project Ixtliyollotl in San Andres, Mexico, and Highlander Folk School in Tennessee (McNeil, 2009, pp. 29 – 30).

Considering the three forms of social reconstructionism discussed above, it can be argued that the Australian Curriculum reflects in part at least two of these conceptualisations, namely social adaptation and futurism, despite their apparently contradictory nature, with the stronger

influence being that of social adaptation. Futurism will be considered first, followed by social adaptation.

The rhetoric behind the Australian Curriculum included references to the future on numerous occasions. It has been mentioned previously that when introducing the Bill to Parliament for the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*, Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, stated:

In developing a single national curriculum, the Authority will ensure that every young Australian has access to the highest quality education – regardless of where they live or their socio-economic background...***The new national curriculum will be future-oriented*** and will equip our young people with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities ***to compete internationally and thrive in the globalised economies of the future***. (Gillard, 2008b, p. 4, emphasis added)

So it can be argued that the Australian Curriculum is predicated in part on being aware of the kind of society and world we are to live in in the future, that is, a globalised economy; with the intention that, through the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities that Gillard referred to, there will be for students an explicit connection between what they are learning and what they may be doing in their future lives. Version 1 of *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* published by National Curriculum Board, the forerunner of ACARA, endorsed this futures perspective stating:

However dimly the demands of society in the mid-2020s can be seen, some serious attempt must be made to envisage those demands and to ensure they are taken into account in present-day curriculum developments. (National Curriculum Board, 2009(c), p. 5).

Such a statement reflects the ideas and thoughts of futurists who advocate that while educators cannot foresee exactly what will happen in the future, what is required is to make informed projections about what is possible and probable. In other words, to use the ‘educated foresight’ that Shane (1989) referred to. So there is evidence that in the hybrid Australian Curriculum, the futurism perspective of social reconstructionism is identifiable.

Moving on to the social adaptation perspective of social reconstructionism, it can be argued that this is also represented in the Australian Curriculum but to a greater extent than futurism. There can be little doubt that the Australian Curriculum, in part, is an attempt to ‘provide the tools for individual survival in an unstable and changing world’ (Eisner & Vallance, 1974, p. 11) and to ‘help students fit into a world they never made’ (McNeil, 1996, p. 34). This is most evident in the inclusion of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum, particularly the general capabilities. ACARA emphasise this priority when they state:

Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities that apply across subject-based content and equip them to be lifelong

learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world. (ACARA, December 2010a, p. 18).

A brief description of the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum has previously been given (see section 2.4, *The Australian Curriculum and Third Way Ideology: Is There a Nexus?*). The general capabilities are expressed explicitly in the content of the learning areas and are a key dimension of the Australian Curriculum. They encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions and students develop capability when they 'apply knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in complex and changing circumstances, both in their learning at school and in their lives outside school' (ACARA, 2012a, p. 5). Elsewhere the goals of the Melbourne Declaration have been discussed: briefly, they are that all students will be supported to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. The general capabilities are seen to play a significant role in realising these goals and are expected to 'assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century' (ACARA, 2012a, p. 3).

Due to the breadth of the general capabilities, some will naturally align with the learning areas within the Australian Curriculum. For example, Numeracy in the Mathematics Learning Area; Literacy in English; Personal and Social Capability in both Health and Physical Education and English; Intercultural Understanding in Languages; and ICT Capabilities in Technologies. It would be expected that the foundational skills and knowledge relevant to these capabilities would be taught explicitly in these learning areas, but that they would be applied, extended, strengthened, and, where relevant, adapted in the other learning areas (ACARA, 2012a, p. 6).

This approach to curriculum construction, in reference to the Australian Curriculum, has been informed by recent international examples. One example is New Zealand. In 1993, a revised New Zealand Curriculum Framework explicitly included essential (or generic) skills. These essential skills included communicative, cognitive, academic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and vocational-oriented processes and abilities which were designed to develop skills to assist students to deal with a world where important knowledge was fluid and unpredictable rather than fixed (Brown, 2006, p. 169). The common rationale for focusing on essential skills is, according to Brewerton (2004), that they 'increase the flexibility and adaptability of people to change, minimise risks of people's knowledge, experience and qualifications becoming redundant, and provide many of the ingredients for individual, social and economic well-being' (Brewerton, 2004, p. 3). The New Zealand Curriculum Framework listed the individual skills to be developed and stated that these were to be developed within the context of the various learning areas (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 4). Furthermore, the stated purpose of the essential skills was for students to 'achieve their potential and to participate fully in society, including the world of work' (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 17).

In a revision to the New Zealand curriculum completed in 2007, the essential skills were extended and renamed as key competencies. Five key competencies were identified, namely: thinking, using language, symbols and texts, managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007a). The vision articulated in the revised curriculum was to support young people in becoming confident, connected, actively

involved, lifelong learners and the key competencies were seen as a major vehicle in supporting students to achieve this (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007c). Briefly, the pivotal features of the key competencies were as follows:

- Key competencies encompass knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.
- Key competencies are not just a new name for the essential skills – they include skills, but also emphasise how skills relate to knowledge, attitudes and values and how skills can be used in interactions with others in various contexts.
- Key competencies require teachers to notice not just what students are learning, but how they are learning and their capacity to continue learning.
- Key competencies are demonstrated in performance – they require action.
- Key competencies are complex and changing – they will look different in different contexts, and will be developed through opportunities to use them in increasingly wide-ranging and complex contexts.
- Key competencies require teachers and learners to think about dispositions...to consider if students are ready and willing, as well as able, to learn. (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007b)

The ideas expressed in these statements display congruency with those conveyed in the Australian context in relation to the general capabilities and reflect best practice in a world context. To cite one more example briefly, the Ministry of Education in Singapore have likewise implemented a framework to enhance the development of what they call '21st century competencies' designed to 'better prepare students to thrive in a fast-changing and highly-connected world' (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2010). Built around a number of identified values for these 21st century competencies, namely respect, responsibility, integrity, care, resilience and harmony, the competencies are presented in two categories. One is more skill based and includes the three areas of information and communication skills, critical and inventive thinking, and civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills. The second category lists five social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2010).

As stated earlier, there is much to suggest that through the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum there is an attempt to 'provide the tools for individual survival in an unstable and changing world' (Eisner & Vallance, 1974, p. 11) and to 'help students fit into a world they never made' (McNeil, 1996, p. 34), thus supporting the presence of an element of social adaptation in the hybrid Australian Curriculum.

2.6 Chapter Summary

At the start of this chapter it was stated that the curriculum reform under discussion here, despite being a major curriculum reform, falls short in terms of a framework by which the nature of curriculum can be understood. In light of such a void within the literature, the chapter has been designed to provide such a conceptual framing; a framing that is essential before further deconstruction and analysis can be enacted. Thus this chapter has put forward the argument that the Australian Curriculum is a hybrid curriculum, being an amalgam of what Print (1993) refers to as curriculum perceptions and characterisations of curriculum. But more importantly it has been argued that, within that framework, the Australian Curriculum reflects predominately a duality of a Reconstructionist curriculum conceptualisation along with a Third Way political ideological influence in its underlying philosophy, but with a reflection of essentialism in its development and design. These are considered to be complementary rather than totally conflicting views and thus the Australian Curriculum has been presented as a complementary pluralistic model. With the development of this theoretical framework, the platform for this study has been established.

Having provided in this chapter a conceptual framing for the Australian Curriculum, a framing that is considered essential before further deconstruction and analysis can be enacted, the following chapter aims to present the design of the study. In particular, the focus will be on the rationale for the approach chosen, the construction of the research method that was arguably the most appropriate in this context, the design and implementation of a pilot study for the survey, the way the sample population was chosen and, finally, the process of data collection and analysis. In short, the theoretical perspective adopted for this study, and the methodology and methods adopted for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The Australian Curriculum is one of the most significant curriculum reforms in Australian schools in the past three decades. This study is designed to consider three main educational phenomena, namely: the history of curriculum reform and collaboration at a national level prior to the design and implementation of the current Australian Curriculum; how the current national curriculum development process is positioned in relation to those earlier attempts; and an analysis of the perspectives of teachers concerning the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, in terms of what has been one of the most significant curriculum reforms in Australian schools in the past three decades.

This chapter aims to present the design of the study, the methodology, with particular attention being given to the rationale for the approach chosen, the construction of the research method that was arguably the most appropriate in this context, the implementation of a pilot study for the survey, the way the sample population was chosen, and, finally, the process of data collection and analysis. The manner in which the first set of findings was produced is also outlined. Based on the extensive literature review, the key research questions have been identified as:

- What is the history of curriculum reform at a national level in Australia?
- How is the current national curriculum development process positioned in relation to the earlier attempts at restructuring the school curriculum in Australia?
- What are the perspectives of teachers in Independent Schools concerning the curriculum reforms and development of a national curriculum?

3.1 Research Design

Methodologies for research into human behaviour are shaped principally by the philosophical nature of the chosen research paradigm (Greene, 2008), which reflects the worldview of the researcher and the ideological shape of the research questions. Such thinking also shapes the purpose of the research. In the literature, the theoretical approaches and epistemological underpinnings are often referred to as paradigms or views of the world (Babbie, 2001).

Crotty (1998) provides a useful framework when considering the range of paradigms that shape research methodology. Crotty (1998) conceptualises research from the standpoint of epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods using a coherent

taxonomy, as depicted in Figure 3.1. Of significance in Crotty's model is the importance of the alignment of reasoning across epistemology, the theoretical perspective adopted for this study, the methodology and methods adopted for data collection and analysis. In this case, the epistemological underpinnings of the study are grounded in the desire to understand how teachers have made meaning of the curriculum reform that has substantially reshaped the work of their profession in Australia. This desire implies a theoretical shaping of the study that is determined by a reconstructionist framework, as outlined in Chapter 2, advocating for a methodology that captures the way in which teachers make sense of curriculum that is an artefact of social change and the reconstitution of society through schooling. Reconstructionism is most closely aligned with interpretive research that is primarily qualitative in nature. This can be illustrated thus:

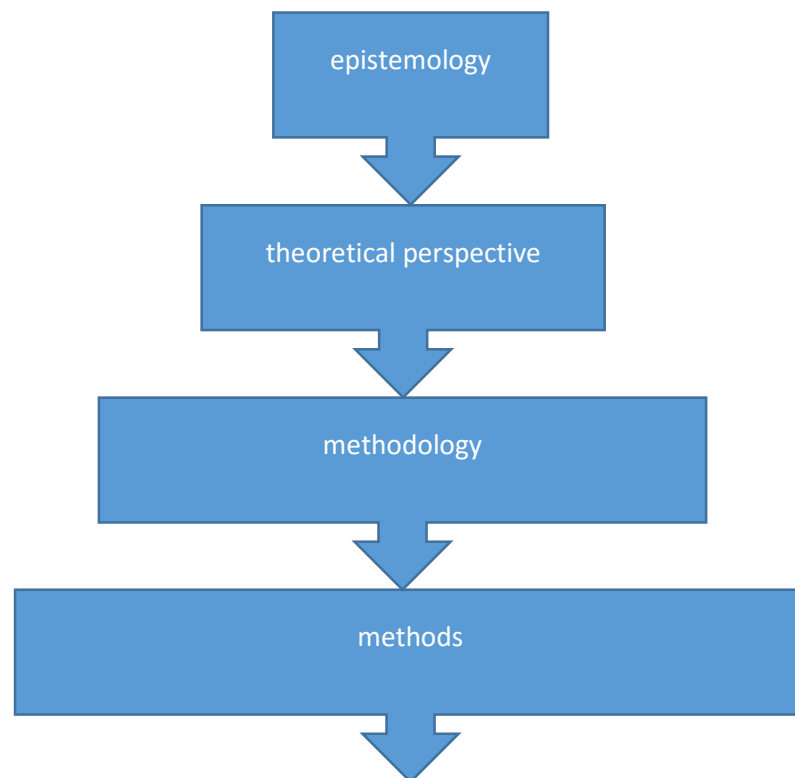


Figure 3.1. A model of the research process

Adapted from Crotty (1998, p. 4).

Grix (2010, p. 59) argues counter to Crotty's taxonomy, suggesting that ontology is the starting point of all research, after which one's epistemological and methodological positions follow logically; therefore Grix would add an initial stage to the framework presented in Figure 3.1.

This position is the one that has been adopted in this paper and is reflected later in the summary in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 The Philosophical Underpinnings of the Current Research Study

Research Component	Quantitative	Qualitative
Ontology		
Epistemology		
Theoretical Perspective	Positivism	Interpretivism (Symbolic Interactionism)
Methodology	Survey Research	Survey Research Grounded Theory
Methods	Questionnaire Measurement & Scaling Statistical Analysis	Questionnaire Statistical Analysis Data Reduction Theme Identification

Grix (2010) cites positivism as being the most dominant research paradigm of the past century and lists the ten most significant premises on which this paradigm is based. It is not the intention to reproduce that list here, however some of the salient points made by Grix (2010) follow. Many positivists seek to employ scientific methods to analyse the social world as positivism is based on a realist, foundationalist epistemology, which views the world as existing independently of our knowledge of it. Furthermore, some methodologies have argued that positivist methods are neutral, as are the researchers using them, thus they do not disturb what exists. From this methodological stance, positivists place emphasis on explanation in social research, as opposed to understanding, with many believing that the real purpose of research explanation is prediction. Objectivity is sought by this group while a clear distinction is made between ‘fact’ and ‘value’ with positivists being more concerned with the former and less with the latter (Grix, 2010, pp. 81-82).

Counter to this positivist thinking, in the context of this study in the initial phases of conceptualisation, an interpretivist theoretical framework was argued as most appropriate, as it is most closely aligned to the reconstructivist conceptualisation of the research problem. The constructivist or interpretive paradigm, in contrast to positivism, has traditionally been associated with qualitative methods. In this sense, research inquiry involves drawing an understanding of people’s experiences, meanings, discourses or practices from the data provided through techniques such as conversation, observation, symbol and image (Mason, 1996). The interpretivist methodology, a qualitative research technique, positions the meaning-making practices of people at the centre of the research. Thus it is conducted from an experience-near perspective, in that the researcher does not start with concepts determined *a priori* but rather seeks to allow these to emerge from encounters “in the field”, so to speak. Interpretive research focuses on disclosing those meaning-making practices analytically, in this

case, on teachers and how they are making meaning of the curriculum reform, while also showing how those practices configure to generate observable outcomes (IPIA, 2009). Creswell (2003, p.8) sums it up succinctly when he states that the researcher, positioned in an interpretive paradigm, tends to rely upon ‘the participants’ views of the situation being studied’.

This study, as previously stated, focuses to a large degree on investigating the history of curriculum reform and collaboration at a national level prior to the design and implementation of the current Australian Curriculum; how the current national curriculum development process is positioned in relation to those earlier attempts; and an analysis of the perspectives of teachers concerning the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Such an investigation is shaped by adopting an interpretivist approach to research and of the symbolic interactionist theoretical approach within it. One of the influential theoretical perspectives that developed within the discipline of sociology is Symbolic Interactionism (Bazeley, 2013; Crotty, 1998; O’Donoghue 2007). Symbolic Interactionism is based on a premise of understanding that humans act toward objects, such as a new curriculum document and all its expectations, and with individuals, such as teachers, according to the meanings they have for particular objects and people (Alvermann & Mallozzi, 2010). That is, teachers in this case, are ‘pragmatic actors who continually must adjust their behaviour to the actions of other actors’ (McClelland, 2000), including policy makers, bureaucrats and curriculum authorities.

The origins of Symbolic Interactionism can be traced to the Chicago School of the 1920s and 1930s. George Herbert Mead (1934) propounded the contention that individuals develop a sense of who they are through interaction with others. Herbert Blumer (1969), Mead’s student, further developed this theoretical paradigm by originating the term ‘symbolic interactionism’. Blumer (1969) describes his own social theory of Symbolic Interactionism as follows:

...Symbolic interactionism is a down-to-earth approach to scientific study of human group life and human conduct. Its empirical nature is the natural world of such group life and conduct. It lodges its problem in this natural world, conducts its studies in it, and derives its interpretations from such naturalistic studies. (Blumer, 1969, p. 47).

Blumer’s description of Symbolic Interactionism rests on three premises, these being that humans act towards things on the basis of the meaning that those things have for them; that the meaning of such things arises out of the social interaction between humans; and thirdly that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by each person in dealing with the things that are encountered (Blumer, 1962, p. 2). Central to Blumer’s argument was that ‘interpretation takes place in such a way that the individual is continually interpreting the symbolic meaning of his or her environment (which includes the actions of others) and acts on the basis of this imputed meaning’ (Bryman, 2001, p. 15). In the case of this study, meaning-making focuses on teachers’ interaction with the Australian Curriculum.

Fundamentally, Blumer (1962) expounds the notion that individuals experience and construct meaning of concrete and abstract experiences, such as a national curriculum, through social interaction with other members of the society of educational organisations and schools in this case, to which they belong. Within such a milieu, symbols take on very specific roles:

- ‘Symbols’ are the basis of social life
- Individuals and societies develop through people’s interaction through symbols
- Individuals develop a sense of themselves as they learn to use symbols
- Individuals develop a sense of themselves as they learn to see themselves the way they believe others see them. (McClelland, 2000).

Griffin (1997) explains succinctly the basic tenets of the social theory of symbolic interactionism:

- The theory consists of three core principles: meaning, language and thought. These core principles lead to conclusions about the creation of a person’s self and socialization into a larger community.
- *Meaning* states that humans act towards people and things according to the meanings that are given to those people or things. Symbolic interactionism holds the principle of meaning to be the central aspect of human behaviour.
- *Language* gives humans a means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols. Humans identify meaning in speech acts with others.
- *Thought* modifies each individual’s interpretation of symbols. Thought is a mental conversation that requires different points of view.

Woods (1992) contends that, in essence, individuals (teachers) create meaning from their interactions with the world in which they live (schools and curriculum implementation). That is, in his terms, they construct, adjust, influence and are influenced (Woods, 1992). Put another way, symbolic interactionists are searching for an increased understanding of the meaning that particular phenomena (curricula) have for them (teachers) in their quotidian lives. Symbolic interactionism also challenged the dominant 1960s social scientific assumptions about a single scientific method, a unitary external reality, objectivity and reliability, and the superiority of quantification over qualitative inquiry (Wertz, et al., 2011, p. 59).

Thus this study is framed by interpretivism as described herewith, and is designed to investigate the history of curriculum reform and collaboration at a national level, prior to the design and implementation of the current Australian Curriculum; how the current national curriculum development process is positioned in relation to those earlier attempts; and an analysis of how teachers make meaning of their engagement with the national Australian Curriculum. The methods aligned to such a framing are outlined in the next section. As the study unfolded, and prior to the pilot outlined in Section 3.7, it was deemed necessary to pursue a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis.

Many writers have identified and grappled with the problem of trying to relate the ontology and epistemology with each other when they are employed in two or more alternative methods within mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003; Bergman, 2008; Hall,

2012). With the increasing use of mixed methods research, a debate has arisen over the rationale for combining methods which, in part, have been regarded as methodologically incompatible. This debate, the so-called 'paradigm wars' of the 1970s and 1980s (Reichhardt & Rallis, 1994) resulted in the differences in the research approaches between quantitative and qualitative researchers being vehemently argued, with researchers adopting polar opposite positions and where the differences were argued to be so fundamentally incompatible that it was impossible to approach a particular research situation from the two different positions. What was not clear in these debates was whether researchers were discussing methodology or methods.

As the debate flourished, there were some voices raised in opposition to the proposition that there was an unbridgeable gulf between the two camps and alternative approaches were developed (see Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2007; Hall, 2012). Hall (2012) lists the alternatives as three-fold and states:

These approaches can be classified into three basic categories: the a-paradigmatic stance, the multiple paradigm approach and the single paradigm approach. The first of these simply ignores paradigmatic issues altogether; the second asserts that alternative paradigms are not incompatible and can be used in the one research project and the third claims that both quantitative and qualitative research (methods) can be accommodated under a single (methodological) paradigm. (Hall, 2012, p.3).

Traditionally, Crotty (1998) and Grix (2010) have both argued that it is logically contradictory to conduct research from a positivist/post-positivist methodological perspective in one part of the study and then switch to an interpretative/constructivist position in another part of the study. As argued earlier, it was deemed appropriate that there needed to be a single coherent and aligned ontological and epistemological framework for the whole research project. Hall (2012) suggests that what is needed 'is a paradigm that does not limit the range of topics to be researched, nor the methods that can legitimately be used to conduct research and can accommodate the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods in use'. This was also the view of the researcher, who was originally perplexed as to how to engage in an interpretative study with such a large population. Traditionally, semi-structured interviews were deemed to be methodologically aligned with interpretivism, a qualitative research paradigm. Yet the researcher was of the view that a survey tool was the only way in which such a large and important data base could be accessed. In order to find a methodologically sound and rigorous solution, the researcher aligned with the second category identified by Hall (2012), that being that alternative paradigms are not incompatible and can be used in the one research project.

3.2 Rationale for Methods of Data Collection

Based on the argument outlined in the previous section, qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis were used in this study. Consequently a mixed methods design was used. The development of mixed methods research designs has endeavoured to bridge the differences between the interpretative theoretical constructs of the study and the survey tools

utilised to collect the data. Mixed methods research, as the name suggests, is ‘empirical research that involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data’ (Punch, 2009, p. 288). In some literature various other terms have been used including ‘blended’, ‘integrated’ ‘multimethod’, and ‘multitrait-multimethod research’ to name but a few. However the term ‘mixed methods’ came to be more universally recognised as an umbrella term to cover the multifaceted procedures of combining, integrating and linking the different types of methods and data following the publication in 2003 of Tashakkori and Teddlie’s *The Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research* (Punch, 2009, p. 289). This opened the way to a more consistent and systematic use of the term ‘mixed methods’.

Creswell’s (2008, p. 552) assertion that mixed methods research is not simply collecting two strands of research, qualitative and quantitative, but consists of merging, integrating, linking, or embedding the two “strands”, was noted as a key aspect of this approach to data collection with a methodology that is shaped by interpretivism.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods have strengths and weaknesses. The prime rationale behind using a mixed methods approach in this study is that it was considered that more could be learnt about the research topic if the strengths of qualitative research were combined with the strengths of quantitative research methods, while at the same time compensating for the weaknesses of each method. This brings a richness of data to the study.

Further, it was pragmatic, as discussed previously, to reject the once-prevalent procedure of making an ‘either-or’ choice of the two methods and, as Punch (2009, p. 291) advocates ‘focus instead on what works in getting research questions answered’. Extending this stance Punch (2009) argues that the research question(s) is (are) more important than, and logically prior to, either the method used or the paradigm underlying the method; and the specific decisions regarding the choice of the method depends on the research question(s) being asked (Punch, 2009, p. 291). Thus it is argued here that the key research question is best addressed through interpretivism, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

It has also been claimed that the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, in combination, provides a better understanding of the research problem and questions than either method by itself (Creswell, 2008, p. 552). Likewise, it is claimed that the use of both qualitative and quantitative data in a study increases both the validity and the authenticity of derived information, and makes the research findings more meaningful (Thurmond, 2001, p. 253), in this case, providing a deeper understanding of how teachers make meaning of the Australian Curriculum as they deliver it.

Thus a mixed methods design was chosen for this study, as it would provide a multidimensional perspective of the research phenomenon and extensive data that would later be used to facilitate responses and findings concerning the research questions.

3.3 Conducting Mixed Methods Research – The Process

Creswell (2008, pp. 567-570) presents a procedure for conducting mixed methods which is broken down into a number of steps, although he emphasises that the steps are not lockstep procedures but rather that they provide a general guide. This study unfolded in a manner that used the steps suggested as a general guide to the implementation of a mixed methods design as is demonstrated in Figure 3.2 and discussed below.

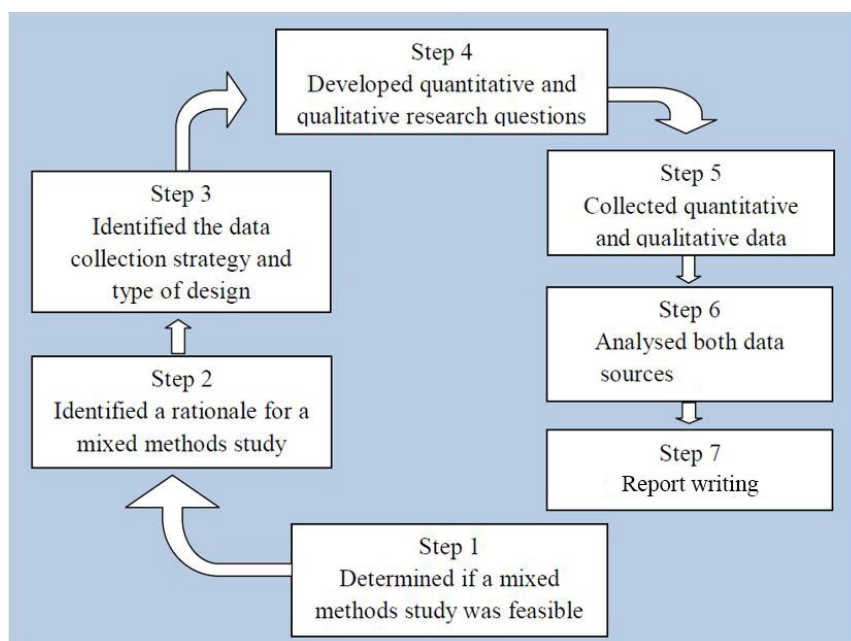


Figure 3.2 Steps of a mixed methods study

Adapted from Creswell (2008, p.568)

Step 1 involved determining if a mixed methods study was feasible. It was ascertained that enough time was available to collect both quantitative and qualitative data during the Phase 1 implementation of the Australian Curriculum, although it was recognised that both state and federal governments were changing as a result of elections with resultant changes in policies and emphasises. Furthermore, as Phase 2 was emerging, to a certain extent, the implementation of the Australian Curriculum was a ‘moving feast’ and research parameters in both temporal and content terms were necessary. That the researcher had a working knowledge of the different types of designs was also considered when making this decision as to whether a mixed methods study was feasible or not.

Step 2 involved identifying the rationale for the use of a mixed methods study, which has, to a large degree, been discussed above. Added to this was the choice of the most appropriate one from the four main types of mixed methods designs that were most relevant and purposeful for this study. As a result the triangulation mixed method design was chosen whereby both quantitative and qualitative data would be collected concurrently with both sets of databases

analysed and interpreted simultaneously (Creswell, 2008, p. 557). This is discussed in greater detail below in Section 3.4.

Step 3 involved the researcher in developing a strategy for data collection. The priority given to quantitative and qualitative data was considered, as was the breadth of the data collection. As data was being sought from all Australian states and territories with the exception of New South Wales, which fell outside the temporal parameters of this study as that state had not commenced the implementation of the Australian Curriculum at that stage, a survey questionnaire was chosen as the data collecting instrument.

Step 4 involved the construction of the survey and the development of items within the survey. Questions related to the collection of quantitative data were designed as closed questions or responses, while those related to the collection of qualitative data were designed as open-ended questions. This is discussed more fully in Section 3.6 below.

Step 5 involved collection of the qualitative and quantitative data. This occurred between March 2013 and October 2013. Initially surveys were distributed to schools in the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland as they had commenced the implementation of Phase 1 of the Australian Curriculum prior to any other state or territory. By mid-2013, surveys had also been distributed in Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and the Northern Territory (see Section 3.8 below).

Step 6 involved analysing the quantitative and qualitative data. This is discussed in Section 3.9 below.

Step 7 was when the researcher wrote up the results of the analysis of the data, which are presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

3.4 Triangulation Mixed Methods Design

The purpose of a triangulation mixed methods design is to simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data, and use the results to respond to the research question(s) (Creswell, 2008, p. 557). Triangulation is simply a term that refers to using more than one method in research (Grix, 2010, p. 135) and is encouraged to increase the likelihood of obtaining better and more reliable data, as well as decreasing the likelihood of biased findings. It is a process of ‘approaching an object of study from different angles using different methods’ (Grix, 2010, p. 136). Although attention has been drawn to the issue of the difficulty in employing triangulation ‘chiefly because of the different ontological and epistemological underpinnings of research strategies, consisting of combinations of methods which are used’ (Grix, 2010, p. 136), Grix (2010) contends that the methods themselves should be viewed as mere tools for collecting data:

... as long as you are aware of *how* you are employing a specific method and *what* this method is pointing you towards, and *how* this relates to the ways in which you

employ other methods, there should be no problem. (Grix, 2010, p. 136 author's emphasis).

In this study, a triangulation mixed methods design was chosen with a view to the researcher giving equal priority to both quantitative and qualitative data, in that both would be valued and were viewed as approximately equal sources of information in regard to the research questions. Whereas the qualitative data would provide data for generalizability and theme emergence, information about the context and setting would be provided by the quantitative data. This takes place, in this study, within the framework of the methodology of interpretivism, which gives direction to the study and is aligned to the key research questions. In searching for teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, it was deemed desirable to conduct a document search and to implement a survey. The rationales for these are discussed in Sections 3.5 and 3.6, below.

3.5 Document Search and Analysis

Documents are a significant resource for research in education (Arthur, et al, 2012, p. 214; Silverman, 1993, p. 89). To study and consider the Australian Curriculum in its complexity and to understand it in its context, documentary data was considered in this research. In considering the first two key research questions, that is: what is the history of curriculum reform at a national level; and how is the current national curriculum development process positioned in relation to the earlier attempts at restructuring school curriculum in Australia, documents were used extensively as a data source.

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents with the express aim of eliciting meaning, gaining understanding, and developing empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). This procedure, as summarised by Bowen (2009) entails:

... finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data contained in documents. Document analysis yields data – excerpts, quotations, or entire passages – that are then organised into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis. (Bowen, 2009, p. 28)

Document analysis has the capacity to produce rich descriptions of a single phenomenon; in this case, the process of creating a new national curriculum, and as such is a research method particularly applicable to qualitative case studies. Furthermore, when considering the history of national curriculum collaboration in Australia, documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem (Merriam, 1988, p. 118). From an historical perspective, Bowen (2009), claims that documents may simply be the only viable resource (p. 29).

Bowen (2009) considers five specific functions of documentary material. Of these, three functions are deemed relevant for this study. First, the documents should provide data on the context of the development of the Australian Curriculum. Using Bowen's (2009) terminology the documents will 'bear witness to past events ... and provide background information as well

as historical insight' (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). Furthermore, as an element of the research question is to consider how the current national curriculum development process is positioned in relation to earlier attempts at restructuring school curriculum in Australia, documentary analysis can indicate the conditions that impinge upon the phenomena currently under investigation.

Second, an analysis of the documents suggested some questions that needed to be asked in the survey, and reaffirmed the selection of existing questions.

Third, the documents provided a means of tracking change and development. The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, for example, has been published in three versions during the life of this study, each one with changes that have arisen as the process has progressed. The same can be said of the Achievement Standards which have been reviewed, revised and re-written (see Chapter 5).

Document analysis was also used based on the advantages that have been noted for this method of qualitative research. These include the following elements that have been identified by Bowen (2009):

- Efficiency: document analysis is less time-consuming and therefore more efficient than other research methods. It requires data selection, instead of data collection, which is relevant to the first two key research questions of this study.
- Availability: many documents are in the public domain, especially since the advent of the Internet, and are available without the authors' permission.
- Lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity: documents are unobtrusive and non-reactive, that is, they are unaffected by the research process. Therefore, document analysis counters the concerns inherent in other qualitative research methods.
- Exactness: the inclusion of exact names, references, and details of events makes documents advantageous in the research process.
- Coverage: documents provide broad coverage; they cover a long span of time, many events, and many settings. (Bowen, 2009, p. 31)

To analyse the documents, the processes of skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation occurred. As this happened, the researcher ascertained whether the contents of the documents fitted the conceptual framework of the study. Concurrently, analysis of the authenticity, credibility, accuracy, and representativeness of the selected documents was undertaken.

The iterative process of skimming, reading and interpretation, as mentioned above, combined elements of content analysis and thematic analysis. With content analysis, the information was processed and organised into categories related to the key research questions under

consideration. Thematic analysis involved a careful, more focused re-reading and review of the data to recognise patterns and emerging themes within the data.

3.6 Survey Questionnaire - Construction

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data for this research. The specific focus was on Question 3: What are the perspectives of teachers in Independent Schools concerning the curriculum reform and development of national curriculum?

The survey items were developed to gather and measure a large number of respondents' perspectives on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Through the survey, both quantitative data was collected through responses to closed questions and qualitative data through open-ended questions. The survey included 32 items, although many of the items covered multiple areas. For example, an item on differentiation would allow the respondent to comment from a subject perspective (English, Mathematics, Science, History) and from a teacher education perspective (pre-service education, professional development seminars, post graduate studies). The developed items are discussed below.

As the survey was being sent to varied school personnel, that is, school administrators, subject heads, classroom teachers, support personnel, etc, in various states and territories and within different locations in terms of remoteness it was anticipated that the responses would elicit various perspectives from across the various groupings, as well as from within each specific grouping. Therefore the survey was designed firstly to seek demographic and background information about the respondents, e.g. their position in schools, their locations in Australia without naming their specific school, the subjects they taught, and the educational levels they had attained. This was necessary to ensure that at a later date, when data on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum had been collected and analysed, it would be possible to reveal whether the emerging themes were general to all respondents or specific to groups of respondents according to factors such as their location, position in the school, or faculty. Table 3.2 summarises the demographic information sought, with information on the item descriptors and the scales used.

Table 3.2 Survey Items – Demographics.

Item No.	Variables	Descriptors	Scales Used
1	Demographic Information – Organisational	Level of Employment	Principal; Deputy Principal; Curriculum Head/Manager; Subject/Faculty Leader; Classroom Teacher; Other
2 - 3	Demographic Information – Organisational	Residential Details	Western Australia; South Australia; Victoria; Australian Capital territory; New South Wales; Queensland; Northern Territory; Tasmania; Postcode
4*	Demographic Information – Organisational	School Classification	State Government; Catholic; Independent
5 – 6	Demographic Information – Individual	Qualifications (Highest Gained)	Bachelor degree; Bachelor Honours degree; Post Graduate diploma; Master's degree; Doctorate; Other; Completion Year

* Item 4 became redundant – see Section 3.8 below.

In the second section, information was sought about how well the teachers thought they would be able to implement literacy and numeracy capabilities across other subjects and whether they thought the recommended inquiry and active participation strategies endorsed in the Australian Curriculum documents would be suitable for their classes. The rationale for this was two-fold. First, it would provide data on how teachers reacted to components of the new Australian Curriculum that were innovative in that they may not have been included, or if included not mandated, in the previous curricula with which they were working. In particular, this refers to areas such as the focus of the Australian Curriculum on inquiry learning as a preferred pedagogy. It also refers to the inclusion of the general capabilities. Second, the data could provide an insight into the degree of alignment between pre-service education programs and the skills and knowledge required to teach the Australian Curriculum, which could then lead to recommendations concerning either the endorsement of pre-service education courses or suggested amendments, depending on the amount of alignment.

Thus items 7 – 15 sought information about the adequacy of the respondents' preparation for teaching and implementation of the Australian Curriculum, i.e. their levels of enthusiasm for teaching particular subjects, knowledge of the subjects, ability to enact knowledge gained in teaching contexts and ability to implement a differentiated curriculum for mixed-ability student groups. Finally in this section, the extent to which their pre-service education, professional development programs and post-graduate studies had prepared the teachers to tackle Asian Studies, Indigenous perspectives and sustainability effectively was sought. Again this would provide data on how teachers reacted to components of the new Australian Curriculum that were innovative, in this case, the three cross curriculum priorities, and provide an insight into the degree of alignment between teacher preparation and development programs and the skills and knowledge required to integrate these priorities.

All items for this section were written in the format of questions followed by closed responses, from which respondents chose the one closest to their own view. This format allowed the respondents to answer questions easily, while at the same time enabling the researcher to compare and analyse the responses due to the standardised and consistent response options (Creswell, 2008). The responses in the items were designed in the format of a five-point Likert scale with different expressions depending on the characteristics of each item in the instrument (see Table 3.3). In some cases, a sixth option – not applicable – was included so that respondents could comment on the subject areas they taught but choose the ‘not applicable’ option for subjects outside their field. Table 3.3 summarises this with information on the item descriptors and the scales used.

Table 3.3 Survey Questions – Specific and Non-Demographic

Item No.	Variables	Descriptors	Scales Used
7 – 8	Measurement of Proficiency	Phase 1 Subjects; Levels of Study	Insufficient; A Little; Adequate; More Than Adequate; Very Satisfied; Not Applicable
9	Differentiated Instruction	Phase 1 Subjects; Levels of Study	Insufficient; A Little; Adequate; More Than Adequate; Very Satisfied; Not Applicable
10 – 11	Capabilities	Phase 1 Subjects of Science & History; Levels of Study	Insufficient; A Little; Adequate; More Than Adequate; Very Satisfied; Not Applicable
12	Inquiry Learning	Pedagogy	Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree
13 – 15	Cross-Curriculum Priorities	Levels of Study; Priorities	Very Poorly; Moderately; Satisfactorily; Very Well; Extremely Well

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum was anticipated by the researcher to vary from school to school rather than be a uniform event. Thus the third section of the survey sought to reveal what possible factors could account, in part, for the relative ‘smoothness’ or otherwise of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Therefore the third section of the survey, items 16 – 29, sought information about the degree of compatibility or incompatibility of the Australian Curriculum with the school’s vision and values. It also sought to gain an insight into the degree of compatibility of the Australian Curriculum’s Phase 1 English, Mathematics, Science and History curricula with the school’s existing curricula and whether the Australian Curriculum required changes to assessment and/or pedagogical practices that teachers had been employing prior to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. The data collected at this point could shed a light on the extent to which the Australian Curriculum, as a major component of the government’s ‘education revolution’, was revolutionary and innovative and capable of taking Australian education into the 21st century, or whether it was an endorsement and a possible amalgamation of existing state and territory curricula. Table 3.4 summarises this, with information on the item descriptors.

Table 3.4 Australian Curriculum Survey - Qualitative: Items, Variables, Descriptors

Item No.	Variables	Descriptors
16 – 17	Schools' Vision	Vision Compatibility
18 - 21	School Curriculum Documents – English; Mathematics; Science; History	Curriculum Compatibility
22 - 25	Individual Pedagogies - English; Mathematics; Science; History	Pedagogical Changes
26 - 29	Assessment Practices - English; Mathematics; Science; History	Assessment Changes

In the final section, items 30 – 32, the teachers' views were sought with regard to changes desired in the pre-service and post-graduate teacher education programs, from both content and pedagogical perspectives. This again gave teachers the opportunity to express their views on the degree of alignment of current teacher education programs and their needs as they perceived them, to implement the Australian Curriculum successfully. Table 3.5 summarises this, with information on the item descriptors.

Table 3.5 Australian Curriculum Survey – Open-Ended Items

Item No.	Variables	Descriptors
30 – 31	Implications for Teacher Education - English; Mathematics; Science; History	Content; Pedagogy
32	Open ended – further comments	

The survey design length sought to balance the need to obtain comprehensive information on this topic and avoid making the survey too long for the teachers being surveyed. Both the number and design of the questions were formatted to reduce the effort required in completing the survey, and yet obtain a significant amount of information from a single survey. In an attempt to achieve this balance, both closed questions, where participants were asked to choose from a set of pre-determined responses, and open questions, which allowed participants to respond in their own words were used. A conscious effort was also made to use language that was natural and familiar to educationists and to write items that were clear, precise and relatively short. For example:

The Australian Curriculum emphasises the need for all Australians to become 'Asia literate'.

To what extent did your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development and post graduate studies include Asian Studies? (Item 13).

The Australian Curriculum encourages teachers to facilitate successful learning through ‘inquiry and active participation in challenging and engaging experience’.

Do you agree that an inquiry based approach is an optimal approach to classroom learning and teaching? (Item 12).

To what extent is the content of the Australian Curriculum in English compatible with your school’s existing curriculum documents? Please comment if you teach this subject. (Item 18).

To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in Mathematics necessitate a change in your choice of assessment tasks? Please comment if you teach this subject. (Item 27).

The survey summary, as discussed above, is shown in its entirety in Tables 3.6 and 3.7.

Table 3.6 Australian Curriculum Survey - Quantitative: Items, Variables, Descriptors and Scales

Item No.	Variables	Descriptors	Scales Used
1	Demographic Information – Organisational	Level of Employment	Principal; Deputy Principal; Curriculum Head/Manager; Subject/Faculty Leader; Classroom Teacher; Other
2 - 3	Demographic Information – Organisational	Residential Details	Western Australia; South Australia; Victoria; Australian Capital territory; New South Wales; Queensland; Northern Territory; Tasmania; Postcode
4*	Demographic Information – Organisational	School Classification	State Government; Catholic; Independent
5 – 6	Demographic Information – Individual	Qualifications (Highest Gained)	Bachelor degree; Bachelor Honours degree; Post Graduate diploma; Master’s degree; Doctorate; Other; Completion Year
7 – 8	Measurement of Proficiency	Phase 1 Subjects; Levels of Study	Insufficient; A Little; Adequate; More Than Adequate; Very Satisfied; Not Applicable
9	Differentiated Instruction	Phase 1 Subjects; Levels of Study	Insufficient; A Little; Adequate; More Than Adequate; Very Satisfied; Not Applicable
10 – 11	Capabilities	Phase 1 Subjects of Science & History; Levels of Study	Insufficient; A Little; Adequate; More Than Adequate; Very Satisfied; Not Applicable
12	Inquiry Learning	Pedagogy	Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree
13 – 15	Cross-Curriculum Priorities	Levels of Study; Priorities	Very Poorly; Moderately; Satisfactorily; Very Well; Extremely Well

* Item 4 became redundant – see 3.8 below.

Table 3.7 Australian Curriculum Survey - Qualitative: Items, Variables and Descriptors

Item No.	Variables	Descriptors
16 – 17	Schools' Vision	Vision Compatibility
18 - 21	School Curriculum Documents – English; Mathematics; Science; History	Curriculum Compatibility
22 - 25	Individual Pedagogies - English; Mathematics; Science; History	Pedagogical Changes
26 - 29	Assessment Practices - English; Mathematics; Science; History	Assessment Changes
30 – 31	Implications for Teacher Education - English; Mathematics; Science; History	Content; Pedagogy
32	Open ended – further comments	

The survey, as provided to respondents in all states and territories, is provided in Appendix 2.

3.7 Pilot Survey

A pilot of the survey was implemented in late 2011 using a small but representative number of people from all the categories included in item 1 except principals (that is deputy principals, curriculum heads, faculty leaders, classroom teachers and specialist teachers) in order to refine both the questions and the format prior to distributing the survey itself. This was done as ‘a proper pre-test (pilot) involves respondents from the same population as the actual study’ (Hoyle, Harris & Judd, 2002). The participants in the pilot survey were made aware of the overall purposes of the study and the aim of the individual questions, allowing them to note whether the questions were understood and could be answered as intended.

Feedback from these people was mainly positive, although it did identify minor unforeseen problems in question wording in some instances, which were rectified at that stage. The most noticeable of these was Question 8 on enactment of knowledge, with comments such as ‘I struggled with the wording a bit here and had to read it several times for it to get through’. This, and similar comments, were constructive feedback which allowed the researcher to re-write the items identified in such a manner. Two of the teachers involved in the pilot survey raised an issue with Question 12 on inquiry learning. To paraphrase their concerns they believed that this question needed more scope as they valued inquiry learning but believed that it had a place alongside other approaches. Therefore they were of the opinion that with a scale of ‘strongly agree’ through to ‘strongly disagree’ they were unable to express their views that inquiry learning was appropriate but only in certain contexts. This was considered a valid point and consideration was given to either revising that particular question or adding an opportunity for comments. As the number of pilot survey respondents who expressed concern was low, the

researcher decided to go with the original question in an effort to balance the need for comprehensive information, yet prevent the survey from becoming too long and drawn out.

The major change resulting from the pilot study was the decision to use drop-down boxes wherever possible in the survey, as opposed to the participant using a key to write (type) in a response. For example, the original survey contained the following:

Please read each comment below and then answer the corresponding question for the subject(s) you teach by filling in the table.

Use the key below for Questions 4 - 8

1. insufficient 2. a little 3. adequate 4. more than adequate 5. very satisfied
9 not applicable

Example Question

To what extent do you believe your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development, and post graduate studies provided you with a passion to teach this subject?

	<i>Pre-Service Teacher Education</i>	<i>Professional Development Seminars during your career</i>	<i>Post Graduate Studies</i>
<i>Mathematics</i>	5	5	5
<i>English</i>	3	5	4
<i>Science</i>	4	4	5
<i>History</i>	9	9	9

This was then followed by the questions in this format. The feedback was that this was quite cumbersome, as participants had to keep referring back to the original key. Furthermore, when the scales changed, from, say ‘insufficient – very satisfied’ to ‘strongly disagree’ through to ‘strongly agree’, so did the corresponding key. Consequently, choosing an instrument such as *Survey Monkey* allowed for the use of drop down boxes, which facilitated the ease of completing the survey for the respondents.

A drawback at the time, which was noted by several of the pilot study participants, was the problem then being faced by schools and school systems, which was that the Ministers for Education representing the Commonwealth and all states and territories decided in December 2010 to delay the introduction of the Australian Curriculum by at least 12 months, so that implementation would not be required until 2013. This meant that participants in the trial of the survey in late 2011 had difficulty answering Questions 16 to 29, as they were not sufficiently familiar with the content of the Australian Curriculum, as they were only working from draft documents. (Note: the final version of the Australian Curriculum, Version 3, was

only made live on the ACARA website on 7th February 2012). For the same reason it was impossible for them to consider Questions 30 to 32, which were specifically related to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, as the timeline for implementation had been delayed by a minimum of twelve months.

Queensland went ahead and began implementation of the Phase 1 subjects of the Australian Curriculum in 2012, as did the Australian Capital Territory. These two constituencies were ahead of any other state or territory. Consequently, a survey was distributed to Queensland and ACT teachers early in 2013 and to teachers from other states and territories in mid-to-late 2013. The researcher is of the opinion that this time delay did not have any profound impact on the results of the survey.

3.8 Survey Implementation

A survey questionnaire is ‘a collection of self-report questions to be answered by a select group of research participants’ (Gay, et al, 2009, p. 154). Survey research designs are research procedures ‘in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the population’ (Creswell, 2008, p. 388). To obtain comparable data from teachers and school administrators in Independent Schools, a number of school-based personnel including principals, deputy principals, curriculum heads, faculty leaders, classroom teachers and specialist teachers were surveyed using *Survey Monkey*. As surveys can be highly descriptive in nature, useful for capturing characteristics of a large group and relatively inexpensive to administer, they are frequently used in research. In this study a survey questionnaire was developed and implemented at the data collection stage to obtain both statistical and non-statistical information about the practices and attitudes of teachers implementing the Australian Curriculum. This approach reflects efficiencies of time and management of data but it also aligns with the methodological design of the study.

Principals from all Independent Schools in Australia were approached by email with a request to forward a copy of the survey to their staff. With the request was a letter of information explaining the nature and aim of the study and inviting each teacher to participate on a purely voluntary basis. In addition to the survey itself, Principals were provided with a copy of the approval obtained by the researcher from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Adelaide.

To expand on this last point, the ethical perspective taken by the researcher in this study has been informed by the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007), and the *Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research* (2007) as well as by commonly used and accepted practices. These practices involved a number of ethical principles relevant to this study which centred on beneficence, that is, the obligation of the researcher to maximise benefits for, in this case, the educational community; while minimising risk of harm to individuals, that is, non-maleficence. Therefore, the chosen principles applicable to this research study were four in number, namely, minimising the risk of harm, obtaining informed

consent, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, and providing the right to withdraw. These principles were seen as interrelated, not mutually exclusive, and each is discussed briefly below.

In this study the potential harm to participants was considered to be foremost in the form of an invasion of their privacy and anonymity. To minimise this risk the researcher ensured that informed consent was obtained from the participants, the participants' anonymity and confidentiality were protected and the participants were provided with the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

In obtaining informed consent, participants were made aware that they were taking part in a research study and what the research required of them. The purpose of the research and the methods being used were included in this information. Protecting participants' anonymity and confidentiality was achieved by identifying participants numerically in discussions on the data, for example, Respondent 176, and by aggregating data in tables. Finally, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research process at any stage.

Therefore the data collection in this study was ethical, thus respecting individuals. While a set of principles have been discussed above, the researcher was mindful of Creswell's (2008) stance that practicing ethics is a complex matter that involves much more than merely following a set of static guidelines. The researcher has a responsibility to actively interpret those guidelines to suit their particular study, to tailor those guidelines to suit the uniqueness of their research, and to ensure ethical issues are a primary consideration rather than an afterthought (Creswell, 2008, p. 13).

Initially the researcher intended surveying teachers from all schools, however, obtaining permission to approach government schools, while generously received in some states, was a problem in others, particularly those that had had a recent change of government. Consequently, this research was confined to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum Phase 1 subjects in Independent Schools only. The researcher considered the narrowing down of the population sample to school personnel in Independent Schools alone would not detract significantly from the total population for the following reason: schools in Australia are classified as either government or non-government schools. Government schools are the direct responsibility of the Director-General of Education (or equivalent) in each state or territory and receive funding from the relevant state or territory government. Non-government schools can be further classified, based on self-identification of the school's affiliation. However, non-government schools are grouped for reporting as Catholic (including Catholic affiliated Independent Schools) or independent (other non-government schools). The key point is this: non-government schools operate under conditions determined by state and territory government regulatory authorities and receive funding from the Australian Government and relevant state or territory governments. Independent Schools, therefore, must comply with a wide range of government policies, regulations and legislation in order to meet their obligations to the broader community. In addition, the Commonwealth requires the publication of school information including context, student enrolments, staffing, national testing results, selected financial information and achievements each year on the Government's *My School* website.

Therefore, the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Independent Schools, it is argued, operates with many of the same constraints and advantages as in government schools. Furthermore, according to a recent non-government schools census, the independent school sector is the fourth largest school education provider in Australia and at the secondary level is the second largest provider of schooling services (ABS, 2010). Independent Schools increasingly serve communities of parents from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, with the majority of schools having SES scores in the middle to low range, thus providing a good sample base for this study.

A breakdown of the respondents from a geographical perspective revealed that the majority were from three states; Victoria (46.81 per cent), Queensland (21.7 per cent) and Western Australia (11.91 per cent). These figures are represented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 Geographical Spread of Survey Respondents.

State or Territory	Number of Respondents	% of Total Respondents
Australian Capital Territory	21	9.0
Northern Territory	2	0.9
Queensland	51	21.7
South Australia	16	6.8
Tasmania	8	3.4
Victoria	108	46.0
Western Australia	29	12.3
Total	235	100.0

3.9 Data Analysis

Use was made of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program to assist with the data analysis. At the data analysis stage, the researcher as data analyst ‘moves from a description of what *is* the case to an explanation of *why* that is the case’ (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989). With regards to the analysis of data collected for this study to formulate theoretical propositions of the perspectives teachers have regarding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, the maxim of using a mode of data analysis that is ‘practical, systematic, and verifiable’ (Krueger and Casey, 2000) was followed. An element of flexibility consistent with interpretivist, inductive qualitative research methodology was used throughout the analysis of the data. The analysis of the data in this study commenced in October 2013. Data collection of this type was emergent, and analysis was undertaken concurrently. In the conduct of this study, data analysis was not collected to support or refute hypotheses. In this case, the main theoretical propositions that are presented as findings emerged from the data.

Quantitative data analysis is a systematic process by which collected information is transformed by the researcher into numerical data. In this study, the purpose of the analysis of

the quantitative data, as is the case with the qualitative data, is neither to support nor contradict an expected outcome or hypothesis, but rather to add a richness and authenticity to the qualitative data and to provide a more complete picture.

The survey to be used for this study will elicit nominal data for Questions 2 and 4. For example, Question 2 asks respondents to select from a list the state or territory in which they reside. This is nominal data as the data is basic classification data and there is no order associated with the states and territories. Question 5, however, provides ordinal data as it can be argued that when respondents are asked what is the highest level of tertiary completion they have attained, that there is a logical order from a Bachelor degree to a Doctorate. Question 1, which looks at respondents' job titles, is not so clear-cut however. It could be argued that there is a logical order here (from classroom teacher to principal) thus providing ordinal data; although it could be counter-argued that some classroom teachers express a strong desire to stay in the classroom and have no desire to move into a school administrative role. Despite this the researcher has, for this study, taken the first approach and regarded this as ordinal data. The remaining questions on the survey that are closed and are designed to elicit quantitative data (Questions 7 – 15) are all worded to obtain interval data by measuring items on various Likert scales. The various scales are listed at Table 3.6. The results from the different variables in the data set will be tabulated as percentage distributions in a data matrix and the relevant data presented in graph form, for ease of interpretation and display.

It should be noted that Questions 7 to 11 allow for responses applicable to the four Phase 1 subjects of the Australian Curriculum, Mathematics, English, Science and History, and also cover three stages of teacher education. This was deliberate, to ensure the survey was not too long yet still obtain the data required. As an example of the design and construction of such questions, Question 9 asks to what extent the respondents believe that their pre-service teacher education, their on-going professional development, and their post-graduate studies prepared them to provide differentiated instruction in a mixed-ability classroom. Obviously there will be some respondents who do not teach all four of these subjects, just as some would not have undertaken post-graduate studies. Therefore one of the responses to this question is 'not applicable'. This 'not applicable' option could be chosen, for example, by a secondary English/History teacher when filling in the boxes for Mathematics/Science. It could also be chosen by a primary teacher who teaches all four subjects, but has not been involved in a Science professional development activity. These are just two examples of when the 'not applicable' option may be used.

However, because the survey is designed this way, the number of 'not applicable' responses is expected to be unusually high and if this is the case, these responses will be eliminated from the data during the data cleaning stage. This should provide a more realistic data collection as, for example, the percentage of Science teachers who respond to each of the question choices on differentiation will not be skewed or distorted in percentage terms by the number of non-Science teachers who entered 'not applicable'. In other words, for a question such as this, the sample total will be the total of Science teachers who respond, not the total of all teachers in the sample.

With the qualitative approach, being consistent with a key tenet of interpretivist, inductive qualitative research methodology of this type results in ‘theme identification as one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research’ (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). A modified Miles and Huberman (1994) method of coding was utilised; the process of coding requires, not only retrieving and organising chunks of data, but ‘dissect(ing) them meaningfully, while keeping the relations between the parts intact’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thematic coding has been chosen because this study involves researching the particular perspectives of a cohort of practitioners with regards to curriculum reform. Descriptive and inferential (or pattern) coding were utilised to induce and formulate these themes from the data on which the theoretical propositions were subsequently formulated. Descriptive coding, which requires little or no inference beyond the piece of data itself, was used as it is valuable in getting the analysis started. It is useful for summarising segments of data which provide the basis for later higher order coding. Inferential (or pattern) codes which require some degree of inference beyond the data were then used to pull together material into smaller and more meaningful units.

On the completion of the data analysis, a substantive grounded theory of teachers’ perspectives on curriculum reform in Australia was constructed. Following this, a set of recommendations for teacher educators at the level of policy, practice and further research has been proposed. Prior to this, data gathering and analysis undertaken in this study used the principles that underpin a grounded theory research approach, which is complementary to symbolic interactionism (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Punch, 2009). The rationale and justification for linking the principles of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism, two seemingly distinct research orientations, is as follows. Chamberlain-Salaun et al (2013) lament that postgraduate students and novice researchers often fail to establish the philosophical foundations of their study, despite the literature reiterating the need for this. In particular they cite that with grounded theory research, due consideration is not necessarily given to a study’s epistemological and ontological underpinnings (Chamberlain-Salaun et al, 2013). In part Chamberlain-Salaun and her associates have focussed on grounded theory research itself, claiming that the originators of the theory failed to articulate the philosophical foundation on which grounded theory is based. In this thesis, Table 3.1 aligns the principles of grounded theory with symbolic interactionism, which aligns with Chamberlain-Salaun’s assertion that grounded theory has its roots in pragmatist philosophy and symbolic interactionist sociology (Chamberlain-Salaun et al, 2013). Likewise, Seaman (2008) links grounded theory with constructionism (as depicted in Table 3.1) by stating that constructivists have ‘transformed grounded theory from a methodology with objectivist underpinnings to an approach that can be used in projects with different methodological assumptions’ (Seaman, 2008). Furthermore, he describes grounded theory as having ‘evolved’ from objectivism to constructivism. Supporting this, arguably extending it, is Charmaz (2006) who repositions grounded theory away from the notion of being a strict methodology to one where it is regarded as a flexible approach. In her own words, Charmaz states that researchers ‘can use basic grounded theory guidelines with twenty-first century methodological assumptions and approaches’ (Charmaz, 2006, p. 9). Mills et al (2006) concur, stating that the constructivist epistemology of grounded theory is ‘more reflective of the context in which participants are situated’ than the traditional stance (Mills et al, 2006, p. 4).

So, grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 410). It has a focus on *theory generation* and construction, that is, developing new theories grounded in new data, as opposed to *theory confirmation* whereby hypotheses developed from previous theories are tested. The inductive nature of grounded theory research is such that 'one does not begin with a theory, then prove it... Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23). Creswell (2008) puts it succinctly when he states:

Grounded theory designs are systematic, qualitative procedures that researchers use to generate a general explanation (called a *grounded theory*) that explains a process, action, or interaction among people. The procedures for developing this theory include collecting primarily interview data, developing and relating categories (or themes) of information, and composing a figure or visual model that portrays the general explanation. In this way, the explanation is 'grounded' in the data from participants. (Cresswell, 2008, p.61).

According to Crotty (1998), symbolic interactionism 'spawned' the research method known as grounded theory (Crotty, 1998, p. 78). He, likewise, emphasised that it was a process that sought to ensure that the theory emerging arose from the data and not from some other source. As he stated, 'it is a process of inductive theory building based squarely on observation of the data themselves' (Crotty, 1998, p. 78).

The four important characteristics of a grounded theory, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967) are fit, understanding, generality, and control. The first means that the theory must fit the data to be useful. The researcher must ensure that personal wishes, biases or predetermined categories are not determinants of the theory but rather that the theory must correspond closely to the real-world data. The second is that the theory should be clearly stated and be unambiguous so as to be readily understandable to people working in that particular field. The third characteristic demands that the theory should be able to move beyond the specifics of the original research study. That is, by exhibiting generality the pitfall of developing a theory that is narrow and only applies to one small section of a population or to only one specific situation is avoided. The fourth characteristic, namely control, requires that if others use the theory, they should have some control over the phenomenon that is explained by the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Using the principles that underpin a grounded theory approach to data analysis requires that extensive data be collected. Furthermore both data collection and data analysis using a grounded theory procedure need to be concurrent and continual.

3.10 Validity Issues

The issue of interpretive validity was also accommodated in this research. Interpretive validity refers to portraying the meaning attached by participants to what is being studied by the

researcher accurately (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). It comprises of the accuracy of the interpretation as to what happened in the minds of subjects and the extent to which the researcher understands the opinions, thinking, feelings, intentions and experiences of subjects. As Johnson & Christensen (2008) state:

(Interpretive validity) refers to the degree to which the research participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood by the qualitative researcher and portrayed in the research report. An important part of qualitative research is understanding the research participants' 'inner worlds'...and interpretive validity refers to the degree of accuracy in presenting these inner worlds. Accurate interpretive validity requires that the researcher get inside the heads of the participants, look through the participants' eyes, and see and feel what they see and feel. In this way the qualitative researcher can understand things from the participants' perspectives and thus provide a valid account of these perspectives. (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 277).

Strategies used to achieve interpretive validity were varied and depended on the aspect of the research methodology to which it was applied. A strategy in reference to reporting the data collected during the surveys was to use low-inference descriptors. Low-inference descriptors seek to record observations 'in terms that are as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what people say, for example, rather than researchers' reconstructions of the general sense of what a person said, which would allow researchers' personal perspectives to influence the reporting' (Seale, 1999, p. 148). Consequently, verbatim accounts were used as it is the lowest inference descriptor of all, with the participants' exact words, as written in the surveys in response to open-ended questions, provided in Chapter 6 as direct quotations. This was particularly useful in achieving interpretive validity when the verbatim accounts from the respondents provided not only description and data, but some information about the respondents' interpretations and personal meanings which were incorporated into the findings that were discussed.

Interpretive validity was also pursued by using methods triangulation and data triangulation. The former has been discussed above in Section 3.4 where a mixed methods approach was used to study the Australian Curriculum and teachers' perception of this innovation. With data triangulation, multiple data sources were used. For example, the range of teachers surveyed included principals, deputy principals, curriculum coordinators, faculty heads, year level coordinators and classroom teachers. Likewise teachers who taught one, some or all of the Phase 1 subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, and History) were surveyed, as were teachers from all states and territories except New South Wales; and teachers from primary, secondary, and P-12 schools. So applying an important component of data triangulation, data was collected at different times, at different places, and with different people (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

The final strategy employed to promote research validity was reflexivity whereby the researcher involved himself in self-awareness and critical self-reflection on his potential biases and predispositions around the Australian Curriculum to ensure these did not affect the research process and/or conclusions. Critical reflection occurs when the validity of our presuppositions

are analysed and challenged and the appropriateness of our knowledge, understanding and beliefs given our present contexts are assessed (Mezirow, 1990). Brookfield (1990) holds that there are three phases to critical reflection:

1. Identifying assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions. (Brookfield defines assumptions as ‘those taken-for-granted ideas, common-sense beliefs, and self-evident rules of thumb’).
2. Assessing and scrutinising the validity of these assumptions in terms of how they relate to our ‘real-life’ experiences and our present context(s).
3. Transforming these assumptions to become more inclusive and integrative, and using this newly-formed knowledge to inform our future actions and practices more appropriately.

This was the process used by the researcher in the context of his current involvement both as an administrator at a multi-campus school responsible for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and as a PhD candidate focussing on the Australian Curriculum.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, addresses research question number 2: What is the history of curriculum reform at a national level in Australia? Arising from an extensive document survey and literature review, the development and implementation of the new and emerging Australian Curriculum is placed in an historical, political and social context by considering the history of national curriculum collaboration in Australia, in various stages, from the period 1968 to 2007.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter identified the research questions and discussed the rationale for the research design that was chosen. The use of a mixed methods design was identified and subsequently justified. The actual research process was then outlined step by step in section 3.3. Other areas covered in this chapter were the issue of triangulation and how it is addressed in this study; document search and analysis techniques; and survey questionnaire development. Also receiving attention in this chapter were the implementation of both the pilot survey and the revised, final survey; data analysis techniques; validity issues and participant and study ethics.

Chapter 4

A History of National Curriculum in Australia

4.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the first research question: What is the history of curriculum reform at a national level in Australia? The current move towards a national curriculum is not the first time such a move has been attempted in Australia. As then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Julia Gillard, pointed out when announcing this latest initiative, ‘Australians have been debating the merits of a national curriculum for the last 30 years’ (Gillard, 2008a). This being so, it is appropriate to examine past attempts and through a literature review, compare and contrast scholarly views of the debate and identify issues and variables surrounding earlier endeavours. By doing so the historical context of the pursuit of a national curriculum can provide insights into the current situation and how this may differ from previous attempts.

The genesis of the national curriculum can be traced back to the work initiated by Malcolm Skilbeck, the inaugural Director of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) in the early 1980s, although a number of observers place the initiation period from around 1989 to 1993 as the first serious attempt to achieve a national curriculum following the release of a major policy statement, *Strengthening Australia's Schools: A Consideration of the Focus and Content of Schooling* (Dawkins, 1988) by the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, in May 1988. This is frequently identified as the formal initiation of the intent for curriculum reform at a national level. Piper (1997, p. 4), for example, describes the Dawkins paper as having a ‘watershed role’ in the reform, as will be seen later in this chapter. Print (1993, p. 105), on the other hand, maintains that it was during the late 1980s that the concept of a core curriculum being delivered through a national curriculum became ‘a realistic manifestation’.

In order to understand the history of the national curriculum in Australia it is necessary to consider the dichotomy of the constitutional responsibility for education entrusted to the States on the one hand and the aspirations for education as espoused by the Commonwealth government for a growing nation with changing economic challenges and a growing population, on the other. Once this has been considered, it is possible to trace the development of a national curriculum in Australia through various stages. Reid (2005a, pp. 16-20) outlines four major periods of development, which will be adopted in this paper with a minor modification. These four periods are:

1. Period 1: 1968-1988
2. Period 2: 1989-1993
3. Period 3: 1993-2003, and
4. Period 4: 2003-2007

The period from 2007 to 2013 is then considered in Chapter 5.

4.1 Educational Responsibility in Australia

Since the Federation of Australia in 1901, the various government portfolio responsibilities have been shared between the central Commonwealth government and the State and Territory governments. The history of this relationship in the education portfolio is of interest. From the 1870s, each colony had passed legislation establishing a state-funded system of public education, which was free, compulsory and secular. This colonial government provision sat alongside systemic Catholic schools and private Independent Schools, each catering to their own distinctive clientele (Seddon, 2001). With the advent of Federation the constitutional framework of the 1890s took the option of ignoring education as a Federal function. Unless areas of control were actually named and specifically ceded in the constitution to the new Commonwealth Government, they were retained by the states. Bowker (1972, p. 148) comments that it is difficult to ascertain whether keeping education as a state responsibility was 'a matter of conviction or of default'. Moran (1980) has no such difficulty commenting that:

The omission of education was quite deliberate as it was simply not seen as an item to be included in the Federal Conferences and Conventions of the 1890s. In general, the individual States were satisfied with the role they were playing and with the education they were providing. (Moran, 1980, pp. 10-11).

Not only was education not included in the specific powers granted to the Commonwealth, it was also absent from the unspecified residual state powers (Moran, 1980, p. 11). Despite this, there were powers within the Constitution which allowed the Commonwealth selective entry into the educational arena. One was the responsibility for the Commonwealth to provide education in the two territories, namely the Northern Territory and, at a later date, the Australian Capital Territory. This was done through an arrangement whereby a named state provided the services (in the case of Northern Territory the services were provided by South Australia, and for the Australian Capital Territory, by New South Wales) while the Commonwealth provided the funding. Another of these powers comes from Section 96 of the Constitution which, essentially, enables the Federal Government to legislate that special purpose grants be made to the various states, particularly in pursuit of a Commonwealth objective. The original intention of Section 96 was to provide a form of protection for the states in the early days of Federation, but it has remained as a much used and very important instrument in Federal-State relations. Moran (1980) explains that:

This power under Section 96 was originally deemed necessary during the 'settling in' period after Federation to allow for contingencies which could have arisen for example as a result of an imbalance from interstate trade thus justifying a 'balancing' grant from the Commonwealth. (Moran, 1980, p.12)

However, by the mid-1960s, selective intervention of this type was seen more and more as a way to allow the Commonwealth Government greater control in areas in which it chose to be involved. Former Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies was to state that Section 96 had 'become a major and flexible instrument for enlarging the boundaries of Commonwealth action; or, to use realistic terms, Commonwealth power' (Menzies, 1967, p. 76). From time to time the constitutional responsibilities for education were debated with a view to extending the powers of the Commonwealth. For example, during an urgency debate in the House of Representatives in 1958, the Labor member for Wills, Gordon Bryant, said:

I realize the Constitution mentions education not at all... If I had to choose between the Constitution and the children I would support the needs of children. The dead hand of the 'nineties should no longer be allowed to strangle the education systems of this country. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, 1958, p. 1453).

However such debates inevitably led to a confirmation by academics and constitutional authorities of the states' rights.

Hinz (2010) posits that education is a residual power and rests with the state governments, citing Section 51 of the Australian constitution. However, she maintains that, though this was largely the case until 1974, it was then that the Commonwealth government began to systematically provide general recurrent funding to both government and non-government schools. Hinz (2010) then elaborates on this stating that 'this funding has increased in relative and absolute terms under every successive Commonwealth government, and is largely based on Section 96 of the Constitution, which allows the Commonwealth to make payments to the states on such terms and conditions as it sees fit' (Hinz, 2010). This reliance on either Section 51 or Section 96 of the Constitution, in regards to education, has resulted in advocates for both points of view. Hinz (2010) summarises the case thus:

(Some) scholars...argue that Australia at federation was organised on the principles of coordination, with section 51 of the Constitution in particular stipulating the limits to Commonwealth powers. Others...argue that concurrency was an intentional feature of Australia's constitution, pointing to section 96 which gives the Commonwealth power to make grants to the states on such terms and conditions as it sees fit (therefore providing constitutional legitimacy for involvement in state spheres of responsibility) and section 109, under which the Commonwealth laws are given precedence over state laws should the two conflict. What is clear is that both principles are embedded in the constitution, and their relative emphasis has evolved over time. (Hinz, 2010, p.3).

Thus, there has always been a role for the Federal Government in State education; albeit limited to a funding capacity. In 1988 Shaw was to comment:

Under the constitution, power with regard to State education remains with the State Parliaments, but there is no constitutional barrier against the Commonwealth

government making grants to the States for educational purposes, or arranging to assume responsibility for some areas of State education. (Shaw, 1988, p. 205)

In the same year then Senator Malcolm Colston wrote:

The Commonwealth Government has a limited, but important role in primary and secondary education. It provides funds to government and non-government schools. It finances a number of national programs and, through the Curriculum Development Council, supports curriculum development in collaboration with the states. (Colston, 1988 p, 137)

In the first few decades following the Second World War, the Commonwealth Government became more involved in Australian education at all levels. One significant reason for this was the establishment of the Commonwealth Office of Education in 1945. A second factor was the financial dominance of the Federal Government over the States after the 1942 uniform tax legislation (Bowker, 1972, p. 158). During the war, the total taxing authority had been transferred to the Commonwealth. Post-war, the Commonwealth benefitted greatly from increased taxation revenues. At this time, pressure groups were urging the Government to spend more on education (Moran, 1980, p.42). In the political sphere, education had become a major community issue. During the post-war period, school enrolments were increasing dramatically and the States were finding the rapidly increasing costs of education to be a real burden on their budgets.

Lingard (2000) argues that federal government involvement in school education, particularly school funding, peaked during the post-World War II economic boom years. Webster and Ryan (2014) concur, citing examples of this school funding, including federal government funding of schools on a needs basis, the proliferation of large-scale capital funding for schools, the large-scale funding of school libraries, the introduction of the disadvantaged schools program and the special education program, and the introduction of teacher in-service program centres and school innovation programs (Webster & Ryan, 2014, p. 62).

Nevertheless, the fact remained that, in the field of school level education, responsibility was constitutionally the prerogative of State and Territory governments. Policy was formulated and schools were administered through departments of education in each of the six states and two territories. The Commonwealth Government had no specific legislative authority over the school curriculum, though over time it came to view the curriculum as a vehicle to facilitate the implementation and achievement of government initiatives and directions. Piper (1997, p. 9) has referred to this constitutional responsibility for schools being with the states and territories as an 'endemic barrier' to the implementation of a national approach to curriculum development, commenting that the states continued to guard this constitutional right jealously. Bowker (1972, p. 146) adds weight to this assertion when he states that federations are 'particularly susceptible to frictions, jealousies and in some cases incompetence generated by competing levels of government within a single political entity'. Thus the tensions that existed

between State and Federal jurisdictions from 1945 to 1988 were instrumental in thwarting a concerted, national effort to centralise curriculum in Australia.

In considering the place of governments as stakeholders in education, and exploring the links between government objectives and the curriculum, Brady and Kennedy (2007) make the following points:

Governments have interests that are largely, although not exclusively, economic in nature. Charting economic growth and development has become a major preoccupation with governments and hence their concern. The nature of the school curriculum will determine the knowledge and skills that future citizens will possess and hence their capacity to contribute to the nation's economy in a productive way. Of course, governments wish to see a community that is socially cohesive, politically literate, culturally sophisticated, tolerant and just. The school curriculum can do much to contribute to these objectives as well. (Brady & Kennedy, 2007, p. 8)

Brady and Kennedy (2007, pp. 16-19) identify the different phases in which the Commonwealth government has sought to influence the curriculum by using a conceptualisation that is commonly used in the fields of international law or international relations. They describe this as being based on a continuum from 'soft' to 'hard' to describe the various mechanisms which are used to bring about compliance. These authors claim that over a period exceeding 35 years, the Commonwealth has moved from using 'soft' to 'hard' policy measures in an attempt to influence curriculum. They distinguish these two extremes of the continuum thus:

... 'soft' policy is often used...to try to persuade participants at lower levels of the benefits of compliance, since legal compliance cannot be enforced. This persuasion might take the form of codes, benchmarks or guidelines, all of which are non-binding. At the other extreme is 'hard' policy that embeds its requirements in legislation, institutional objectives and commitments and budgetary allocations and for which there are explicit sanctions for non-compliance. (Brady & Kennedy, 2007 p. 16)

An alternative and useful taxonomic approach to Brady and Kennedy's 'soft-hard' classification is one used by a number of researchers when discussing federal-state relations, using the terms 'cooperative federalism', 'corporate federalism' and 'coercive federalism' (Bartlett, Knight & Lingard, 1991; Harris-Hart, 2009; Kincaid, 1990). These taxonomic approaches will be referred to later in this chapter.

Using Brady and Kennedy's classification, the evolution of this shift from 'soft' to 'hard' can be seen when a number of stages or phases in the move to a national curriculum are considered. As the decade of the sixties neared its end, it was evident that the Commonwealth government was adopting a 'soft' stance by moving in the direction of indirect influence on State and Territory curricula, predominately through the funding of various curriculum projects and bodies. This was a strategy that dominated in the twenty-year period from 1968 to 1988.

4.2 1968 – 1988: The Advent of National Curriculum Development in Australia

4.2.1 Introduction

In the mid-1960s the Commonwealth government, by allocating funds to support the development of libraries and science laboratories in schools across Australia, foreshadowed significant changes that were to occur in regards to the Commonwealth's role in education (Seddon, 2001, p. 315). However, it was the curriculum reform movement in the United Kingdom and the United States of America during the 1960s that provided the impetus for the curriculum reform in Australian education that occurred during the period under consideration (Musgrave, 1979; Watt, 1992.). During the period from approximately 1968 to 1988, Commonwealth involvement in school curriculums was predominately through the funding of individuals and groups to develop curriculum materials. This opened the door for the Commonwealth to become involved directly in the school curriculum in a 'non-threatening yet high-profile' way (Brady & Kennedy, 2007, p. 16).

This involvement appears to have evolved in three distinct stages with the first being the Commonwealth initially funding individuals working on curriculum development. Then, in 1968, came a significant move with the Commonwealth government funding the Australian Science Education Project (ASEP), discussed below. From this point in time, other national subject committees, such as the National Committee on English Teaching (NCET), were also able to gain Commonwealth funding. A third stage could be identified with the creation of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) founded in June 1973. This third stage was also significant because, as Piper (1997, p. 13) observes, 'it institutionalised the Commonwealth's entry into the curriculum area, and legitimated the concept of national curriculum development'. Christie (2003, p. 103) places just as much emphasis on the previous stage stating that 'the creation of such committees as the NCET was a significant step towards Commonwealth-state curriculum collaboration'.

Christie (1985), in studying the development of national curriculum in Australia, identifies three similar stages. Her interpretation includes:

Phase 1: A phase of nationally coordinated curriculum activity that occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was evidenced with the creation of three national committees, namely, the National Committee on Social Science Teaching (1970-78), the Asian Studies Coordinating Committee (1974-78) and the National Committee on English Teaching (1974-78).

Phase 2: The creation of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) with the aim of absorbing the work of the aforementioned committees (although, Christie comments on the programs of the CDC being severely curtailed as an outcome of the 'razor gang' cuts in the 1980-81 budget); and

Phase 3: The CDC being retained but with a different form as it became part of the Schools Commission and lost its independence as a statutory authority.

Christie (1985) explains the evolution of these three stages and the slow emergence of a national curriculum thus:

The first phase of national curriculum activity involved the creation of national committees. A second phase commenced with the creation of the Curriculum Development Centre, although the work of the CDC was affected significantly by the decision (1980-81) to wind the centre down. Now, with the re-emergence of the CDC in a new form, a third phase of national curriculum activity has commenced. (Christie, 1985, p. 150).

4.2.2 The Australian Science Education Project

The Australian Science Education Project (ASEP), which preceded the establishment of the Curriculum Development Centre, is significant in that it represents the first occasion where the Commonwealth government provided funding for curriculum development, traditionally a state responsibility. Watt (1992, p. 106) stated that for the first time, the ASEP, in their bid for curriculum development, initiated national cooperation between the various educational bodies in Australia. Fraser (1978, p. 417) referred to it as an important landmark in the history of Australian education as it was 'the first national curriculum project in any subject area in Australia' while Piper (1997, p. 11) even more enthusiastically referred to it as the 'advent of national curriculum in Australia'.

The formation of the ASEP can be traced to an earlier Junior Secondary Science Project (JSSP) that originated in Victoria. Prior to the JSSP, curriculum development, particularly in science, was described as being 'haphazard' with courses being developed by a few state departmental officers meeting infrequently with university staff and selected teachers (Lucas, 1972, p. 444). The JSSP, under the patronage of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and the Victorian Universities and Schools Examination Board, acquired funding from a group of companies and trusts, such as the Myer Foundation, for its work. It was a project that encompassed more than content within the remit of curriculum development. Moran (1980) enthused that:

It was probably the very first time in the history of Australian education that curriculum developers had looked much beyond content and examined the method and techniques of presentation, the students' learning process, the expected outcomes and the development of skills and attitudes important for scientific investigation... (Moran, 1980, p. 52).

The JSSP materials, although prepared for Victorian schools, were also trialled with favourable outcomes in some Tasmanian and South Australian schools. Arising from this, in 1968 a national curriculum proposal was approved at a meeting of representatives of the Commonwealth, Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria, and a committee of management took over the Victorian-sponsored JSSP (Penguin Macquarie, 1989, p. 40). New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia also opted to participate in 1969, at which time the name of the project was changed to the Australian Science Education Project.

The project was funded to the extent of \$1.4 million with the Commonwealth Government contributing \$750,000. The stated purposes of the project were:

1. to develop instructional materials in science for use by teachers and pupils in Grades 7-10 in Australian schools;
2. to carry out such evaluation of current practices in a cross-section of Australian schools as is necessary to ensure that Project materials are tried in a variety of situations where the characteristics of the school, teachers, and students have been adequately described;
3. to produce suitable evaluative and descriptive instruments designed for use with Project materials;
4. to develop a model of a teacher education program for the implementation of Project materials in schools and implement it in conjunction with teacher education authorities throughout Australia, and
5. to establish a specialist resource service for the developers of Project materials, for trial teachers in schools, and for other teachers interested in Project materials but who may not be using them in the trial situation. (ASEP, 1969, p.7).

A significant feature of the ASEP was the structure and workings of the curriculum development team. The early projects of the Curriculum Development Centre which were to follow (such as the Social Education Materials Project and the Language Development Project) had several teams located in their 'home' state. The ASEP, on the other hand, had a team of curriculum developers under the leadership of a director and a committee of management who were brought together in one location.

In March 1974, after approximately four years of development, trial, and revision of materials, the project modules were published. Organised as independent units, the materials were inquiry-based, with sufficient options to cater for individual differences in students. Forty-seven units were developed for use in the classroom, each one arranged into three levels of difficulty based on Piaget's theory of intellectual development. A further unit was developed which was intended for use in teacher education.

While the ASEP was successful in bringing teachers from various states together to work on the project, and certainly exhibited a Commonwealth/State partnership, its success at the implementation stage is not so clear cut. The ASEP had its own evaluation group; however the project was not funded in a way that would allow it to carry out any extensive evaluation in its own right, although the carrying out of studies by outside bodies on both the final product and the implementation of the ASEP modules was encouraged. Various studies were conducted and published covering a range of focus areas such as the underlying philosophy of the ASEP (Fraser, 1976a), the content themes in the materials produced (Carss, 1973; Clarke, 1973a; Clarke, 1973b), student outcomes through a comparison of ASEP and conventional classrooms, and effects of teacher structuring (Fraser, 1976c; Tisher & Power, 1973; Tisher & Power 1975), the factors affecting dissemination and the range of dissemination (Northfield, 1976; Owen, 1977a) and finally the learning environment through four distinct processes namely direct observation (Tisher & Power, 1976), student perceptions (Fraser, 1976b; Northfield, 1976; Tisher & Power 1975), teacher opinion surveys (Owen, 1977a) and case studies (Susan, 1976).

Considering the dissemination aspect, Owen (1977b, p. 68) was to comment that in the preceding seven years, while teachers were aware of the ASEP by name, few had become completely familiar with the materials. Musgrave (1979, p. 133) also notes that although the materials were more likely to be used in South Australia and Tasmania (and less likely in Queensland and Western Australia), by February 1976 about 30 per cent of secondary schools in Australia had not purchased any ASEP units, and of those that had, they were generally being used for less than one term. Thus the success of the ASEP as a national curriculum initiative when viewed in terms of its acceptance and use can only be described as limited. The timing of this project, however, was during what Hargreaves (2006) has described as the 'age of the autonomous professional'. It was during this time that governments and charitable organisations and foundations invested in curriculum projects, many of which were developed by universities or regional teams but were 'rarely implemented faithfully in the classroom, still less institutionalised into the routines of teachers' practices' (Hargreaves, 2006, p. 678).

Piper (1997, p. 11) however, acknowledges the vital role of the ASEP in the history of national collaboration in education:

While there had been examples of cooperation between the Commonwealth and the states on curriculum matters before the late 1960s...it was the inauguration of the Australian Science Education Project (ASEP) in October 1969 that marked the advent of national curriculum development in Australia. Two features of the project are worthy of note here, since they have remained central to the concept of national curriculum development in Australia: firstly, the principle of national curriculum development as a partnership between the Commonwealth and the states, including the principle of shared funding; and, secondly, a recognition of the importance of involving teachers in the process of curriculum development. (Piper, 1997, p. 11).

Moran (1980, p. 55) has suggested that the ASEP was in many ways a prototype for the Curriculum Development Centre whilst warning that one should not be seen as a definite genesis of the other. She comments that the ASEP showed 'that State systems were not impenetrable and that cooperation across State borders was not impossible' (Moran, 1980, p. 54). Musgrave (1979, p. 134), concurs, noting that a project such as the ASEP clearly demonstrated that more permanent initiatives in curriculum development were possible at a national level, and observing a reduction in interstate jealousies; while Fensham (1995, p. 194) put it in terms of the ASEP 'opening the door' to national curriculum development, which led to the establishment of the Curriculum Development Centre. To that extent, the ASEP was successful and provided a model for future attempts at national collaboration in curriculum development and a mindset that such collaboration was possible.

4.2.3 The Curriculum Development Centre

The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) was established in 1975 as an independent statutory body under the Curriculum Development Centre Act 1975, although the centre had already been operating with an Interim Council since 1973, being one of the early Cabinet

decisions of the newly elected Whitlam government in December 1972. Section 5 of the Act clearly set out the six functions of the CDC. Notwithstanding the functions relating to making payments and incidental tasks, the four remaining main functions were:

- a. to devise and develop, and to promote and assist in the devising and development of, school curricula and school educational materials;
- b. to undertake, promote and assist in research into matters related to school curricula and school educational materials;
- c. to make available or supply school curricula and school educational materials; and
- d. to collect, assess and disseminate, and to promote and assist in the collection, assessment and dissemination of, information relating to school curricula and school materials.

The then Minister for Education, Kim Beazley, in his second reading speech when presenting the CDC Bill to Parliament, acknowledged the work being done in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and emphasised the need for a national review body in Australia. He stated:

Experience in Australia and overseas has demonstrated the benefits that can accrue to children and their schools from the concentration of relatively large funds and other resources on curriculum development on a national scale. In the United Kingdom a national Schools Council fosters curriculum and materials developed by providing funds and other support and by arranging publication of results. In the United States of America several large projects have been mounted in recent years in science, social science and the humanities – generally with Federally provided budgets of several million dollars... (CDC Bill, 1975, Second Reading).

Beazley went on to state:

In Australia each of the State Education Departments has created facilities for curriculum development. In general, however, these facilities appear to be fully stretched in the production of materials of particular relevance to the individual state, and which receive limited use in other states. There is also a lack of any permanent facility for the exchange of information and ideas between the State curriculum agencies, and for receiving and assessing new concepts and developments from overseas.

These considerations have for some time pointed to the need for a national body such as this Centre. Further, the Educational Department has, over a period, received many specific proposals for curriculum and materials development on a national scale – indicating there would be ample work of a national character for a Curriculum Development Centre, now and in the future. (CDC Bill, 1975, Second Reading).

The CDC granted funding directly to schools and the states. It drew its legislative authority from the grants to states clauses, with its power residing in Section 96 of the Constitution, however Moran (1980, p.2) put forward a strong plea that the CDC ‘must be seen as a Centre

which has as its major objective, a commitment to improving and enriching the learning experience of students through research and development of curricula – an educational rather than a financial benefit’. Once operational, the CDC developed a high profile in federal-state relations, especially in areas where there was conflict and difference of opinion. Many aspects of the work undertaken by it reflected the Whitlam Labor Government’s unstated (in curriculum terms) policy of idealism and reform (Bartlett, 1993, p. 286). The first Director of the CDC was Professor Malcolm Skilbeck. Reid (2005a, p.17) observed that for the short time that it functioned, the CDC was a lively contributor to curriculum development through its management of a number of curriculum projects. If ever there was a time to foster the development of national curriculum, this was it.

4.2.4 The Social Education Materials Project

The first major enterprise of the fledgling Curriculum Development Centre was the Social Education Materials Project (SEMP), with an investment of \$1.2 million. This project had been proposed by the National Committee on Social Science Teaching, a group that arose following an Australian UNESCO seminar that had been held in Burwood (Victoria) in August-September 1967, and was based around the provision of resources in secondary schools for the teaching of the social sciences. The format of this project is interesting in that it reflects the general perception of national collaboration of that era, that is, eight teams of secondary teachers worked in a predominantly autonomous way within their own state boundaries, with the ‘national’ input being the coordination of the groups, (rather loosely Piper suggests [Piper, 1997, p.12]) by a national project director, Colin Tonkin, a secondary schools inspector whom the Victorian Education Department agreed to release on secondment for three years. Of the eight teams, seven were endorsed by state education departments and the eighth was sponsored by the New South Wales Headmasters’ Conference. Thus, each team was state-based with the only real commonality among them in the task that they undertook being an agreement to use an inquiry-based approach. This concept of a national project centred on state-based teams was frequently referred to as an ‘outposting model’ (Marsh, 1994; Piper, 1997). In a media release by Minister Beazley on 26th July 1974 the units each of the teams had as their focus were listed, these being:

Government and Decision Making Processes	N.S.W. Department of Education
Racial and Ethnic Relations	Victorian Education Department
Urbanism	Victorian Education Department
Social Control and Conflict	S.A. Education Department
Community Study	W.A. Education Department
Family Groupings	Headmasters’ Conference and Catholic Education Office
Challenging Social Relationships	Tasmanian Department of Education
The Consumer in Society	Queensland Department of Education
	(Ministerial No. 42, 1974).

While this was the first major project of the Curriculum Development Centre, it was not one that was successful if assessed from the perspective as to whether or not it contributed to a curriculum framework that was cohesive, workable, and able to be adopted nationally. Piper (1997, p. 12) commented:

While the Social Education Materials Project model satisfied the accountability demands of the states, it in turn was criticised for its lack of an identifiable national focus, or indeed, of any cohesive curriculum framework to guide project activity. The nominal adherence of each of the project teams to an inquiry-based approach ensured that the various team products were at least pedagogically compatible, despite a wide range of development styles, but it failed to provide a focus whereby the separate and largely independent set of resources could be said to cohere into a curriculum. Consequently the materials seem to have been taken up in a piecemeal fashion to be slotted into existing courses, some of them pedagogically at variance with the inquiry-based approach on which the materials were predicated. (Piper, 1997, p. 12).

Marsh (1994, p. 38) concurs with this, stating that the SEMP project, by using a periphery approach to decision-making, experienced very low levels of adoption in all States and Territories. Moran (1980) on the other hand, while not applauding the outcomes of the SEMP in glowing terms, does take a more optimistic viewpoint stating four key positives, namely:

1. the production of handbooks for teachers as well as parents;
2. the coverage of topics not previously dealt with to any extent (e.g. consumerism, marriage and the family, and ethnic cultures);
3. demonstrating that there was a great deal in common across the States; and
4. demonstrating that material requiring extensive resources was more economically and comprehensively produced in a central organisation. (Moran, 1980, pp. 85-86)

It is these last two points that suggest that a national curriculum focus was relevant and that there were good reasons to pursue this option further.

4.2.5 The Language Development Project

A second major national initiative undertaken by the Curriculum Development Centre was the Language Development Project (LDP) which commenced operations formally with the appointment of a full-time project officer to the CDC staff in 1977 (Piper, 1984a, p. 2). Christie (2003) gives a succinct summary of the central aim of the LDP when she states that:

Its program of curriculum research and development was primarily devoted to development of curriculum materials for promoting language development in the transition years from primary to secondary school, though its theoretical statements and goals were influential for all the years of compulsory schooling. (Christie, 2003, p. 103).

Similar to the Social Education Materials Project (SEMP), part of the process of the LDP was to have eight discrete and separate projects, one in each state and territory, working somewhat

independently of each other. Victoria, for example, focussed on ‘second phase’ learners of English, which was broadly defined as students from a non-English-speaking background who still found difficulty with reading and writing tasks in the classroom despite being able to communicate effectively in English in most situations. This focus reflected a particular need as perceived within Victoria at the time. The tasks selected by the other states and territories likewise reflected their interests at the time while still being consistent with the goals of the national project. The eight component projects of the national Language Development Project are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. State and Territory Projects of the LDP (adapted from Piper, 1984a, pp. 6-7).

State/Territory	Task Force Composition	Focus of Project
South Australia	One full-time coordinator and a number of part-time consultants working with a network of 30 teachers from 10 schools	The development of children’s writing abilities in Years 5-8. By identifying and documenting successful practice in the teaching of writing, they aimed at developing materials for pre-service and in-service training of teachers, as well as guidelines and resources for classroom teachers.
Victoria	Four part-time consultants from the Curriculum Services Unit of the Education Department working with a network of teachers in South Melbourne. In the second year this task force was augmented by a consultant from the Catholic Education Office and a network of teachers from the Geelong region.	To identify the writing and reading demands made on second-language learners during the transition from primary to secondary school, the special problems faced by students whose mother tongue was other than English, and the development of strategies for tackling these special problems. It was hoped to produce a 16mm film, supported by documentary material designed to heighten the awareness of teachers, parents and the wider community to the special needs of second language learners.
New South Wales	23 language consultants drawn from the State, Independent and Catholic systems and parent representatives working with networks of teachers in a number of regions.	Similar to South Australia, children’s writing was the focus. By analysing children’s writing and documenting good practice they sought to identify the factors affecting the development of writing abilities and the changing demands in writing during the transition from primary school to secondary school. The aim was to produce resources and guidelines for teachers including criteria for assessing students’ writing.
Queensland	Five part-time officers of the Curriculum Branch of the Education Department assisted from time to time by an officer from the Catholic Education Office. This taskforce worked with a network of lecturers from Colleges of Advanced Education and teachers from approximately 20 project schools.	Investigated the role of language exploration and study particularly in relation to oral language in the transition years. Aimed at developing resource materials to support and promote oral language study in schools and in the community.
Tasmania	Three part-time officers from the Education Department working with a network of about 25 primary and secondary teachers.	Concerned with the analysis of the reading demands made on students during the primary-secondary transition, the level of pupil competence in reading, and the effectiveness of existing reading programs in helping students cope with the reading demands placed on them during the primary-secondary transition. Aimed to develop new or modified reading programs more suited to student needs.
Western Australia	This task force was sponsored by the Catholic Education Commission and was composed of five part-time members – three from Colleges of Advanced Education and two primary school principals. A network of 15 teachers from five Catholic primary schools was also involved. (This network of 15 teachers was expanded in 1981).	Restricted to Years 5-7 in upper primary schools. Through the application of techniques for the analysis of classroom discourse derived from linguistic research, it was hoped to develop procedures which teachers could use in their own classrooms, as well as strategies to improve the quality of classroom discourse.
Northern Territory	A full-time coordinator working with teams of teachers in Darwin and Alice Springs.	Through the investigation of the role of talking and writing in classroom learning, it was hoped to develop resources and guidelines for teachers to improve the quality of language use in the facilitation of classroom learning across a number of subject areas.
Australian Capital Territory	Four people operating from the Curriculum Development Centre with a network of 25 teachers from seven Canberra secondary schools and their feeder primary schools.	Aimed to document and investigate strategies for the development of children’s oral language skills for a wide range of contexts and purposes, leading to the development of curriculum materials for both teachers and students.

However, unlike SEMP, the Language Development Project also had a central project team located at the Curriculum Development Centre in addition to the 'local' state and territory teams. Piper (1997), who held the position of national evaluator for the LDP, comments that:

This two-tier structure reflects a dualism in the nature of the project...There is a sense in which each of the state and territory projects was an autonomous unit, tackling its own project in its own way within its own preferred structures; but there is also a sense in which each was a part of a wider, national project, sharing common goals and negotiating a common platform. (Piper, 1997, pp. 13-14).

One result of each state and territory working on various component projects was that there was no comprehensive coverage of the tasks, an outcome indicated by the Language Development Project's goals. Some justification for this is provided by Piper (1997) who argues that 'in fairness they were never intended to, since they were clearly seen as an initial set of tasks from which further work would be developed' (Piper, 1997, p. 13).

The LDP was designed to accommodate a three-phase development. Phase 1 of the LDP was essentially a research phase. This, in summary, led to the pronouncement of a set of beliefs about both the nature of language, and the ways in which language is learnt. Phase 11 was the actual development of language curricula with Phase 111 being the dissemination phase along with the implementation of the materials developed during Phase 11. However, as Owen (1978) has noted, in the early years of national collaboration the importance of involving teachers in curriculum development was a feature of such collaboration. This remained a priority of the CDC. Thus, during the LDP process, the match between the theoretical beliefs which underpinned the project (as espoused in Phase 1) and the desire to be responsive to the needs of the project teachers in Phase 11 was not always in alignment and led to modifications. Contributing to this, of course, were the dual factors of the geographical locations of the various state and territory project teams and the diversity of the projects being undertaken. Piper (1984a, p. 3) observed that while the achievements of Phase 1 were impressive, they failed to provide a clear focus for Phase 11 of the project, nor did they provide a clear plan for the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 11. McCulla (1984, p. 31) concurs, referring to Phase 1 as being academic and descriptive but with no clear plan of action being established for Phase 11. As it turned out, this project came to a premature close during Phase 11 of the LDP with the demise of the Curriculum Development Centre, and many of the state and territory based tasks remained incomplete.

Considering the significance of this national focus or emphasis of the LDP in the overall history of a national curriculum pathway, Piper (1984a) explains:

The project's assumptions on curriculum and curriculum development were predicated on the belief that there was a need for a national policy on language education, and for a national curriculum development project to develop and implement that policy. It was further assumed that such a national approach could best

be achieved through a co-operative effort involving the centre (CDC) and the States and Territories; in other words through the adoption of the 'co-operative model' developed by the Curriculum Development Centre. (Piper, 1984a, p. 4).

However this national approach was not without its problems, and those it encountered were, to a large degree, a reflection of the political reality of the day. A period of fifteen months elapsed between the completion of Phase 1 and the commencement of Phase 11, during which time there were protracted negotiations and planning. Piper (1984b, p. 40) attributed this prolonged period of negotiation in part to the fundamental tension between cooperative curriculum development and the federal structure under which it was constrained to operate. The states' fixation on maintaining their rights along with a 'suspicion' of 'a common enemy, Canberra' was very much to the fore (Piper, 1984B, p. 40). Despite this, it was recorded that:

In mitigation it should be said that at the worker level...co-operation between State and Territory projects was a very positive feature...which did help to give (the LDP) a genuine national identity. This should not surprise us, for once the project coordinators came together in a working relationship it was inevitable that they would discover that they had more in common than separated them; which only serves to call into question even more the divisions and difficulties at more senior levels. (Piper, 1984b, p. 43).

And so the fruits of national curriculum development were again being recognised, yet the time was still not ripe to overcome the remaining political reservations and inherent problems and obstacles.

4.2.6 The CDC and Core Curriculum

In 1980 the CDC, under the directorship of Malcolm Skilbeck, produced a paper which was a framework for action developed to guide all those with the responsibility for what schools teach in designing a core curriculum; that is, a 'set of basic and essential learnings and experiences which can reasonably be expected of all students' (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980a, p. 4). Crump (1993, p.7) observes that it is interesting that this paper, *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980), which, in effect, promoted a national curriculum framework, was published at a time when there was increased autonomy for schools in decision making and when school-based curriculum development was to the fore. Part of the reason for advocating a core curriculum at this time was to combat the criticism that a weakness of the school-based curriculum development process was that it was 'piecemeal' and 'lacked any point of reference in a general or comprehensive view of a curriculum of general education for all' (Skilbeck, 1984, p.176). Skilbeck (1984) further asserts that the core curriculum program was purposefully linked with school-based curriculum development in an attempt to ensure that these two potentially opposed approaches were not pursued by their advocates in isolation. It was contended, somewhat hopefully, that constant reference to each other would occur. To Skilbeck the concepts of school-based curriculum and a national core curriculum were not mutually exclusive.

...core is not a displacement of or substitute for the school's role in curriculum development, but a way of articulating it and of building connections with the goals of general education and the emerging national curriculum framework. (Skilbeck, 1984, p. 176).

Bartlett (1993), however, makes a pertinent point when he states that the debate was essentially about core curriculum, not a national curriculum; pointing out that it was driven by educational argument and reflected more the curriculum culture of the 1970s than what was to follow with the national curriculum push of the 1980s (Bartlett, 1993, p. 286).

Twelve months prior to the publication of *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed*, Musgrave (1979, p.153) had noted that many teachers were advocating that 'decisions about curriculum should be taken locally in schools' and that this was due in part as 'an index of professional freedom'. Musgrave then suggested a compromise; a core curriculum giving prominence to the three Rs of Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic, alongside a school-based negotiated curriculum (Musgrave, 1979 pp. 153-154). However the CDC paper emphasised that the term 'core curriculum' could not be reduced to what was popularly known as 'the basics' or the 'three Rs', and that the core should not be reduced to that which could be tested in the traditional sense; rather core learnings were varied and complex (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980a, p. 4). The paper went on to assert that:

Merely to define the core curriculum as a set of compulsory subjects is... unsatisfactory. To simply list the subjects is to miss one vital requirement of core curriculum, namely that subject *matter*, teaching-learning *processes* and learning *situations* should be organised around a set of aims, principles and values which relate to the defined characteristics and major needs of contemporary society and all youth. (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980a, p. 13).

It is important to examine the context in which *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980), was published. Kennedy (1981, p. 45) maintains that its publication coincided with a period of community disenchantment with schools. Consequently, in Australia and overseas, a strong 'back to basics' movement had gathered momentum. Thus the CDC paper cannot be considered as an isolated educational statement, but rather, as Kennedy (1981) suggests, 'a response to that complex array of social, political and economic influences that always impinge on schools and the curriculum' (Kennedy, 1981, p. 45).

To appreciate the uniqueness of *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980) fully, Kennedy (1981, pp. 45-50) compares this document with the *Guide to Core Curriculum*, 1977, issued by the Ministry of Education in British Columbia, which was a Canadian response to the same issues of disenchantment. A summary of the differences can be found in Table 4.2 (below).

Table 4.2. A Summary of Kennedy's (1981) comparison of two core curriculum documents. Reference: Kennedy, K. (1981). 'A call to re-examine the curriculum'. *Curriculum Perspectives*. Vol. 1. No. 2. pp. 45-50

	<i>Guide to Core Curriculum, 1977. (Ministry of Education, British Columbia, Canada, 1977)</i>	<i>Core Curriculum for Australian Schools. (Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra, Australia, 1980)</i>	Comments
Definition of core curriculum	Expected learning outcomes in 13 areas were stated. There was clear direction that basic skills and knowledge made up the core and these were prescribed and expected to be taught. What constituted the core for every school at each grade level from Grade 1 to Grade 12 was clearly articulated.	Core was not defined as basic skills and knowledge, but a framework was suggested from which individual schools could develop a core curriculum. Nine broad areas of knowledge and experience were defined, although these were tentative in that they were subject to modification. Teacher-learning processes and learning situations were included as part of the core.	Both documents acknowledged that the core was a part of the total curriculum. However, the Canadian document was clearly one that was designed to be implemented, being clear, well-defined and pre-determined. On the other hand the CDC document provided an expanded framework advocating that core curriculum should be based on a common cultural framework and schools should create a core that was meaningful to their community. Thus it was a document, not for implementation, but for discussion and debate.
School level involvement and the role of the teacher	Planning of the core went through an initial process of public consultation, but once determined was clearly a 'top-down' change process. Teachers were the implementers and were viewed as technicians rather than problem solvers. Little opportunity was provided for teachers to be resourceful in the selection of content or creative. Document was a curriculum product, with the core defined. Document was static and sought consensus.	Schools and teachers were encouraged to discuss and debate the document to 'map out the core elements of the curriculum'. A 'bottom-up' approach was advocated and encouraged. Document was a curriculum process, which sought to define the core. CDC paper was dynamic and was prepared to encourage debate and with that, conflict.	The Canadian document was reactionary in that it was a response to community disenchantment with schools, and was thus a very visible acknowledgement of returning to 'the basics'. On the other hand the CDC paper, rather than providing solutions, encouraged schools to come up with solutions after engaging in a cultural mapping exercise.
Standardised testing	Specific reference to evaluation was made in this document. As there was agreement as to what was the core, large scale assessment testing was advocated as one form of evaluation. However, locally developed assessment mechanisms were also seen as important.	The CDC document strongly asserted that national assessment testing should not be a logical extension of determining core knowledge, learning processes and learning situations. The basic premise behind 'core' was that it could be identified as culturally significant, not that it could be tested.	By valuing both large-scale and locally developed assessments, the Canadian document was an attempt to placate both the proponents and opponents of state-wide testing. The Australian document, on the other hand, pointed to local rather than state or national testing. Kennedy (1981, p. 48) stated that the CDC paper was 'the most coherent argument put forward so far' against national testing.

It is by comparing the two documents in Table 4.2, and their different approaches to 'core curriculum' as Kennedy (1981) has done, that the exact nature of *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980), becomes clearer and easier to ascertain.

In justifying the release of *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980) and the need to advocate for a core curriculum, seven reasons were presented which Crump (1993, p.7) notes were ‘surprisingly similar to those outlined by Mr Dawkins eight years later’. The reasons cited were:

1. Significant changes and development in our society to which schools must respond.
 2. Growing community concern about educational directions and standards.
 3. Schooling, particularly at the secondary level, now being for the whole population, not the select few.
 4. The wide range of challenging innovations in education that had come to the forefront in recent years.
 5. Limited educational resources, both financial and human.
 6. Outdated subject organisation which no longer satisfied either society or students.
 7. A future orientation and how best to meet emerging social and individual needs.
- (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980a, pp. 6-7)

Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed (1980) was significant as it emphasised both teacher-learning processes and learning situations, unlike later attempts at national curriculum development in Australia, which have primarily been discipline or subject focussed, specifically targeting learning areas such as mathematics, science, and so on. It was produced as a policy discussion paper and Skilbeck states quite firmly that it ‘was quite definitely not aimed at producing a syllabus’ (Skilbeck, 1984, p. 177). ‘Core’, in this document, was seen as not being narrowed and equated to ‘basics’ but as being a representation of a theory of general education. *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980) has been described as ‘an influential discussion paper’ (Piper, 1997, p. 32), and the ‘most significant contribution to curriculum policy and debate in Australia’ (Kennedy, 1993, p.11).

However, it was not without its critics. Due to the inclusion in the paper of seven core learning procedures, skills and attitudes, as well as nine areas of knowledge and experience, Crittenden (1982, p. 73) criticises the document, asserting that it goes beyond simply being a core curriculum, but is more akin to a comprehensive common curriculum. He states that it ‘must be considered as a proposal for a desirable program of learning based on a very broad interpretation of the role of the school as an agency of education’ (Crittenden, 1982, p. 79). Tripp (1981, p. 51) concurred with this, suggesting that the core was so extensive that the addition of any specialist, optional, technical or advanced studies, as suggested by the CDC paper, would be almost impossible to fit in.

Crittenden further criticises the CDC document for avoiding the question of minimum levels, suggesting that this is a result of the CDC’s unwillingness to endorse national or state testing programs (Crittenden, 1982, p. 79). Likewise Tripp (1981, p. 54) refers to the CDC’s discouragement of testing as being ‘politically naive’ and suggests that the core curriculum actually opens up further areas in which testing may be necessary. Marsh (1994, p.9), on the other hand, takes to task Skilbeck’s claim that the CDC document attempted a reconceptualisation of existing school subjects. Marsh (1994) contends that ‘new esoteric

frameworks' are generally treated with suspicion and that 'the expression of content in a conventional way' remains the only acceptable version (Marsh, 1994, p. 9). In a similar vein, Kennedy (1981) interpreted Skilbeck's definition of a core curriculum as not altogether a unique meaning, but certainly different from that which is usually accepted and discussed (Kennedy, 1981, p. 45).

Despite these criticisms *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980), was also important in that it was the start of a significant thrust by the CDC away from an emphasis on a larger number of small, disparate projects, to major projects such as the development of a core curriculum and national projects in a number of disciplines (Curriculum Development Centre, 1980a, p. vi). Kennedy (1993, p.9) suggests that this move came too late. He argues that while the CDC under the Fraser Government was 'a national agency in search of a mission', with the publication of *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools: What it is and why it is needed* (1980), it came close to finding that mission. However, the publication met the fate of many other projects with the demise of the CDC in 1981 and lapsed.

4.2.7 The Demise of the CDC

Writing in 1980, prior to major financial constraints being placed on the CDC, Moran (1980, p.113) stated that the establishment of the CDC was 'a significant event in the history of Australian education'. She observed that:

It was...a significant decision because from the outset it was clear that this was not going to be another case of grants to the States...It was as if the States had reached maturity and set rivalry to one side. They were all aware that State systems of education, despite advantages, also had disadvantages. Expertise in short supply could not be available adequately in all States. Overlap in curriculum development and materials preparation was occurring. (Moran, 1980, pp. 113-114).

Moran (1980, p. 114) further claims, somewhat erroneously considering the earlier achievements of the Australian Science Education Project, that the CDC had provided for the first time an opportunity for teachers from several states to work together on a joint program. Moran also gave credit to the CDC for being a catalyst for widespread discussion on curriculum problems by providing opportunities through national workshops and conferences but oddly makes a claim, without any apparent verification, that:

Teachers who in the past have been inhibited by the 'system' and the hierarchy of centralised departments have been encouraged to join the debate. And have done so. (Moran, 1980, p. 114).

However, Moran does acknowledge the national significance of the CDC stating that the decision to establish this body was an acceptance that some curriculum concerns were 'national and overrode State borders' (Moran, 1980, p. 115). Despite this, the conservative Fraser Government went on a severe cost-cutting exercise in the early 1980s. A Review Committee,

the Ministerial Review of Commonwealth Functions, felicitously known as the ‘razor gang’, recommended that the CDC be wound down unless the states and territories agreed to provide 50 per cent of the funding (Hughes & Kennedy, 1987, p. 299). This was not agreed to and so in April 1981 the CDC was abolished. Piper (1984b, p. 44) argues that when the government came under pressure from its backbench to reduce spending and shed government functions, the CDC was vulnerable.

It was small; it was isolated from the bureaucracy and the corridors of power; its director had recently resigned...and, while the government almost certainly underestimated the extent of the public outcry over its abolition, it was largely unknown outside the educational community. (Piper, 1984b, p. 44).

However, some of the then current work of the CDC, including multicultural education, education in the arts, and indigenous education, was deemed by the government to be important and needed to be continued. Thus some of the functions of the CDC were absorbed by a branch set up within the Commonwealth Department of Education with no specific budget. That this occurred without any challenge to its legality surprised some observers (*The Canberra Times*, 1-12-81; Piper, 1984b). The Act that established the CDC as an independent statutory authority was not repealed. Thus the standing of the CDC in theory differed from what happened in practice. Legally, the CDC continued to exist as an independent statutory authority under the direction of an independent council that could determine its policy and programs. In practice, however, it was subsumed into the Commonwealth Department of Education under the control of a Minister of Education and presumably senior Education bureaucrats. The legal anomaly existed despite the appointment of the deputy secretary of the Department as the chairman of the CDC Council (Piper, 1984a, pp. 47 -48).

Later, in June 1984, the Hawke Government reactivated the CDC’s activities as one of four divisions within the Commonwealth Schools Commission. The Hawke Government’s reactivation of the CDC was, according to Kennedy (2009, p. 2) an indication that the Labor government had plans for a coordinated approach to the school curriculum. However, the Commonwealth Schools Commission itself ‘became an easy target for the government’s Expenditure and Review Committee – the Hawke Government’s own razor gang’ (Piper, 1992, p. 23) and it was disbanded in 1987 with some of its roles subsumed within the national Department of Employment, Education and Training. A great opportunity for national collaboration and dialogue had been lost.

4.2.8 The Migratory Argument

During this period, the argument that it was necessary to have a common national curriculum so as to not disadvantage students who moved from one state or territory to another was first voiced with real authority. In 1968, the then Federal Minister of Education and Science, Malcolm Fraser, stated that devising curricula ‘is the responsibility of the education authorities in the States, but the Commonwealth has a special interest in reducing the unnecessary differences in what is taught in the various States and hence the very real difficulties faced by

children who move from one State to another’ (Fraser, 1968, p. 8). This has been a recurring argument for a national curriculum since that time, as will be discussed later.

4.2.9 The Period 1968 – 1988: A Summary

The twenty-year period 1968 – 1988, saw many changes as the Commonwealth increased the financial aid it gave to the States and Territories for education. It was a time when many teachers were supporting school-based curriculum development, in part as an expression of professional freedom, yet it was also a period when a notion of core curriculum applicable to all students in Australia was also being advocated. A national focus on teacher subject associations was likewise a prominent feature at this time. Of this period Reid (2005a, p. 17) was to conclude:

The approach to national curriculum development during this 20 year period was one that sought to influence the official curricula of the States without challenging their curriculum authority. Whilst a number of advances were made, the approach was hampered for two reasons. First, the sensitivity to the curriculum autonomy of the States resulted in many projects being organised on a federal model where key aspects of projects were located in State-based teams. This tended to dilute a national perspective and allowed States to maintain their control of the official curriculum. Second, the project-based focus of the national collaboration during this period meant that curriculum change was piecemeal and open to shifting political whims. There was little opportunity within this approach to grapple with some of the tricky conceptual curriculum questions or to develop a coherent and consistent view of curriculum and approach to curriculum change. (Reid, 2005a, p.17)

It was evident that despite some inroads into the advent of a national curriculum, there was still a long way to go. While this twenty-year period is noted for the indirect manner in which the Australian Government attempted to influence curriculum, the following period was one which saw a very direct approach and which is seen by many to be the first serious attempt at a national curriculum in Australia.

4.3 1989 – 1993: An Agenda for Reform

4.3.1 Introduction

The mid to late 1980s is often seen as a period of major shift in focus in Commonwealth and State policy developments in education within Australia with economic factors and priorities driving this shift (Crump, 1993; Marginson, 1997; Meadmore, 2004; Reid, 2005a; Roberts, 2014; Welsh, 1999). Education, while previously almost exclusively the domain of professional educators or educational bureaucracies, was changing. The role of education as part of the broader social, political and economic agenda was becoming increasingly evident.

This was not an issue confined to Australia. A 1987 report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stated:

The labour market challenges that call for long-term adjustment of the educational systems stem from the pressures of international competition, technological change and, more generally, the need for flexibility. Though individual member countries all have their own economic legacies, they now face largely the same market conditions and use more or less the same technologies and sources of information. In this situation, each country's prosperity hinges to a great extent...on its ability to enhance its competitiveness under what are inherently unpredictable market conditions. ...a fact which inevitably raises serious concerns for countries whose education systems perform poorly by international standards - be it in terms of quantity, quality or flexibility. (OECD, 1987, pp. 69-70).

And so, nationally and internationally, government education policies during this period were framed within a context of economic rationalism and human capital theory (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight, 1995; Welsh, 1999). Throughout much of the world, education was seen as 'crucial to economic competitiveness, mobilised for economic reconstruction, and embedded in economic reform, corporatisation and marketisation' (Marginson, 1997, p. 151).

This belief that education was central to micro-economic reform was certainly taken up in Australia. With the replacement of Susan Ryan, a Master of Arts graduate, as Minister for Education by John Dawkins, an Economics graduate, a clear program for restructuring education was put in place (Knight, 1990, p. 139). John Dawkins, a member of the Hawke government, held the position of Minister for Employment, Education and Training from July 1987 to December 1991, before being succeeded by Kim Beazley. In July 1987 the Hawke government had created a new 'super-department' whereby employment, education, research and training were integrated into one portfolio with Dawkins as the responsible Minister. Marginson (1997, p. 160) contends that this integration was based on national economic goals while Knight (1990, p. 139) was to comment that the reconstruction of the Department of Education into this larger portfolio symbolised the increased emphasis upon an instrumentalist and human capital approach to education. Crump (1993, p. 6) is more outspoken in his assessment believing that there was very little wrong with education at the time and major changes were pushed through by non-educators. He bemoans:

...(T)here were few signs that curriculum was at some significant crossroad in the mid-1980s. Indeed much had been gained in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, professional development, decision-making, community involvement and innovation through the school-based curriculum movement that became the target of the New Right, compliant politicians and conservative education unionists. Rather than grassroots disquiet, curriculum changes were driven largely by key politicians, union officials and career bureaucrats who pushed through structural changes to school organisation, management and teachers' work. That is, it is not easy to identify perceived problems on the local, state or national level, of any great magnitude, least

of all on educational grounds. Rather, economic rationalist models, bureaucratic empires and individual egos seem to have provided their own justification. (Crump, 1993, p. 6).

In delivering the 1986 Buntine Oration at the Annual Conference of the Australian College of Education, Headley Beare expressed similar views stating that the recurring litany of prescriptions for education was for educators to observe the 4Es as well as the 3Rs (Beare, 1987, p. 71). The 4Es he referred to were efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and excellence. Relating these to education, Beare saw efficiency as schools/systems making better use of their monetary resources; effectiveness as precisely describing outcomes and measuring those outcomes with economic-type indicators; equity as the economy depending on all people having a high level of education; and excellence as education stretching all students towards high achievements. He went on to lament:

All those ideas, I regret to say, are driven by an instrumental or economic imperative, no matter how dressed up or disguised the ideas are. It is a politically compiled agenda, concerned about money and tax-dollars, about trade, about international competitiveness, about employment, about making and selling things, and about making profits. That agenda does not seem to me to be concerned enough about making people great, or loved, noble, or valued. (Beare, 1987, p. 71).

Beare's criticism of this economic approach to education was that it encouraged instrumentalism: valuing things because they are useful, usable or measurable. He challenged educators to place an economic weight on increasing a child's self-esteem, on developing a love of reading, or on building racial tolerance (Beare, 1987, p. 73). He recognised, however, that the economic rationalist force pushing national priorities in education was not confined to Australia but evident in most OECD countries and conceded that:

To be competitive, then, countries in the developed world are now being forced to provide twelve years of universal education and at least one year of post-school training for everyone. For national economic well-being if not for survival, education is and will increasingly be nationally strategic. Hence resource agreements. Hence performance indicators. Hence outcomes-targeted grants. Hence program budgeting. Hence national priorities. Hence efficiency reviews. Education piper, play the national tune. (Beare, 1987, p. 75).

Kennedy (1992) adds to this when discussing national curriculum initiatives, claiming that the rationale for doing so was 'blatantly political and economic'. He continued to note that 'it was as though the curriculum of schools had been discovered as yet another policy instrument that could be wielded in the name of economic restructuring and micro economic reform' (Kennedy, 1992, p. 35). Whether or not there was a problem in education at the time Dawkins became the responsible Minister is debatable and, as Marsh (1994, p.4) suggests, depends upon ideological stances. On the new role of bureaucrats in this process, however, Kennedy, Watts and McDonald are less than complimentary noting that:

Education bureaucrats in Australia once saw their main task as protecting and promoting the education profession. This is no longer so. A new breed of bureaucrats has emerged across the country and their role in corporate Ministries of Education is to please their Ministers and respective governments. For the most part, these people are not professional educators and they are wary of the professionals. It is a disturbing trend which in the end prevents the best advice from flowing to Ministers... The corporatisation of education and the adoption of economic rationalist principles marked a fundamental shift in the development of Australian educational policy. (Kennedy, Watts & McDonald, 1993, p. 5).

And so what followed was described as a pressure for total national curriculum reconceptualisation within a different mind-set, whereby education was to be regarded as an industry and schooling as a component in that industry (Collins, 1995, pp. 6-7). The structure to achieve this was neo-corporatism which has been described as a 'system of decision-making which bypasses parliamentary debate, replacing it with national councils of major stakeholders who are then supposed to hold their constituents in line' (Collins, 1995, p. 8). As will be discussed below, during the time that Dawkins was Minister, the Australian Education Council (AEC) became this dominant neo-corporatist body as far as the curriculum of schools was concerned.

4.3.2 The Dawkins Factor

In May 1988 Dawkins released a major policy statement, *Strengthening Australia's Schools: A Consideration of the Focus and Content of Schooling* (Dawkins, 1988). Whilst recognising that 'the Australian economy is part way through a process of substantial change' and that the lesson we have learnt is 'the need for...increased flexibility and responsiveness in the economy' (Dawkins, 1988, p. 1), it is in the foreword where Dawkins declares the thrust of what was to be for the next five years a 'full on frontal assault' (Reid, 2005a, p. 17) in attempting to secure a national curriculum, or at the very least, a national consistency in curriculum.

Schools play a critical and central role in the nature of our society and economy, and much is expected and demanded of them. We need to ensure that all Australian schools are of the highest possible standard. We must concentrate on the most effective use of resources available to schools, and work co-operatively so that the benefits of our best educational thinking and practice are available to all school students. Australia can no longer afford fragmentation of effort - approaches must be developed and implemented in ways which result in real improvements in schooling across the nation. (Dawkins, 1988, foreword).

Thus began a new era of attempting to secure national collaboration for curriculum reform. Piper (1997, pp. 10-11) contends that it was no coincidence that *Strengthening Australia's Schools* (1988) 'appeared two months after John Dawkins chaired an international conference on education and the economy in Paris, nor that it appeared as part of a government statement

on economic restructuring'. However, if we look back even further than that, it can be seen that Dawkins was expressing similar views some five years earlier. In *Labor essays 1983*, Dawkins and Costello (1983) discussed the duality of a Labor vision, namely to create a just and equal society while at the same time controlling their own economic destiny. To achieve this, they stated that the Labor government needed to provide 'new forms of national leadership in education' and that this went beyond the granting of funds but required the national government 'to be concerned with objectives of education and the structures through which it is provided' (Dawkins & Costello, 1983, p. 68). Using a medical analogy Kennedy, Watts and McDonald (1993, p. 5) describe this national government desire to be more active in school curriculum in the same terms that a physician might use to describe a tumour that was once benign but is now active and intrusive.

It is worth noting that while some observers cite *Strengthening Australia's Schools* (Dawkins, 1988) as the origin of the national curriculum exercise (Bartlett, 1993; Piper, 1997;) Kennedy (1995, p. 154) argues that, in reality, it began with Dawkins' predecessor, Senator Sue Ryan. Under Ryan, the Australian Education Council (AEC), in June 1986, began to consider the twin issues of minimising the unnecessary differences in curricula from state to state, and maximising the scarce resources available for curriculum development. This was the first time the AEC was used as a forum to initiate national curriculum policy (Kennedy, 1995, p. 154) and was a precedent that Dawkins was later to follow with more vigour. Consequently, Kennedy views *Strengthening Australia's Schools* (1988) not as a radical document, but as an extension of the work and policy direction Senator Ryan had initiated. Kennedy (2009, p. 2) contends that 'what Susan Ryan divined but dimly, John Dawkins pursued aggressively – he was undisguisedly a neo-liberal when it came to the school curriculum'.

Strengthening Australia's Schools (1988) was significant in many respects. Bartlett (1993) described it as the document that became the basis for the neocorporatist policy of the fourth Hawke Labor government (Bartlett, 1993, p. 288). While acknowledging that the States, constitutionally, were the primary policy makers in the area of schools, Dawkins made it clear that the Commonwealth would not ignore 'the very real responsibility it has to provide national leadership' (Dawkins, 1988, p. 3). Reid (2005b, p. 8) notes that this change in the Commonwealth's involvement in curriculum issues was evident in a move away from the development of materials, which was a very indirect way of influencing national consistency towards a push for a single national curriculum.

The majority of the Dawkins paper dealt with six main issues; namely, the creation of a common curriculum framework; a common approach to assessment; improving teacher training; increasing the school retention rate and consequently the number of students enrolling in post-secondary education and training courses; meeting the educational needs of disadvantaged groups (including improved educational outcomes for girls); and finally maximising the investment in education (Dawkins, 1988, pp. 4-6).

In calling for a common curriculum framework, Dawkins was seeking something that was not only applicable to the nation as a whole, but which could be adapted for the specific needs of various locations.

What is required is the development of a common framework that sets out the major areas of knowledge and the most appropriate mix of skills and experiences for students in all the years of schooling, but accommodates the different or specific curriculum needs of different parts of Australia. (Dawkins, 1988, p. 4).

The common curriculum framework envisaged by Dawkins needed to:

- emphasise the need for higher general levels of literacy, numeracy and analytical skills;
- acknowledge Australia's increasing orientation towards the Asian and Pacific region;
- clearly set out the criteria for determining content in the major subject areas;
- outline the criteria for methods of assessing the achievement of curriculum objectives;
- provide a guide to the best curriculum design and teaching practices; and
- set a priority for mathematics and science courses. (Dawkins, 1988, p. 4).

Marginson (1997) comments on the polemic nature of *Strengthening Australia's Schools* and other documents produced by Dawkins at that time stating that they functioned in a manner of a 'declaration or a call to arms'.

They were statements of policy as truth that were designed to secure authority over education and its professionals, to demonstrate that authority to an outside public in business and the media, and to open education to external intervention. They were not descriptions, or analyses, and were not subject to testing or verification... People critical of one or another aspect found themselves positioned against the broader goals to which the reports were directed, such as international competitiveness, access to education or economic progress. Such essential virtues could hardly be refuted, helping the new policies to secure hegemony. (Marginson, 1997, p. 153)

Marsh (2008) endorses this point of view when he refers to Dawkins as using 'crisis rhetoric' when steering State and Territory Ministers of Education along his preferred path of national collaboration (Marsh, 2008, p. 355). Previously Marsh (1994, p.13) had described Dawkins as 'the leader par excellence' among the politicians using the 'education in crisis' rhetoric. Ball (2008) refers to such people as 'policy intellectuals' who play an important role in establishing credibility and 'truthfulness' and who provide 'ways of thinking and talking about policies that make them sound reasonable and sensible as solutions to social and economic problems' (Ball, 2008, p. 5). It is a policy discourse process or strategy that works to privilege certain ideas and topics and exclude others.

4.3.3 The Australian Education Council and the Hobart Declaration

Strengthening Australia's Schools (1988), as previously mentioned, has been described as having a watershed role in education 'both as a crystallisation of concerns that had been gathering momentum in Australia over at least the previous two decades and as a catalyst for

the national collaborative curriculum process that followed' (Piper, 1997, p. 4). What did follow was what has become referred to as the Hobart Declaration on Schooling (1989). With the Commonwealth abolishing both the Schools Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre, the move for national consistency was handed to the Australian Education Council (Ellerton & Clements, 1994, p. 49). The AEC, comprising the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education, met in Hobart for three days in April 1989, chaired by Peter Rae, the then Minister for Education in Tasmania. Arising out of this meeting was the announcement of the Hobart Declaration on Schooling. Crump (1993, p. 7) was to comment saying that it occurred at all 'was due to the prevailing economic malaise in Australia so it was not surprising that the main thread through the details of the declaration was the education-economy nexus'. Briefly, this document set out common and agreed national goals for schooling in Australia, the intention to commence an annual national report on schooling, a commitment to continuing national collaboration in curriculum development, and the establishment of the Curriculum Corporation of Australia. (Other parts of this agreement covered the development of an appropriate handwriting style for Australian schools, the goal of a common age of entry for Australian schools, and improving the quality of teaching).

More specifically, ten national goals for schooling were listed which were intended to assist schools and school systems to develop specific objectives and strategies, particularly in the areas of curriculum and assessment. Goal 6 was curriculum focussed in that it espoused a desire to develop in students:

- a. the skills of English literacy, including skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- b. skills of numeracy, and other mathematical skills;
- c. skills of analysis and problem solving;
- d. skills of information processing and computing;
- e. an understanding of the role of science and technology in society, together with scientific and technological skills;
- f. a knowledge and appreciation of Australia's historical and geographic context;
- g. a knowledge of languages other than English;
- h. an appreciation and understanding of, and confidence to participate in, the creative arts;
- i. an understanding of, and concern for, balanced development and the global environment; and
- j. a capacity to exercise judgement in matters of morality, ethics and social justice.

Other goals clearly reflected the core tenets of *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, for example, to respond to the current and emerging economic and social needs of the nation, and to provide those skills which will allow students maximum flexibility and adaptability in their future employment and other aspects of life (Goal 4); to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and

values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context (Goal 7); to provide an excellent education for all young people, being one which develops their talents and capacities to full potential, and is relevant to the social, cultural and economic needs of the nation (Goal 1); and, to provide appropriate career education and knowledge of the world of work, including an understanding of the nature and place of work in our society (Goal 10). While there appeared to be a general acceptance of these goals within the education community, they were pronounced by Ellerton and Clements (1994, p. 59) as being 'prosaic and mundane'.

The Hobart Declaration was, in the view of Bartlett (1993, p. 289) the 'real beginning of the formulation of what has been called 'national' in national curriculum'.

4.3.4 Beyond Hobart

Following the Hobart Declaration, a collaborative curriculum mapping exercise was initiated by the national government, funded to the extent of fifty per cent with the other fifty per cent being contributed by the States and Territories, according to a weighted formula. This project of national collaboration in curriculum development initially had an uncertain start. As one would expect, the various State Directors General of Education, who traditionally had control over systemic curriculum policy and provision, sought to retain this power (Piper, 1997, p. 18; Reid, 2005a, p. 18).

Thus a series of curriculum mapping exercises were commissioned with the objective of seeking to prove that there was already considerable similarity across the various State and Territory curriculum documents and therefore further national collaboration was unnecessary (Piper, 1997, p. 18). However, as this exercise progressed following the Hobart Declaration, it evolved into a collaborative effort, and Reid (2005b, p. 8) was to observe that the 'momentum for a national curriculum gathered pace'. The mapping exercise was now considered to be of value as it identified shared goals across the various States and Territories and this therefore provided a common platform as a basis for collaboration (Beazley, 1992, p. 26; Piper, 1997, p. 18). The June 1990 AEC meeting, chaired by Dawkins, endorsed the development of national curriculum profiles. A paper setting out the structure of the profiles was developed largely by Garth Boomer for the Australasian Cooperative Assessment Program (which consisted mainly of State and Territory directors of curriculum). This was likewise endorsed at the December AEC meeting (Clements, 1996, p. 73). Following the initial mapping exercise, the AEC, at its meeting in April 1991, approved eight designated Learning Areas which were to be described in terms of Profiles and Statements. The Statements provided a framework for what was to be taught, while the Profiles set out what students were expected to learn (McGaw, 1994, p. 5; Piper, 1997, p. 18; Reid, 2005a, p. 18).

The choice of the eight areas was, according to Kennedy (1992, p. 34), 'neither remarkable nor radical' as they closely matched the existing State and Territory priorities. This assessment was echoed by the then Victorian Director of Curriculum, Bill Hannan, who described the choice as pragmatic and conservative (Hannan, 1992, p. 29). Marsh (1994, p. 22), however, suggests that an opportune moment had been missed. Quoting Hartnett and Naish (1990) and applying

their comments concerning the United Kingdom experience to Australia, he laments that ‘the government appeared to lack the time, the desire, and imagination to rethink the curriculum and, accordingly, it resorted to plundering the past’ (Hartnett & Naish, 1990, p.3 quoted in Marsh, 1994, p. 22). This added to the earlier arguments of Bartlett (1993) who, in reference to the previous mapping phase, noted that it was reactionary and reflected a status quo understanding of curriculum formation. He went on to say that it was hardly a liberating curriculum for the twenty-first century noting ‘it reflects *what is*, not what *should be*; where we *are*, not where we are *going*’ (Bartlett, 1993, p. 290).

The eight areas that were chosen on the grounds that they were nearest to those already in use around the country were English, Science, Mathematics, Languages Other than English, the Arts, Technology, Studies of Society and Environment, and Health, which incorporated Personal Development and Physical Education. Some educators questioned not so much the choice of the eight areas *per se* but rather the relationship of these to the goals of the Hobart Declaration. Hill (1995), for example, decried that the goals failed to identify the kind of person that would ‘graduate’ after experiencing this curriculum choice.

Again, as in the previous period, the responsibility for various curriculum projects was divided on a state basis. For example, mathematics was the project assigned to New South Wales, while Tasmania had technology as its focus, and so on. However, in reference to the statements and profiles, the Hobart Declaration stated that:

...Their use will *not* be compulsory but where agreement is reached after full consideration then it is *likely* that government and non-government systems and schools will use them. (MCEECDYA, 1989, p. 3. emphasis added).

Thus not making the proposed national statements compulsory became a compromise; a compromise that Piper describes as being unfortunate as ‘it introduced into the process a degree of ambiguity that left it vulnerable to confusion and manipulation’ (Piper, 1997, p. 18).

Piper (1997, p. 18) suggests that there was some tension between the various State Directors General of Education who, as was mentioned above, sought to retain their control over curriculum policy and provision, and their Ministers who in the main were supportive and committed to Dawkins’ national curriculum proposal. It should be noted at this stage that further promoting this tension between the Directors-General and their Ministers was the lessening of the role of the former at the AEC level. Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight (1995), when reporting on the 57th AEC meeting held in June 1988, state:

The intransigence of the new Liberal New South Wales Education Minister, Dr Terry Metherell (attending his first meeting following the defeat of the New South Wales Labor government), towards the national agenda resulted in a Ministers-only session at this meeting in an effort to achieve some political consensus. A consequence was the significant weakening of the policy influence of the Directors-General *vis-à-vis* the AEC. From that time, the Ministers would seek also to control initiatives in national collaborative developments. (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight, 1995, p. 43).

However, at that stage, advancements were being made in the preparation of profiles and statements and the likelihood of national consistency was, while certainly not inevitable, presenting itself as a possible outcome. However later events showed this was not to be.

4.3.5 The Ending of an Era of Collaboration

In September 1992, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Kim Beazley, who had replaced Dawkins in that portfolio, wrote of the great advances that had taken place since the Hobart Declaration, but was in no doubt that the spirit of bipartisanship that had occurred was on the verge of collapse. After declaring that there had been a unique period of collaboration between the States and Territories and the Commonwealth; that other comparable nations, particularly in North America, had followed our progress with great interest; and how we had demonstrated to the world that Australia could rise above parochial concerns with commitment and vision, he went on to say, prior to appealing to the education community to 'defend and build upon the last decade's achievements':

Some members of the education community are concerned about the recent appearance of political partisanship in education debates which threatens the collaborative approach to education and training...Over the next few years it is likely that representatives of the education sector will be drawn into political debates about the fundamental purpose of schooling. They will be called upon to justify what they want to achieve through education and training... (Beazley, 1992, p. 27).

Prior to the December 1993 meeting, the AEC was seen to wield enormous power in terms of school curriculum. Collins (1995) went so far as to say that as a result of the AEC's influence:

Decision-making about the curriculum in State systems and in Boards of Studies ground to a halt as everyone awaited their marching orders and tried to sort through the triangle of inconsistencies between a profiles approach, a key competencies approach and their own State traditions. (Collins, 1995, p. 8).

By 1993 the Ministerial Council was no longer prepared to continue with the course of action it had been pursuing and 'substantially backed away from this commitment to national collaboration' (McGaw, 1994, p. 6). As mentioned previously, the curriculum had been organised into eight Learning Areas in 1991 following the mapping exercise, and various writing teams were preparing the new curriculum documents in terms of statements and profiles for the meeting of the Australian Education Council to be held in Perth in June, 1993. These documents were not endorsed at that Perth meeting, but were referred to the next meeting to be held in Hobart in December of the same year. That a change in the character of the national agenda in education occurred at this time can be linked to the fact that there was now a majority of non-Labor State governments (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight, 1995, p. 45). As Clement (1996, p. 62) bluntly put it 'more than ever before, the direction and type of curriculum reform has become a function of who has won the last State or Federal election'. Again, at the Hobart meeting the statements and profiles were not accepted when the AEC voted along party lines and, in essence, were referred back to individual State and Territory Ministers for their consideration. In referring the profiles and statements back to the States and Territories, the

AEC noted that this action implied neither rejection nor endorsement of these by the States and Territories (AEC, 1993, p.3).

McGaw (1994, pp. 6-7) puts forward four possible explanations for this shift away from national collaboration and the sentiment expressed earlier at the Hobart Declaration in 1989. They were:

1. A change in membership of the Council resulting from the changed political complexions of the States. For the first time for some years, the Federal Minister was in a political minority and the national thrust was being viewed as a Federal government initiative, thus threatening the autonomy of the various State and Territory systems.
2. Despite the fact that the statements and profiles were the result of a collaborative process, and had been carried out at State and Territory level, resistance to the Federal authorities' proposal to use the profiles as a basis for national monitoring and reporting grew.
3. There was loss of confidence in the statements and profiles following public criticism of some of them. McGaw (1994) cites the example of a group of university academics who criticised the mathematics profile.
4. Sending the statements and profiles back to the individual State and Territory Ministers was justified as a constitutional necessity. (McGaw, 1994, pp. 6-7).

Lingard, Porter, Bartlett and Knight (1995, pp.50-51) also comment on the shift away from national collaboration stating that three agendas influenced the outcomes of the July 1993 AEC meeting, particularly in reference to curriculum statements and profiles. The first of these supports McGaw's observation of the changed political complexions of the States. They contend that the decision to reject the statements and profiles 'was based on party political persuasions with Coalition States versus Labor States' and that this non-endorsement was 'a clear message to the Commonwealth by the States that they would not be dictated to, rather than a direct rejection of profiles, statements and competencies *per se*' (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight, 1995, pp.50-51).

The second reason they put forward for the non-endorsement of the statements and profiles is that it was a 'face-saving exercise by the coalition governments'. They maintain:

The new non-Labor government in Victoria, pressured *inter alia* by the University of Melbourne and its Vice-Chancellor, had made commitments to reject the profile statements, although the other non-Labor States were more supportive. To extricate the Victorian government from its predicament, Virginia Chadwick, the New South Wales Liberal Education Minister, linked the statements, profiles and competencies in the one motion so that they stood or fell together. (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight, 1995, p.50).

Linked to McGaw's observation that despite the fact that the statements and profiles were the result of a collaborative process; were carried out at State and Territory level; and that

resistance to the Federal authorities' proposal to use the profiles as a basis for national monitoring and reporting grew; the third reason put forward by Lingard, Porter, Bartlett and Knight (1995) was that although the States were committed to some form of profiles and statements, they were something that was required for their particular state and thus needed to be prepared by their particular state – that is, they were prepared to write the statements, and presumably discuss and share these with other states and territories, provided the Commonwealth funded and assisted this costly enterprise. By doing so, a degree of national conformity and agreement could arise. This was the old 'our curriculum is superior' argument.

Added to the arguments discussed above could be the general lack of public support for a national curriculum and the responses of the popular press. Marsh (1994, p.6) refers to the disappointing outcome of December 1993 as resulting primarily from 'the paranoia developed by certain lobby groups and inflamed by the media'. Ellerton and Clements (1994, p. 63), on the other hand, found comfort in the pronouncements by the media and wrote:

The *Sydney Morning Herald*, in an editorial devoted to the national curriculum debate (July 2, 1993) argued that, rather than liberate schooling, a national curriculum for schooling would place it in a straitjacket. The fact is that there are large cultural differences between children in different parts of Australia and reasonable arguments can be mounted to support the premise that a common curriculum which insists on common outcomes can be a recipe for inequality of educational opportunity. (Ellerton & Clement, 1994, p. 63).

This argument is reminiscent of the statement by the British philosopher John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* when he proclaimed in 1859 'A general state education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another...in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body' (Warnock, 2003, p. 173).

Support from the education community, particularly from practising teachers, was not gained from the outset, thus providing a further possible cause for the project's demise. Kennedy (1992, p. 33) referred to the AEC as being 'slow to recognise the need for extensive consultation' and further observed that the curriculum initiative was 'driven by unrealistic political deadlines'. Foggo and Martin (1992, p. 39) complained of the agenda as being 'top-down', while their assessment of the collaborative process was one of 'a juggernaut out of control'. Forster (1995, pp. 209-210) described the consultation process as 'a blitzkrieg approach', which 'left the stakeholders gasping' and concluded that 'the speed of the operation left most of the educational interest groups gaping on the sidelines'. Cumming (1992, pp. 6-7) likewise commented that many participants were overwhelmed by the speed of the developments in addition to the extent and nature of the changes, and went on to say that:

While collaboration is perceived to be operating at political and bureaucratic levels, there is a common view that the quality of consultation with the educational and wider community up until now has been very poor, and all too often a case of 'too little, too late'. (Cumming, 1992, p. 7).

Clements (1996, p. 77) goes as far as to state that throughout the period 1989-1993, some national professional associations and academics were vitally interested in, and repeatedly made attempts to be allowed to contribute to, national curriculum policy formation. However, they were deliberately excluded by the AEC and education bureaucrats from such participation.

While there were a number of critics of the consultation process, there were a few voices in its defence. One was Francis (1993 p. 6) who stated that there had been an 'enormous amount' of consultation. He identified the lack of appropriate responses by those consulted as being the problem, and cited four rather subjective examples of this, namely that too many:

- a. failed to understand or to take seriously the document sent to them;
- b. tossed off a few negative remarks without any suggestion of what they would want;
- c. wasted their opportunity by looking for hidden agendas and evil empires; and
- d. found the thrill of a headline irresistible. (Francis, 1993, p. 6)

Of this demise of what many would describe as a serious attempt at national collaboration, Reid's assessment was that 'the most ambitious attempt at national curriculum collaboration in Australia's history had foundered on the old rock of State-Commonwealth suspicion' (Reid, 2005a, p. 18). Seddon (2001) concurs, stating that the 'Commonwealth's attempt to manage by consensus unravelled in the face of traditional state-federal politics' and that the states 'would not undercut their historic control of school education' (Seddon, 2001, p. 318).

Reflecting on the decision by the Australian Education Council not to endorse the statements and profiles at their Hobart meeting in 1993, Piper (1997, p. 22) points out that:

Ironically the city that had given birth to a national collaborative approach to curriculum reform with the Hobart Declaration on Schooling was also the site, some five and a half years and many millions of dollars later, of its inglorious demise. (Piper, 1997, p. 22).

However, he continues with foresight:

It seems unduly optimistic (and highly ahistorical) to suggest that the states and territories will, of their own volition and in the absence of specific structures and incentives, move towards curriculum reform in a genuine spirit of collaboration in the national interest. By the same token it would be unduly pessimistic to suggest that the pressures for reform, or indeed the need for reform, will simply go away, and that the current impasse will, or indeed can, be accepted as a satisfactory resolution of what is, after all, a national problem, and arguably a national imperative.

Perhaps the most abiding impression left by these events is one of wasted opportunity. Certainly the results fall far short of the promise and expectations generated by the Hobart Declaration on Schooling. By the same token it would be short-sighted to dismiss these events as simply wasted effort. Certainly the outcomes are

disappointing, but they are not negligible; nor are they necessarily final. (Piper, 1997, p. 23).

The turning point against the move for a national curriculum in the form being pursued had been the election of coalition governments in a number of states. This revived the 'Labor versus Coalition' opposing ideologies of previous times. It was not until the lead up to the 2007 Federal election that Australia was in a position where both major parties were advocating a national curriculum.

4.3.6 Revisiting the Migratory Argument

The growing interstate mobility of the workforce and the inconsistencies in school curricula from state to state that these families were experiencing was a justification Dawkins used to promote a common national curriculum. Ignoring the advice of the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus who warned that you cannot step twice into the same river, almost two decades later Rudd and Smith (2007a) were espousing the same argument in the most recent bid to promote a national curriculum.

Today, Australians are much more likely to move to take up work opportunities, and the significant internal migration of families within our nation provides another argument for greater consistency in what our schools teach. (Rudd & Smith, 2007a, p. 5).

This is a recurring theme in the national curriculum debate. Ellerton and Clements (1994) suggested, however, in response to the move for a national curriculum in the late 1980s-early 1990s, that there are counter arguments and that it is wrong to assume that this frequently heard argument is valid:

There is, in fact, research evidence that can be mounted against the mobility argument. In the mid 1970s two Monash University academics, Lindsay Mackay and Brian Spicer, were commissioned by the Commonwealth Government to investigate claims that the children of highly mobile defence personnel experienced educational disadvantages as a result of their mobility. Mackay and Spicer...found that, in fact, the academic performance of children in very mobile families, was superior to that of children (also of defence personnel) of similar ability who were at the same grade levels but had attended only one or two schools. (Ellerton & Clements, 1994, p. 63).

Clements (1996, p. 67) reiterated this at a later date, stating that no matter how many times the mobility argument is repeated, the fact is that this argument '*is not* supported by research' (his emphasis).

One constant in the migratory argument is that the solution offered is a national curriculum. Marsh (1994, p.44) is one of a number of researchers who points out that there is no further elaboration that there might be other solutions to the problem. A common school starting age or the States and Territories agreeing as to whether Year 7 should be in the primary sector or

secondary sector, for example, are not considered as alternatives. In the era under discussion, Marsh (1994) makes the point that the Minister ‘took the quantum leap of arguing that *the* solution to school itinerancy was a national curriculum’ (Marsh, 1994, p. 44). Reid (2007), while considering a later period of time, agrees, suggesting that strategies such as the introduction of student portfolios may be a more powerful way to facilitate student transition (Reid, 2007, p. 16). The primacy of the migratory argument is also challenged by Reid. While stating that it is difficult to maintain an argument that an entirely new curriculum edifice should be created for the three per cent of students who are mobile, he argues that the mobility argument is a technical one and fails to offer guidance about the nature of the curriculum. ‘Supporting mobile students may be a side effect of national curriculum collaboration; it should not be its *raison d’être*’ (Reid, 2007, p. 16). Rizvi and Lingard (2010) likewise question whether the argument about the interests of students who are mobile across state borders is simply a spurious argument (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 95).

And so, at the close of this period, the prospect of a national curriculum had faltered predominantly on the two issues of State-Federal rivalry and political party lines. However, inroads had been made. Writing in 1995, Lingard, Porter, Bartlett and Knight were to comment:

...the reality now is that even the most strident of States’ rights advocates...accept the need for at least a degree of national collaboration across the sectors of education. As one interviewee in our research (a former Labor State Minister of Education) put it, we now have at least a ‘minimalist commitment to a minimalist national agenda’. To that extent, Dawkins...was successful in shaping a new conceptual and policy terrain in Australian education. (Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight, 1995, p. 45).

Following this period of a ‘full-on frontal assault’ for a national curriculum, and the period prior to 2007 when there was a consensus by both major parties of the need for such, came a decade which could be referred to as a ‘period of influence’.

4.4 1993 – 2003: A Period of Influence

4.4.1 Introduction

While the AEC decided in 1993 to refer the statements and profiles to the individual states and territories, the eight Key Learning Areas continued to have a substantial impact on curriculum development across Australia, particularly in the early part of that decade. Clements (1996) went as far as to suggest that from July 1993 Australia had, for a number of years, a *de facto* national curriculum (Clements, 1996, p. 80). This, he contends, was no surprise given the financial and professional inducements which were offered at the time. Ellerton and Clements (1994) concurred, stating that the main financial enticements offered by the Federal Government and the Department of Education, Employment and Training were fourfold and included:

- a. The Federal Government warning that it could use tied grants in education and training unless the states complied with the national curriculum agenda which would be evidenced in a number of ways (Ellerton & Clements, 1994, pp. 269 – 270);
- b. The determination of the Commonwealth Government to use its control over the funding of the professional development of teachers to support targeted initiatives (Ellerton & Clements, 1994, pp. 270 – 273);
- c. The Federal Government and the peak teacher bodies signing an Accord which, in part, emphasised the need for a national approach in curriculum development and gave teachers Federal funding for the implementation of the profiles (Ellerton & Clements, 1994, pp. 276 – 278); and
- d. The establishment of the Australian Teaching Council which ran summer schools for teachers giving them the opportunity to analyse the national curriculum statements and profiles and to explore their implication for pedagogy and assessment (Ellerton & Clements, 1994, pp. 278 – 279).

The funding of teacher professional development as a means of achieving the national curriculum agenda, mentioned above, has been examined by Kennedy (1995). Arising from the Keating Government's *One Nation* statement was the National Professional Development Program (NPDP) which heralded the return of the Commonwealth government as a provider of teacher professional development. However, rather than providing funds to be administered by State government education bureaucracies, as was the previous position, under the NPDP arrangement 'partner groups' (e.g. professional associations, universities, employers) could bid for Commonwealth funding. The implementation of national curriculum statements and profiles stood out as the main task to be undertaken with NPDP funds (Kennedy, 1995, pp. 160 -161).

So on the one hand while there was a great deal of preoccupation, particularly at the state level, with the statements and profiles, in the decade following the largely unsuccessful 'full-frontal assault' on national curriculum (Reid, 2005a, p.17) national collaboration also continued albeit in the form of a return to the more indirect strategies that had characterised the 1968 – 1988 period. One major benefit of the tumultuous five year period from 1988 – 1993 was the 'minimalist commitment to a minimalist national curriculum', as mentioned above, and thus there was, to some extent, a more open and encouraging framework in which the application of indirect strategies and incentives were to operate. Yet working against this there is evidence that the states were far more concerned with their own programs and issues and saw many national collaborative ventures as distractions. Hinz (2010), in her paper on the nexus between federalism and school funding in relation to Victoria's devolution reforms of that period, states that the biennial and triennial meetings of the AEC and MCEETYA were seen by the state bureaucrats as 'necessary distractions' and irrelevant. She contends that 'these meetings were dominated by the Commonwealth and concentrated on issues tangential to the Victorian reforms, such as a national curriculum statement, school starting age, and higher education and training' (Hinz, 2010). She furthermore adds the observation that 'ministers remained most concerned with maintaining their own electoral support and pursuing their own state agendas' (Hinz, 2010).

Whilst the States remained conscious and protective of their right to curriculum autonomy, the Commonwealth continued to provide opportunities and encourage national collaboration. Arguably the three most prominent examples of this during the decade 1993 – 2003 were the re-defining of the National Goals of Schooling, the increasing pre-eminence of the Curriculum Corporation, and the long-running Discovering Democracy program.

4.4.2 National Goals of Schooling Revisited

In April 1999 the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) comprising State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education, met in Adelaide. At that meeting, the Ministers endorsed unanimously a new set of national goals for schooling, superseding the Hobart Declaration (1989). The new goals were released as *The Adelaide Declaration (1999) on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*. Like the Hobart Declaration of the previous decade, the Adelaide Declaration was also a four page document containing a number of goals that related to personal, community and economic outcomes. It also contained a very strong social justice element, described by Buchanan and Chapman (2011, p. 2) as a ‘more developed vision’ for social justice in Australian education, and established a foundation for action among state and territory governments and schooling authorities. However, from a national collaboration point of view, the document stated that the achievement of these agreed national goals required a commitment to collaboration for the purposes of, amongst other things, ‘continuing to develop curriculum and related systems of assessment, accreditation and credentialing that promote quality and are nationally recognised and valued’ (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001). The *Adelaide Declaration* continued to endorse the agreed eight key learning areas.

4.4.3 The Increasing Pre-eminence of the Curriculum Corporation

In 1989 the AEC recommended the formation of a new national agency, the Curriculum Corporation, which effectively incorporated the then current Curriculum Development Centre and the Australian Schools Catalogue Information Service. In May 1990, with the appointment of an Executive Director, the Curriculum Corporation actively commenced operations, continuing until May 2010 when it merged with Education.au to become Education Services Australia.

The Curriculum Corporation was a company limited by guarantee. It was governed by a rather large Board of Directors consisting of representatives from each State and Territory Department of Education (excluding New South Wales which initially refused to become a member), the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, the National Council of Independent Schools Associations, the National Catholic Education Commission, the National Board of Employment, Education and Training, and, from 1991, the New Zealand Department of Education (Watt, 1992).

With a clear mandate that centred, not on policy making, but rather on collaborative activities, the mission of the Curriculum Corporation evolved around three key platforms, namely:

- a. To facilitate curriculum development. This included providing advice to the AEC on national curriculum issues and undertaking research related to national initiatives.
- b. To publish curriculum materials. This not only encompassed the publication of curriculum products arising from national collaborations, but also materials from other curriculum-related organisations and allowed to AEC to be a ‘publishing house’ of selected materials for the its own purposes. The Curriculum Corporation became very active in this publishing domain.
- c. To provide curriculum information. The managing of selected curriculum information on a database relevant to national collaboration in curriculum issues became an important aspect of this platform, along with increasing awareness of accessible curriculum information to facilitate effective decision making about teaching and learning. (Watt, 1992).

Initially the Curriculum Corporation was extensively involved in the process of mapping curriculum resources against each of the state and territory curriculums, as has been discussed previously. However, once the ‘Dawkins project’ became virtually defunct, the Curriculum Corporation continued to have a strong presence in education through a number of avenues. One of these avenues was through the development for schools of multimedia and online resources, in the main user-focused and underpinned by strong pedagogical understandings. The Le@rning Federation initiative, for example, employed emerging technologies to produce online curriculum content to encourage student learning and support teachers in Australia and New Zealand. The Curriculum Corporation was also involved in large-scale testing, test development, design and desktop publishing, and the administration and logistics of assessment and testing at both classroom and system levels. During this period, the Curriculum Corporation was also prominent in developing, managing and delivering teacher professional development with models ranging from online communities of practice to train-the-trainer programs. These varied in form from national conferences and seminars to facilitating mentor arrangements between schools and higher education institutions.

Also at this time, the Curriculum Corporation became very prominent in the publishing arena. A large volume of resources to support teacher professional development was produced with print and electronic publications covering practical teaching guides, student workbooks and resources, and professional reading. Furthermore, the print educational journal *EQ Australia* was produced by the Corporation on a quarterly basis, while *Curriculum Leadership*, a journal for leaders in school education, was published weekly online.

On 12th June 2009 the Ministerial Council of Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) approved the consolidation of the Curriculum Corporation and Education.au, and agreed to use the Curriculum Corporation base structure as the legal ‘shell’ for the new company (ESA, 2011, p. 1). The consolidation was completed on 28th February

2010 and Education Services Australia commenced operation as a legal entity on 1st March 2010.

4.4.4 The Discovering Democracy Project

During May 1997, the federal Minister for Schools, Dr David Kemp, announced a national civics education policy 'Discovering Democracy'. In launching this program, Kemp stated that all students from Year 4 to Year 10 would study the evolution of Australia's democracy (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997). This intersystemic program, funded by the Commonwealth over four years, was to support links across the curriculum including History, Business Studies, English, the Study of Society and the Environment (SOSE) and Technology. Kemp's announcement was endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) the following month in June. The program aimed to encourage the development of skills, values and attitudes that would enable effective, informed and reflective participation in political processes and civic life (Discovering Democracy n.d). Achieving this required knowledge of the history and operation of Australia's political and legal systems and institutions, and of the principles that underpin Australian democracy. Kemp's rationale for introducing this program was that '50% of the population did not know that Australia had a written constitution' and '73% of people over 15 had a total lack of knowledge of the role of the Governor General' (Commonwealth of Australia, 1997). Further, Kemp lamented the decrease in the number of students studying Australian history.

The genesis of this decision by the Howard Liberal-National Coalition government can be traced back to three inquiries into citizenship that were convened by the Senate Select Committee on Employment, Education and Training between 1989 and 1994 and their subsequent reports (Senate Select Committee on Employment, Education and Training *Education for active citizenship education in Australian schools and youth institutions*, 1989; *Education for Citizenship Education Revisited*, 1991; *A system of national citizenship indicators*, 1995). The neglect of civics education within Australian schools was highlighted by these reports, and how citizenship could be developed, explored and measured against the best international standards was proposed. Concurrently with these reports, the Federal government established a Civics Expert Group which released its own report *Whereas the People...Civics and Citizenship Education* (1994) which marked a turning point for civics being a prominent feature in Australian education policy making (Print & Gray, 2000). But while these reports served to ensure that there was a critical mass of support for civics education, the catalyst to unify them and galvanise them was, according to Print and Gray (2000), the then Labor Prime Minister, Paul Keating. They contend:

... the critical factor in accounting for the revitalisation of civics education was the Keating Government's initiative for a new identity for Australians based upon a republic within our lifetime. To achieve this goal, it was argued that Australians needed to be knowledgeable about our system of government as part of the process of breaking the final ties with Britain. Yet, the prevailing perception was that Australians, and particularly young Australians who were more likely to be supportive of a

republic, were largely ignorant of our system of government and our constitution as well as their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Identification of a clear civics deficit amongst Australian students has been a powerful motivating factor in accounting for the civics renaissance. (Print & Gray, 2000, p. 7)

The Discovering Democracy Program was implemented in two stages. The first stage (1997 – 2001) produced the majority of teaching and learning materials, established Project Officers in each state and territory, and implemented the program in schools throughout Australia. Professional development for teachers and the consolidation of the program in schools were the aims of the second stage (2001 – 2004). The program itself was centred on four themes, these being principles of democracy; government in Australia; the Australian nation; and citizenship. These four themes were addressed by eighteen units of study. The subject matter for Discovering Democracy was presented in two separate packages, one for the middle and upper primary school and one for secondary students to Year 10. A major difference between what appeared in the Discovering Democracy program from what was advocated in the earlier policy of the Civics Expert Group was the far greater emphasis upon history as the main content vehicle for civics. Other notable differences were the inclusion of subject matter associated with the rule of law and a reduced set of values which emphasised a cluster of democratic values (Print & Gray, 2000, p. 9).

A number of evaluations of the program were carried out. A major report by the Erebus Consulting Group in November 2003 noted that the Australian Government's responsibility had been to establish the preconditions for successful implementation of civics and citizenship education by schools in all systems and sectors. From this perspective, they concluded that all of the policy goals had been achieved to a considerable extent (Erebus Consulting Group, 2003, Intro. p. xx). However the endorsement was not so strong at the state and territory education jurisdiction level.

(It would appear that significant use of the Discovering Democracy materials within a well-structured, whole school programme that can demonstrate improved student learning outcomes has been fully achieved in no more than half the schools nationally...From a school level perspective...Discovering Democracy in the majority of instances has never been seen as a programme in its own right, but rather as a set of resources that can be 'dipped into' on an as required basis... It is rarely taught in totality, or even in a sequential manner... The present approach...may therefore not be adequately addressing the principle objective of providing depth and breadth of civic understanding. (Erebus Consulting Group, 2003, Intro, pp. xx – xxi).

That there had been few lasting positive effects from the Discovering Democracy program was confirmed in December 2006 when ACER released the results from the first National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship; a program commissioned by MCEETYA that had assessed students in Years 6 and 10. The assessment itself was conducted in October 2004, involving more than 20,000 students from 567 schools. Project Director, Suzanne Mellor, described the results as 'revealing surprising gaps in students' knowledge of key historical

events and concepts of democracy and citizenship’ and went on to say that ‘Australia has an urgent need for formal education in civics and citizenship’ (Mellor, 2007, p. 11). After such public failure it could never be claimed that Discovering Democracy had succeeded as a national curriculum program and in many ways it resembled, in its effectiveness and implementation, the Australian Science Education Project of some three decades previously.

And so at the close of this period, with the adoption by the various states and territories of the curriculum profiles, there was some semblance of a pseudo national curriculum. To what degree this existed depended greatly on one’s perspective. Other national curriculum projects had been implemented with various results but politically a substantial national curriculum as such seemed not to be on the agenda. Seddon (2001) observes that when the federal Labor government lost office in the mid-1990s their agenda, which had attempted to tie an economic-instrumental approach to education to social justice, was quickly overturned by the incoming government which ‘pursued less compromised deregulatory, neo-liberal policies aimed at opening up educational choice’ (Seddon, 2001, p. 319). In May 1996, the Commonwealth Minister for Schools, Dr David Kemp, stated unambiguously that the Coalition would not be reviving the national curriculum concept (Clements, 1996, p. 81). However changes were ahead.

4.5 2003 – 2007: The Commonwealth Signals a New Intent

4.5.1 Introduction

During the period 2003 – 2007, the calls for a national curriculum by successive Federal Ministers of Education were similar to those of John Dawkins some 15 years or so earlier (Reid, 2005b, p. 10). The arguments and calls for consistency in curriculum offerings across Australia and a reduction of duplication, along with the migratory argument, were back in vogue. What was a significant difference, however, was that when Dawkins was the federal Labor minister responsible for education, he began his drive for change with all states and territories also being Labor governments. Conversely, when Brendan Nelson and later Julie Bishop, federal Ministers for Education in the Howard Liberal-National Coalition government were advocating national curriculum initiatives, the states and territories were all of the opposite political persuasion, being Labor governments. So while Dawkins had previously been able to initiate national collaboration strategies which, had they been successful, would have achieved his goals of a just and equal society, while at the same time controlling economic destiny (Dawkins & Costello, 1983); Howard’s ministers emphasised a deficit argument. That is, they advocated national consistency to correct the deficits of incompetent states and teachers. Or as Minister Bishop was to put it, ‘to take the school curriculum out of the hands of ideologues in the State and Territory education bureaucracies’ (Bishop, 2006, p. 3).

4.5.2 Nelson and the Australian Certificate of Education

During his time as Education Minister in the Howard Government (2001-2006), Dr Brendan Nelson, after introducing a series of radical changes to Australia's higher education system, embarked on a quest for national uniformity in school curriculum, particularly by focussing on national standards at the Year 12 level of schooling, and outlined his willingness to use the leverage of Commonwealth funding as a means of achieving this. A report in *The Australian* newspaper on 26th June, 2003 stated:

Dr Nelson has declared he is prepared to use the Federal Government's annual \$6.9 billion in state education funding as leverage to get national standards in 'Australia's national interest'. 'We have eight different educational jurisdictions, eight different commencement ages, eight different curricula,' Dr Nelson told *The Australian*. 'We would not be giving service to young Australians if we just accept that we are eight jurisdictions,' he said. ...

Dr Nelson said the Federal Government gave \$6.9 billion in financial assistance to schools and believed the Commonwealth had a 'responsibility to use the leverage' of that funding to head towards national consistency. 'That's putting it in its bluntest form, but I think that's the way we need to start thinking,' he said. (*The Australian*, 26th June, 2003)

Some commentators immediately interpreted this as a push for a national curriculum. In an editorial in the spring 2004 edition of *English in Australia*, the journal of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English, Professor Wayne Sawyer noted that with the Howard government also controlling the Senate came 'the most dangerous of creatures, the politician who thinks he has a bright idea'. He went on to state that 'Nelson's bright ideas include...the holy grail of Federal Ministers, the national curriculum, along with national testing...' (Sawyer, 2004, p. 3). Although the positioning of a national curriculum on the political agenda was refuted in parliament by Nelson at the time, Sawyer's editorial coincided with a campaign of criticism by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training of the various state and territory Year 12 finishing certificates as not being consistent across the board. Nelson's proposed remedy was to create an Australian Certificate of Education, which implied to some the start of a national curriculum.

It can be noted here that Nelson's willingness to use the leverage of Commonwealth funding to achieve national consistency is a change from his earlier stance when he was reported as saying that a national curriculum and national consistency should be achieved 'without Commonwealth coercion...and without the emotionalism and politicisation that has occurred in the past' (Cook, 2002). It also illustrates the model of Commonwealth involvement in curriculum put forward by Brady and Kennedy (2007, pp. 16-19) based on the conceptualisation of policy being on a 'soft' to 'hard' continuum, with this being an indication of the move from 'soft' policy to one where there were obvious and explicit sanctions being mooted for non-compliance.

Following the press release of 26th June 2003 (discussed above), Nelson raised the need for greater national consistency in schooling, including the issue of the differences in senior

secondary certificates across Australia, at the meeting of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in July 2003. The Australian Government also indicated its stance in favour of an Australian Certificate of Education as part of its 2004 election policy (Masters, 2005). By May 2005, Nelson had formally proposed the Australian Certificate of Education (ACE) and announced that the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) had been selected to develop options for the ACE. This study was led by Professor Geoff Masters, the Chief Executive Officer of ACER. The ACER was asked to explore four options:

- a. introducing a certificate to sit alongside the likes of a Higher School Certificate;
- b. incorporating some of the more attractive features of the International Baccalaureate into an Australian certificate;
- c. developing a national certificate from the existing nine certificates (Victoria had two certificates); and
- d. including an aptitude test in a national certificate. (Masters, 2005b, p. 44)

The canvassing of these options with employers, universities, parents, students, curriculum authorities and others was required. Although four options were to be explored, Nelson predicted, erroneously, that what would emerge would be the option of a student aptitude test (Nelson, 2005). The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), on the other hand, clearly indicated a preference for option c (above), as it not only allowed for the States and Territories to 'co-brand with the Commonwealth to preserve some of the individual aspects of their current senior certificate' but it could also 'strengthen the support for development of national curriculum in key areas of learning' (ACCI, 2005).

In July 2005 Professor Geoff Masters released an options paper on the Australian Certificate of Education, outlining the four options ACER had been commissioned to investigate. In discussing the current arrangements the differences that existed among the senior secondary certificates were outlined, these being:

- a. differences in requirements for completion in terms of compulsory subjects, available pathways, number of required units of study, and number of required hours of study for each unit;
- b. differences in the processes for the award of the certificate and the modes of assessment;
- c. differences in the way achievements were reported; and
- d. differences in how standards were specified in each jurisdiction and whether this information was included on the certificate. (Masters, 2005a, pp. 1-2).

The ACCI newsletter published in September 2005 drew heavily on the Masters' option paper and endorsed the opportunity to provide consistency by overcoming these differences. However, it went further, introducing the argument that education is a product, particularly for overseas students.

It must also be remembered that education has a dual role in Australia's economy. The outcomes are to produce the social overhead capital necessary for a global environment. It also is a product in itself being sold to overseas students in increasing numbers. These students could potentially provide a source of skilled labour if they are encouraged to stay in Australia once their studies are completed. Branding through an Australian Certificate of Education would provide an easily recognisable product internationally. (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2005, p. 4).

By May 2006, the ACER report was ready and presented to the then Minister for Education, Science and Training, Julie Bishop, who had replaced Brendan Nelson by that stage. The report stated that the option most similar to their recommendations was the introduction of a certificate that would evolve from existing senior certificates but noted that the proposal had drawn on elements of all four options (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2006, p. 62). Furthermore, the report envisaged the maintenance of separate state/territory syllabi and curriculum frameworks (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2006, p. 64).

In the first of three recommendations the report called for national agreement on what should be taught, arguing that in individual subjects a core of essential knowledge, skills, ideas and principles should be identified. In advocating a core of common content that would be taught in all states and territories, the report emphasised that this 'would not determine the entire curriculum in a subject and so would not constitute a national curriculum' (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2006, p. v). One reaction to this was to label the report as 'neither bold nor ambitious' (Riordan, 2006, p. 2). Riordan (2006) argued that while a move to a more national approach to credentialing was welcome, it needed to be integrated within a national curriculum rather than simply overlaying the ACE on top of existing arrangements. Riordan (2006) went on to state:

There is a strong case for a single national system of curriculum development, assessment and certification. Among expert practitioners and theoreticians in curriculum design there is uniform agreement that certification, assessment, pedagogy and curriculum structure and design are all interconnected. Overlaying the credentialing, without redesigning the rest of the package, is a fraught task. (Riordan, 2006, p. 2).

The establishment of a national standards body, which in turn would establish subject panels, was the mechanism recommended by the report to identify this core of essential knowledge, skills, ideas and principles for each subject. This national standards body would not only identify these essential elements, but approve them, undertake occasional reviews, update them, and benchmark them against relevant overseas curricula to ensure that course content would be consistent with international expectations (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2006, p. 71). It was pointed out elsewhere by Masters that it was difficult at that time to establish what was common across Australia because the states and territories provided different levels of specificity in their syllabuses and curriculum frameworks (Masters, 2006, p. 797).

The second recommendation called for students throughout Australia to be assessed against a shared set of achievement standards, while the third and final recommendation was that, to be awarded the ACE, students should be required to demonstrate acceptable levels of key capabilities. Four key capabilities were identified these being Reading Literacy; Mathematical Literacy; Written English; and ICT Literacy, with the recommendation being that these capabilities would be assessed and reported on in their own right rather than being incorporated into subject results (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2006, pp. 72-86). In making these recommendations it appeared that the ACER Project Team had carried out some international comparisons, in particular considering the so-called 'Bologna process' in the European Union, and were concerned that Australia may have been lagging behind in its ability to compare the results of students from the various states and territories. Masters (2006, p. 798) has stated that the group found themselves asking many questions about current senior secondary arrangements.

...does Australia, with a smaller population than some American states, really require nine different senior certificates? ...At a time when the states of the European Union are working to make their qualifications more compatible and more comparable to increase the international competitiveness of European education, to encourage mutual recognition and to facilitate student mobility, can Australia afford to have senior secondary arrangements which are becoming increasingly disparate? (Masters, 2006, p. 798)

The final report was 208 pages in length in which less than one hundred pages dealt with the background, evaluation of options and the actual recommendations. Riordan (2006) made comment on the format of the final report and the degree of consultation that took place, finding both unnecessary and of little value. He stated:

One thing that struck me about this report...is the extent of consultation that occurred and, moreover, the painstaking documentation in the appendices of the report of every person and group who contributed or were consulted in its development. This is the current orthodoxy, and it is a worry on two counts. First, it conforms to what Andy Hargreaves has described as a device for achieving contrived consent in support of prefigured recommendations. The second and more worrying issue is that talking to a lot of people can help you understand the way an issue is perceived, but it doesn't necessarily point to a clever or wise solution. (Riordan, 2006, p.4)

Masters (2006, p. 798) foreshadowed one of the major obstacles to the acceptance and implementation of the ACE – the staunch defence by the states and territories of their own systems. He suggested that a number of states would support the national push if it meant that other states would adopt their more superior curriculum. Most states, according to Masters, regarded the curricula of other states as 'lacking in academic rigour, unresponsive to local and student needs, too rigid and bureaucratic, based on narrow and limited forms of assessment, and captured by educational fads' (Masters, 2006, p. 798).

Bishop's response to the ACER report was to invite comment from key educational stakeholders, her state and territory ministerial colleagues and the public (Holden, 2006, p. 22). That was to be followed by yet another study, also to be carried out by ACER assisted by an Advisory Group of curriculum and assessment authorities, to compare the content, curriculum and standards of six curriculum areas – English, English Literature, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Australian History. This effectively put a decision on hold.

4.5.3 Bishop's Pursuit of the Holy Grail

While Nelson advocated a uniform approach to curriculum but had shifted his emphasis to the senior years of schooling and a national Year 12 certificate, his successor re-focused and took this one step further with a push for a national curriculum. In an address to the History Teachers' Association of Australia at their conference in Fremantle on 6th October 2006, Minister Julie Bishop argued strongly for a national curriculum and a viable role in curriculum determination for the Federal government through a stinging attack on State and Territory education authorities. In claiming that the Australian History Summit which she convened in August 2006 opened up the public issue of 'the quality of curriculum development, and who should be setting the curriculum, and what role the Federal government should be playing in this function' (Bishop, 2006, p. 2) she went on to state:

There is widespread community concern about the content of curriculum being developed by State government education authorities...I am convinced of the need for the Commonwealth to take a leadership role in a fight for a back-to-basics approach across curriculum... The failure of State governments to protect the interests of young Australians from trendy educational fads has led to the community turning to the Federal Government to take action. The serious question needs to be asked whether it is time for a common model curriculum across the country. I think this is a debate that we must have. Let's open the lid on what is being taught in our schools, and have a debate on what could be taught and why. (Bishop, 2006, p. 3).

Minister Bishop continued:

A common model curriculum would (by virtue of being on the national stage) result in curriculum being made more accountable through greater public scrutiny at the bar of public opinion...So let me suggest something that will obviously shock the sensibilities...We need to take school curriculum out of the hands of ideologues in the State and Territory education bureaucracies and give it to say a national board of studies, comprising the sensible centre of educators. (Bishop, 2006, p. 3).

This speech, while attracting support from some quarters, also attracted criticism. In an editorial the following day, *The Age* wrote that '(Y)esterday Education Minister Julie Bishop launched an astounding attack on schools and teachers, claiming that left-wing ideologues had hijacked the curriculum.' Bishop was also criticised in the same editorial for her reference to

the curriculum coming ‘straight from Chairman Mao’, a phrase that had been in the advance copy of her speech given to the media but actually omitted from her speech in Fremantle, as well as for failing to provide evidence to support her claims; revealing her own ideology by endorsing the teaching of Latin; and for the government, of which she was a Minister, failing to make any significant investment in improving school resources over the past decade (*The Age* 7-10-06). Farrelly (2007, p. 40) described Bishop’s comments on the ‘ideologues who have hijacked the school curriculum’ as ‘the most misguided reason put forward for the national curriculum’. He argued:

The thinking here is completely muddled. If the ‘ideologues’ can hijack a state school curriculum they can also hijack a national one and wreck their havoc not on a state-wide level but on a national level. It is the centralised state curricula which allow the state-wide hijacking. The solution is not to further centralise decision-making at the federal level but to decentralise to an open market. (Farrelly, 2007, p. 40).

Bishop’s speech gave further credence to the belief that the Howard government’s preferred option in dealing with state responsibilities such as education was through coercive federalism. While analysing the immediate pre-2007 election period, in particular the policies and *modus operandi* of the Coalition government, Brett (2007, p. 59) identifies and comments on the existence of this approach:

...Howard was impatient with federalism’s constraints; he treated the division of powers between the Commonwealth and the states as lines of conflict rather than potential co-operation. His federalism was combative and coercive, attempting to take over states’ responsibilities or forcing them to comply with federal policy priorities through tied funding, and generally blaming the states for intransigence or incompetence. (Brett, 2007, pp. 59-60).

Kennedy (2009, p.3) was also critical of Bishop’s approach and justification for a national curriculum. He maintains that a vision for a national curriculum should be based on creating a future for young people by providing the best possible educational opportunities that can be mustered, rather than correcting deficits. He suggests that Julie Bishop and her predecessors in Brendan Nelson and David Kemp were all concerned ‘almost exclusively with deficits and lacked any appreciation of the broader social purposes of the curriculum’ (Kennedy, 2009, p.3). Leaving no questions on his position, Kennedy stated:

Thus if any Commonwealth government thinks that the rationale for a national curriculum rests on the basic mistrust of state/territory governments to do the job, then, in my view, this does not qualify as a vision – it is politics and it is bad politics... In the same way, if the vision for a national curriculum rests on the idea that schools and teachers are inadequate and they need a strong push by the Commonwealth government to remind them of their responsibility – then this too is nonsense. It is not a vision – it is ugly politics of the worst kind. (Kennedy, 2009, p.3)

Leech (2006, p. 25) went as far as saying, with good reason, that Bishop's proposal for a board of educators from the sensible centre, along with her comments concerning ideologues was 'met with outrage from state governments and teachers' associations'. Ferrari (2006) writing in *The Australian*, gave a succinct summary of this outrage, quoting a range of people including the Queensland Education Minister, Rod Welford, *'The federal minister would be better off working with us...rather than grandstanding...(and) behaving like a tin-billy dictator'*; the Federal Opposition Leader, Kim Beazley who also accused Bishop of grandstanding and using 'ridiculous extreme language'; Australian Secondary Principals Association president, Andrew Blair, *'It is a ...cheap political shot'*; Australian Education Union Victorian secretary, Mary Bluett stating Bishop's comments were ill-informed and insulting; NSW Education Minister, Carmel Tebbutt, *'The idea that in some way the federal Government is an ideology-free zone is simply laughable'*; and South Australian Premier, Mike Rann (referring to a national curriculum as a 'dumbing down' and not wanting South Australia to 'drop down to the average') being amongst those who were quoted.

It is interesting to note the parallels between the Bishop approach to a national curriculum and that taken earlier in Britain by the conservative Thatcher government, which likewise considered the teaching profession and the local educational authorities as antipathetic to their own values. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) summarise this effectively when they state:

The Thatcherite move for a national curriculum was ideologically driven; at one level it was about what her New Right ideology saw as defeating the 'producer' or 'provider capture' of teachers of the institution of schooling, their perceived political stance and similarly in respect of the local authorities; at another level this was about the production of national citizens of particular kinds, ones looking more to the glories of the past than the future perhaps – what has been referred to as a 'curriculum of the dead'... These rationales and policy intentions can be contrasted with those of the subsequent New Labour government, who see national curricula as ensuring the types of skill and human capital necessary to the post-industrial economy and the competitiveness within the global economy of the national one. (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 95)

Similarities between Bishop's address to the History Teachers' Conference in Fremantle and the rhetoric of the UK's Margaret Thatcher are discernible. Believing that 'real knowledge' was being replaced by an 'ideological curriculum' in schools, Thatcher, in a speech to the 1987 Conservative Conference, accused hard-Left educational authorities and extremist teachers of depriving children of the education they deserved. Thatcher went on to claim children were taught political slogans instead of clear English expression, and the inalienable right to be gay instead of traditional moral values. Later, in her autobiography, Thatcher (1995) wrote that the fact that since 1944 the only compulsory subject in the curriculum in Britain had been religious education reflected a healthy distrust of the state using central control of the syllabus as a means of propaganda. However, she went on to say 'that was hardly the risk now: The propaganda is coming from the left-wing local authorities, teachers and pressure groups, not us' (Thatcher, 1995, p. 570). This provided the need for a 'restorationist' agenda through a national

curriculum with a focus on history, geography and English (Ball, 2008, p. 82). In Australia, Bishop, as Thatcher had done earlier in Britain, took a similar approach of blaming the teachers and education authorities, along with an alleged lack of accountability, as the justification to intervene in teachers' work and to introduce even greater control and oversight. However, Robin Harris, a Thatcher biographer and former speech writer and policy adviser for the British Prime Minister, assesses Thatcher's National Curriculum as a failure, stating that it 'quickly became highly prescriptive, bureaucratic and educationally unsound' (Harris, 2013, p.245).

And so at the end of 2006, with a federal election looming in 2007, it was quite clear that a national curriculum, whilst being advocated by the coalition government, was meeting with a great deal of resistance from the states. Leech (2006) noted that:

Bishop's proposal is so much hot air unless every state and territory government education authority agrees to the plan, and the states have already made their position clear. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth, which comprises state, territory and Commonwealth ministers, discussed the concept of a national curriculum and certificate of education at a meeting in July, and the states insisted that they retain control over their individual curricula, and refused to support a national system. (Leach, 2006, p. 25)

In the lead up to the 2007 federal election, however, the Labor opposition also took up the call for a national curriculum. Topsfield and Tomazin (2007), reporting in *The Age*, referred to this as an 'audacious move' noting that the Labor leader, Kevin Rudd, went further than the Government by extending the plan to primary students as well as secondary and committing to a time frame and costing. They also predicted that, unlike the Government, Rudd was likely to get the support of the states. This prediction was, in part, confirmed when the Victorian government welcomed the plan, despite previously criticising the Federal Government's policy as an exercise in 'state bashing' that would lower education standards (Topsfield & Tomazin, 2007).

The arguments put forward by the Australian Labor Party for a national curriculum basically fell into two main categories. The first was the need for Australia to succeed in a highly competitive global economy, and the second, the need to cater for the internal migration of families within Australia by providing greater consistency in what Australian schools teach. The emphasis was, however, firmly on the first of these justifications.

In February 2007, nine months before the federal election, Kevin Rudd and Stephen Smith (then Shadow Minister for Education and Training) released a new directions paper *Establishing a National Curriculum to improve our children's educational outcomes*. In this document, the first paragraph of the introduction underpins the future Rudd government's move for a national curriculum:

Australia's future economic prosperity is tied to the skills and productivity of our workforce. For Australia to compete successfully in the global economy, we must

invest in human capital and build a highly skilled workforce that can compete with the best of our neighbours... (Rudd & Smith, 2007a, p. 4)

On the same day as the release of this new directions paper, the economic argument was detailed more fully in an address Kevin Rudd gave to the Melbourne Education Research Institute at Melbourne University entitled 'An Education Revolution for Australia's Economic Future'. Taking the argument that the course of human history was dramatically changed during the past two hundred years by the industrial revolution and then the technological revolution, Rudd extended this statement to argue that once again Australia found itself on the cusp of significant change. During this address, Rudd promoted a number of catchcries and exhortations such as 'education is the engine room of the economy'; 'it is now time for a third wave of economic reform – a human capital revolution, an education revolution, a skills revolution'; 'education is the pathway to prosperity'; and 'Labor sees education as being about the economy and about opportunity' (Rudd, 2007b). The Opposition Leader then proceeded to demonstrate a link between prosperity, productivity and human capital investment by saying:

OECD research shows that if the average education level of the working-age population was increased by one year, the growth rate of the economy would be up to 1 per cent higher.

Another recent study found that countries able to achieve literacy scores 1 per cent higher than the international average will increase their living standards by a factor of 1.5 per cent of GDP per capita.

So whether it is through focusing on literacy levels, or increasing the average number of years spent in education, the evidence invariably shows that more educated economies are wealthier economies. (Rudd, 2007b)

Rudd concluded this address by proposing that it was now time for a national educational revolution (Rudd, 2007b).

4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to address the first research question, namely, what is the history of curriculum reform at a national level in Australia. As an introduction to this chapter, Commonwealth, state and territory governments' responsibilities with respect to education were discussed and in doing so it was noted that the Commonwealth government has increased its influence over the past decades. The remainder of the chapter examined the growing Commonwealth government's influence on curriculum during four defined periods of time. The first covered 1968 to 1988 with a detailed analysis at how the Commonwealth government exerted its influence through the Australian Science Education Project, the Curriculum Development Centre, the Social Education Materials Project, and the Language Development Project.

The period 1989 – 1993 was then reviewed with an emphasis on the Commonwealth government's attempt at increasing its influence over the school curricula through a cooperative venture with state and territory governments. The Hobart Declaration and the subsequent curriculum mapping exercises were analysed, followed by a discussion and interpretation of the events in 1993 which resulted in a decreased interest in the states and territories pursuing national curriculum collaboration. The two issues of state-federal rivalry and political party allegiances were identified as factors resulting in the prospect of a national curriculum faltering.

The third period, 1993 to 2003, focussed on the three main developments that occurred at that time: The Adelaide National Goals of Schooling, the establishment of the Curriculum Corporation, and the Discovering Democracy Project. This led into the final period covering the years 2003 to 2007. Here the emphasis was on the work of two former Federal Ministers for Education, Dr Brendan Nelson and Julie Bishop, and their efforts in moving towards the establishment of a national curriculum at a time when there was continual resistance from the state and territory governments. This section noted, however, that as the 2007 Federal election was approaching, the Labor opposition also took up the call for a national curriculum and this changed the dynamics of the debate.

So prior to the 2007 federal election, both major parties were advocating a national curriculum. By that time, the manner in which the Liberal-National Party Coalition portrayed themselves as the saviours of education at the expense of the states and teachers in general, may well have been their *eventus stultorum magister*. As Reid (2009, p. 2) points out, there was a 'growing resentment to coercive federalism' being employed by the Howard Government and the education profession were 'becoming tired of the tactic of denigration of schools and teachers by federal Education Ministers that seemed to accompany each new initiative'. This resentment was, in Reid's view 'turn(ing) to hostility' and, partly as a result of this, the federal election in November 2007 saw the Liberal/National party government losing office. A new stage in the history of national curriculum development in Australia was about to unfold.

Chapter 5

The Australian Curriculum – The Current Initiative: 2007 - 2013

5.0 Introduction

Leading into the 2007 Federal election, both of the major political parties were advocating the establishment of a national body to prepare a national curriculum for Australia. Following the election, the Australian Labor Party took office on 3rd December 2007 with Kevin Rudd as Australia's 26th Prime Minister. By April 2008, the Rudd Government, with Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard as Minister for Education, had established the independent interim National Curriculum Board to develop Australia's first national curriculum in English, Mathematics, the Sciences and History, with a view to having this implemented from 2011. Professor Barry McGaw was appointed as Head of the Interim Board. McGaw had a background in curriculum and assessment, and had previously held the positions of Director of Education for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and chief executive of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

This chapter will examine the processes around the development of the national curriculum including analysing how this process is positioned in relation to the earlier attempts at restructuring the school curriculum in Australia, as discussed in the previous chapter. In doing so, this chapter will specifically address the second research question of this study.

5.1 The Embryonic National Curriculum Board

The Interim National Curriculum Board was comprised of representatives from each of the States and Territories, and three representatives from the Catholic and Independent Schools sectors. The inaugural meeting was held in Canberra on 23rd April 2008, chaired by Professor Barry McGaw with Tony Mackay as Deputy Chair. A full list of the interim board is found in Table 5.1

By the end of May 2009, the nascent National Curriculum Board had morphed into the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), but by that time had carried out quite substantial work towards the first phase of the national curriculum. In June 2008 a *National Curriculum Development Paper* had been published as background reading for selective wide-ranging participants invited to attend a forum, 'Into the Future', held in Melbourne on 27th June 2008. The introduction to this paper proposed an argument for the role of a national curriculum in building Australia's future and the principles for developing a national curriculum. This was then followed by notes and key questions covering content, achievement standards, cross-curricula learnings, and the development process itself, including communication and consultation (National Curriculum Board, 2008a). The key questions listed in that paper were discussed by the 200 people who attended the national forum and were also discussed in subsequent state and territory forums which were held between June and November 2008 (National Curriculum Board, 2008b, p. ii)

Table 5.1 List of Interim National Curriculum Board Members

Name	Position	Organisation
Professor Barry McGaw	Director	Melbourne University Research Institute, University of Melbourne
Mr Tony Mackay	Executive Director	Centre for Strategic Education
Mr Tom Alegounarias	Chief Executive	New South Wales Institute of Teachers
Mr John Firth	Chief Executive Officer	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
Mr Kim Bannikoff	Director	Queensland Studies Authority
Professor Bill Loudon	Dean of Education	University of Western Australia
Ms Helen Wildash	Executive Director, Curriculum	South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services
Mr David Hanlon	Former Deputy Secretary	Tasmanian Department of Education
Ms Rita Henry	Executive Director, Central Australia	Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training
Ms Janet Davy	Deputy Chief Executive	Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training
Dr Brian Croke	Executive Director	Catholic Education Commission New South Wales
Professor Marie Emmitt	Dean of Faculty of Education	Australian Catholic University National
Mr Garry Le Duff	Executive Director	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia

While such a process can be labelled consultative, some regarded this as mere window dressing. Taylor (2008b), for example, cites that the forum mentioned above was 'attended by all the usual suspects (stakeholders)' and continues:

This is how things normally get done. Draw as many consultees as you can to the preliminaries, especially the principals' associations, make them feel involved and then narrow down the field as the government moves towards the sharp end of the policymaking process, while issuing press releases, newsletters, speaking at key functions and calling for submissions from the wider community. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Canberra will be busy setting up *in camera* meetings with officials from the states and territories, a narrower field of stakeholders and, almost certainly, Curriculum Corporation... Then will come the subject panels and the detailed nutting out, the territorial arguments ('My pedagogy is more important than yours') and the compromises. (Taylor, 2008b, p. 52)

It is relevant at this point to consider the principles for developing the national curriculum as espoused in that initial paper by the National Curriculum Board, as these were considered by the Board to 'underpin the development' of the national curriculum (National Curriculum Board, 2008a, p.2) and were reflected in the papers subsequently published by the Board. These

principles also became, at a later date, a reference point for many of the institutions and individuals who responded to the invitation to comment on the draft curriculum papers. Seven principles were outlined in this initial document, these being:

1. A National Curriculum needs to provide students with an understanding of the past that has shaped the society and culture in which they are growing and developing, and with knowledge, understandings and skills that will help them in their future lives.
2. The curriculum should be based on the assumptions that all students can learn and that every child matters. It should also take account of the markedly different rates at which students develop while not allowing those differences to become a reason to abandon some students to low expectations that will arbitrarily limit their development.
3. The curriculum should make clear to teachers what has to be taught, and to students what they should learn and what achievement standards are expected of them in each stage of schooling.
4. The curriculum needs to be feasible. It must be based on reasonable expectations of time and resources available to teachers. The length of documentation, extent of specification and accessibility of language also need to be considered.
5. The development of a national curriculum is intended to establish essential content and achievement standards for all students to invigorate a national effort to improve student learning in the selected subjects.
6. The curriculum needs to be flexible. It must allow jurisdictions, systems and schools the ability to deliver national curriculum in a way that values teachers' professional knowledge and reflects local school and regional differences and priorities.
7. A National Curriculum needs to be developed collaboratively with jurisdictions, systems and schools across Australia. It will reflect 'best practices' across Australia and overseas. (National Curriculum Board, 2008a, pp. 2-3).

Following the National Curriculum Board forum in June 2008, which was the initial consultation occurrence, an 'event record' was published. This was designed to provide information for interested parties about the outcomes of the forum, and drew on information provided from the keynote addresses, workshop sessions and the facilitated panel discussion. In August 2008, lead writers were appointed to support the writing of the initial advice papers. Between 12th September and 3rd October 2008 small expert advisory groups, including the lead writers, met to support the development of the National Curriculum Board's draft initial advice papers. *The Shape of the National Curriculum: A Proposal for Discussion* was then released by the National Curriculum Board in October, 2008. This paper outlined the broad scope and structure proposed for the national curriculum and set out the overarching context of the Board's work. It was designed to be read in conjunction with initial advice papers for the four areas – English, Mathematics, the Sciences, and History – which were released on-line at the same time. Concurrently with this, between July and mid-November 2008, the National Curriculum Board conducted eight state and territory forums to discuss the Board's

publications. Specifically, the initial advice papers were discussed at national forums during the period 13th - 17th October, 2008. At approximately the same time as these national forums, nominated teacher professional association groups met from 14th – 18th October to support the lead writers in shaping the direction of the framing papers.

A key progression point for the National Curriculum Board came with the release of the framing papers for English, Mathematics, the Sciences, and History on 20th November, 2008. These papers, which were only accessible on-line, had been developed from the feedback and consultation received from the initial advice papers. Each paper presented broad directions for what teachers should teach and students should learn in the national curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12. Consultation was invited on these framing papers. On 28th February 2009 consultation closed and the submissions read and analysed, leading to consultation reports being developed for Board endorsement.

It is significant to note at this stage that all this work in preparing an initial shaping paper as well as advice papers and framing papers, not to mention the discussions, forums and consultations, was all carried out by the National Curriculum Board prior to the publication of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008). Yet, as will be discussed later, ACARA claims in many of its documents and fact sheets it was this publication that guided the work of that body in the development of the Australian Curriculum. Briefly, to put this publication into its time frame, on 5th December 2008 the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, released the *Melbourne Declaration* with the intention that this would set the direction for Australian schooling for the next ten years. Superseding the *Adelaide Declaration*, the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration*, which will be discussed later, were developed by Education Ministers in collaboration with the Catholic and independent school sectors, following public consultation on a draft declaration.

During February and March 2009 the National Curriculum Board conducted a number of forums and workshops to seek clarification to allow the Board to ‘set its overall direction for the development of curriculum’ (NCB, 2009a, p. 6). This included holding forums on equity and diversity, stages of schooling, and learning for the 21st Century (late February); as well as a literacy, numeracy and ICT workshop and an achievement standards workshop in the first week of March; a learning area consultation workshop (18th March); a Directors’ Curriculum meeting to discuss emerging issues and directions (20th March); a sustainability forum and a business/industry focus group meeting (both on 25th March); and an Indigenous education focus group meeting (26th March) – all ostensibly to address issues identified through earlier rounds of consultation (NCB, 2009a, p. 6).

However it was the publication of a set of shaping papers made available on the Board’s website on 6th May 2009, that was a significant step forward. These papers provided a sense of optimism for the advocates of a national curriculum as they provided a clear implication that the focus would be on the future while acknowledging that a ‘back-to-basics’ mindset was relevant in building sound foundational skills. Three of the four subject shaping papers referred directly to developing the curriculum with a futures orientation (National Curriculum Board,

2009b, p.4; National Curriculum Board, 2009c, p.4; National Curriculum Board, 2009d, p.4). The futures orientation acknowledged that Australian society was growing in its complexity and that students in the future would need to ‘interact in a global environment, know how to learn, adapt, create and communicate effectively, and interpret and use information more fluently and critically’ (National Curriculum Board, 2009b, p.4). It was acknowledged, however, that future conditions are distant and difficult to predict but, despite this difficulty, a serious attempt must be made to envisage those demands and incorporate them in present-day curriculum development (National Curriculum Board, 2009e, p.4). As was stated in the introductory paper, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (2009):

A curriculum for the 21st century will reflect an understanding and acknowledgement of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future. Young people will need a wide and adaptive set of knowledge, skills and understandings to meet the changing expectations of society and to contribute to the creation of a more productive, substantial and just society. (National Curriculum Board, 2009e, p.6)

Also published by the National Curriculum Board at that time was the *Shape Paper Consultation Report* (National Curriculum Board, 2009a). This paper provided a succinct summary of the feedback the Board had received that affirmed the directions provided in the Shape papers, as well as the areas where further examination was required.

One of the final achievements of the National Curriculum Board was the induction of English, Mathematics, Science and History curriculum writers and advisory panel members as a step towards the writing of the curriculum for the four learning areas. This took place between 12th and 15th May, 2009, just a fortnight before ACARA became operational.

5.2 Establishment of Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

The National Curriculum Board proved to be *ad interim* before being incorporated into the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Bill 2008* was introduced into the Australian Parliament on 23rd October 2008 by Minister Gillard, some six months to the day after the inaugural meeting of the National Curriculum Board. This Act was passed by the Australian Parliament on 8th December, 2008 and ACARA became operational on 28th May 2009 with the appointment of its Board.

The composition of ACARA differed slightly from the previous National Curriculum Board. The 13 member Board of Directors included a Chair, a Deputy Chair, one nominee from the Commonwealth, one nominee from each State and Territory Education Minister, one nominee from the National Catholic Education Commission and one nominee from the Independent Schools Council of Australia. Barry McGaw and Tony Mackay retained their roles as Chair and Deputy Chair respectively. Four former members of the National Curriculum Board, Kim

Bannikoff, Rita Henry, Janet Davey and Professor Marie Emmitt, were replaced, with Lesley Englert, Deborah Efthymiades, Angus James and Dianne Kerr being the new members of the Board. A full list of Board members for ACARA can be found in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 List of ACARA Board Members (as at November, 2010)

Name	Position	Organisation
Professor Barry McGaw	Director	Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne
Mr Tony Mackay	Executive Director	Centre for Strategic Education
Mr Tom Alegounarias	President	Board of Studies New South Wales
Mr John Firth	Chief Executive Officer	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
Ms Lesley Englert	Former Assistant Director General, Curriculum	Queensland Department of Education and Training
Professor Bill Loudon	Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor	University of Western Australia
Ms Helen Wildash	Executive Director, Curriculum	South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services
Mr David Hanlon	Former Deputy Secretary	Tasmanian Department of Education
Ms Deborah Efthymiades	General Manager, Strategic Executive Services	Northern Territory Department of Education and Training
Mr Angus James	Consultant	
Dr Brian Croke	Executive Director	Catholic Education Commission New South Wales
Ms Dianne Kerr	Curriculum Advisor	Education Services Australia Ltd
Mr Garry Le Duff	Executive Director	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia

ACARA was mandated with ten functions under the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*. The first of these was to ‘develop and administer a national school curriculum, including content of the curriculum and achievement standards, for school subjects specified in the Charter’. When introducing the Bill to Parliament, Minister for Education Julia Gillard stated:

In developing a single national curriculum, the Authority will ensure that every young Australian has access to the highest quality education – regardless of where they live or their socio-economic background...The new national curriculum will be future-oriented and will equip our young people with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to compete internationally and thrive in the globalised economies of the future. (Gillard, 2008b)

A unique feature of ACARA was that it was an independent statutory authority established under a **Commonwealth** Act of Parliament, yet it received its directions from MCEETYA – the body comprising State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education. Section 7 (i) of

the Act stated that ACARA ‘must perform its functions and exercise its powers in accordance with any directions given to it by the Ministerial Council’. Furthermore, Section 43 required ACARA to report to the Ministerial Council.

This fairly unique situation of a body corporate, established under a Commonwealth Act of Parliament yet accountable to and receiving direction from state and territory ministers, is an example of the cooperative federalism approach of the (then) Rudd government. This approach differed from the coercive federalism of the previous government which, it was argued in the previous chapter, was the approach taken by previous Federal Ministers of Education. Reid (2009, p. 2) comments succinctly on this when he states:

[Dr Brendan Nelson] made a vigorous call for national curriculum approaches (much as Dawkins had done 15 years earlier) but rather than seeking to achieve agreement through collaboration, the new tactic was to threaten and withhold funds from the states and territories unless they agreed to implement certain curriculum changes, most of which were determined unilaterally by the national government. The states and territories bowed to coercive federalism. (Reid, 2009, p.2).

Kevin Rudd, however, had long been an advocate of cooperative federalism. Even before he became leader of the Labor Party his commitment to cooperative federalism was well documented. For example, in an address to the Queensland Chapter of the Don Dunstan Foundation in July 2005, at a time when he was Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and International Security, Rudd stated that the challenge for a future Labor government would be to rebuild the Federation based on the principles of cooperative, rather than coercive, federalism. This, Rudd postulated, would ‘create a sustainable political and constitutional mechanism to deliver lasting reform to the nation’ (Rudd, 2005). As Leader of the Opposition he continued with this theme, telling a group of Australia’s top industry people in September 2007 that we needed to move away from coercive federalism to cooperative federalism where ‘funding is no longer held to ransom by narrow political agendas’ (Rudd, 2007a).

Once elected as Prime Minister, Rudd used the first meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to proclaim that the ‘blame game’ was over and that the cooperative federal-state approach was a new era designed to meet the challenges facing the country, including an improvement in education (Metherell, 2007). Of course, this COAG meeting was one of all-Labor premiers and territory ministers, and as Reid (2009) quips, ‘we are yet to see if the collaboration remains intact once the states and territories change their political complexions’ (Reid, 2009, p. 2). Carr (2015) concurred stating that the consent of the state governments was vital and that Rudd was ‘blessed with cooperative Labor Premiers in every state and territory until late 2008’.

ACARA was given the charter to develop an Australian Curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12. Kindergarten was defined as the first year at school, a term that was being used at that time in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, and included the alternative terms used in other states and territories such as ‘Reception Year’ in South Australia, ‘Pre-Primary’ in Western Australia, ‘Transition’ in the Northern Territory and ‘Preparatory Year’ in

Queensland, Victoria, and Tasmania. (By October 2010, ACARA had stopped using the term 'Kindergarten' and had replaced it with 'Foundation', which was a 'neutral' term not in use in any state or territory). Initially ACARA was to develop an Australian Curriculum in the learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and History. (This was the original remit of the National Curriculum Board, effectively delivering on the ALP pre-2007 election promise). However, following the acceptance of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008), a second stage would see the further development of the Australian Curriculum in Geography, The Arts and Languages.

This left a third group of learning areas, noticeably Information and Communications Technology, Design and Technology, Health and Physical Education, Economics, Business, and Civics and Citizenship. While there was agreement in the following year from the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) that these learning areas should be included in the Australian Curriculum, it was left to ACARA to provide advice on how this might best be done. *[Note: The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs – MCEETYA - which had been in operation since June 1993 gave way to the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development & Youth Affairs – MCEECDYA. This took effect from 1st July, 2009 with a realignment of the roles and responsibilities of the former MCEETYA and MCVTE – the Ministerial Council for Vocational & Technical Education].*

So from late 2008 development of the Australian Curriculum by ACARA was guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008). The Melbourne Declaration superseded the Hobart Declaration of 1989 and the Adelaide Declaration of 1999. Signed on 5th December, 2008, the Melbourne Declaration is a joint agreement endorsing collaboration between the federal Minister for Education and the Ministers for Education representing the six states and two territories. Obtaining this level of cooperation has been described as a 'fortuitous political happenstance of there being a Labor government in power at the federal level and in every state and territory with the exception of Western Australia' (Buchanan & Chapman, 2011, p. 3). Dr Elizabeth Constable, an Independent, signed the agreement as the relevant minister in Western Australia, along with the Labor Ministers for Education from the rest of Australia. (The Western Australian Labor Government had been replaced by a Coalition Liberal/National Party at the September 2008 elections). Unlike the previous Hobart and Adelaide Declarations, the Melbourne Declaration also had a companion document which was a four-year action plan (MCEETYA, 2009).

The Melbourne Declaration, in its preamble, states that Australia values 'the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society – a society that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse, and that values Australia's Indigenous cultures as a key part of the nation's history, present and future' (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4). Furthermore, the Melbourne Declaration commits to two educational goals – 'promoting equity and excellence', and supporting 'all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (MCEETYA, 2008, pp. 7-9). Prevalent in the previous Adelaide Declaration was a concern for social justice. This was translated in the

Melbourne Declaration as 'equity' and was twinned with the goal of 'excellence' (Buchanan & Chapman, 2011, p. 3).

As with the failed attempt by Dawkins to bring about a national curriculum in the late 1980s - early 1990s, the economic imperative was still very much to the fore in the Melbourne Declaration. The opening words of the Declaration are:

In the 21st century Australia's capacity to provide a high quality of life for all will depend on *the ability to compete in the global economy* on knowledge and innovation. (MCEETYA, 2008, p.4 emphasis added).

However, this document goes beyond the economic imperative and states that 'in contrast to earlier declarations on schooling, [the Melbourne Declaration] has a broader frame' (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 4). Reid (2009), however, postulated that the main thrust behind the Melbourne Declaration was economic. He states: -

Although the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* ... contains a far more expansive view of the purposes of education, the public rhetoric of the Rudd government and many of its strategies, limit the vision of the educational revolution to seeing students as (potential) human capital to be enlisted in the cause of economic recovery and growth. Such a stance marginalises the cultural, social, political and relational aspects of education. It understands students as potential workers and consumers, rather than as local and global citizens. (Reid, 2009, p. 4).

Buchanan and Chapman (2011) likewise argue that the two previous iterations of national educational goals – the Hobart Declaration of 1989 and the 1999 Adelaide Declaration – along with the 2008 Melbourne Declaration are driven by an agenda for producing workers for the global economic workplace, and this aim has found its fullest expression in the Melbourne Declaration (Buchanan & Chapman, 2011, p. 2). This economic imperative was not confined to Australia but was also evidenced in other nations. Furlong (2008), for example, in a paper that discusses Tony Blair's legacy to England and the rest of the world, quotes Blair as having said just one year after coming to office that 'education is the best economic policy we have' and contends that education under Blair moved from being a *social* policy to an *economic* policy (Furlong, 2008, p. 728).

The rationales behind the economic underpinnings of educational reform, however, are subject to debate, just as the justification behind the relationship between changes to educational policies and an increase in national competitiveness can be questioned. As Green (2006) points out:

...education and training policy has been much hyped by governments because it is less contentious than employment and fiscal policies, because it allows them to make relatively risk-free election promises which few will oppose, and because it serves to mask the growing structural unemployment which is now endemic in most advanced economies. Many economists see no proven link between skills and productivity and others argue that increasing the supply of skills is secondary to raising the demand for

them, which is much more difficult to keep. However, voters rarely question government claims that more education and training improves national economic competitiveness because they know that on an individual level, at least, human capital investment does pay dividends. Whatever the political calculations and however valid the economic reasoning, it remains the case that most governments see education and training as the critical factor in national economic performance and competitive advantage. (Green, 2006, p. 195).

In reference to the past attempt by Dawkins to secure national curriculum collaboration, Kennedy (1995), in foreseeing the need for a broader framework such as that within the Melbourne Declaration, makes a valid point. He had argued that while the earlier curriculum exercise may have been born in the economic rationalist climate (referring to the second and third Hawke governments), it needed to grow to maturity in a society that values equity, social justice and respect for the individual (Kennedy, 1995, p. 159). Later Kennedy (2009) was to hypothesise that, in part due to the ramifications of the Global Financial Crisis, a re-think of the economic imperative would occur. He states:

By this I mean, that in the future, economic concerns may be placed alongside cultural, ethical, social and moral concerns so that governments will no longer reify the economic at the expense of everything else. Perhaps Susan Ryan was right after all, concerns for social justice, equity and culture have a central role to play in the curriculum. (Kennedy, 2009, pp 2-3).

This was certainly reflected in the wording of the Melbourne Declaration. However, despite the eloquence of the Melbourne Declaration, the real task for ACARA lay in how this could be translated into practice. To illustrate: as mentioned above, one of the goals of the Melbourne Declaration is to support ‘all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens’ (MCEETYA, 2008, pp. 7-9). This is not dissimilar to the National Curriculum for Secondary Schools (2008) in England that declares that the curriculum should produce young people who are successful learners, confident individuals, and active and responsible citizens. But as Claxton (2008) reminds us, the listing of such qualities by themselves does not get the job done. He elaborates on this when he states:

The qualities themselves are often so abstract and shorn of detail that it is almost impossible to disagree with them, and yet equally hard to know what in practice they mean, and how on earth a busy teacher might go about trying to ‘teach’ them. (Claxton, 2008, p. 119).

Claxton takes one of the goals – ‘successful learners’ – as a brief example and asks whether this means helping children to become powerful, confident, real-life learners; or does it mean that we want them all to be successful at school and to get good grades. He contends that if the latter persists, nothing has changed (Claxton, 2008, p. 121). This was seen by many to be a central issue for ACARA – would a curriculum be produced that was for the students of the 21st century or would the emphasis be on ‘back to the basics’ and improving Australia’s ranking

on international assessment platforms such as PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study).

5.3 The Journey: The Creation of the Australian Curriculum (Phase 1 Subjects)

With the Chair and Deputy Chair of the National Curriculum Board, along with the majority of Board members retaining their roles with ACARA, many of the decisions and pathways of the former were continued in a seemingly seamless transition from one body to the other. One such decision that remained was the creation of cross-curriculum panels for equity and diversity and stages of schooling. National Curriculum Board chair, Barry McGaw, had previously explained that the Board's remit had highlighted the importance of equity and diversity as well as meeting the needs of all students in the development of the national curriculum (NCB, 2009f). He stated that the key issue of equity and diversity 'relates to the development of national curriculum that will be based on assumptions that all students are learners and every child matters' and further that the Board needed to 'examine different curriculum approaches that may be required for different stages of schooling to support young people to grow and develop as successful learners' (NCB, 2009f). Thus ACARA initially began with six curriculum advisory panels, these being: English, Mathematics, Science, History, Equity and Diversity, and Stages of Schooling. The induction of these cross-curriculum panels for equity and diversity and stages of schooling, which took place on 6th – 7th July 2009, was one of the first tasks that ACARA took on in its own name.

By mid-2010 the process of developing the new Australian Curriculum was well advanced with both advisory and consultation processes having been established and implemented. To go back a step; in May 2009 *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English, Mathematics, Science and History* (ACARA, 2009a) was published. Following this, the draft Australian curricula for English, Mathematics, Science and History for the first year of schooling through to Year 10 were available online for a consultation period that ran from 1st March 2010 through to the end of May. Thus it was clear at this stage that the Australian Curriculum would be presented as discrete subjects or learning areas, with general capabilities embedded in each of the learning areas and cross-curricular priorities also being woven into each discipline. Thus a three dimensional model of the Australian Curriculum was being presented. It is also relevant to note that the Australian Curriculum was being developed using web technologies to embed links and enable flexible, multiple views and access (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 2010a).

Each of the curricula documents followed the same format: a rationale followed by content descriptors which identified what teachers would be expected to teach, and achievement standards which identified what students would learn and be able to demonstrate. At various points in the content descriptors were 'elaborations' which either clarified the particular content descriptor it was associated with or further illustrated this. Each discipline was set out in year levels from the Foundation Year to Year 10.

It is worth at this stage considering the choice of the four Phase 1 subjects. English, Mathematics and Science had all been enshrined over the previous two decades as key learning areas, and that had been reflected, it is argued, in various national statements (Macintyre, 2009). All three were taught from the first year of schooling to Year 10, and all were offered in the post-compulsory years. History, however, was regarded by some as having more of a ‘marginal status’ (Macintyre, 2009). The argument often offered was that History, by its inclusion in SOSE (Study of Society and the Environment), had been reduced from being a major discipline and a key learning area to being a minor curriculum offering. (Of all the states and territories, only New South Wales had retained History as a subject in its own right).

The teaching of History and the place of History in school curricula had been further eroded by the interference of politicians. While politicians seldom expressed an opinion on what should be taught in Mathematics or Science, and occasionally did so with English (particularly in regard to the teaching of Phonics), History, on the other hand, seemed to be fair game. In what is often described as the ‘History Wars’, both sides of the political spectrum are at fault, with a large proportion of the blame being attributed to former Prime Minister, John Howard (Carr, 2015; Freudenberg, 2005; Harris-Hart, 2009; Macintyre, 2009; Parkes & Donnelly, 2014; Taylor, 2008a, 2008b; Zarmati, 2012). Describing the history wars as Australia’s longest war, Freudenberg (2005) wrote, at a time when Howard was Prime Minister, that:

In no other nation is the war carried on with deeper intensity. No Australian prime minister has waged it with such singleness of purpose as John Howard. There is an element of sheer old-fashioned class war in Howard’s approach. He bitterly resents what he and the Australian neo-conservatives see as the domination of Australian history by Labor historians to the exclusion of the middle class of which he believes he is the incarnation. (Freudenberg, 2005, p. 272).

This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

The inclusion of general capabilities into the Australian Curriculum was noted. Originally ten general capabilities had been identified, but by mid-2010 these had been reduced to seven, namely, literacy, numeracy, ICT capabilities, ethical behaviour, intercultural understanding, personal and social competence, and critical and creative thinking. The three cross-curriculum perspectives included across the learning areas were chosen to represent a national focus, a regional focus and a global focus, and thus were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture, Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia, and Sustainability.

At this stage, prior to a meeting of the Federal, State and Territory Ministers of Education to discuss national education reforms (discussed later) there was both widespread support for a national curriculum but also substantial debate and angst regarding both the content and the process.

5.4 Support for the Australian Curriculum

As the various stages of the national curriculum process unfolded, support was forthcoming from many sources. On the release of the draft Australian Curriculum in English, History,

Science and Mathematics, Masters (2010, p.11) described the curriculum as ‘a milestone for Australian education’. He enthused that ‘after several false starts late last century, the nation at last has a clear curriculum roadmap of the minimum essential knowledge and skills that all students should learn’ adding ‘not before time’. Likewise Reid (2010, p. 31-33) stated that the idea of a national curriculum was ‘long overdue’ and that there were powerful arguments to support this, but cautioned that ‘it is an important step to take as a nation and we need to get it right’.

Support for a national curriculum and for the work carried out by ACARA also came from the Australian Curriculum Coalition (ACC). This was quite significant, considering the standing of the ACC. The ACC began in 2010 and grew out of the Curriculum Standing Committee of National Education Professional Associations (CSCNEPA), which first met in February 2007. Membership of the ACC is made up of the Presidents, Executive Officers and Executive Directors of fifteen national professional associations including the Australian Council of Deans of Education and the Australian College of Educators. (A complete list of the membership of ACC is shown in Table 5.3.) In October 2010, the ACC released a paper called *Australian Curriculum Coalition – Common View on Australian Curriculum* (ACC, 2010) to all Australian Education Ministers and the media, in which they endorsed the Australian Curriculum as an ‘ambitious initiative’ that could lead to a curriculum that reflects ‘who we are, our visions for the future and our best attempts to predict and plan for what young people will need to be active and successful participants in Australian and global political, economic, social and cultural life’ (ACC, 2010, p. 4). However, despite this support for the Australian Curriculum, a number of shortfalls and concerns were also raised.

Table 5.3 Membership of the Australian Curriculum Coalition (as at October, 2010)

Australian Council of Deans of Education
Australian College of Educators
Australian Primary Principals Association
Australian Secondary Principals Association
Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia
Association of Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools of Australia
Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council
Australian Association for Research in Education
Australian Curriculum Studies Association
National Education Forum Australian Curriculum Studies Association
National Education Forum
Australian Council for Educational Leaders
Australian Education Union
Australian Independent Education Union
Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations

5.5 The Underpinning of the Australian Curriculum: Perceived Shortfalls

With bipartisan support for a national curriculum leading into the 2007 Federal election, some educators saw this as an opportunity for a bold response to many issues surrounding schools and the various curricula offered. Aware that the failed attempt for national collaboration and consistency in the late 1980s and early 1990s centred on finding what was common in the various states and territories and building on this, one school of thought was to go beyond that approach. It was, as Kindler (2010, p. 7) stated, an opportunity to free the cobwebs of last-century thinking around curriculum. The similarity between the curriculum of the last century and that of this century had not gone unnoticed. Professor John O'Toole from the University of Melbourne in his opening remarks to a National Curriculum Symposium held in February 2010 told the participants (somewhat tongue-in-cheek) that:

The 1872 Victorian Education Act relegated the curriculum itself to less than half a page in an appendix...based on at least seven-and-a-bit subjects – Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Drill and where practicable Gymnastics; and sewing and needlework in addition for girls.

Have you noticed, that's not at all dissimilar from our new seven-and-a-few-bits subject-based Australian Curriculum. We've swapped drill for science, broadened out grammar into languages, found ourselves a history to join geography, and widened needlework for girls into arts for boys and girls... and gymnastics is still in the 'where practicable' basket which is now called Phase 3 subjects...However, this isn't 1872. (O'Toole, 2010).

Bateman (2010), a futures educator, expressed a similar concern asking why curriculum models from the 1950s were still being used, and maintained that the Australian Curriculum was an excessive recycling of a curriculum developed for a previous generation's futures (Bateman, 2010).

Loader (2007, p. 19), expressed reservations to the call by both political parties for a national curriculum and Labor's 'educational revolution'. He questioned whether a national curriculum with core content, mandatory testing and league tables was really a revolution or simply the result of a *coup d'état*. He argued that what was needed was 'a revolution in ideas and practices' but what we were facing was 'a new regime imposing its own orthodoxy and conformity' (p. 19). Loader argued that the political parties were advocating a national curriculum based on the false assumption that 'schools, classes, pedagogy and curriculum should continue much as they do today, as though the concept of schooling formed more than 100 years ago is still appropriate, needing only more imposed centralised authority and a little bit of tweaking at the edges' (Loader, 2007, p. 19). Likewise, the Australian Curriculum Coalition on the release of the draft documents, questioned whether the Australian Curriculum could be viewed as a 21st century, world class curriculum. In their October 2010 letter to the Ministers of Education they stated:

The drafts viewed to date do not represent a world-class, 21st century curriculum. The curriculum does not adequately reflect the intention of the Melbourne Declaration that

young people should become successful, creative, innovative and resourceful learners able to think logically and evaluate evidence, able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines and able to work independently as well as collaborate with others. The segmentation of the curriculum works against effective integration across learning areas. The documents do not focus sufficiently on thinking skills, imagination, links to the real world and student engagement. (ACC, 2010, p. 6).

Reid (2009, pp. 6-10) likewise identifies and comments on a number of shortfalls including a limited rationale offered by the government for a national curriculum and the lack of connection between the stated goals of the curriculum and the curriculum itself. He laments that while the goals of schooling are clearly stated (successful learners, confident individuals, active and informed citizens), there is no discussion on how best to achieve these goals through the curriculum. Rather, 'we are simply told the curriculum will comprise Mathematics, Science, English and History' (Reid, 2009, p. 7). In reference to *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* Reid continues:

...(I)t is hard to see how all the societal changes and challenges that are identified at the beginning of the document, will be met by a reprise of the curriculum of the past. In terms of the structure of knowledge organisation, there are the same four core learning areas...as comprised the curriculum of most states in 1901; and in terms of the curriculum architecture described in the curriculum papers – scope, sequence, strands and outcomes (now called achievement standards) – there is exactly the same structure as the statements and profiles of the early 1990s. There may be nothing wrong with that, but it behoves the developers to state why maintaining the status quo or returning to the past, will address the challenges identified. (Reid, 2009, p. 7).

This call for a more relevant curriculum for the 21st century through a major overhaul of schools and the purpose of education has been a theme advocated by many educationalists, even those not necessarily commenting on a national curriculum as a means of achieving this. Claxton (2008) in the preface of his book *What's the Point of School?*, states that it is necessary to understand what it is that young people really need, what schools are actually providing, and acknowledge the gulf between the two (Claxton, 2008, xxi). Claxton argues strongly that:

Overall...large-scale structural reforms turn out to be very poor value for money. But governments keep introducing them, because that is what governments do. Changes to the curriculum, the examination system, the methods of management and financing, the school-leaving age are the kinds of things that are amenable to central control. And announcing grand-sounding 'new initiatives' is what politicians like to do. The trouble is, such reforms leave the fundamental purposes and assumptions of education quietly in place. As long as we continue to measure 'success' predominantly in terms of examination performance, and to design curricula around pre-specified bodies of knowledge that have to be mastered, triumphant announcement followed by expensive disappointment will continue to be routine. (Claxton, 2008, pp. 42-43).

Masters (2007, p. 16) had earlier discussed some of the problems specific to science, such as attracting students to a subject they saw as having little relevance to them and finding highly qualified and passionate science teachers. After stating that 95 per cent of senior secondary chemistry content, 90 per cent of advanced mathematics, and 85 per cent of physics content was already common to all states and territories, he continued:

Presumably, it would be a relatively straightforward matter to reach agreement on national curriculum consistency in senior subjects such as these... But would this alone produce more positive student attitudes, larger numbers of students studying science, or higher levels of science attainment? It seems unlikely. Although the arguments for reducing duplication, removing unnecessary differences and making subject results comparable across Australia are compelling, the mere alignment of what currently exists may do little to address these more pressing concerns. (Masters, 2007, p. 16).

Masters later elaborated on this, stating that the progress towards a national curriculum was presenting itself as an opportunity to re-think school curricula for the 21st century. He went on to say that an important opportunity would have been lost if nothing more than reducing duplication and removing unnecessary differences across states were achieved (ACER, 2008).

However Ball (2008) argues that rarely do we find policy makers with the opportunity to work with ‘clean slates’. Rather, in practice, most policy works by accretion and sedimentation as ‘new policies add to and overlay old ones, with the effect that new principles and innovations are merged and conflated with older rationales and previous practices’ (Ball, 2008, p. 55). Viewing policy in terms of both changes and continuity – what changes and what stays the same – often leaves practitioners with inconsistencies and contradictions that they need to solve (Ball, 2008, p. 55), and when we focus our attention on change, or reform, we must not lose sight of what stays the same – the continuities of and in policy (Ball, 2008, p. 8). The problem arises, however, as to the extent and depth of change compared with what remains as a constant; and the degree of constraint placed on the reform by what remains constant.

5.6 Release of the Draft Documents: A Critical Response

In March 2010, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, announced the release of draft Kindergarten to Year 10 curriculum documents in four areas: English, Mathematics, Science and History. These were available on line until 23rd May for a 10-week consultation period; a period which some observers criticised as being too brief (see below).

Following the release of the draft documents there were, as would be predicted, a number of issues raised by various and varying interest groups during the consultation stage. The timeframe for consultation, as mentioned before, was criticised for being too brief, as it had been with the previous national curriculum exercise in the 1980s-1990s. ACARA did, however, receive 821 on-line responses in respect to the English document, 793 for Mathematics, 555 for Science and 582 for History (ACARA, 2014a). An over-simplified interpretation of the

responses to the draft curriculum documents would be one of disappointment; that the excitement, expectations and sense of optimism generated by the Melbourne Declaration and the various *Shaping Papers* was not reflected to any great degree in the draft curriculum documents. The main criticisms or issues raised fell broadly into the following categories.

5.6.1 Scope of the Australian Curriculum and its Coherence

One of the major issues raised during the development of the current Australian Curriculum was the lack of any real definition or view of curriculum from ACARA. (This issue was the impetus for the development of a curriculum conceptualisation of the Australian Curriculum by the researcher as discussed previously in Chapter 2). In response to a direct question to ACARA as to how ‘curriculum’ had been defined for the purposes of writing a national curriculum, the reply was that ‘we have concentrated more on what needs to be included within the curriculum’ (Rose, 2010).

Reid (2010, p.31) observed that ‘on the basis of what is on offer to date, it seems that a curriculum is simply a number of stand-alone subjects’ and that with these discrete subjects there was ‘little obvious connection’. He continued: -

This impoverished view of curriculum has led to a process where, rather than describe the whole curriculum at the outset, curriculum development has become a process of drip-feeding subjects... Surely a curriculum for the 21st century should be more than a series of disconnected subjects... (T)here should be coherence across the whole curriculum. Official curriculum documents should spell out the whole of an intended curriculum – what is in it, what weighting is given to each section, what is core and elective, how assessment and reporting will work, and so on – with the whole having an overall coherence and integrity. What is being called the national curriculum has none of this. (Reid, 2010, p. 31)

The Australian College of Educators (ACE) agreed, stating that ‘there are prior, generic and high-level questions that need to be the subject of consultation, ahead of consultation that focuses only on the specific discipline areas’ (ACE, 2010, p.1). This concern was shared by the Australian Education Union (AEU). In their submission to the K-10 National Curriculum Consultation, they commented on the learning areas standing alone with ‘insufficient coherence between them’ (AEU, 2010, p. 15). While acknowledging that there were three areas of cross curriculum perspectives (namely sustainability, Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia, and Indigenous history and culture) and ten general capabilities, the AEU went on to assert that these were ‘not sufficient to establish effective pedagogical links between the learning areas and maximise the opportunities of cross curriculum learning’ (AEU, 2010, p. 15). The AEU called on ACARA to produce scoping papers on cross curriculum perspectives and capabilities.

From a different perspective, the Australian College of Educators found the concept of student learning capabilities ‘potentially very exciting’ (ACE, 2010, p. 3). However, the ACE bemoaned the lack of information about the capabilities, the conflation of quite different forms

of ‘capability’, the lack of justification of the choice of capabilities and to what extent, if at all, these capabilities were distinguishable from competencies (ACE, 2010 pp. 3-4). One comment made was that the capabilities appeared to be little more than an updated version of key competencies (Reid, 2009, p. 8). Interestingly, the original National Curriculum Board Development Paper, released in 2008, referred to areas such as literacy, numeracy, information technology and creativity as ‘competencies’ (National Curriculum Board, 2008a, p.6) rather than ‘capabilities’ as they were to be called in the ACARA documents.

In identifying the need to define curriculum as a key issue for ACARA, the ACE continued:

Is this a core curriculum or is it the whole curriculum? This is a fundamental issue that requires clarification... The document appears to define curriculum primarily in terms of syllabus coverage, although the addition of capabilities and cross curricula themes make it clear that it is intended to be about more than content coverage. A clearer and more coherent definition of curriculum is needed to bring these three elements together in a meaningful way. (ACE, 2010a, p. 2).

The Australian Secondary Principals’ Association found the approach used in developing the Australian Curriculum as ‘perplexing’, going on to comment:

A curriculum to be implemented across the country needs a defined framework, a context into which the total curriculum package is aligned... [It needs] a framework that defines content, assessment and reporting, as well as the interrelationship that these elements have with each other. Without this framework, it is very difficult for schools to implement in a local context of other subject offerings available through state jurisdictions and vocational training organisations. A total curriculum framework needs to be addressed as a matter of priority. (Australian Secondary Principal’s Association, 2010, p.1).

Accommodating the needs of various interest groups is likewise seen as a constraint on developing a coherent curriculum. While commenting specifically on the Science curriculum, Groves (2010) noted that there had been tensions and issues throughout regarding the processes used to develop the curriculum. He went on to say that not the least of these is the danger that, in compromising to meet the wishes of all those consulted, a curriculum is agreed that is neither innovative nor powerful enough to enable Australia to align with other parts of the world or take us into an appropriate future (Groves, 2010, p. 53). While not commenting specifically on the Australian Curriculum draft documents, Luke (2010a, p. 60) is also helpful in elaborating on this problem. He explains that the creation of a national curriculum usually entails trade-offs and compromises from all parties. A risk of this is that, in doing so, the incorporation of all views on requisite knowledge and skills is one of the available options, leading to ‘bloated or conceptually incoherent syllabi that, simply, cannot be taught’. He states:

The enacted curriculum in schools is a zero-sum game: there is a finite amount of instructional prime time available at each grade and level. This prospect needs to be viewed in the context of widespread teacher complaint that the 1990s movement for

‘outcomes-based’ curriculum led to curriculum reform by addition, agglomeration and collection. (Luke, 2010a, p. 60).

This leads to a further common criticism of the draft documents; the extent of overcrowding in the Australian Curriculum.

5.6.2 The Issue of Overcrowding

Many of the submissions to the drafts of the first four disciplines made comment on the overcrowding of the curriculum. There is no doubt that the original remit of the National Curriculum Board in 2008 was that the new curriculum would be based on identifying a core of national curriculum that all states and territories would be required to implement but ‘beyond these core requirements there will continue to be flexibility for innovation and creativity at the local level’ (NCB, 2008a, p. 30). In *The Shape of the National Curriculum: A Proposal for Discussion*, one of the stated principles and specifications for development was that time demands on students must leave room for learning areas that would not be part of the national curriculum (National Curriculum Board, 2008b, p. 4). The Board also stated that since it ‘is not responsible for the whole curriculum, it will seek to ensure that its curriculum connects with the curriculum areas that will continue to be developed by the states and territories’ (National Curriculum Board, 2008b, p. 3). So while it appeared that the expectation was that the Australian Curriculum would be a core with provision for local content, what was produced was so vast as to leave no time for anything other than that mandated in the Australian Curriculum itself. The ACC stated that the documents not only presented a complete curriculum, as opposed to a core, but were ‘too large to be realistically implemented’ (ACC, 2010, p. 7). They continued:

We are not clear whether the draft documents reflect everything to be taught, or a core around which jurisdictions and schools might add further content of local relevance. The Australian Curriculum should consist of core, mandated elements rather than a complete curriculum...There must be clarity about what is essential and what is optional within the drafts. The volume of content in the current drafts...would constitute the whole of the time available in the primary curriculum and a high proportion of the secondary curriculum. (ACC, 2010, p. 7).

This criticism did lead to a subsequent winnowing of the drafts. ACARA chairman Professor Barry McGaw was later to state that ‘our experience is that committed curriculum writers assume more can be done than can feasibly be done, so all our drafts had too much in them’ (Milburn, 2011a). At the same time McGaw proclaimed that his aim was that the total curriculum would not command more than 80 per cent of a student’s time, the equivalent of four days a week (Milburn, 2011a).

5.6.3 Consultation Time Frame

One of the major criticisms of the failed attempt to establish a national curriculum in the late 1980s-early 1990s, as discussed previously, was the lack of time for extensive consultation

and the unrealistic political deadlines placed on the consultation phase. With the consultation timeframe being restricted to ten weeks within the current Australian Curriculum initiative, the following comments were indicative of the frustration and opposition to the length of the process in general and the limited consultation phase in particular:

- Our overarching concern is that the pace at which the process is being driven is simply too fast for the complexity of the task. While we understand that short political cycles drive the desire for outcomes with unrealistic timeframes, we fear that in the long run this haste may well prove to be self-defeating. (Australian College of Educators, 2010a, p. 1).
- The AEU is deeply concerned about the scope and timeframe of the present consultation process. It is imperative that ACARA give greater priority to maximising the opportunities for teachers to have input into all stages of the development of the National Curriculum. (Australian Education Union, 2010, p. 2).
- ...(T)he rapidity and the limited extent of the consultation processes and implementation are worrying. The 10-week consultation periods for the Maths, Science, English and History drafts at both the compulsory and post-compulsory year levels do not allow adequate time for extensive trialling or debate...(T)he speed of the development process is contrary to everything that we know about sound professional development practices and educational change. (Reid, 2010, p. 32).
- The timelines for all stages of the project at present are unreasonably short, and in the end this will be self-defeating. The consultation timelines do not allow enough time to provide considered, detailed feedback, and do not allow the voices of teachers and other stakeholders to be heard... Schools require time for both evaluation of the curriculum documents after they are provided and planning for their effective implementation. This will also require an extension of the timeline. (Australian Curriculum Coalition, 2010, pp. 4-5).

Of course, the *consultation* time-frame is related to the overall time-frame for the Australian Curriculum project. Herein lies a major problem that impacts on many educational initiatives, that being the differentiation between a realistic timeframe for a project and the timeline placed on the project by politicians. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010) have stated, there is very often ‘a mismatch between political timeframes for policy trials and the time required to institutionalise effective change’ and further, that ‘politics and effective educational change are situated within different temporalities, a reality often ignored by political expectations about education policy and reform’ (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 108). Lima (2010) concurs, citing this latest attempt at framing a national curriculum as a ‘classic example’ of the time issue. She states:

The problem with political responses to real issues is that time, rather than quality is privileged. Preference is given to strategies which are achievable within the three-year political term...and have inbuilt political deniability of responsibility should they fail. (Lima, 2010, p. 21).

In terms of the Australian Curriculum, while conceding that ACARA provided input access through its website, held meetings and contacted state professional associations, most of whom were secondary focussed, Lima (2010) encapsulates the general view when she opines that little consultation actually took place. Among the groups she claims had little opportunity for consultation, were teachers whose disciplines were outside what she termed ‘the famous four’ of Mathematics, English, History and Science’, regional and remote teachers, primary and prep teachers, Indigenous focus groups, Asian focus groups, and special needs teachers (Lima, 2010, p. 21). Clearly, the lessons from the Dawkins attempt at securing a national curriculum were not heeded, with the issue of unrealistic time frames and consultation periods not being addressed. However as Ball (2008) points out, rapid change by governments is in part tactical, that is, they are about the dynamism of government, about being seen to be doing something, and ‘transforming systems’ (Ball, 2008, p. 2). Quoting Tony Blair’s speech-writer, Ball (2008) concedes that ‘modern politics is all about momentum; stagnate, drift, wobble, and the media or, if strong enough, the opposition will pounce’ (Ball, 2008, p. 2). Thus consultation periods are necessarily brief and often tokenistic.

5.6.4 The Construction-Implementation Dichotomy

While ACARA was responsible for the development of the Australian Curriculum, the implementation of this was a state or systemic responsibility. The Australian Secondary Principals’ Association labelled this sharing of responsibilities as ‘absurd’ adding that such a piecemeal approach ‘provides no accountability back to the government agency’ (Australian Secondary Principals’ Association, 2010). The ACC called for clarity about ACARA’s role and the role of states and territories in the rollout process, stating that the current constitutional arrangements might not be a useful guide to the relative responsibilities of Commonwealth and State and Territory governments in implementation (ACC, 2010, p. 8). Taking up the accountability issue, they maintained that ACARA, at the very least, should ‘give some thought as to how the quality, coherence and comprehensiveness of implementation’ might be reviewed and tracked (ACC, 2010, p.8).

ACARA continued to maintain that the mandate was always clear; ACARA would be responsible for the process of creating an Australian Curriculum, that is, *what* would be taught, while the responsibility for its implementation would lie with the individual states and territories, giving teachers the freedom to decide *how* it would be taught. Along with this, it was made clear that the resourcing, including teacher professional development and support, was a state and territory responsibility. (This was later modified with the Federal Government providing funds for some teacher professional development, see Chapter 2; Section 2.1.4.)

This stance was based in part on the premise that pedagogies are central to teacher professional practices and to prescribe pedagogy would be to place teachers as more akin to technicians. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) agree, claiming there are potential dangers in mandating policy about pedagogies as this tends to dissociate pedagogies from epistemological and knowledge concerns (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 102). They observe that:

...(E)ducational systems have tended not to have policies about pedagogies. For example, in Scotland there is a statutory authority responsible for examinations and qualifications... and another responsible for curricula... However, there are no explicit policy discourses about pedagogy. This is the norm across educational systems, rather than the exception. Pedagogy has thus been the domain of teacher professional autonomy. (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 102).

Thus, as ACARA maintained, it is teachers' professional autonomy that allows them to decide how knowledge framed by a mandated curriculum is imparted.

However, as the Australian Curriculum rolled out, implementation varied from state to state and from sector to sector not just in pedagogical approaches or format but also in timing. For example, the Australian Curriculum in History was taught in secondary schools in the ACT in 2011, but not in primary schools until 2012. Tasmanian Catholic schools taught History in 2012, but the Government and Independent sector went a year later in 2013. Also implementing the Australian Curriculum in History in 2013 were schools in the Northern Territory, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia; whereas for South Australia in 2013 both Government primary and Catholic schools implemented this curriculum but only some Independent Schools did so. South Australian secondary schools introduced this in 2014 in Years 8 and 9. New South Wales is to allow optional implementation in primary schools in 2015 with full implementation in 2016, while for the secondary sector, Years 7-9 will implement the Australian Curriculum in History in 2014 and Years 8-10 in 2015. A more detailed account of the implementation for all states and territories in all four Phase 1 subjects can be found in Appendix 1.

5.7 The Media Response to the Draft Documents

In response to the criticism raised about the draft documents by various professional bodies, groups and individuals, the media had a field day. Throughout late September and October 2010 there was a flurry of media coverage on the issues being raised. Some of the coverage reported quotes from various interest groups and individuals on the draft documents with comments that were populist, sensational and certainly negative. Typical of the media headlines were the following.

NSW cans 'inferior' national curriculum' – *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17th September, 2010

Principals fail national curriculum – *The Age*, 21st September, 2010

New curriculum slammed by studies board – *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13th September, 2010

A curriculum at the crossroads – *The Australian*, 9th October, 2010

History course 'cobbled together' – *The Australian*, 9th October, 2010

F for fail: 'overcrowded, incoherent' national curriculum panned – *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15th October, 2010

Content drowns new curriculum – *The Australian*, 18th October, 2010.

The reports continued in a similar vein. A congeries of journalists in a short time produced a range of negative press reports that broke out like a virulent contagion. Leading the charge was the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Education Editor, Anna Patty. Patty described the NSW Board of Studies response to the national curriculum as a 'scathing review' (Patty, 2010a; Patty, 2010b) warning readers that the national curriculum was 'vastly inferior to the existing NSW curriculum' (Patty, 2010a; Patty, 2010b). Patty also reported that the NSW Board of Studies had raised 'a litany of complaints' about the national curriculum (Patty, 2010c); that the national curriculum had been 'comprehensively panned as overcrowded, incoherent, inadequate and lacking depth' (Patty, 2010d); and that there had been a 'chorus of criticism against the new national curriculum' citing Independent Schools in NSW and the ACT as labelling it a '20th century document' (Patty, 2010e). Readers of *The Australian* were informed that the national curriculum in science was 'fundamentally flawed' and that the curriculum did 'not set out a coherent course of study' (Ferrari, 2010a), while the history curriculum was 'cobbled together', and that the process in determining the curriculum was 'deeply flawed' and 'inspired no confidence that quality courses would be produced' (Ferrari, 2010b). Ferrari also noted for her readers that the national curriculum was 'losing its way' (Ferrari, 2010c). In a more moderate response, Topsfield informed readers of *The Age* that the proposed national curriculum would be overhauled and that ACARA would respond to the 'scathing criticism of its initial draft' (Topsfield, 2010) while the observation that the national curriculum was 'not up to scratch' was reported by Topsfield and Harrison (2010).

Thus, during the period following the release of the drafts of each of the four subjects, ACARA had to deal with a 'strong and often rancorous diversity of views from teacher professional associations, principals' groups, teacher unions, school sectors and academics' (Milburn, 2011a). Some of this criticism might have been avoided, or at least had the heat taken out of it, thereby reducing the media hysteria. Following the consultation period, the drafts underwent a revision that took approximately six months to complete. ACARA chairman Barry McGaw was later to concede that the failure by ACARA to inform the stakeholders of this revisionary process and not providing regular updates on the changes was a mistake. He stated:

There were people who knew what revisions were being made but they were people in the tent, they were on our advisory panels, and so on. We've got to make those developmental stages more evident because the public debate became misinformed. (Milburn, 2011a, p.15)

By not providing regular updates, the debate and criticisms continued unabated. However the debate was to an extent misinformed, as McGaw points out, because it continued to be based on the original drafts with stakeholders and the media unaware that changes and revisions were being incorporated into the documents.

5.8 The First Hesitant Step Forward

On 8th December, 2010 the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs issued a communiqué from their meeting that day in Canberra. The communiqué stated that the content of the Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History from Foundation to Year 10 had been endorsed in an ‘historic decision’ by the Ministers. It further stated that a number of steps had been agreed to with the aim of ensuring there was substantial implementation by 2013 – two years later than was originally intended. These included:

- establishing a national common approach to the achievement standards across all states and territories, and trialling and validating that approach;
- States and Territories developing additional material to support effective implementation of the curriculum to accommodate their different curriculum development, approval and implementation requirements;
- further refining and adjusting the curriculum content as a result of validating achievement standards and structured feedback from teachers;
- finalising a clear overarching framework that assures the place and integrity of all learning areas within the context of the overall school curriculum and different State and Territory structures;
- developing the curriculum content and achievement standards as required to meet the needs of special needs students; and
- engaging with the teaching profession in the implementation of these processes to ensure comprehensive preparation for substantial implementation by 2013. (MCEECDYA, 2010).

The communiqué also noted three other significant decisions by the Ministers. The first was that Western Australia was to be involved in the trialling and validation of the achievement standards in 2011 and would commence its widespread implementation once MCEECDYA had finalised and adjusted the total curriculum package. The second was an instruction to ACARA to finalise the achievement standards and any adjustments and refinements that needed to be made to the curriculum by October 2011 for approval by the Ministers. The final decision reported was the agreement by the Ministers to the publication of a new version of *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*. This second version was to guide the second phase of the Australian Curriculum (Geography, The Arts, and Languages) and to inform the initial work on the rest of the Australian Curriculum. This second version was required to be completed by the end of 2011 (MCEECDYA, 2010).

The curricula, available on the ACARA website, were the first in the world to be delivered only online (ACSA, 2010b). While the Schools Minister Peter Garrett, who had succeeded Julia Gillard as Minister, referred enthusiastically to the agreement as an ‘historic and bold step’ (Harrison, 2010a), the media coverage varied in its response. *The Age* ran the story under

the modest headline ‘National curriculum step closer’ (Harrison, 2010a), while a more nuanced coverage in *The Australian* stated ‘Syllabus not ready but set to be taught’ (Ferrari, 2010d). This contrasted with a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* which said bluntly ‘Must do better: national curriculum not ready for classrooms’ (Harrison, 2010b).

On the day following the MCEECDYA meeting, the Chair of ACARA, Barry McGaw, released a statement acknowledging the endorsement of the content of the curriculum for Foundation to Year 10 in English, Mathematics, Science and History. He went on to state enthusiastically: -

It was perhaps timely that, on the day after the OECD released its PISA results, the Australian Ministers of Education endorsed the first Australian curriculum. It is not the first time we have moved towards ensuring that we have common educational expectations for all Australian students, regardless of where they live, but it is the first decisive step taken to achieve it. As the Ministers said in their meeting and in their joint press conference, it was an historic moment in Australian education. (ACARA, 2010b).

But the question posed by the Australian College of Educators (ACE) was quite straight forward: what has been agreed? In an on-line newsletter to members on 13th December 2010, ACE stated that the official position appears to be that ‘a national curriculum’, that is, the first stage, ‘will be rolled out in 2013 with all states agreeing in principle’ (ACE, 2010b). However, they continued ‘it is clear that WA and NSW are saying that although they are signing on to this curriculum in principle it is not yet fit for purpose and they will not be implementing it without more changes’ (ACE, 2010b). That both WA and NSW had by this time Liberal-National Party Coalition governments should not go unnoticed (as was the very recently elected Baillieu Liberal-National Coalition government in Victoria). When ACARA was established there was bipartisan support from the states and territories with the Commonwealth government as all were Labor governments. Reid (2009) had presaged this situation some fourteen months earlier.

The latest national curriculum is only possible now because the states – through COAG and MCEETYA – have agreed to collaborate. At any time, such as with the election of a number of Liberal state governments, that support could be withdrawn. ACARA would be neutered. Of course the federal government could then resort to threatening the states by withholding money, but it would be difficult to do this in the face of blanket resistance and anyway, it would undermine the claim to ‘cooperative federalism’. (Reid, 2009, p.3).

It is interesting to note that within McGaw’s statement, he mentioned that the ACT would be implementing the new curriculum in 2011 and that most states would use 2011 as a year for familiarisation and trialling. However, he was far more cautious in his remarks about NSW stating that the NSW Board of Studies would ‘build new syllabuses that preserve the integrity of the Australian Curriculum’ (ACARA, 2010b). This was probably due to the unique situation in NSW. In 1990 the *Education Reform Act 1990 (NSW)* was passed establishing the NSW Board of Studies. This enshrined into legislation the key learning areas that were to apply to

curriculum in NSW, at both a primary and secondary level. It also represented a shift in curriculum leadership away from the Department of Education and its Director General, as any future amendments to the key learning areas would require parliamentary debate (Drabsch, 2013, p. 9). Thus ACARA would develop the Australian Curriculum but in NSW the state's Board of Studies would be responsible for transferring the curriculum into the NSW syllabus.

Educational commentator Steve Holden saw the MCEECDYA agreement as 'a win for the Australian Curriculum Coalition' (Holden, 2011, p. 63) as the issues that were to be considered and dealt with leading to a 2013 implementation were the same issues raised by the ACC in their letter to the Ministers of Education in October of the previous year.

5.9 Developments Post December 2010

5.9.1 Validation of Achievement Standards

One of the major impediments to full approval of the Australian Curriculum by MCEECDYA on 8th December 2010 was the dissatisfaction with the achievement standards as they were presented. MCEECDYA determined that 'the next stage of substantial implementation of the Australian Curriculum by 2013...will include establishing a national common approach to the achievement standards across all States and Territories, and trialling and validating that approach' (MCEECDYA, 2010). It was clear that the Ministerial Council sought to confirm the coherence, developmental progression and consistency of expectation of the achievement standards, along with their usability by teachers. Consequently, ACARA undertook a validation process during 2011 which focussed on the extent to which:

- a. the achievement standards in each learning area represented a coherent hierarchy of increasing complexity, in terms of understanding and skills;
- b. the achievement standards for each year were appropriately aligned with the content for that year (i.e. pitch and coherence), and
- c. the achievement standards were seen by classroom teachers as facilitating planning for and assessing (formative and summative) student learning (usability). (ACARA, 2011e, p. 7).

ACARA chose this approach following the feedback they received from Professor Patrick Griffin and Professor David Andrich from ACER concerning validation processes in December 2010. The process ACARA undertook can be summarised as follows.

During Term 1 of the 2011 school year, ACARA commenced the revision of the Foundation – Year 10 achievement standards. In History and Science they incorporated two key dimensions of learning, namely understanding and skills, to apply a consistent structure to the achievement standards, while for English they added to the structure the organisation of the achievement standards by the receptive and productive modes. For Mathematics the three strands of Number

and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability were included as a basis for organising the achievement standards.

This proposed strategy for revising the Foundation – Year 10 achievement standards was reviewed on 9th – 10th May 2011 through ACARA teleconferences with state and territory representatives, as well as representatives from the National Catholic Education Commission, the Independent Schools Council of Australia, and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Following this, on 26th May 2011 ACARA conducted a national workshop of curriculum and assessment experts who could coordinate and oversee the validation activities that would take place in each state and territory.

ACARA then conducted national workshops on 16th – 17th June, 2011. Four workshops were held, one each for English, Mathematics, Science, and History. Each workshop was attended by 24 teachers and eight curriculum experts. Each state and territory had nominated one curriculum expert and three teachers; one from Foundation-Year 2, one from Years 3-6 and the third from Years 7-10. Five main tasks were given to these participants. Ignoring the final task of completing a self-reflective questionnaire at the conclusion of the workshop, the main tasks were as follows:

1. To order the achievement standards by sequencing these across Foundation – Year 10 correctly.
2. To match the content descriptions with the achievement standards by evaluating the degree of alignment of each achievement standard to the corresponding curriculum content using a matrix mapping analysis.
3. To match given assessment tasks to achievement standards by making a judgment as to which particular assessment tasks were best aligned to various achievement standards.
4. To match given work samples to the sequence of achievement standards by making a judgment as to which particular samples of work were best aligned to various achievement standards. (ACARA, 2011e, p. 10).

Each state and territory jurisdiction was invited by ACARA to coordinate a similar program of activity within their state or territory involving either teachers brought together for this task or groups of schools. Each state and territory undertook this activity using the same four tasks as described above. These validation activities were completed by South Australia on 19th July, Tasmania on 22nd July, Australian Capital Territory and Queensland on 25th July, Victoria and Western Australia on 29th July, and New South Wales and Northern Territory on 2nd August. In addition to this, Victoria undertook an independent trialling and validation exercise with 50 primary and secondary schools representing all sectors (government, Catholic, and independent) and urban, regional and rural locations. This was submitted to ACARA as a separate validation report.

Concurrently with these validation activities, the ACER had been commissioned to undertake a systematic linguistic audit of the achievement standards to ‘reveal the extent to which the language, syntax and sequencing of ideas were consistent within and across learning areas’

(ACARA, 2011e, p. 11). The report on the linguistic and conceptual audit from ACER was made available to ACARA on 25th July, 2011.

Following this process, during August 2011 the revised achievement standards underwent a final review and validation by state and territory authorities and by the classroom teachers who had participated in the June workshops. A second national validation workshop was held on 29th August 2011 at which there was final confirmation that the revised achievement standards, with some final refinements, were ready for publication. On 13th September ACARA published the Foundation to Year 10 Achievement Standards *Validation Report* (ACARA, 2011e). The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) endorsed the Foundation to Year 10 achievement standards for English, Mathematics, History and Science at their meeting on 14th October 2011. (*Note: This was one of the final actions of MCEECDYA along with endorsing a revised version of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum version 3, as this body was replaced by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood – SCSEEC – in January 2012*). Shortly afterwards in mid-October 2011, Version 2 of the Australian Curriculum was released containing the revised achievement standards.

5.9.2 Students with Disability

The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum v. 3.0* (ACARA, 2011a), as with the previous versions, describes ACARA's commitment to supporting equity of access to the Australian Curriculum for all learners and to developing a curriculum that will equip all young Australians with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in a globalised world. This commitment to the development of high-quality curricula for all Australians embraced an understanding of the diverse and complex nature of students with disability.

When the Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 10 was released in December 2010 for the Phase 1 subjects, each of the four publications included information on the inclusion of students with disability within the 'organisation of learning' sections. At the same time ACARA released a very brief paper entitled *Guidance for using the Australian Curriculum with students with special needs* (ACARA, 2010c). This paper clearly enunciated that the Australian Curriculum had been purposely designed to provide teachers, schools and education authorities with the flexibility needed to fulfil their obligation to provide students with special education needs with 'the opportunity to access and participate meaningfully in education on the same basis as other students' (ACARA, 2010c). In using this terminology, it was evident that ACARA was aiming to ensure that support would be provided to teachers to meet their professional obligations as set out in the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006) under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). Concurrently with this, ACARA published on-line two brief FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) Factsheets, one entitled *How does the Australian Curriculum meet the diverse range of student needs?*; the other being *How do I cater for students with special education needs?*

Although teachers, schools and education authorities had, as previously mentioned, been provided with the flexibility needed to fulfil their obligation to provide students with special

education needs with the opportunity to access and participate meaningfully in education on the same basis as other students, it was recognised that, for a small percentage of students, particularly those with a significant intellectual disability, the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum content and achievement standards may not be appropriate or meaningful even with adjustments. Consequently, during 2011, ACARA writing teams, with input from a Students Disability Advisory Group (one of three such advisory groups initiated by ACARA), sought to identify sequences of learning relevant to students with disability whose learning could be described as ‘progressing to the Foundation achievement standard in English and Mathematics’ (ACARA, 2012c, p. 31). These curriculum writers maintained the structure and design of the existing Australian Curriculum documents in English and Mathematics in order to ensure that the new materials would be familiar in presentation to teachers. What they did develop were additional content descriptions, content elaborations and achievement standards, using a further four ‘phases’ as a framework for learning. Each of these phases was representative of the characteristics of learning prior to that described at the Foundation achievement standard and intended to be inclusive of all learners, including those whose learning could be described as ‘pre-intentional’ (ACARA, 2012f, p. 2). These draft Australian Curriculum Progressing to Foundation materials in English and Mathematics were, in ACARA’s words, developed:

...to ensure that the Australian Curriculum is inclusive of all students; to effectively extend the Australian Curriculum English and Mathematics F-10 continuum of learning to provide teachers of students with significant intellectual disability the capacity to identify and build on students’ current knowledge, skills and understanding; and to provide teachers with a framework to assist them to plan for and monitor learning, and to make judgments about the extent and quality of students’ progression and skill development within the framework of the Australian Curriculum. (ACARA, 2012f, p. 2).

These draft curriculum materials were then available for national consultation with feedback being sought from 21st September to 1st November 2011 – a period of six weeks. It has been argued elsewhere in this paper that such short consultation timeframes were not conducive to ensuring a high quality curriculum. Six main sources of consultation feedback were made available but only two of these were unrestricted and open to any interested organisation or individual. (The four that were by invitation or nomination only were a national teacher consultation forum with 26 participants; a national professional associations’ consultation forum attended by representatives from the Australian Association of Special Education and the Australian Special Education Principals’ Association; a students with disability national panel meeting; and ACARA’s Students with Disability Advisory Group). The two general consultation processes were an online survey on the consultation portal of the Australian Curriculum website where respondents completed a rating scale for each question and were able to provide comments, and the opportunity to provide a written submission directly to ACARA within the six week timeframe.

It is interesting to note and to reflect on the response to the invitation to provide feedback, given the importance of the process and the short consultation time provided. For what was an Australia-wide public consultation process, ACARA received only 110 online responses and

40 written responses. With the online responses, from a state and territory perspective, 46 responses (42%) came from Queensland and 22 responses (20%) from New South Wales. A possible reason for the high response from Queensland could be that during the consultation period, ACARA held two activities that were confined to that state only. One was a teleconference consultation with the Queensland Executive of the Association of Special Education Administrators which focused on the Progressing to Foundation curriculum materials, while the other was a professional development network session with approximately 300 Queensland educators of students with disability, which covered all areas of ACARA's work related to that field.

Looking at the same figures from a demographic perspective, 43 respondents (39%) were primary teachers, 25 (22%) were school leaders, and 19 (17%) were secondary teachers. Despite this being a survey open to all interested Australians, surprisingly only two Education Authorities responded, two parents, and three employers. Likewise with the 40 written submissions that were received, 18 (45%) came from individuals and significantly no schools and no government agencies from throughout Australia responded. Further, the education authorities in both Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory did not accept the invitation to provide a written submission.

Following the consultation process, ACARA reported that an analysis of the findings revealed a degree of overlap and occasional contradiction between what some respondents identified as an overall strength of the draft curriculum materials, and what others identified as an area for improvement (ACARA, 2012f, p. 27). However, overall there was strong support for the materials. The major concern which elicited strong views was around the nomenclature. 'Progressing to Foundation' was widely considered as inappropriate for students with disability and needed to be changed to present a more inclusive view of learners of all ages. Also considered inappropriate were the nomenclature for each of the four 'prior to foundation' learning phases that had been used in the draft documents, namely, 'responsive', 'exploratory', 'active' and 'purposeful', on the basis that these terms were confusing and unfamiliar to many teachers. This was taken on board by ACARA. The other recommendation expressed by a significant number of the stakeholders was that the draft materials be subject to an extended period of consultation (ACARA, 2012f, p. 27). However, ACARA decided not to act on this recommendation.

5.9.3 Consultation on the General Capabilities

The inclusion of general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum and their role is discussed throughout this paper. Briefly, in December 2010 ACARA first published the general capabilities. This included short descriptions of each capability, rationales and descriptions of their role across the curriculum and links to English, Mathematics, Science and History. Successive versions of the general capabilities materials were developed in 2011 and feedback was sought in relation to the draft general capabilities materials. Thus the general capabilities materials were made available for national consultation from 10th June to 7th August 2011; a period of nine weeks.

There were three sources of consultation feedback:

- an online survey on the consultation portal of the Australian Curriculum website where respondents completed a rating scale for each of 32 questions with an additional 31 open-ended questions which invited respondents to write a comment;
- a national teacher consultation forum held over two days (21st-22nd June, 2011) and attended by 30 primary and secondary teachers from across all states and territories and school sectors;
- written submissions sent directly to ACARA. (ACARA, 2011h).

With the general capabilities being such an integral part of the Australian Curriculum, it could be argued that the number of respondents was in the low category considering the importance of the focus. Over the nine week period of consultation, only 367 responses were received throughout Australia, an average of only 40 per week. Seventy-five respondents (20.4 per cent) were secondary teachers, while a further 81 respondents (22.07 per cent) were classed as 'other school based personnel' which included principals, curriculum coordinators, teacher librarians and teacher aides. Education authorities accounted for 51 (13.9 per cent) of respondents and 39 respondents (10.6 per cent) were primary teachers. Lesser categories, in terms of number of respondents, were academics (7.3 per cent), community members (3.8 per cent), parents (2.2 per cent), business and industry representatives (2.2 per cent) and students (0.5 per cent). This left a further group of respondents (approximately 17 per cent) designated as 'other'. Given the wide range of demographic groupings used by ACARA, it raises the question as to who these 'other' respondents were if they did not fit into any of the categories mentioned above. Incidentally, the 367 respondents comprised less than 15 per cent of the number of people registered for consultation by ACARA, around 2,500.

Over the nine week consultation period, 43 written submissions were received. Of these, eleven were received representing seventeen state and territory curriculum and school authorities, a far better response than the meagre two submissions from that category to ACARA's student disability consultation. A further 18 submissions were from peak bodies such as teacher professional associations, government agencies and non-government organisations, while three schools also provided written submissions. The remaining eleven submissions came from individuals: teachers, academics, parents and members of the community.

Although the number of respondents was low, overall the consolidated findings of all feedback indicated very high levels of support (over 80 per cent approval) for the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2011h, p. 52).

The incorporation of the General Capabilities in both the formal curriculum and school and classroom practice was strongly supported. These areas were seen as critical components of the 21st century curriculum, and ensuring that they are fully taken into account throughout the project was seen as essential to the effective implementation of the Australian Curriculum. (ACARA, 2011h, p. 52).

Although the result was an overwhelmingly positive one, endorsing the general capabilities, the consultation also identified a number of key areas for development or revision. Some of these were, arguably, very important to classroom teachers who were to implement the Australian Curriculum. They included clarifying the nature and purpose of the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum; clarifying the meaning of terms such as ‘capabilities’, ‘competence’, ‘understanding’, and ‘behaviour’ and how these relate to knowledge, skills and dispositions throughout the materials; and clarifying the position of assessment of general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum. Others appeared to be less important for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, such as considering changes to some capability titles, especially ICT Competence, Ethical Behaviour, and Intercultural Understanding. (ICT Competence was later changed to ICT Capability, and Ethical Behaviour to Ethical Understanding).

5.9.4 Students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect

When producing the Australian Curriculum, ACARA was well aware that a significant number of students in Australian schools were learners of English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). These were students who required additional support to assist them to develop English language proficiency, as their first language was a language other than what ACARA referred to as ‘Standard Australian English’. (In a footnote ACARA defined Standard Australian English as the variety of spoken and written English language in Australia used in more formal settings, such as for official or public purposes, and recorded in dictionaries, style guides and grammars, adding that while it is always dynamic and evolving, it is recognised as the common language of Australians. ACARA, 2011d). Acknowledging that schools and state and territory education authorities already had in place policies and strategies to support teachers to ensure that these students reach their full potential, in a published Fact Sheet on Student Diversity ACARA conceded that while many EAL/D students succeeded in school, there was a significant number that left without achieving their potential (ACARA, 2011b).

In characterising EAL/D students, ACARA portrayed them as students that enter Australian schools at different ages and at different stages of English language learning and having various educational backgrounds in their first language. Their diverse backgrounds include overseas and Australian-born students whose first language is a language other than English as well as students whose first language is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language, including creoles and related varieties, or Aboriginal English. It was further recognised that for some, school is the only place they use English (ACARA, 2011b).

Consequently ACARA produced *English as an Additional Language or Dialect Teacher Resource Version 1.1* (ACARA, 2011d) and several related publications to support teachers of all learning areas to make content in the Australian Curriculum accessible to all EAL/D students. The first of these was *Overview and EAL/D Learning Progression*, published in August 2011. This was a broad synthesis of existing state and territory documents for EAL/D students and was developed as support material especially for mainstream teachers who were not EAL/D specialists. It comprised an overview of EAL/D learning, an EAL/D learning progression, advice for teachers of EAL/D students, and a glossary and references. In

publishing this, ACARA reiterated that the specialist EAL/D documents in the states and territories remained important resources and that the *Overview and EAL/D Learning Progression* should be used in conjunction with these (ACARA, 2011c). This was followed a year later by the release in August 2012 of annotated content descriptions for each of the four Phase 1 learning areas. Specifically, the publications were *Learning Area Annotations: English Foundation to Year 10* (ACARA, 2012b), *Learning Area Annotations: Mathematics Foundation to Year 10* (ACARA, 2012c), *Learning Area Annotations: Science Foundation to Year 10* (ACARA, 2012d), and *Learning Area Annotations: History Foundation to Year 10* (ACARA, 2012e). These annotations described linguistic and cultural considerations implied by some curriculum content descriptions and suggested teaching strategies to enable EAL/D students to access the learning described in the content descriptions more effectively.

5.9.5 Differentiation and the Australian Curriculum

Discussions centring on students with disabilities and students with English as an additional language or dialect obviously lead into a broader field of catering for *all* students and how the teaching of the Australian Curriculum in schools can be differentiated. There was some criticism of the Australian Curriculum as being a lock-step syllabus or ‘one-size-fits-all’ curriculum. Gould (2012) for example, when considering the Australian Curriculum in Science, observes that the curriculum is usually misrepresented as confining and restrictive by teachers because of the structure of the content descriptions. He contends that the language and structure of the content descriptions imply a rigidity that is contradicted by the history of development and language in the background documents. He makes a valid point. Clearly the Australian Curriculum was designed with the intention that teachers are to adopt and adapt the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of all learners, not just those with disabilities or EAL/D students. Evidence of this can be seen in the following three extracts from ACARA publications:

Extract 1:

Schools and teachers continue to have the flexibility to enable students to progress at different rates through the curriculum. The year-by-year structure of English, Mathematics, Science and History provides an indication of the content and achievement standards it is expected most students in particular grades will meet, but more importantly it provides a map that defines key indicators of learning development and progress. It continues to be the case that schools and teachers should provide flexible pathways to enable every student to make progress in their learning. (ACARA, 2010a, p. 23).

Extract 2:

To meet students’ learning needs and cater for the wide range of performance in classes, teachers need to be able to identify current levels of student achievement using the Australian Curriculum and tailor their teaching in line with these levels. In many cases this will involve identifying and filling in specific gaps in a student’s knowledge, understanding or skills while still

focusing instruction on the curriculum content described for their particular year of schooling. In other cases this will involve focussing instruction on curriculum content at a lower or higher level than that set out for a particular year of schooling. (ACARA, 2010a, p. 23).

Extract 3:

The Australian Curriculum has been developed to ensure that curriculum content and achievement standards establish high expectations for all students. The curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to take into account the different rates at which students develop and a diverse range of learning and assessment needs. (ACARA 2012g, p. 17).

The extent to which teachers do differentiate and the gap between the theory and practice is discussed in Chapter 6.

5.10 Conclusion

The current project to design and implement an Australian Curriculum has taken Australian education to a position which it has not previously experienced. For the first time, a national curriculum has reached the implementation stage in four designated disciplines and been accepted to an extent where there is a large degree of conformity in what is being taught in schools throughout Australia. This has occurred despite repeating the errors of previous attempts, such as very short consultation timelines, and without the provision of a framework within which the nature of curriculum can be understood. It has also been achieved despite a barrage of initial media criticism, an initially overcrowded syllabus which caused much uproar, and the separation, whether justified or not, of the design from the implementation. The pluses are also numerous. The work of ACARA has been immense and well received by many. The publication of the Australian Curriculum solely on a website is a world first. The depth of the work carried out on the general capabilities is to be applauded, as is the process used to validate the achievement standards and the re-working of the sections on students with disabilities. While the Australian Curriculum is not, and cannot be, 'all things to all people' it does represent a momentous achievement in Australia's educational history.

The last two chapters have addressed two of the three research questions, namely: What is the history of curriculum reform at a national level in Australia? and, How is the current national curriculum development process positioned in relation to earlier attempts at restructuring school curriculum in Australia? Now the thesis turns to the third research question: What are the perspectives of teachers in Independent Schools concerning curriculum reform and the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and what are the ramifications of this for pre-service teacher education in Australia?

Chapter 6

Results, Analysis and Recommendations

6.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the third research question: What are the perspectives of teachers in Independent Schools concerning curriculum reform and the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and what are the ramifications of this for pre-service teacher education in Australia? The chapter commences with a profile of the survey respondents. From there five key themes are generated arising from an analysis of the data. These themes are related to the degree to which teachers in Independent Schools rate the knowledge and associated pedagogy they received in their Pre-Service Education in reference to the Phase 1 Australian Curriculum subjects; the ability of teachers to teach differentially; the degree of teachers' confidence to integrate the Australian Curriculum capabilities into their teaching; likewise, the degree of teachers' confidence to integrate the cross curriculum priorities into their teaching; and the endorsement of inquiry learning as an optimal pedagogy for implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

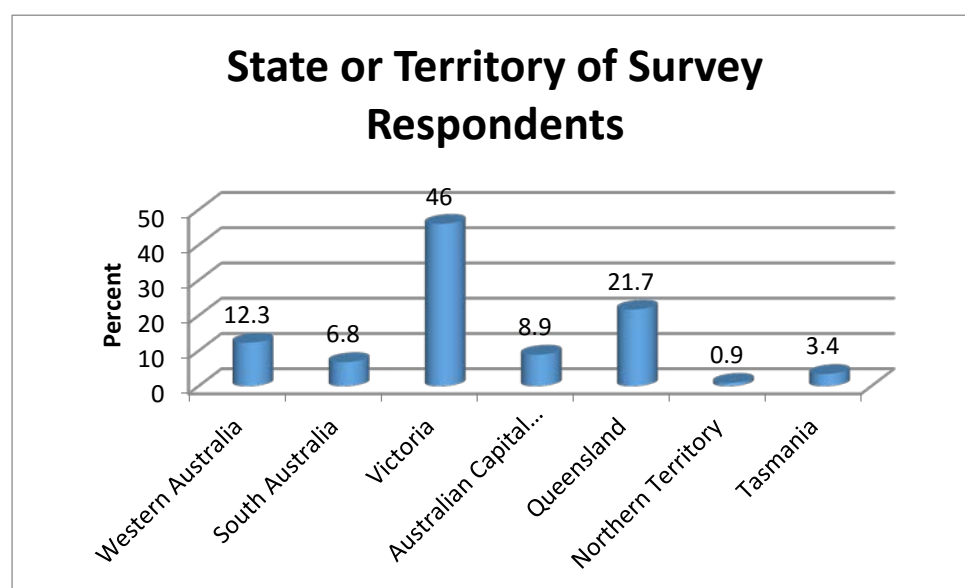
Other areas considered in this chapter will be the degree of compatibility between the new Australian Curriculum and the curriculum that was being offered in schools prior to the change instigated by the government's 'education revolution'; the degree of pedagogical change perceived by teachers and their reaction to this; and the perceptions by teachers of impending assessment changes.

Where relevant state comparisons will be included in the data and analysis, and the chapter will conclude with a set of recommendations.

6.1 Profile of Respondents

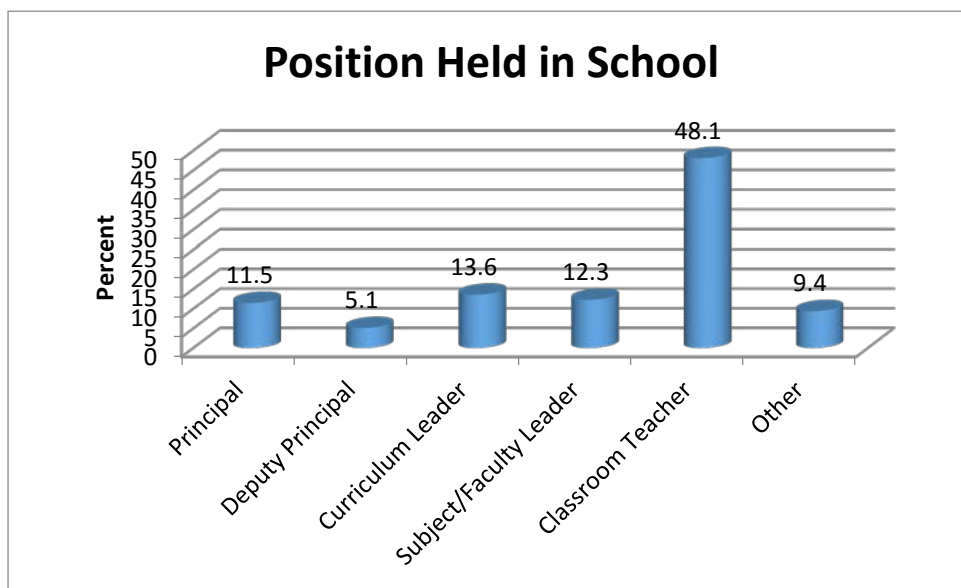
Surveys were sent to 1,073 Independent Schools or school campuses in cases where a school was located on more than one campus (in some cases up to four campuses). The surveys were sent to the Principal of each school (or Campus Head) with a covering letter and a request that they consider forwarding the survey onto their staff members. In total 235 completed surveys were returned and analysed. Although surveys were sent to Independent Schools in all Australian states and territories, except New South Wales, the majority of respondents were from Victoria (46.0 per cent) followed by Queensland (21.7 per cent) and Western Australia (12.3 per cent). Due to the frequency of responses of the returned surveys cross-tabulations where responses have been analysed by state or territory at a later date, have been restricted to comparisons among these three states only. A complete profile of respondents by state or territory can be found at Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: State or Territory of Survey Respondents



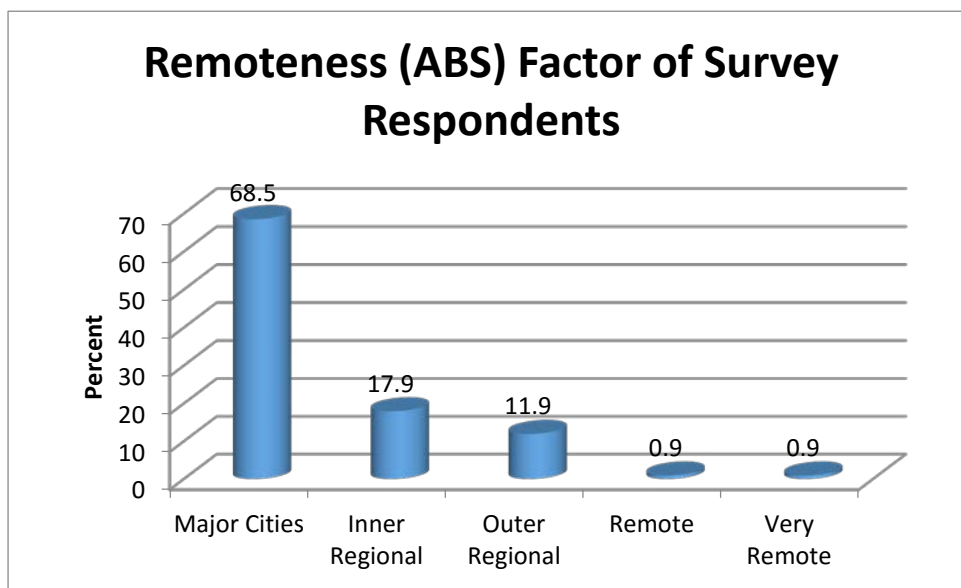
Issues surrounding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum were the major foci of the survey. Therefore it was neither surprising, nor unexpected, that almost half the respondents (48.1 per cent) were practising classroom teachers. This was followed by curriculum leaders in schools (13.6 per cent) and subject or faculty leaders (12.3 per cent). This combined total of 74 per cent adds to the validation of the survey results as these are the people in schools who are most likely to be involved with the implementation of the Phase 1 subjects of the Australian Curriculum on a day by day basis. Added to this is administrative/leadership staff (Principals and Deputy Principals) who would also be heavily involved in curriculum implementation but at a different level of engagement from classroom teachers and subject or faculty leaders. This group (administrative/leadership staff) made up a combined 16.6 per cent of respondents. The category 'other' was chosen by 9.4 per cent of the respondents. In the main these were specialist teachers such as teacher librarians and student support teachers. Figure 6.2 gives a complete breakdown of the position held in the school by the respondents.

Figure 6.2: Survey Respondents – Position Held in School



Remoteness of teachers in terms of where they taught was also determined using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Remoteness Classification. The concept of remoteness is an important dimension of policy development in Australia. The provision of many government services is influenced by the long distances that people are typically required to travel outside of the major metropolitan areas. Within the ABS classification, Australia is divided into broad geographical regions that share common characteristics of remoteness for statistical purposes using an index (Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia) supplied by the University of Adelaide. The index is supplied as a one kilometre grid covering all of Australia. Each grid is allocated a value which is based on measurement of road distances to service centres. As far as the location of schools is concerned there are five major classifications: major cities, inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote. The majority of respondents (68.5 per cent) were from major cities with a further 17.9 per cent from inner regional areas. The numbers from other categories were, as expected, negligible (see Figure 6.3) so no later cross tabulations based on remoteness were carried out.

Figure 6.3: Remoteness Factor of Survey Respondents



Finally, respondents were classified according to the highest level of tertiary education they had completed and the year of completing that qualification. The vast majority of respondents held a Bachelor degree (38.3 per cent), a Post Graduate diploma (27.7 per cent) or a Masters degree (27.2 per cent). Furthermore, a combined total of 61.9 per cent had completed their highest qualification this century. Interestingly, 4.3 per cent had last completed a formal qualification in the years 1970 – 1979 and an additional 13.2 per cent from 1980 – 1989. Details are to be found at Figures 6.4 and 6.5.

Figure 6.4: Highest Level of Tertiary Completion of Survey Respondents

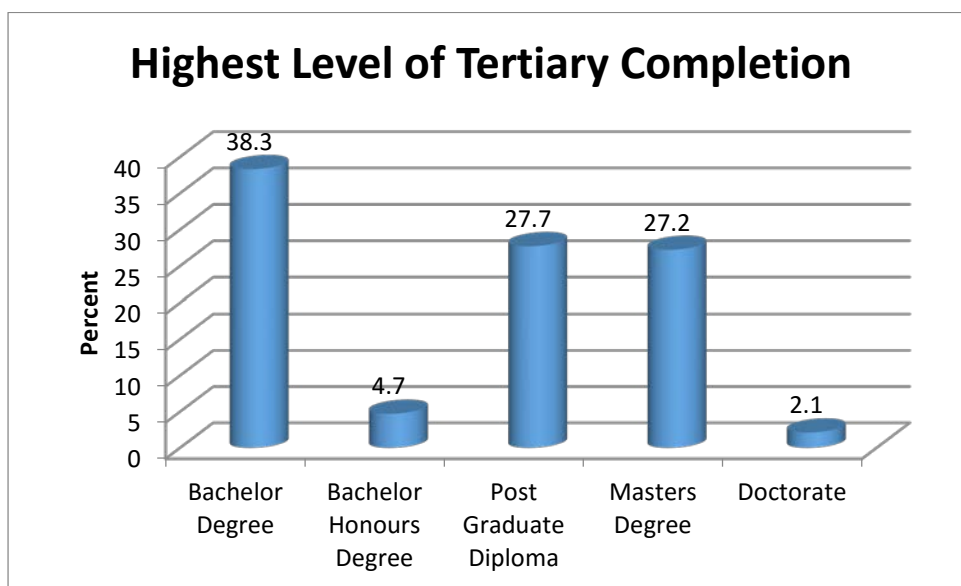
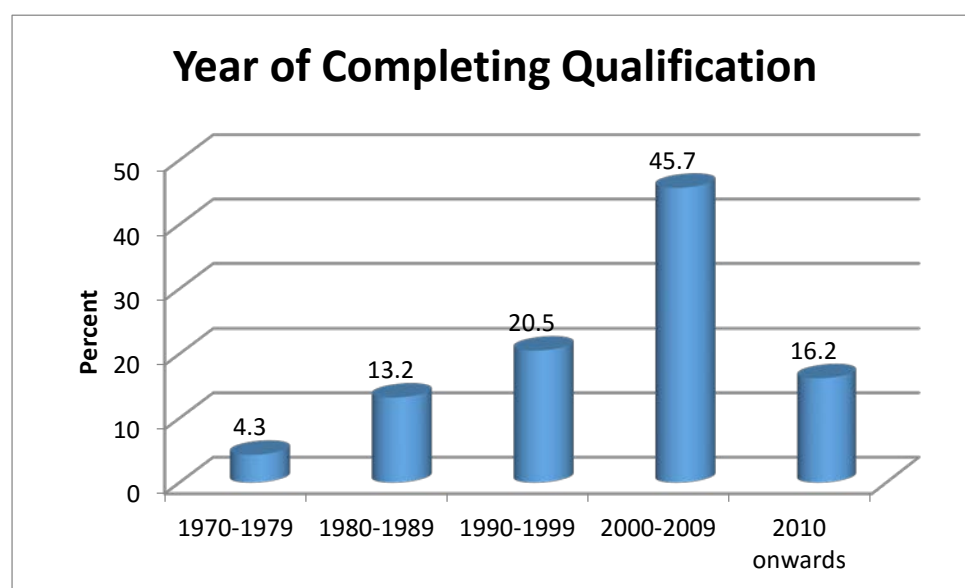


Figure 6.5: Year of Completing Highest Qualification for Survey Respondents



Analysing the survey data resulted in the identification of five major leitmotifs that characterise the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. The remainder of this chapter delineates each of the five major interrelated theoretical propositions that emerged from the analysis of the data collected for this study. These are:

1. Teachers in Independent Schools in Australia rate the knowledge and associated pedagogy they received in their Pre-Service Education much lower for the Phase 1 subjects of History and Science than they did for Mathematics and English, to the extent that, particularly with History, there was a large degree of dissatisfaction in terms of being ready for the Australian Curriculum.
2. Teachers indicated that while the ability to teach differentially is being addressed to some degree in on-going professional development and through post graduate studies, there needs to be a closer alignment between teachers' need for a knowledge of differentiation and teacher education at the pre-service level.
3. Teachers of History and Science in Independent Schools in Australia in the main are not confident that their training enables them to integrate the literacy and numeracy capabilities of the Australian Curriculum into their teaching. Again a closer alignment between this area of the Australian Curriculum and teacher education is desirable.
4. Teachers in Independent Schools in Australia overwhelmingly endorse inquiry learning as the optimal pedagogy for implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
5. Inadequate preparation of teachers in Independent Schools in Australia for the inclusion of each of the three cross-curriculum priorities into their disciplines as required by the Australian Curriculum was noted.

Each of these themes will now be dealt with in turn.

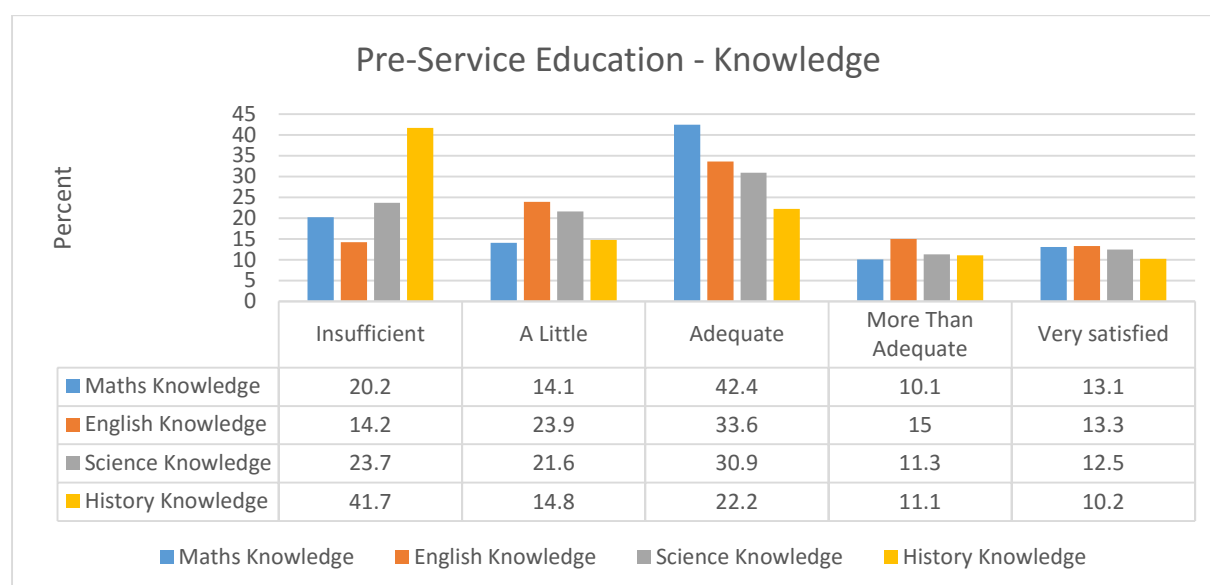
6.2 Theme 1: Teachers in Independent Schools in Australia rate the knowledge and associated pedagogy they received in their Pre-Service Education much lower for the Phase 1 subjects of History and Science than they did for Mathematics and English, to the extent that, particularly with History, there was a large degree of dissatisfaction in terms of being ready for the Australian Curriculum.

Questions in the survey were restricted to the four Phase 1 subjects of English, Mathematics, History and Science. A focus in the Australian Curriculum is on proficiency. A state of being proficient is premised on not only having the knowledge, but also the flexibility and inclination to apply this knowledge in diverse contexts. To this extent, the survey sought data from teachers as to what extent did they believe, in the context of implementing the Australian Curriculum, that their pre-service teacher education, their on-going professional development, and where relevant, their post-graduate studies provided them with adequate knowledge to successfully implement the new Australian Curriculum in the areas of Mathematics, English, Science and History; and additionally, the ability to enact this knowledge through flexibility of thought and the inclination to identify, interpret and respond to others' ideas and ways of thinking. The results pertinent to pre-service education are discussed further.

6.2.1 Knowledge – All Subjects

One in five teachers (20.2 per cent) claimed that the knowledge they received in Mathematics during their pre-service education as insufficient to implement the Australian Curriculum successfully. A further 14.1 per cent cited receiving 'a little' in terms of knowledge indicating that what they received was not adequate but at the same time was not considered insufficient. However the largest grouping (42.4 per cent) classified the input they received as 'adequate', with the other categories being 10.1 per cent for 'more than satisfied' with 13.1 per cent 'very satisfied' (see Figure 6.6 Pre-Service Education Knowledge – All Subjects). From these figures it can be argued that one in three teachers believe the Mathematics knowledge they gained from the various Higher Education Institutions was less than adequate in terms of implementing the changes required in the new Australian Curriculum.

Figure 6.6 Pre-Service Education Knowledge – All Subjects



The overall figures for English were not dissimilar to those for Mathematics (see Figure 6.6). While one in three pre-service teachers believe the English knowledge they are gaining from the various Higher Education Institutions is adequate (33.6 per cent), just over a third (38.1 per cent) found this to be less than adequate for successful implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Likewise, although there are slight discrepancies, the data for Science shows similar trends (see Figure 6.6). For Science Knowledge, just over 30 per cent of teachers found this to be adequate in their pre-service education, however almost one in two teachers (45.3 per cent) found this less than adequate with 23.7 per cent selecting ‘insufficient’ and 21.6 per cent choosing ‘a little’ from the range of options. Only one in eight teachers (12.5 per cent) indicated that they were very satisfied.

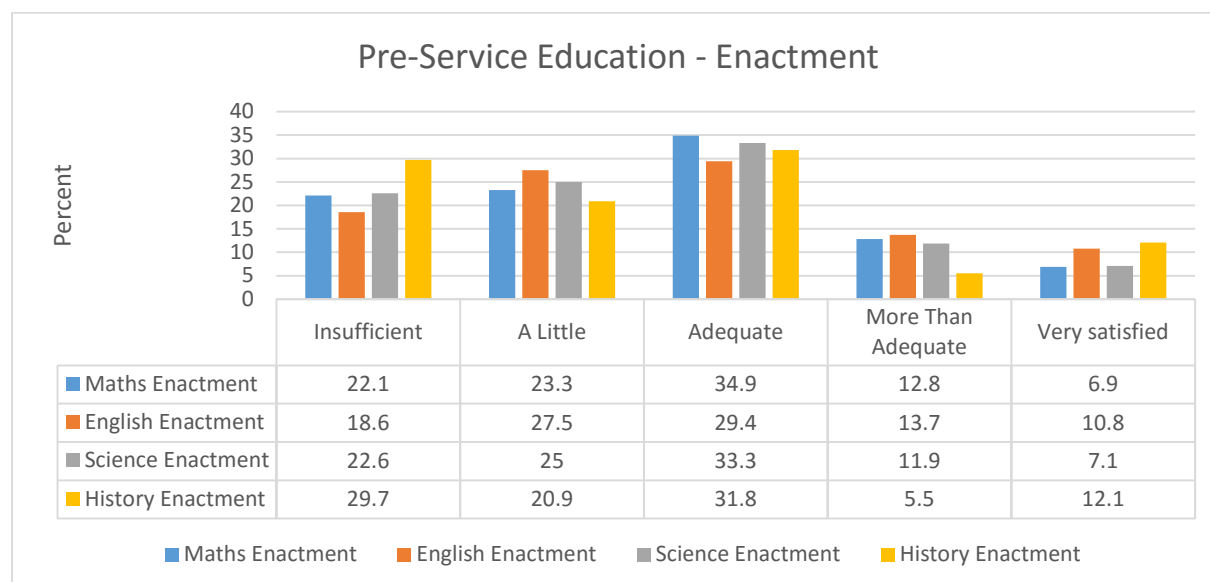
However, teachers reported a contrasting picture when History was considered. Whereas the range for those in the other three disciplines who indicated that their pre-service education was insufficient ranged from a low of 14.2 per cent (English) to a high of 23.7 per cent (Science), the figure for History was significantly higher at 41.7 per cent. Add to this a further 14.8 per cent of respondents who chose ‘a little’, then over the sample population 56.5 per cent regarded the History knowledge they received from their pre-service education as less than adequate in terms of implementing the new Australian Curriculum.

6.2.2 Enactment – All Subjects

Having gained the knowledge, teachers of Mathematics generally found that their pre-service education was, in the main, not at an acceptable level as far as being able to enact that knowledge in the classroom (see Figure 6.7 Pre-Service Education Enactment – All Subjects). The percentage who indicated ‘insufficient’ was at 22.1 per cent and ‘a little’ at 23.3 per cent. The number that chose ‘adequate’ was at 34.9 per cent in Enactment. The category ‘more than adequate’ showed 12.8 per cent but the group of teachers who were ‘very satisfied’ was only at 6.9 per cent. So in Mathematics slightly less than half (45.4 per cent) failed to gain an adequate or higher ability to enact knowledge through flexibility of thought and the inclination

to identify, interpret and respond to others' ideas and ways of thinking, exactly those skills that the Australian Curriculum (and in particular the *Melbourne Declaration*) would be striving for with students.

Figure 6.7: Pre-Service Education Enactment – All Subjects



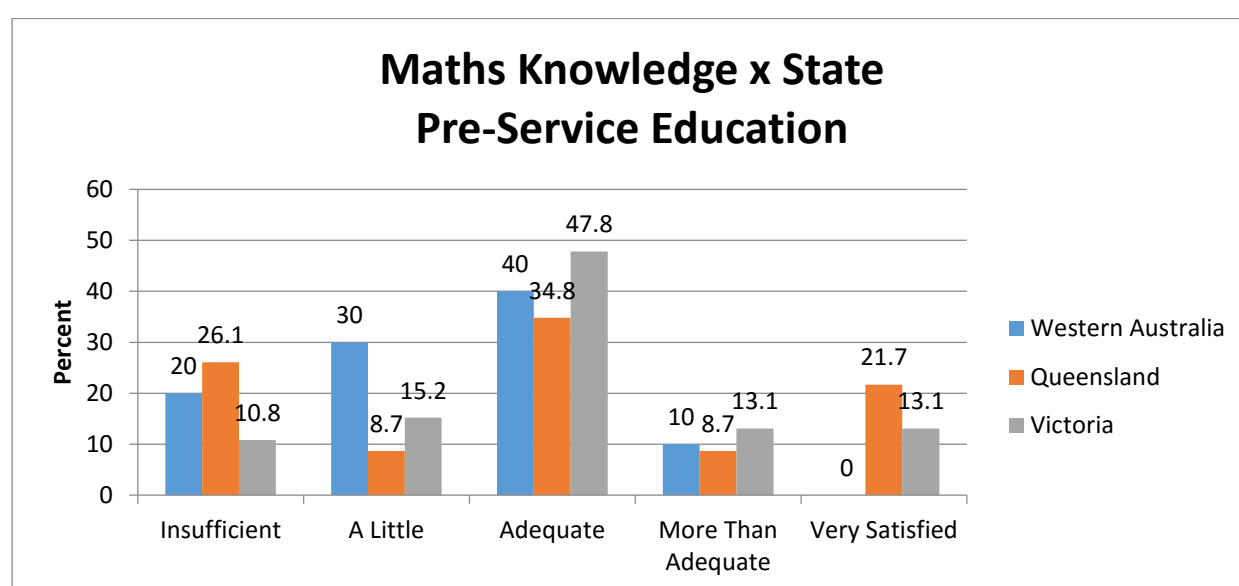
Teachers of English indicated trends similar to their Mathematics counterparts. The percentage who indicated 'insufficient' was 18.6 per cent and 'a little' 27.5 per cent, giving a combined total of 46.1 per cent of respondents who chose the less than adequate options. The 'adequate' category in Enactment was at 29.4 per cent, leaving approximately one in four teachers with positive choices of 'more than adequate' or 'very satisfied'. For Science Enactment, the percentage that were very satisfied was 7.1 per cent. Those who considered their education in this area insufficient was at 22.6 per cent for Enactment while teachers who chose 'a little' was 25.0 per cent, representing one in four teachers surveyed. However, combining the lower two options of 'insufficient' and 'a little' reveals that 47.6 per cent of teachers of Science chose the less than adequate options. In History, more than half of the teachers surveyed indicated that their pre-service education was either insufficient in terms of Enactment or that what they gained was rated 'a little'. This is the highest figure of all four disciplines, however at the other end of the spectrum a large percentage of teachers of History (12.1 per cent) indicated that they were more satisfied with this aspect of their pre-service education than any of the other three disciplines.

6.2.3 State Comparisons - Mathematics

Looking at the results from a state perspective, bearing in mind that only figures from Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria have been compared due to these states accounting for 80 per cent of the surveys returned, some interesting trends appear.

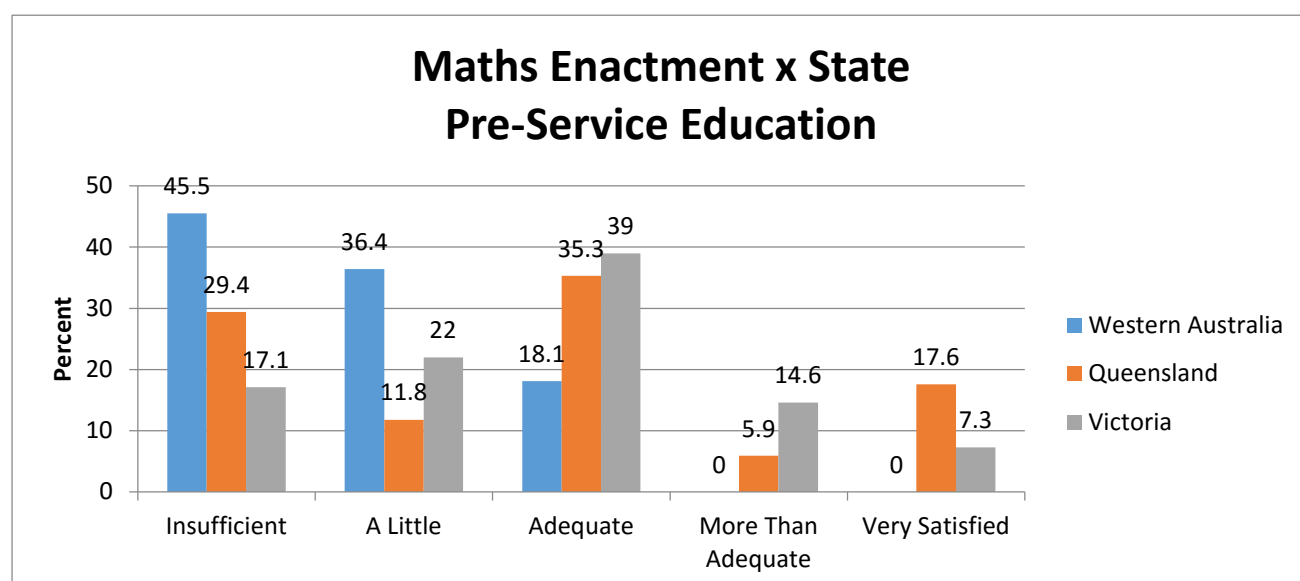
For Mathematics knowledge gained in pre-service education, teachers in Western Australia are less likely to be satisfied. Combining the categories of ‘insufficient’ and ‘a little’ accounted for 50 per cent of teachers in Western Australia compared with 34.8 per cent in Queensland and 26.0 per cent in Victoria. (See Figure 6.8). The category of ‘very satisfied’, while accounting for approximately 1 in 5 teachers from Queensland (21.7 per cent), was not chosen at all by teachers in Western Australia.

Figure 6.8: Pre-Service Education Maths Knowledge x State



For the Maths Enactment, the responses were more prominent from Western Australian teachers. While 18.1 per cent said that this was adequate in their pre-service education, (with none choosing ‘more than adequate’ or ‘very satisfied’), the remaining 81.9 per cent found this less than adequate (see Figure 6.9). This was more than twice the corresponding percentage from Victoria.

Figure 6.9: Pre-Service Education Maths Enactment x State

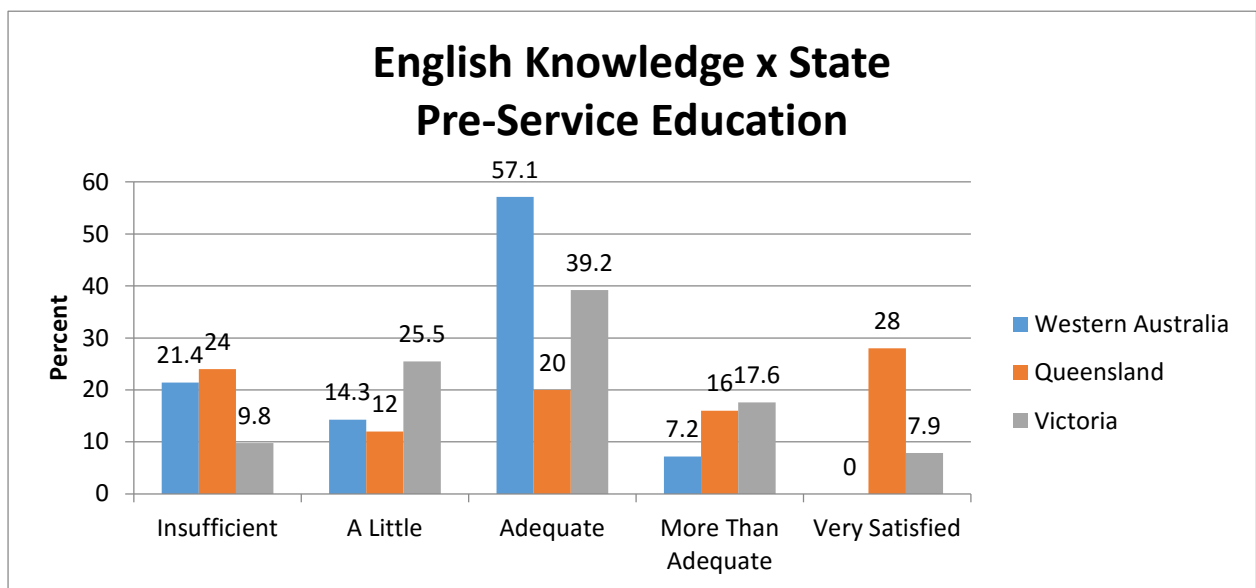


6.2.4 State Comparisons - English

State comparisons were again of interest. For English Knowledge the three most notable features were:

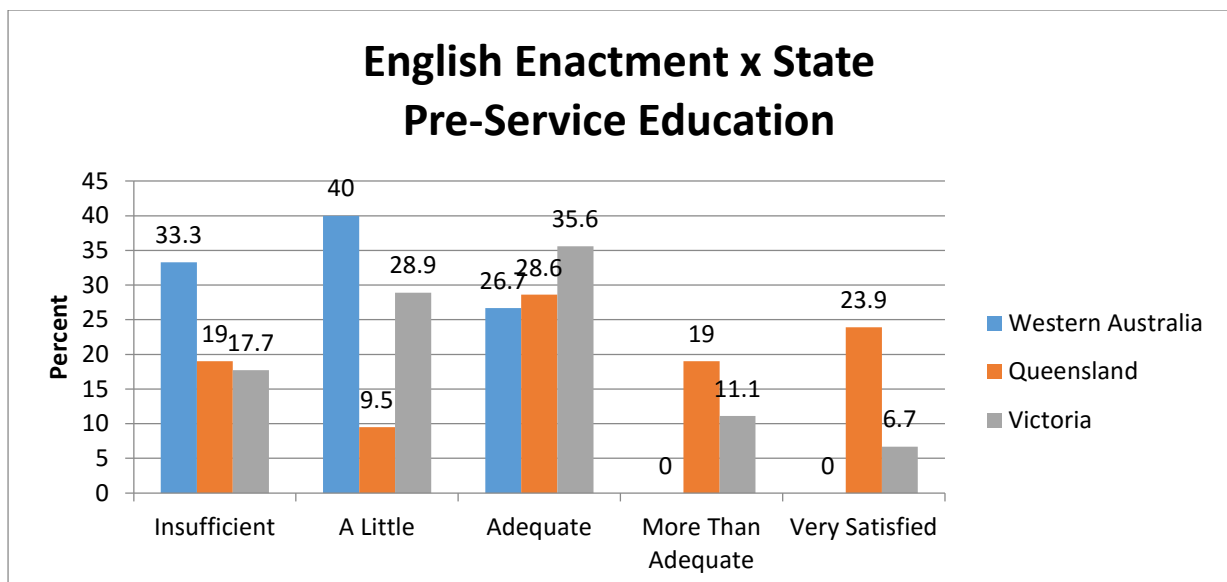
1. The high number of Queensland teachers who were very satisfied with this aspect of their pre-service education; 28.0 per cent compared with 7.9 per cent in Victoria and a nil rating from Western Australian teachers.
2. The percentage of teachers who indicated less than adequate by choosing either 'insufficient' or 'a little' was fairly even in the three states: 35.7 per cent Western Australia, 36.0 per cent Queensland, and 35.3 per cent Victoria.
3. The high percentage of teachers from Western Australia who chose the midpoint of 'adequate' – 57.1 per cent compared with 39.2 per cent in Victoria and 20.0 per cent in Queensland. (See Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10: Pre-Service Education English Knowledge x State



For English Enactment at the pre-service level, the figures from Western Australian teachers were again disturbing. The combined categories to the left of the midpoint ('Insufficient' and 'A Little') were chosen by 73.3 per cent of Western Australian teachers. This compared with 46.6 per cent in Victoria and 28.5 per cent in Queensland. In fact, Queensland teachers were relatively supportive in this area with almost one in four (23.9 per cent) indicating 'Very Satisfied' and 19.0 per cent 'More than Adequate'. These results are shown at Figure 6.11.

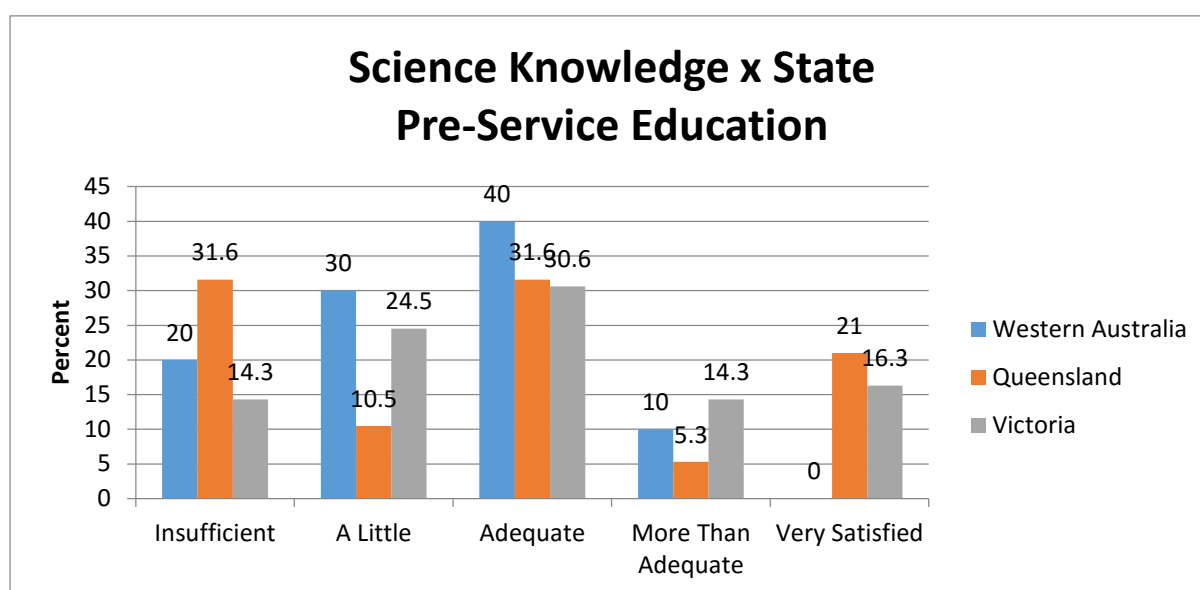
Figure 6.11: Pre-Service Education English Enactment x State



6.2.5 State Comparisons – Science

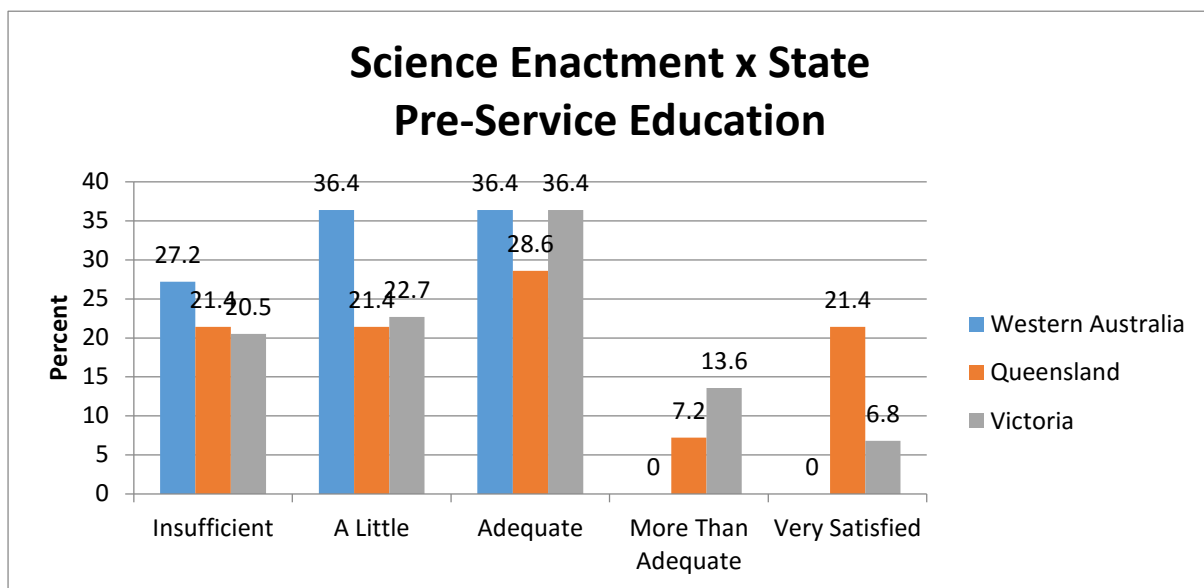
For Science Knowledge, Queensland teachers provided the anomaly by being the largest group at both ends of the spectrum. 31.6 per cent of Queensland teachers found this aspect of their pre-service education to be insufficient (Western Australia 20.0 per cent; Victoria 14.3 per cent); while at the same time 21.0 per cent indicated that they were very satisfied (nil response Western Australia; 16.3 per cent Victoria). The other noticeable factor from these surveys was that only ten per cent of teachers from Western Australia rated their pre-service education in Science Knowledge as positive in terms of being ‘more than adequate’ (10 per cent) or ‘very satisfied’ (nil). This contrasts with the responses from Queensland (26.3 per cent combined) and Victoria (30.6 per cent combined). Figure 6.12 provides this information.

Figure 6.12: Pre-Service Education Science Knowledge x State



Looking at Science Enactment there are two notable features. The first is, as with English Enactment, a large percentage of Queensland teachers were very satisfied with this aspect; the responses being 21.4 per cent compared with 6.8 per cent from Victoria and a nil response from Western Australia. The second is again the skewing to the left of teachers from Western Australia with no responses to the right of the midpoint. (See Figure 6.13).

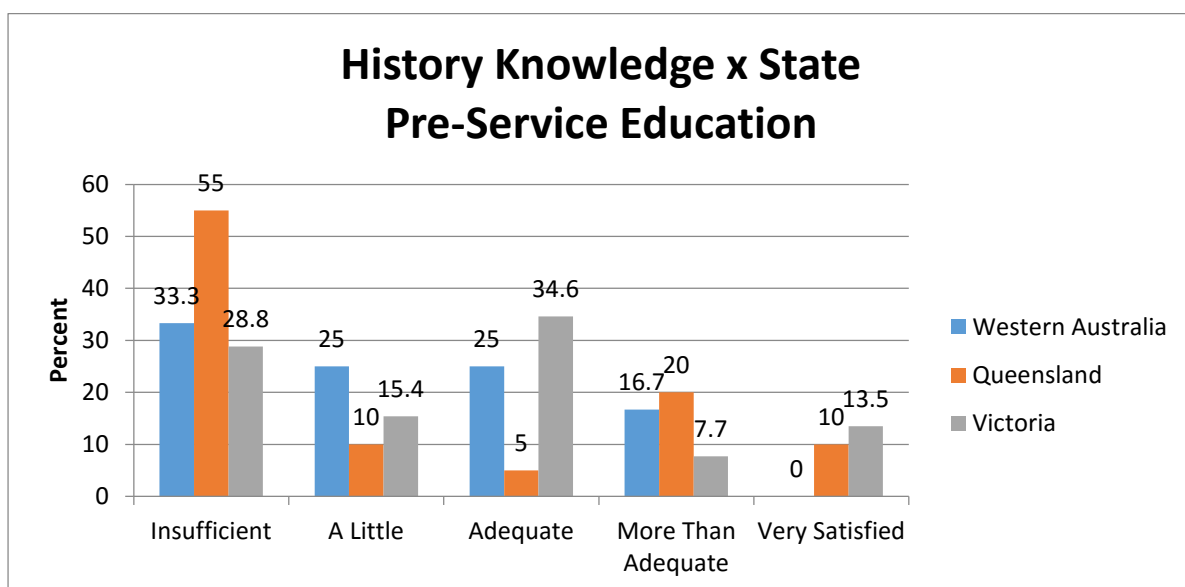
Figure 6.13: Pre-Service Education Science Enactment x State



6.2.6 State Comparisons – History

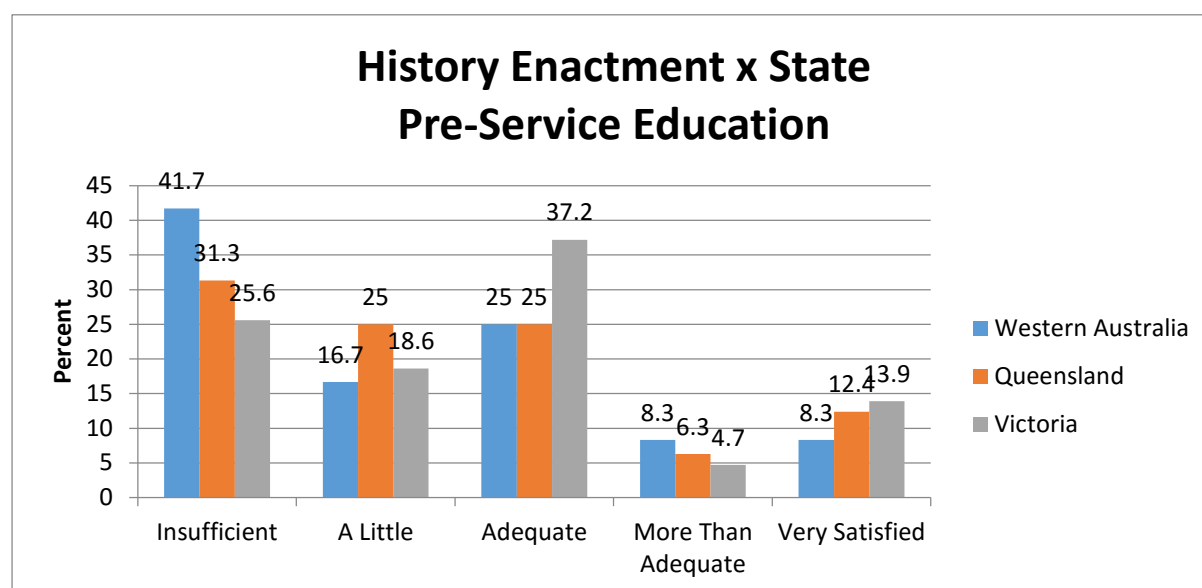
Likewise with the cross-tabulations related to the three main states in terms of survey returns, more than half of Queensland's teachers rated their pre-service education as insufficient in regards to History Knowledge. This figure of 55 per cent was higher than the 33.3 per cent in Western Australia and 28.8 per cent in Victoria. Conversely, however, 30 per cent of Queensland's teachers found this training either more than adequate or were very satisfied, while only 21.2 per cent of Victorian teachers and 16.7 per cent of Western Australian teachers concurred with this. (See Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.14: Pre-Service Education History Knowledge x State



Further alarming figures were recorded for History Enactment with 41.7 per cent of Western Australian teachers, 31.3 per cent of Queensland teachers and 25.6 per cent of Victorian teachers rating their pre-service education as insufficient in terms of implementing the Australian Curriculum. In fact, if the two categories to the left of the midpoint are combined, the degree of dissatisfaction for Western Australian, Queensland and Victorian teachers is 58.4 per cent, 56.3 per cent and 44.2 per cent respectively. (See Figure 6.15).

Figure 6.15: Pre-Service Education History Enactment x State



6.2.7 History - A More Detailed Discussion

Returning to Figure 6.6, the results for History Knowledge differ from the other three Phase 1 disciplines, in some cases quite significantly. For example, a comparatively large percentage of respondents (41.7 per cent) regarded the knowledge they gained in History during their pre-service education insufficient to implement the new Australian Curriculum successfully. Figures for the other disciplines in the corresponding category were 14.2 per cent for English, 20.2 per cent for Mathematics and 23.7 per cent for Science. Taking the mid-point of the survey options, History had the smallest percentage of respondents who chose 'adequate' and, at the other end of the scale, the smallest number of respondents who indicated that they were 'very satisfied' (Figure 6.6). The possible reasons for these predominately negative survey responses for History need to be identified.

Macintyre (2009), the lead writer for ACARA's History curriculum, identifies the quality of teachers, the lack of adequate and rigorous pre-service teacher education and the apparent lack of priority in hiring History teachers as dilemmas that need to be addressed for this discipline. He states:

History shares the problem with maths and science in that it is often entrusted to teachers without training in the discipline. But unlike those subjects, there is no shortage of qualified graduates ready to fill the breach. The problem is rather that educational faculties and schools outside NSW give limited attention to history teaching, and the hiring practices of educational systems place a low premium on expertise in history. It is commonly assumed that anyone can take a history class. (Macintyre, 2009, p.2).

Taylor (2008a), in an address given at the NSW History Teachers Association/Macquarie University National History Forum in September 2008, espoused similar thoughts saying ‘many primary teachers, who are technically highly skilled classroom practitioners, are unfamiliar with historical literacy and tend to teach a stripped down version of the secondary program while secondary teachers, many of whom have no history background, teach history in a minimalist way, using the textbook approach’ (Taylor, 2008a).

On the issue of teacher education, Taylor (2008a) contends that many of the faculties, schools and departments of education in HEIs throughout Australia are seriously deficient when allocating resources to history education. In primary programs, for example, Taylor (2008a) maintains that at best history education comprises 1/96th in contact hours of a normal four-year degree. For secondary programs, according to Taylor, most history education lecturers are either seconded teachers or part-time, contracted lecturers. He concludes ‘Not good enough!...these faculties, schools and departments are going to have to do some very serious rethinking if they want to meet the needs of the national curriculum’ (Taylor, 2008a).

Harris-Hart (2009) adds to this somewhat negative picture claiming that of all the Faculties/Schools of Education in higher education institutions across the country only sixteen offer a history methodology class and ten of these are in NSW where History remained a discrete subject. Therefore not only is there a lack of qualified teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum in History successfully, but as Harris-Hart contends ‘few universities are hurrying to redress this chasm’ (Harris-Hart, 2009). Macintyre is attributed with saying that in addition to there being very few universities outside of NSW with History in their teaching degrees, many were removing it from their primary school teaching courses at a time when it was about to become mandatory (Ferrari, 2010e). He endorsed Harris-Hart’s observation by stating ‘no Faculty of Education has adjusted its course to take account of the (Australian Curriculum) changes’ and goes further to claim that History as a stand-alone discipline is not happening as ‘people who would prefer an integrated curriculum approach are stronger in universities’ (Ferrari, 2010e).

Further, Harris-Hart has put forward the notion that the advent of a History curriculum, as opposed to SOSE, has current teacher education students instilled with fear:

... fear of being less employable and the fear of having to teach history with little content knowledge (and indeed less pedagogical content knowledge) and no clearly articulated pathway for professional development once they are in schools. (Harris-Hart, 2009, p.6).

The History Teachers' Association of Australia (HTAA), the peak body that represents the history teachers' associations of the Australian Capital Territory (ACTHTA), New South Wales (HTANSW), Queensland (QHTA), South Australia (HTASA), Tasmania (THTA), Victoria (HTAV) and Western Australia (HTAWA), has expressed concerns about the capacity of the current pre-service training programs to prepare teachers capable of implementing the Australian Curriculum in History. In a statement from the HTAA Executive in February 2010, an urgent call was made to secure a commitment from all education ministers, universities, state curriculum authorities and teacher employment bodies to address this issue by adopting a minimum standard, that being that:

- a secondary history teacher will have completed at least one history major in their first degree AND a one year history method program (which may have been undertaken in conjunction with another discipline method), and
- a primary teacher will have a firm foundation in the content to be dealt with in the primary section of any national syllabus AND an understanding of the discipline of history and history pedagogy appropriate to the primary setting. (HTAA, 2010).

In Chapter 5 (Section 5.3), the issue of the 'History Wars' was raised. In light of the survey results pertaining to History, this needs to be revisited. Zarmati (2012) contends that two parallel worlds exist in the universe of history education in Australia. One belongs to the practising classroom teachers and professional curriculum developers who take head on the challenges of providing an engaging history curriculum for students on a daily basis. The other:

... is the ideological world of politicians and journalists whose chief concerns are which history should be taught in schools and whether the agenda to construct the curriculum has been set by the radical-socialist left or the ultra-conservative right. (Zarmati, 2012, p.1).

Taylor (2013), who has been very critical of political interference from the right, adds that the approach by right-wing reformist politicians to history curricula follows a clear pattern. He contends that politicians begin by expressing a need to return to a triumphalist view of the past that uncritically highlights the achievements of a free market economy, Western civilisation and Christianity, and follow this up with a view, which, Taylor asserts, is highly personalised about what should be in and what should be out of the ideal history curriculum (Taylor, 2013).

Parkes & Donnelly (2014) comment on the interest in Australian History taken by politicians and the conservative media, claiming that 'History curricula in the 1990s will be remembered as a period of conflict over rival interpretations of the nation's past (Parkes & Donnelly, 2014, p. 122). Macintyre adds to this debate by establishing that the starting point with the writing of the Australian Curriculum in History was the need to avoid the 'recurrent and unproductive debate over the false dichotomy of inquiry-based learning in history and factual knowledge' (Macintyre, 2009). In reference to former Prime Minister John Howard, Macintyre states:

You will be familiar with this, if only by following the strong views of the former Prime Minister on what very young Australians should know about Australian history, his insistence on narrative (which he assumed was a natural and unproblematic account of what happened) and his disparagement of what he described as the culinary incompetence of teachers who turned history into a messy stew of themes and issues. (Macintyre, 2009, p.9).

Incidentally, Howard's stance echoed that of one of his conservative role models, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In her autobiography Thatcher (1995) wrote that the hardest battle she fought on the national curriculum in Britain was about history. She stated that she had had a very clear idea of what history was, an idea she 'naively imagined uncontroversial'. History, to Thatcher, is an account of what happened in the past. 'Learning history, therefore, requires knowledge of events. It is impossible to make sense of such events without being able to place matters in a clear chronological framework – which means knowing dates' (Thatcher, 1995, p. 573). She added that she was 'appalled' when she received the interim report of the History Working Group as it 'put the emphasis on interpretation and enquiry' and that there was 'insufficient weight given to British history' (Thatcher, 1995, p.574).

The problem, of course, for Australia's teachers, and for teacher educators, is how to deal with History in a way that is in the best interests of students and true to the aims of the *Melbourne Declaration* in the face of blatant political manoeuvring and interference. Between 2003 and 2006 the National Centre for History Education, based at Monash University, was funded by the federal Department of Education, Science and Training under the Quality Outcomes Program. The Centre's Director was Associate Professor Tony Taylor and the Manager was Ms Scilla Rantzen. During this time, one of the projects they initiated to deal with the issue of the politicised views of school history, was the publication of *Making History: a guide for teaching and learning of history in Australian schools* (Taylor & Young, 2003). This was a systematic, easily accessible both in print and on-line, and research-based historical literacy framework that was designed 'to counter the worst effects of ideological interference' (Taylor, 2008a). This framework was used quite successfully until then Prime Minister Howard established a group that published an alternative Australian History syllabus that 'modified and seriously weakened' the principles espoused in the National Centre's publication (Taylor, 2008a) at a time when Howard 'rallied against moral-relativism and the lack of narrative in the teaching of History in Australian schools (Carr, 2015). In the foreword to the Prime Minister's *Guide to the Teaching of Australian History*, Howard himself wrote that he had called 'for a root and branch renewal of the teaching of Australian history in our schools' and for 'the need to restore a coherent sequenced narrative of our national story to a central place in school curriculums' (AHCRG, 2007).

Howard's Australian History syllabus drew much criticism, none more scathing than that from Freudenberg (2005):

The fact is that John Howard has embarked on a massive rewriting of Australian history. Because he knows that controlling history is the key to controlling the future.

Howard is the Regius Professor of what I call the GBM School of Australian History – the notion that there is nothing worth knowing about Australia except Gallipoli, Bradman and Menzies. There is nothing more disgraceful in his career than his manipulation and politicisation of the ANZAC legend in the interests of the Liberal Party. (Freudenberg, 2005, p. 281).

Political analyst and commentator Paul Kelly agreed, stating that Howard ‘recruited the icons of nationalism to Australian conservatism’ and referred to this as ‘naked political theft’ (Kelly, P. 2009, p. 339). With the election of the Rudd Labour government towards the end of 2007, the Howard syllabus was effectively, at least for the next six years, ‘consigned to history’ itself with the advent of the National Curriculum Board and the beginnings of the Australian Curriculum. But the question has to be asked, and is worthy of further research projects, as to why so many teachers of History in response to the survey discussed in this thesis, were dissatisfied with the pre-service education they received; and why history education and history method are such rare commodities in Australia’s tertiary institutions. With all of the states and territories except NSW opting over a period of time for various forms of integration and, in particular, the Study of Society and the Environment (SOSE), it is likely that the tertiary institutions merely responded to this trend. With History becoming a mandated subject in the Phase 1 roll-out of the Australian Curriculum, the lack of training for teachers in history content and history method was possibly accentuated.

6.3 Theme 2: Teachers indicated that while the ability to teach differentially is being addressed to some degree in on-going professional development and through post graduate studies, there needs to be a closer alignment between teachers’ need for a knowledge of differentiation and teacher education at the pre-service level.

6.3.1 Differentiation and the Australian Curriculum – A Brief Introduction

In Chapter 5, the need for the Australian Curriculum to cater for all students and the ability for teachers to teach differentially in the classroom was touched on. Differentiation is a means of catering for differences amongst students in the same class or at the same year level. It provides multiple pathways for learning for every student. It can involve modifying the pace or level of instruction, incorporating flexible grouping of students or varying the products of learning and the pedagogy required to reflect students’ ways of learning. In a nutshell, it is differentiating the content to be taught or the process of learning or the product of that learning. Hall (2009) puts it well when she writes that differentiated instruction does not change *what* is taught; it changes *how* it is taught. It is teaching with student variance in mind. Instruction is tailored based on individual differences, engaging students where they are, rather than where they are expected to be according to a prescribed curriculum (Hall, 2009).

For any curriculum to be successfully delivered to students competent teachers who can teach differentially are required. Writing in the *Canberra Times*, Masters (2010, p. 11) used the release of the proposed Australian Curriculum in English, History, Science and Mathematics as an opportunity to issue a challenge, particularly to the newly-established Australian Institute

of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), to ensure that every classroom teacher would be equipped and supported to deliver the new curriculum. After describing best practice and the *modus operandi* of excellent teachers, Masters observed that:

Evidence from recent audits of teaching and learning practices in Australia reveal that teachers differ significantly in their ability to provide differentiated teaching of this kind. Some fall back on delivering the curriculum for the grade, teaching to the middle of the class, with the consequence that lower achieving students fall further behind as each year's curriculum becomes increasingly inappropriate for them; others allow higher achieving students 'free time' when they complete class work early, rather than challenging and extending them with more advanced work. The worst possible outcome of a national curriculum would be an increase in the number of teachers who deliver the curriculum in an undifferentiated way to all children in the same year. (Masters, 2010, p. 11).

Discussing a national curriculum and differentiation in the same sentence could appear to be an oxymoron, but the 'lock-step' presentation of the Australian Curriculum provides the framework on which to create differentiated instruction. The Australian Curriculum guides teachers in making decisions about what to teach, while differentiated teaching can provide the mindset and tools for the 'how' to teach.

Education Services Australia (ESA), a national, not-for-profit company owned by all Australian education ministers, defined differentiation in a brief on-line paper that introduced a number of vignettes demonstrating aspects of differentiation. It stated that differentiation was: -

...teachers (requiring) knowledge of each student's background and experiences, interests, readiness and learning needs. Teachers use this knowledge to plan and implement curriculum, teaching strategies, learning experiences and assessments that provide multiple pathways for learning for every student. This ensures all students have equitable access to curriculum and are able to demonstrate success. (ESA, 2013).

There is now a plethora of papers that advocate differentiation, encourage teachers to take on this now mainstream concept in education and offer 'how to' guides. This approach is certainly encouraged by ACARA for the Australian Curriculum as was documented in Chapter 5. There is also a growing body of research that deals with the difficulties of differentiation and to what degree this concept, widely accepted in theory, has been taken up by teachers in the classroom.

As mentioned above, the notion of differentiating instruction has become a mainstream concept in education, considered a key to raising student performance and closing the achievement gap. However, as Pappano (2011) has stated, there is a gap between the theory that is espoused in teacher education faculties and practice; furthermore there is now much current debate as to the realistic aspirations of differentiation (Pappano, 2011). As a lead in to discussing the survey findings of this current project with teachers from Independent Schools in Australia, some of the (mainly overseas) research findings follow.

A USA study by Mason (1999) with teachers from California and Kansas concluded in part that there was 'plenty of room for improvement in the way prospective teachers should be prepared to teach students in the growing diverse student population' (Mason, 1999, p. 10); and furthermore that:

Teachers expressed a mismatch between what is actually needed to teach students of different groups and what skills are offered to them to do the job effectively in in-service or pre-service programs. (Mason, 1999, p. 10).

To this, the researcher expressed the opinion that correcting the mismatch was the job of the educational planners at school district and university levels (Mason, 1999, p. 10).

Renick (1996) also conducted a study that sought to describe whether first-year special educators used their knowledge of differentiated teaching strategies in their classrooms. This study also sought to understand what conditions within school systems supported or hindered attempts made by educators to implement these unique pedagogical strategies. This research endorsed the premise that there was a gap between the theory gained in pre-service education and the practice carried out in schools. A focus of the research was on the practicum component of pre-service education courses. Renwick concluded:

University preparation for regular educators is 'washed out' during the student-teaching experience. As a result of this, very little university preparation actually reaches the classroom of the regular educator. (Renwick, 1996, p.13).

A proposition has been forwarded by Gould (2004) that differentiation of instruction is a classroom practice that is only used by the more experienced teachers (Gould, 2004). She distinguishes between what she terms the 'gross motor skills of teaching' which younger, less experienced teachers are trying to master and the 'fine motor skills of teaching' which include differentiation and is found in the repertoire of 'veteran' teachers. Indeed, previous research on graduate and less experienced teachers (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Hollingsworth, 1989; Lidstone & Hollingsworth, 1992; Tomlinson, et al, 1994) would suggest that aspects such as teacher-centred teaching, classroom and student management issues, and instructional planning receive greater emphasis with little focus on differentiation. That is not to say that early career teachers do not recognise differences among students, rather that they find it difficult at that stage of their career to be responsive to those differences (Tomlinson, et al, 1994).

Gould (2004) has suggested four steps that should be taken in pre-service education programs to prepare teachers to use differentiation in their classrooms more effectively. The first step is for lecturers in Higher Education Institutions to model differentiation. Gould claims that 'very few teacher preparation programs differentiate for pre-service teachers' and adds that many teacher preparation programs fall short in helping pre-service (novice) teachers adapt curriculum and instruction to address learner needs effectively because 'novices do not even know how it feels to be a learner in a differentiated classroom let alone teach in one' (Gould, 2004). She continues:

Education professors must ‘talk the talk’ and ‘walk the walk’. College professors can assess pre-service teachers’ readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles within their college classes. They can then model differentiated instruction of educational course content, classroom activities, and products based on the results of needs identified by these pre-assessments. In addition, college professors must ‘think aloud’ and let the pre-service teachers know what is differentiated, how it is differentiated, and why they chose to differentiate the instruction the way they did. (Gould, 2004, p.1).

Thus, Gould maintains, by taking this approach and having pre-service teachers experience differentiation and understand how they themselves differ as learners, they can gain a greater appreciation of what will be required to meet the needs of their future students in classrooms.

The second step in Gould’s four-point plan is to ensure that pre-service teachers have a strong foundation and knowledge of research-based pedagogical techniques as ‘when novice teachers have a sense of which methods of instruction would be most effective in teaching particular content to particular learners, they can begin to differentiate’ (Gould, 2004).

The third tier relates to a careful placement for the pre-service teacher’s practicum whenever this is possible. This requires placing the pre-service teacher in a classroom with a teacher who uses differentiation; video-taping the teacher’s lessons to get feedback from the classroom teacher, and the supervisor (where one exists) from the Higher Education Institute; and using the feedback to reflect on their own teaching and how effective they were in meeting the needs of the various students.

Most schools provide graduate teachers with a mentor in their first year at a school. Gould’s final point is that mentors should be chosen who have the ability to support the new teacher in an effort to differentiate.

Adding weight to this notion that teachers receive little support in learning how to differentiate in their pre-service education, and thus do not embrace this practice when they commence teaching, are the arguments put forward by Holloway (2000). Quoting the research by Tomlinson (1999), he states that Tomlinson discovered that teacher education programs in general are not preparing tomorrow’s teachers for the increasing diversity of students; and furthermore that pre-service teachers seldom, if ever, experience differentiated instruction in their teacher-preparation programs (Holloway, 2000, p. 82). When a teacher education unit did focus on exceptional children it tended to deal almost exclusively with learner traits rather than with pedagogy or methods of teaching. Holloway (2000) even went as far as to suggest that differentiation was discouraged rather than encouraged. In referring to Tomlinson’s 1999 research, he said:

The teachers also reported that education professors, university supervisors, and master teachers rarely encouraged them to actively differentiate instruction. In fact, during the pre-service training master teachers often discouraged pre-service teachers from differentiation, recommending rather that they ‘keep everyone together’. (Holloway, 2000, p. 83).

Tomlinson's report stated that the pressure on new teachers to 'teach to the middle' was 'profound' with the justification being either that teaching was complex, particularly for recent graduates, or the need to conform to 'the way we do it here' (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 115).

From an Australian and more recent perspective, Melbourne University's John Munro, in a paper that outlined effective strategies for implementing differentiated instruction for students who are gifted and talented, stated that 'the practice of differentiation in regular classrooms has, in practice, been largely unsuccessful' (Munro, 2012). Furthermore, Munro provides evidence of the lack of differentiation for highly able students in regular classrooms. He quotes, for example, the work of Reis et al (2004) who researched the differentiation talented readers (defined as students reading at least two grades above their chronological grade placement with advanced language skills and advanced processing capabilities in reading) in Year 3 and Year 7 of their schooling were receiving. Munro laments that 'they found that the talented readers in 75 per cent of the classrooms received no differentiated reading instruction. They were not exposed to appropriately challenging books or more challenging learning tasks' (Munro, 2012).

Drawing on the work of Van Tassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2005), Munro then cites eight reasons for the lack of differentiation:

1. Teachers lack the content knowledge necessary to extend and differentiate the typical curriculum content areas.
2. Teachers lack the classroom management skills necessary to support differentiated teaching.
3. Teachers lack the beliefs needed to implement differentiated teaching.
4. Teachers do not know how to accommodate the approaches to learning by gifted students who are from different cultural groups or who are also underachievers.
5. Teachers find it hard to locate and use effectively a range of resources that would facilitate teaching.
6. Teachers do not have the planning time needed to adjust the curriculum.
7. Teachers are not supported or encouraged by school leadership to value and guide the implementation of differentiated strategies.
8. Teachers lack the relevant pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills. (Munro, 2012).

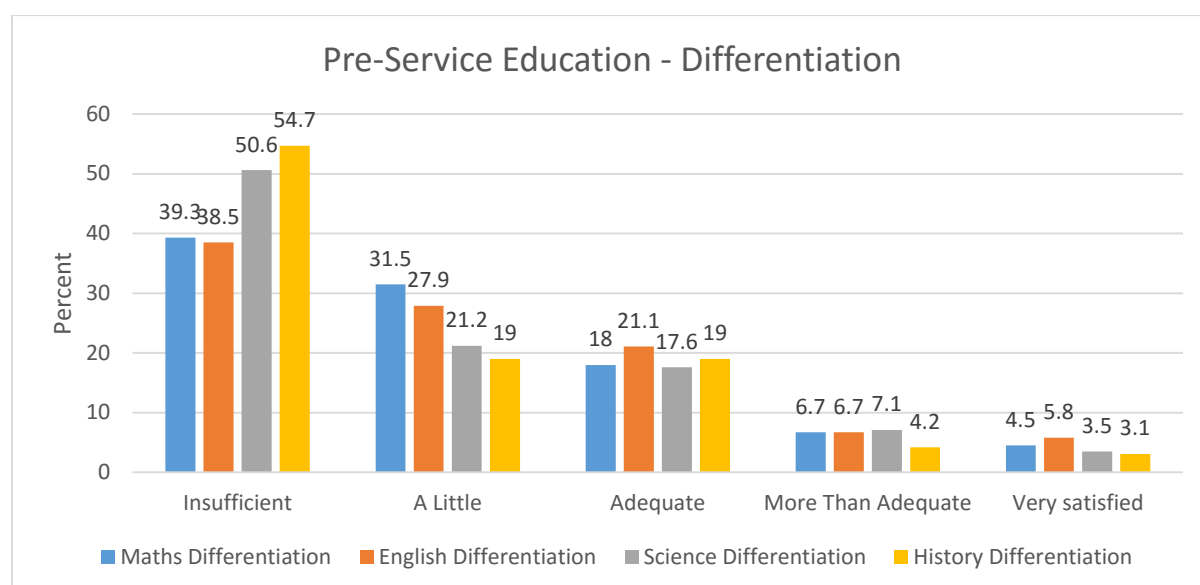
Of these eight barriers to differentiated teaching at least four of them, possibly five, could be addressed during the teachers' pre-service education. This is an important point to note because the survey data from this study reflects the above discussion. So, what does it all mean in relation to this study? The findings are outlined forthwith.

6.3.2 Differentiation - Survey Results and Analysis

In the survey of teachers in Independent Schools on their management and implementation of the Australian Curriculum, the following results on differentiation were collected. Overall,

teachers regarded the knowledge and skills they received on how to teach differentially during their pre-service education to be insufficient (see Figure 6.16). For both English and Mathematics more than 1 in 3 teachers indicated this (38.5 per cent and 39.3 per cent respectively). For Science and History this had increased to 1 in 2 teachers choosing the option of ‘insufficient’ in regard to differentiation as a part of their pre-service education (50.6 per cent and 54.7 per cent respectively). Given the option of a five-point scale, with the midpoint indicating ‘adequate’ then the figures indicating less than adequate are high – 66.4 per cent for English, 70.8 per cent for Mathematics, 71.8 per cent Science, and 73.7 per cent History. At the other end of the scale the number of teachers who were very satisfied in regard to differentiation ranged from 3.1 per cent in History to a high of only 5.8 per cent in English.

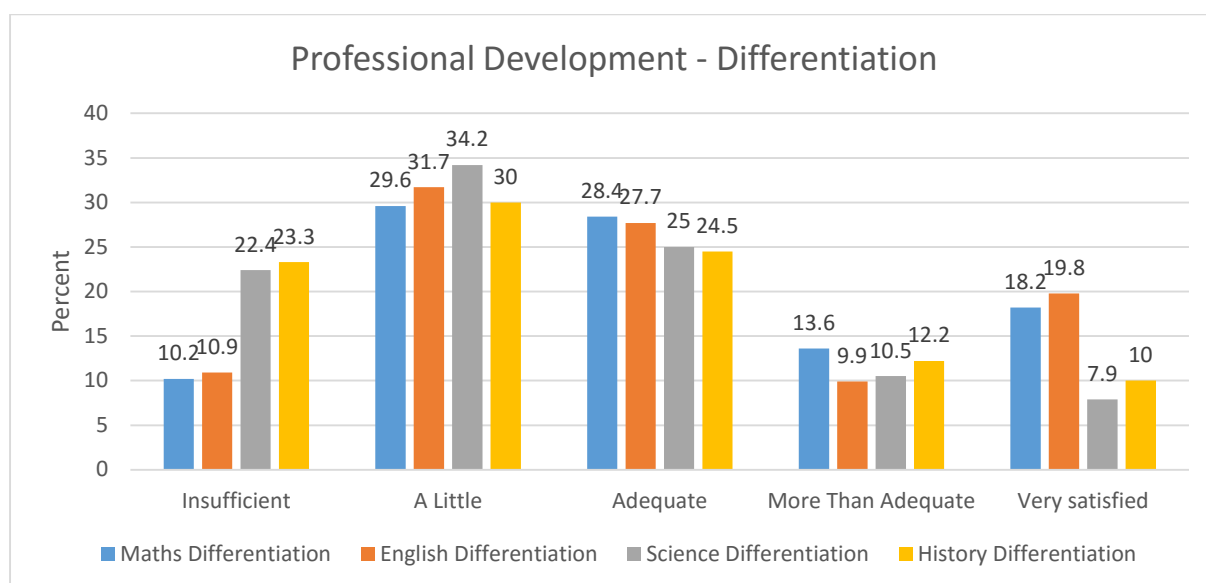
Figure 6.16 Pre-Service Education Differentiation – All Subjects



These figures are magnified when we evaluate the same teachers responding to their degree of satisfaction with the knowledge and skills they receive through professional development activities during their teaching careers (see Figure 6.17). There can be little doubt that teachers, to varying degrees, are relying on the additional training they do while employed in the profession to compensate for the lack of training (or opportunity) in differentiation during their pre-service education. There is, for example, a pronounced drop in the number of teachers who indicated that professional development activities provided insufficient knowledge and skills compared with their pre-service education. In Mathematics, the number that chose ‘insufficient’ dropped from 39.3 per cent for pre-service education to 10.2 per cent for professional development; in English from 38.5 per cent to 10.9 per cent; Science 50.6 per cent to 22.4 per cent; and History 54.7 per cent to 23.3 per cent. At the other end of the scale, if the categories of ‘more than adequate’ and ‘very satisfied’ are combined, the increases in percentages are from 11.2 per cent in pre-service education to 31.8 per cent for professional

development in Mathematics; 12.5 per cent to 29.7 per cent in English; a more modest 10.6 to 18.4 per cent in Science; and 7.3 per cent to 22.2 per cent in History.

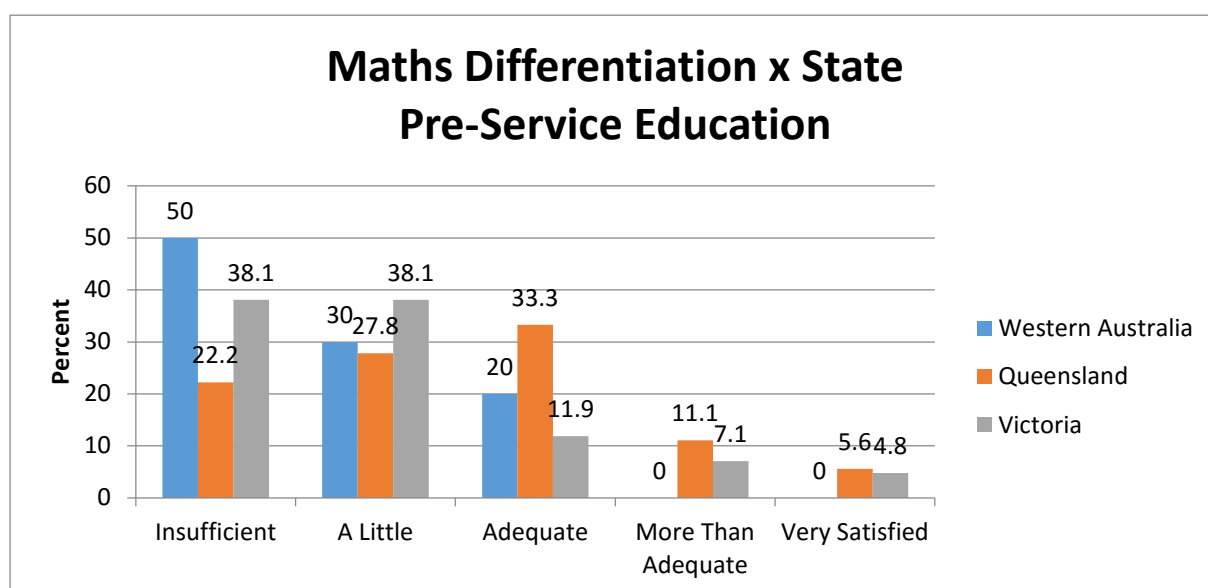
Figure 6.17: Professional Development Differentiation – All Subjects



6.3.3 State Comparisons - Mathematics

Looking at a comparison of teachers in the three states which accounted for 80 per cent of the survey replies, teachers in Western Australia are far more likely to be disenchanted with their pre-service education in terms of differentiation. Considering, for example, the percentage of teachers who chose the most negative option of 'insufficient', 50 per cent of Western Australian teachers opted for this in Mathematics compared with 22.2 per cent in Queensland and 38.1 per cent in Victoria. This is shown in Figure 6.18. Queensland teachers were more likely to consider their pre-service education in differentiation as 'adequate' with one in three teachers selecting this option (33.3 per cent) while the figures for Western Australia and Victoria were 20.0 per cent and 11.9 per cent respectively. From this it can be said that teachers in Western Australia were more dissatisfied with their pre-service education in regards to differentiation and their ability to apply such knowledge in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

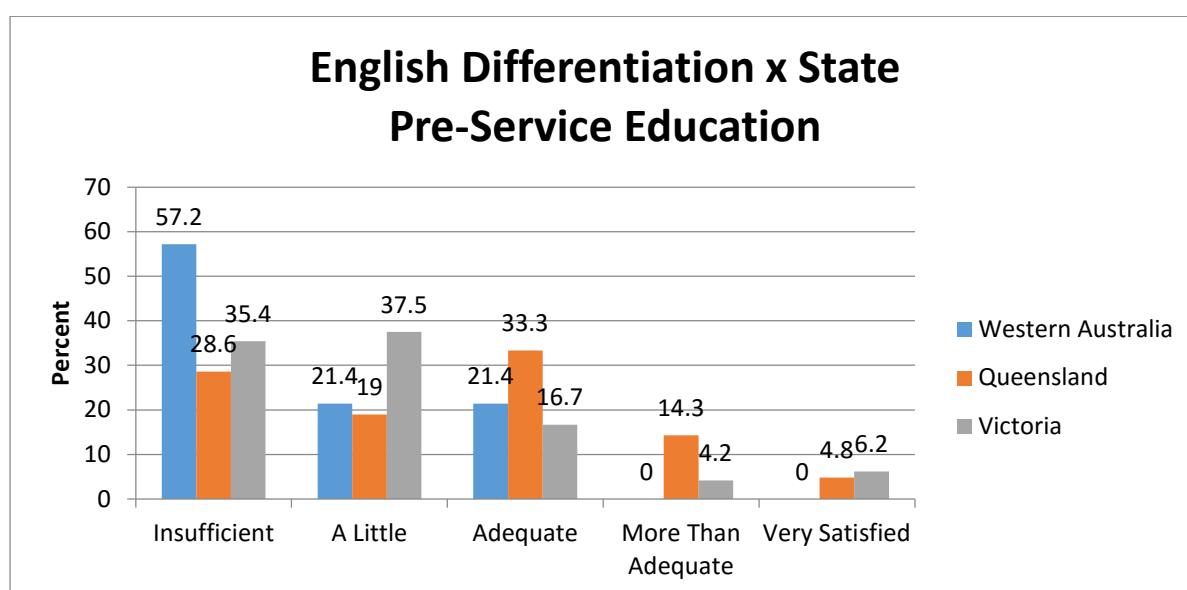
Figure 6.18: Pre-Service Education Maths Differentiation x State



6.3.4 State Comparisons - English

For English, the corresponding percentages of teachers who chose the most negative option of ‘insufficient’ were 57.2 per cent for Western Australia compared with 28.6 per cent (Queensland) and 35.4 per cent (Victoria), as is shown in Figure 6.19. Again, Queensland teachers were more likely to consider their pre-service education in differentiation as ‘adequate’ with one in three teachers selecting this option (33.3 per cent), while the figures for Western Australia and Victoria were 21.4 per cent and 16.7 per cent, respectively. From this it can be said (as for Mathematics) that teachers in Western Australia were more dissatisfied with their pre-service education in English in regards to differentiation and their ability to apply such knowledge in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

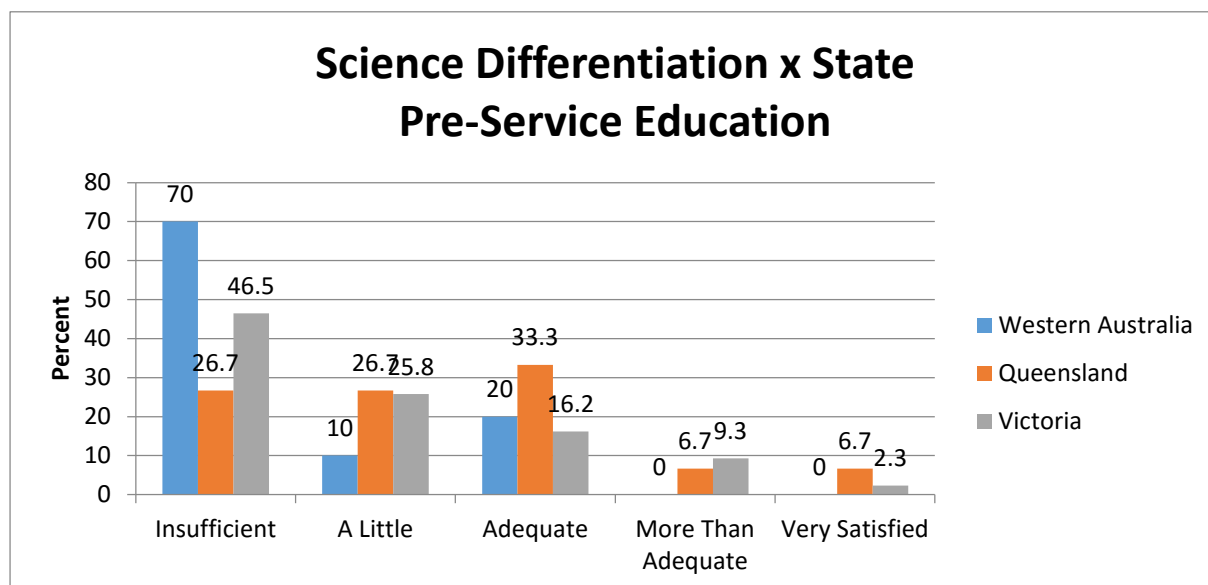
Figure 6.19: Pre-Service Education English Differentiation x State



6.3.5 State Comparisons - Science

Science figures indicating the number of teachers who chose the most negative option of 'insufficient', as shown in Figure 6.20, were also alarming - 70.0 per cent for teachers in Western Australia compared with 26.7 per cent (Queensland) and 46.5 per cent (Victoria). Once again, Queensland teachers were more likely to consider their pre-service education in differentiation as 'adequate' with 33.3 per cent of teachers selecting this option while for Western Australia 20.0 per cent and Victoria 16.2 per cent chose this option.

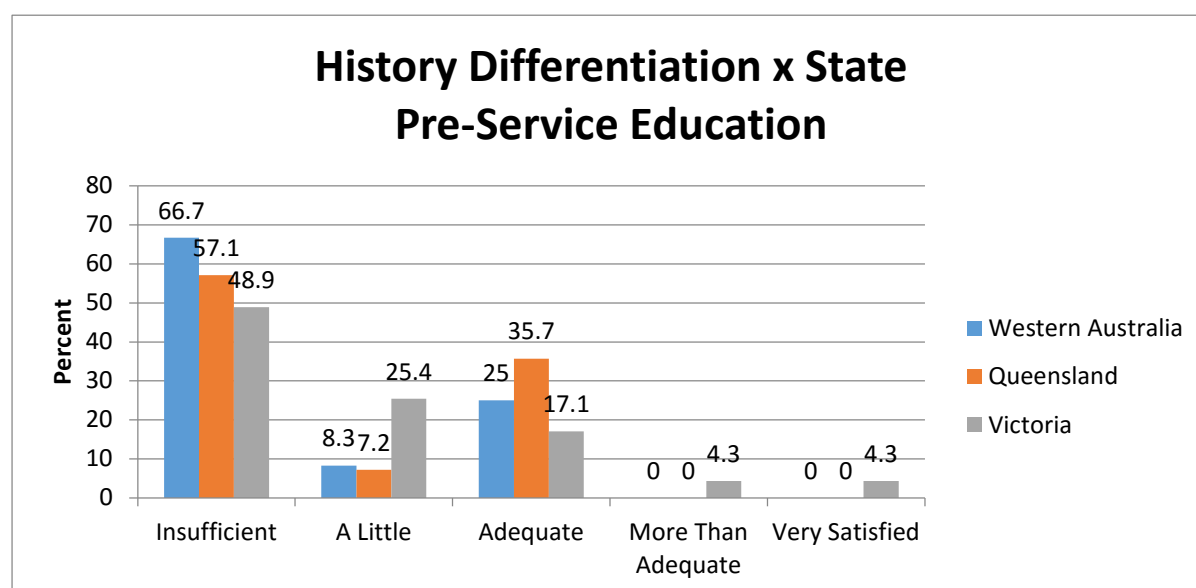
Figure 6.20: Pre-Service Education Science Differentiation x State



6.3.6 State Comparisons - History

Finally, for History where the figures were relatively high for all states, 66.7 per cent of Western Australian teachers chose 'insufficient' while the numbers for Queensland and Victoria were 57.1 per cent and 48.9 per cent respectively. Figure 6.21 provides this information on differentiation from a state perspective. As with the other three disciplines, Queensland teachers were more likely to consider their pre-service education 'adequate' in this area (35.7 per cent). One in four teachers in Western Australia agreed (25.0 per cent), while the figure for Victoria was 17.1 per cent.

Figure 6.21: Pre-Service Education History Differentiation x State



Clearly when looking at differentiation for all four of the Phase 1 disciplines of the Australian Curriculum there are more issues around differentiation for teachers in Western Australia than the other states.

6.4 Theme 3: Teachers of History and Science in Independent Schools in Australia in the main are not confident that their training enables them to integrate the literacy and numeracy capabilities of the Australian Curriculum into their teaching. Again a closer alignment between this area of the Australian Curriculum and teacher education is desirable.

6.4.1 Capabilities - Introduction

The inclusion of seven General Capabilities into the Australian Curriculum has been discussed in Chapters 2 and 5 of this thesis. To summarise some of the main points, the general capabilities were first published in 2010, and revised in 2011, following a national consultation. ACARA promotes the general capabilities by stating that:

They were developed by writing teams with expertise in the particular capabilities, together with advice from the General Capabilities Advisory Group, academics, focus groups of teachers and curriculum experts from the state and territory education authorities. The materials build on significant state and territory initiatives and practice, and are informed by national and international research. (ACARA, 2012h).

Of the seven general capabilities, the survey for this study included specific questions on two: literacy and numeracy. In particular there was a focus on their application in the Phase 1 subjects of Science and History. The Australian Curriculum indicates very clearly where general capabilities have been identified in learning area content descriptions and elaborations.

Furthermore, each learning area includes a brief description of the general capabilities that have been explicitly included in the content or advice about those that could be developed through particular learning contexts. While the primary development of literacy and numeracy is based in English and Mathematics respectively, the development and application of these capabilities across the curriculum is essential to effective teaching and learning in the Australian Curriculum context.

The scope of the literacy capability is put forward clearly by ACARA (see, for example, ACARA 2012i). The literacy capability is premised on three broad principles: that all teachers are responsible for teaching the subject-specific literacy of their learning area; that all teachers need a clear understanding of the literacy demands and opportunities of their learning area; and that literacy appropriate to each learning area can be embedded in the teaching of the content and processes of the learning area (ACARA, 2012j).

Using an icon of a closed book, the literacy capability in the Australian Curriculum is identified in places where it has been developed or applied in the content descriptions or where it offers opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning in the content elaborations. To assist teachers in finding where literacy has been identified in the curriculum content of all subject areas, a filter function has been included on the Australian Curriculum website.

While the Australian Curriculum literacy capability provides a framework for principals, curriculum leaders and teachers to ensure explicit teaching of literacy occurs in all learning areas, it is also important to recognise and acknowledge that the writers have chosen a social view of language that considers how language works to construct meaning in different social and cultural contexts. While it is not the intention to explore this in detail in this thesis, ACARA claims that this view builds on the work of Vygotsky (1976), Brice Heath (1983), Halliday and Hasan (1985), Freebody and Luke (1990), Gee (1991, 2008), and Christie and Derewianka (2008), who have articulated the intrinsic and interdependent relationship between social context, meaning and language (ACARA, 2012k). They continue:

This view is concerned with how language use varies according to the context and situation in which it is used. There are important considerations for curriculum area learning stemming from this view because, as students engage with subject-based content, they must learn to access and use language and visual elements in the particular and special ways that are the distractive and valued modes of communication in each learning area. They need to learn how diverse texts build knowledge in different curriculum areas, and how language and visual information work together in distinctive ways to present this knowledge. (ACARA, 2012k, p.11).

Adopting a social view of language in the Australian Curriculum which considers how language works to construct meaning in different social and cultural contexts means that as students engage with subject-specific content, they must learn to access and use language and visual elements in ways that are valued in each learning area.

In a similar vein, ACARA has provided sound justification for the inclusion of a numeracy capability in the Australian Curriculum and contends that ‘students become numerate as they

develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across other learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly’ (ACARA, 2012l). As with literacy, where the nexus between English and literacy is evident, in the Australian Curriculum much of the explicit teaching of numeracy skills will occur in the Mathematics discipline. Also, as with literacy, the numeracy capability is premised on a commitment by all teachers to develop numeracy as an essential component of learning across the curriculum. Thus teachers are required to identify the specific numeracy demands of their particular learning area; to provide learning experiences and opportunities that support the application of students’ general mathematical knowledge and skills; and, where appropriate, use the language of numeracy in their teaching (ACARA, 2012m).

Again an icon, this time a calculator, is used in the Australian Curriculum to identify for teachers whenever a numeracy capability has been developed or applied in a content description or where it offers opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning in content elaborations.

ACARA has drawn on a number of evidence-based reports and papers to support the identification of numeracy as a general capability to be addressed across the curriculum. These include the *National Numeracy Review Report* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008) which argues for an emphasis both on Mathematics as a distinct area of study and numeracy as an across-the-curriculum competency; the work of Carraher, Carraher & Schliemann (1985) and Zevenbergen & Zevenbergen (2009) emphasises that the mathematics students use in context is better understood than mathematics used in isolation; the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (1998) also emphasise this view in their *Policy on Numeracy Education in Schools*, stating explicitly that numeracy requires contextual and strategic knowledge as well as mathematical skills. Others cited by ACARA include Thornton & Hogan (2005) who espouse the idea that numeracy moments often arise in unexpected situations, Miller (2010) who advocates the need for quantitative literacy if people are to participate fully in a democratic society; and Steen (2001), the US educator, who points out from a ‘democratic’ perspective, the ever-increasing gap between people’s quantitative needs and their quantitative capacity.

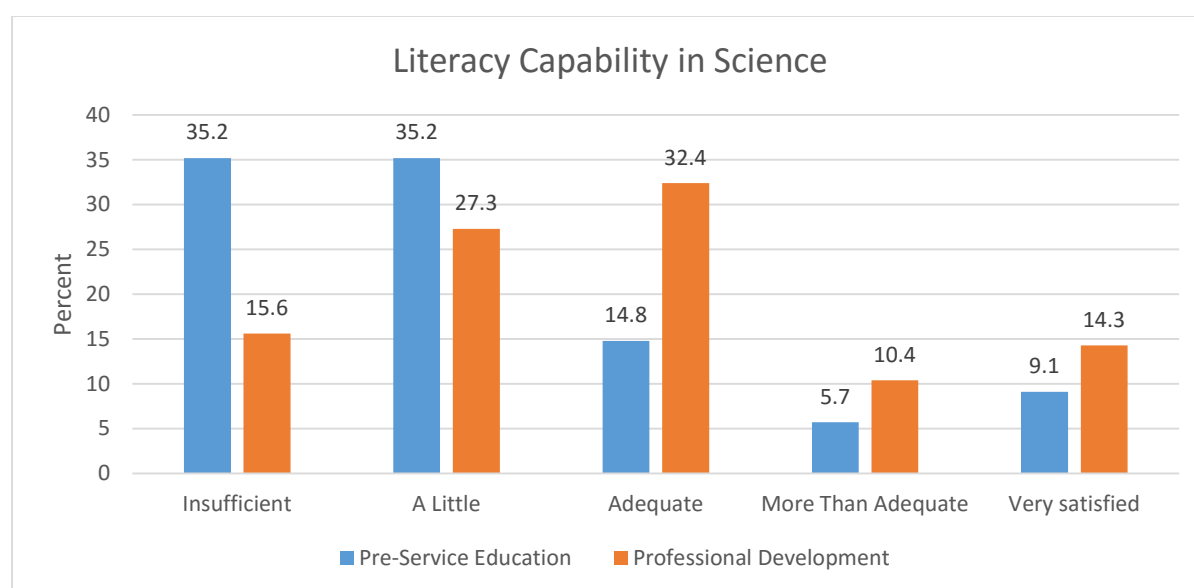
6.4.2 Capabilities – Survey Results and Analysis

Given the importance of the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum and the length that ACARA have gone both to justify the general capabilities and to facilitate the ease of access for teachers to these capabilities in the Australian Curriculum, it is interesting to view the responses from teachers of Science and History in the independent sector as to how well prepared they felt to incorporate literacy and numeracy capabilities into their daily teaching.

Considering, in the first instance, the literacy capability, more than two out of every three Science teachers (70.4 per cent) found their pre-service education less than adequate in teaching the Australian Curriculum (see Figure 6.22). The combined percentages of positive responses (that is, Science teachers who chose ‘adequate’, ‘more than adequate’ or ‘very satisfied’) was just 29.6 per cent. This figure rose to 57.1 per cent for the same teachers when

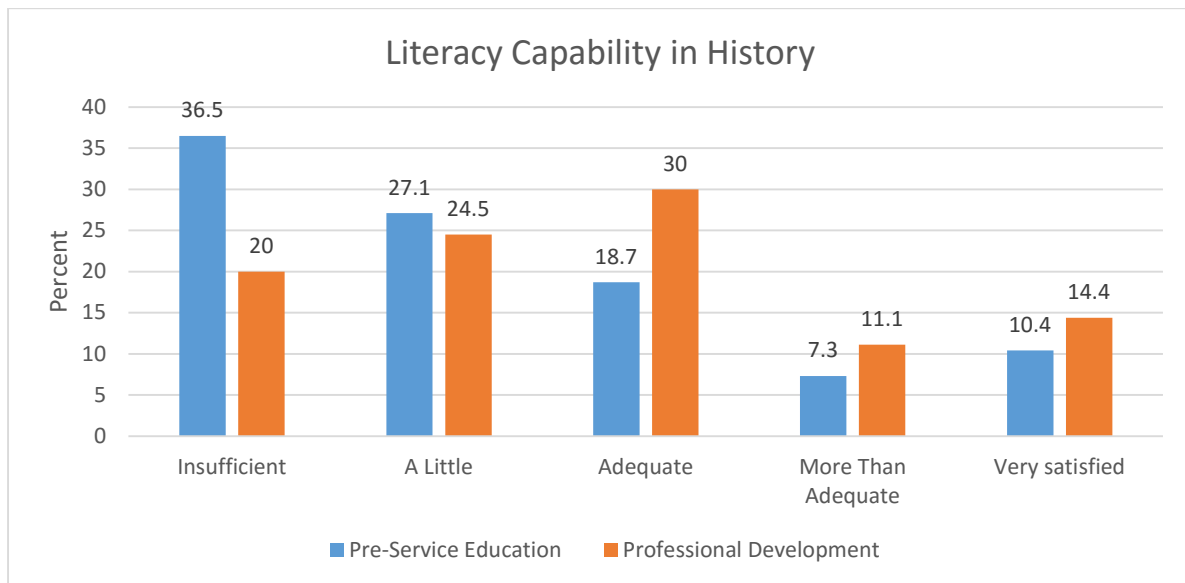
they responded to the same question but on Professional Development undertaken while in the profession, as opposed to their pre-service education, as can be seen in Figure 6.22. One possible reason for this is that many subject associations and educational groups provided extensive programs for teachers following the release of the Australian Curriculum. For example, the Australian Curriculum Studies Association in 2012 ran a two-day curriculum symposium in Adelaide specifically on the general capabilities, which followed on from their previous symposium in 2010, which was also on the Australian Curriculum. Likewise, Independent Schools Victoria ran a series of one-day programs on the general capabilities over a two-year period. These two random examples are indicative of what was happening throughout Australia.

Figure 6.22: Literacy Capability in Science



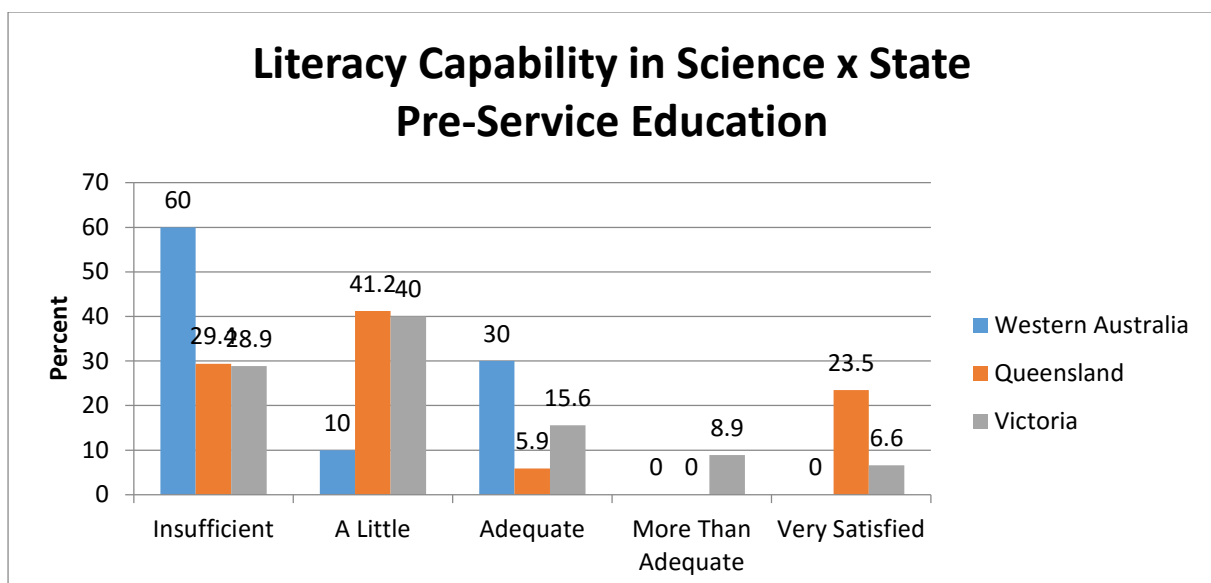
Teachers of History showed a similar response in regards to their pre-service education preparing them to incorporate literacy capabilities into their discipline while teaching the Australian Curriculum (see Figure 6.23). Positive responses were somewhat higher (36.4 per cent) than Science teachers although the number of dissatisfied teachers was almost at a level of two out of every three (63.6 per cent). Again, there was also a higher positive figure in regards to Professional Development: 55.5 per cent, with a corresponding number of dissatisfied teachers falling from 63.6 per cent to 44.5 per cent.

Figure 6.23: Literacy Capability in History



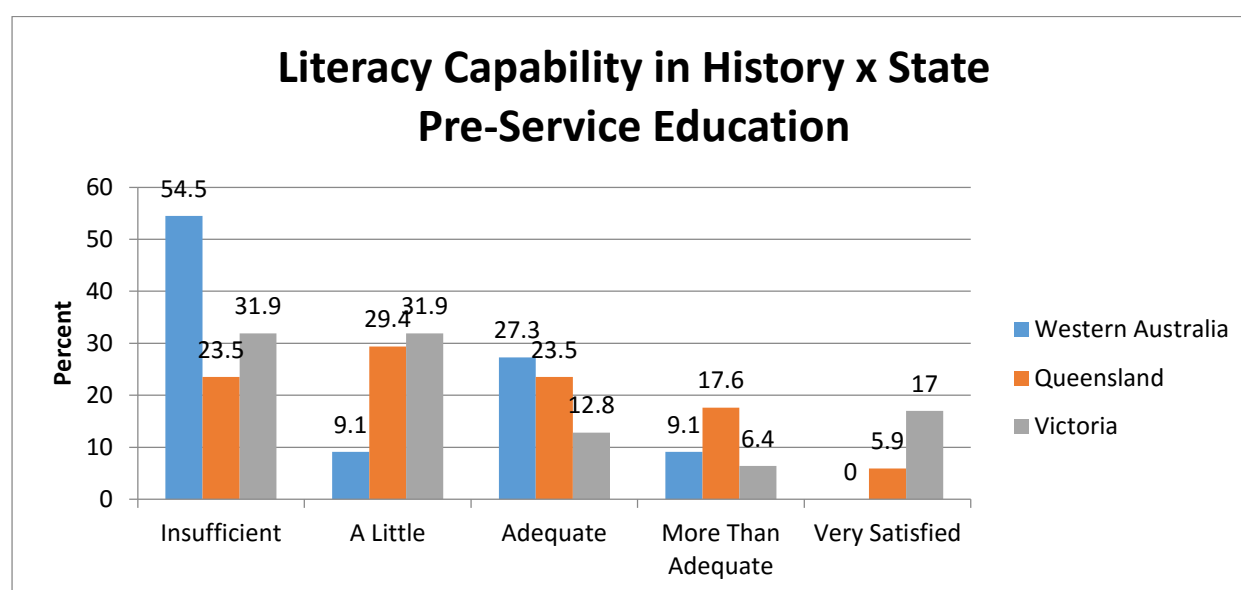
From a state perspective, Science teachers in Western Australia were far more critical of their pre-service education at the lower end of the scale than those from Queensland or Victoria (see Figure 6.24). Sixty per cent of Western Australian Science teachers regarded their pre-service education as insufficient in teaching the Australian Curriculum, compared with 29.4 per cent in Queensland and 28.9 per cent in Victoria. However, if the three positive categories are combined, there is little difference: Western Australia 30.0 per cent; Queensland 29.4 per cent and Victoria 31.1 per cent. Of the 29.4 per cent from Queensland the vast majority of these (23.5 per cent) were very satisfied.

Figure 6.24: Pre-Service Education Literacy Capability in Science x State



History teachers also provided some interesting responses. Again, History teachers from Western Australia were the most negative, in that 54.5 per cent chose the ‘insufficient’ category compared with 23.5 per cent from Queensland and 31.9 per cent from Victoria (see Figure 6.25). Looking at the three positive categories combined, there was little difference between Western Australia and Victoria, however; 36.4 per cent and 36.2 per cent respectively. The figure for Queensland was a high 47.0 per cent, yet more teachers in Victoria chose the highest ‘Very Satisfied’ category than those from either of the two other states.

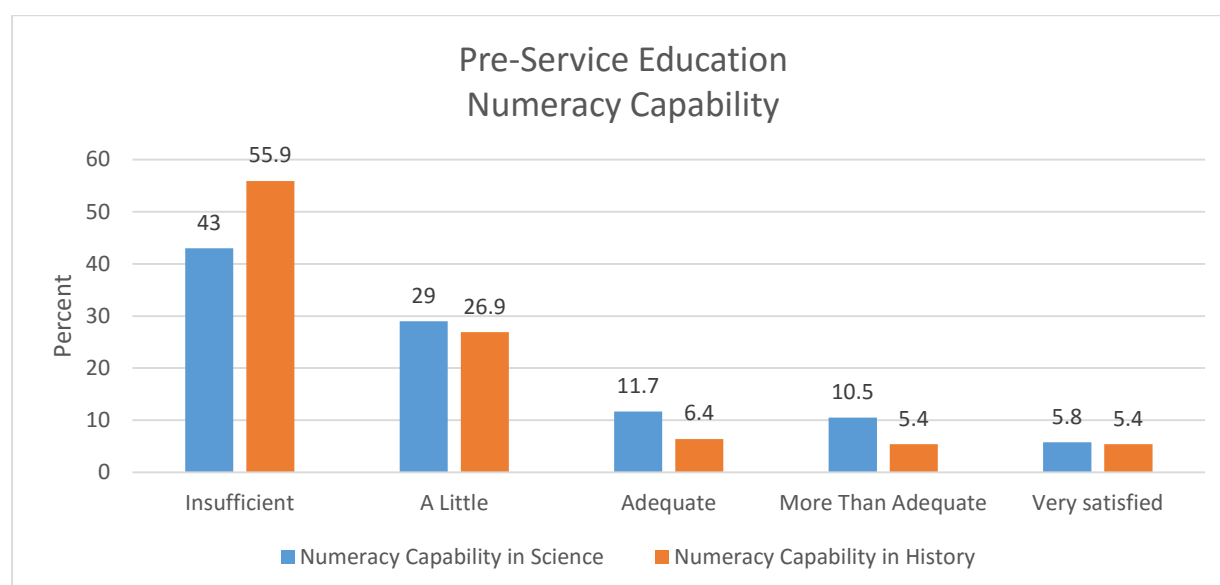
Figure 6.25: Pre-Service Education Literacy Capability in History x State



This data suggests that, while for many years now there has been a general consensus in schools that broadly speaking ‘all teachers are teachers of English’ in practice, teachers of Science and History feel underprepared to take this on board.

Turning now to the numeracy capability, the responses from teachers of Science and History in the independent sector as to how well prepared they felt to incorporate numeracy capabilities into their day-to-day teaching can be seen in Figure 6.26.

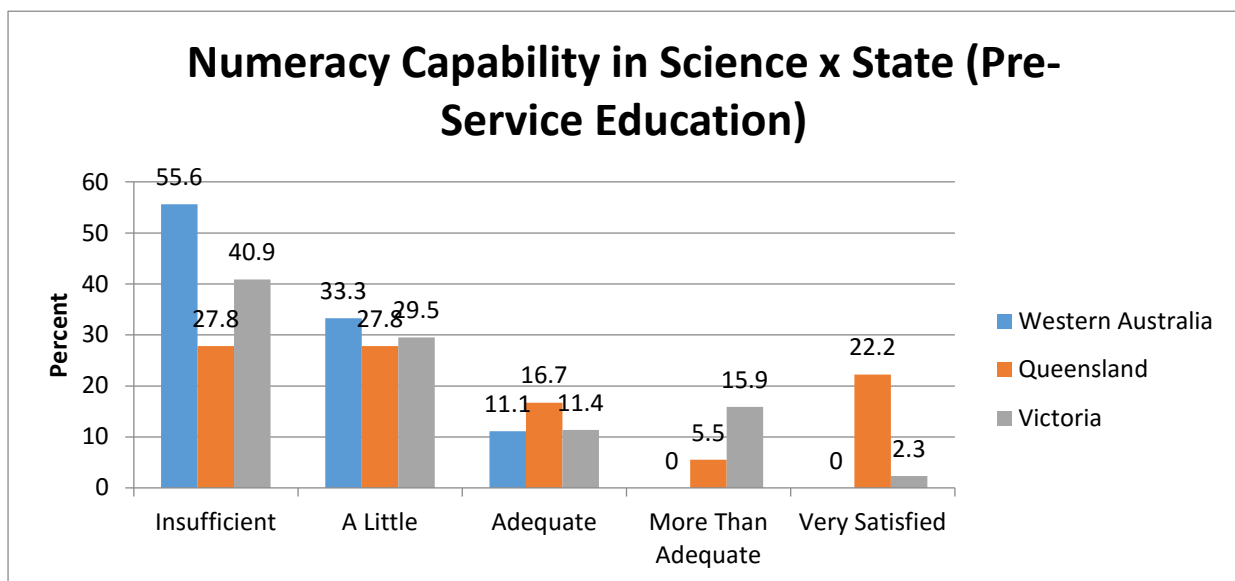
Figure 6.26 Numeracy Capability in Science and History



Only 28.0 per cent of Science teachers were positive, in that they chose ‘adequate’, ‘more than adequate’ or ‘very satisfied’. Approximately two out of five Science teachers (43 per cent) indicated that their pre-service education had not prepared them for the changed emphasis in the Australian Curriculum on incorporating numeracy capabilities into their curriculum by choosing ‘insufficient’ from the responses on offer. The figures were even more discouraging from teachers of History. More than half of all respondents (55.9 per cent) chose ‘insufficient’ while the positive responses achieved by combining the ‘adequate’, ‘more than adequate’ and ‘very satisfied’ options was a low 17.2 per cent.

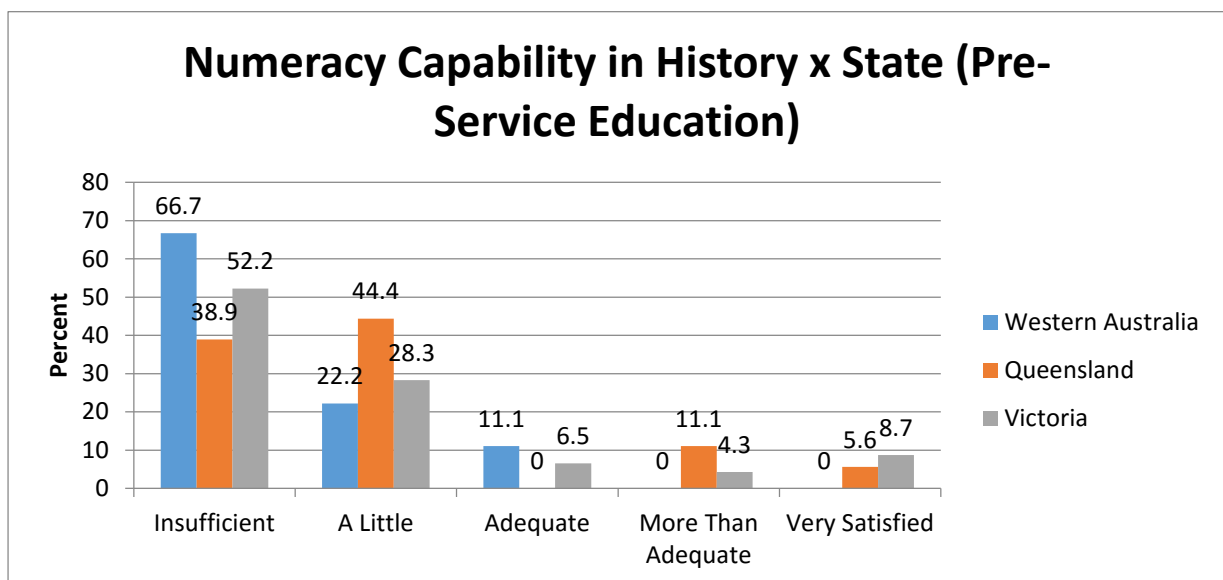
Some interesting comparisons can be ascertained from looking at this data from a state perspective. Figure 6.27 shows that Western Australian teachers of Science overwhelmingly indicated a dissonance between their pre-service education and what was now expected of them in implementing a numeracy capability into their day-to-day teaching. More than half (55.6 per cent) chose the ‘insufficient’ option – twice the number of respondents from Queensland (27.8 per cent) and higher than the 40.9 per cent from Victoria. Only 11.1 per cent of Western Australian respondents indicated ‘adequate’ with none choosing an option more positive than that one. By contrast, 22.2 per cent of Queensland teachers were ‘very satisfied’ with their pre-service education while 15.9 per cent of Victorian teachers found it ‘more than adequate’. However the graph clearly shows, overall, a skew to the left.

Figure 6.27 Numeracy Capability in Science x State



For History, the dissatisfaction was even more pronounced as can be seen in Figure 6.28. Two out of three History teachers from Western Australia (66.7 per cent) chose 'insufficient', however the most prominent feature of this graph is the pronounced skew to the left with only a very small number of responses from any of the three states in the positive range.

Figure 6.28 Numeracy Capability in History x State



6.5 Theme 4: Teachers in Independent Schools in Australia overwhelmingly endorse inquiry learning as the optimal pedagogy for implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

6.5.1 Inquiry Learning - Introduction

Inquiry learning originated in a belief in the development of independent learners, with its method requiring active participation by students (Joyce & Weil, 1980, p. 62). The general goal of inquiry learning is to help students develop the intellectual discipline and skills necessary to raise questions and search out answers (Joyce & Weil, 1980, p. 62). It shifts the focus from the end result of the student being 'learned' to an endpoint where the student is regarded as a 'learner'. That is, a person whose formal education has not been solely based on acquiring a body of broad-based and job-specific knowledge and skills, but who has also developed the capabilities such as those advocated in the Australian Curriculum and which include creative and critical thinking and personal and social competence. ACARA have postulated that there is a relationship between creative and critical thinking and inquiry learning (ACARA 2014b). In an on-line information paper they state:

The philosophical inquiry method ... has two major elements: critical and creative thinking, and forming a classroom environment called a 'community of inquiry', to support the development of thinking and discussion skills... Twenty-first century learning theories emphasise the importance of supporting authentic and ubiquitous learning, and providing students with opportunities, resources and spaces to develop their creative and critical thinking skills... Learners need to develop the skills to analyse and respond to authentic situations through inquiry, imagination and innovation. (ACARA, 2014b).

Others have echoed this relationship between creative and critical thinking and inquiry learning as it relates to the Australian Curriculum. Two brief examples are examined here. In February 2014 a series of workshops were conducted in Melbourne by teacher librarians under the title *Teacher librarians as innovators and collaborators in the Australian Curriculum: A workshop for Teacher Librarians*, with a central theme being to 'work collaboratively with teachers to develop the general capability of critical and creative thinking through using the model of inquiry based learning' (SLAV, 2014). Likewise, in October 2014, Associate Professor Gillian Kidman, in delivering one of the Faculty of Education Dean's Lecture Series presentations at Monash University, hypothesised that through the application of the Australian Curriculum's general capabilities, including creative and critical thinking, the integration of the three inquiry strands of the Australian Curriculum formed an inquiry learning framework (Kidman, 2014).

The creative and critical thinking capability includes being resourceful, collaborative, inquisitive, logical and imaginative, to name just a few of the attributes. It could be claimed that an emphasis on 'learner' rather than 'learned' or 'learnedness' reflects what Proctor (2007) wrote in the foreword to Scolese's book *The Whisper in Your Heart*:

In times of change, the learner shall inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists. (Proctor, 2007, pp. xiii-xiv).

So it can be argued that inquiry learning is designed for a changing world, a twenty-first century with the defining feature being economic, cultural, environmental, political and interpersonal change. Conrad & Dunek (2012) call it an 'age of uncertainty'; Ramo (2009) an 'age of surprise'; and Barnett (2005) a world of 'strangeness' and 'unpredictability'. No matter what label is put on it, it is an age that needs to produce students with various adaptable capabilities and competencies and not just knowledge.

The Australian Curriculum takes a strong stance on inquiry learning but one which is in many ways interesting. In the Australian Curriculum, inquiry skills are explicit in the Phase 1 subjects of Science and History. In Science, for example, 'Science Inquiry Skills' is one of the three strands. It involves:

Identifying and posing questions; planning, conducting and reflecting on investigations; processing, analysing and interpreting evidence; and communicating findings. This strand is concerned with evaluating claims, investigating ideas, solving problems, drawing valid conclusions and developing evidence-based arguments. (ACARA, 2011f, p.10).

Lupton (2012) argues that this description of inquiry is generic and could be applied to any discipline. Others project a different perspective. Shelley Peers, the Project Manager of the Science and Literacy Project at the Australian Academy of Science, holds out hope that teachers will have the opportunity with the Australian Curriculum to transform their practice and 'build a new vision of what it means to teach science' (Peers, 2011, p. 17). She advocates, at the primary school level at least, moving from an activity-based curriculum to a true inquiry curriculum which will help students 'develop deep knowledge, to think critically and to contribute to a tolerant world' (Peers, 2011, p. 17).

Tytler & Hobbs (2011) likewise acknowledge positively the prominence given to inquiry processes through the inclusion of the Science Inquiry strand in the Australian Curriculum Science document, adding that, in their opinion, there is clear evidence in the literature that 'inquiry approaches, which have students questioning and exploring and making decisions, engage them in quality learning and support the development of higher order thinking' (Tytler & Hobbs, 2011, p. 6). However, they add as a sober reminder that there is also ample research to show that inquiry approaches and investigative work have existed as the exception rather than the rule as classroom practices (Tytler & Hobbs, 2011, p. 6).

Turning from Science to History, in the Australian Curriculum in History, it is claimed that historical inquiry...

...develops transferable skills, such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different

perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively. (ACARA, 2011g, p.1).

With this approach, Lupton (2012) would posit that questions and method are prominent and historical inquiry is presented as being dependent on analysing primary and secondary sources. This tends to match the current approach to the teaching of History. Henderson (2012), for example, writes that today's history classrooms are places where students form their knowledge of the past through careful inquiry rather than accepting unquestioned representations (Henderson, 2012, p. 5). She applauds the curriculum materials that are now available which support the critical inquiry of history and culture and encourage students to construct their knowledge of the past through this approach.

Crerar, et al (2015), tend to concur stating that when students learn History through inquiry they are overwhelmingly enthusiastic as opposed to the alienation and abject disinterest when fed the facts without the opportunity to construct meaning or draw upon their prior knowledge and cultural perspectives. They add that the Australian Curriculum recognises the importance of this pedagogical approach (Crerar, et al, 2015, p. 45).

However, despite the endorsement of inquiry learning in the Australian Curriculum, apparent anomalies in the scope and sequence have been identified. For example, students are expected to be able to evaluate information critically in Year 7 in History, but not until Year 9 in Science. (Likewise students plan an inquiry in Year 7 in Science, but in the Phase 2 subject of Geography – which is outside the parameters of this study – students plan an inquiry two years earlier in Year 5). Tytler & Hobbs (2011) claim that there has been some quite trenchant criticism of the use of Piagetian stage ideas to frame science curricula that underestimate children's capacity to engage with ideas and interpret evidence. Citing the work of Metz (1995; 1997) and Tytler & Peterson (2003; 2004), they state that the presumption that children from the Foundation Year to Year 2 should be restricted to observation, classification and pattern seeking, falls well short of their actual capacity for reasoning. Furthermore, they contend that many Foundation Year children are capable of proposing and judging science explanations and that this is quite common by Year 1 (Tytler & Hobbs, 2011, p. 5).

Lupton (2013) alerts us to the fact that the language used within and among subject areas in the Australian Curriculum in relation to questioning is different and states that 'students are variously expected to 'pose', 'identify', 'frame', 'formulate', 'construct' and 'develop' questions' and that it is 'unclear as to whether these terms have any differences' (Lupton, 2013, p. 28).

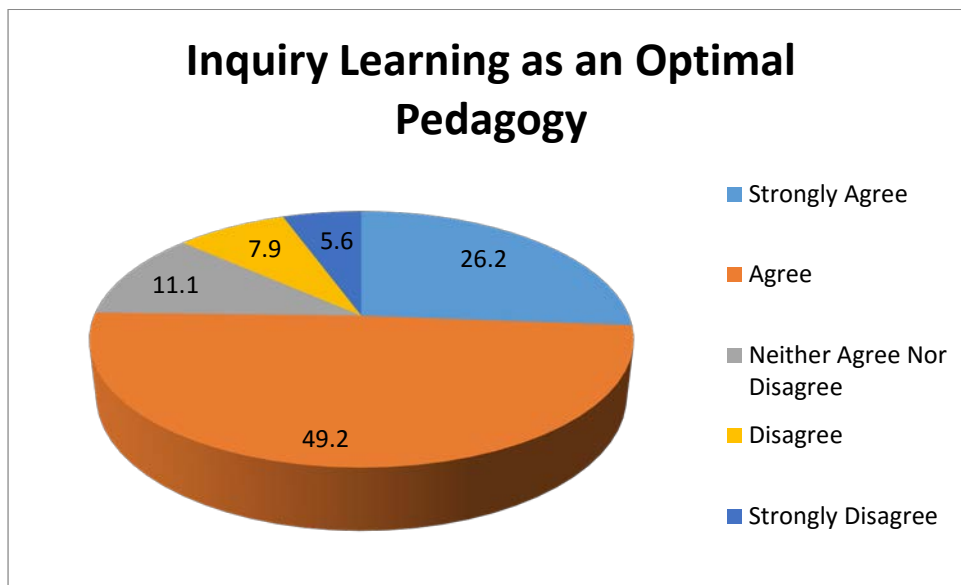
In an earlier paper, Lupton (2012) noted that the Australian Curriculum uses the term 'inquiry' and 'inquiry skills' but never the term 'inquiry learning'. She posits that it could be argued that inquiry skills are a part of inquiry learning. 'For instance,' she writes, 'inquiry skills can be regarded as procedures and processes undertaken by the student, while inquiry learning can be regarded as the pedagogical and curriculum approach' (Lupton, 2012, p. 18). This fits well with ACARA's remit of not determining pedagogy but Lupton argues that the lack of a

coherent understanding of inquiry learning in the Australian Curriculum was a lost opportunity for ACARA.

6.5.2 Inquiry Learning: Survey Results and Analysis

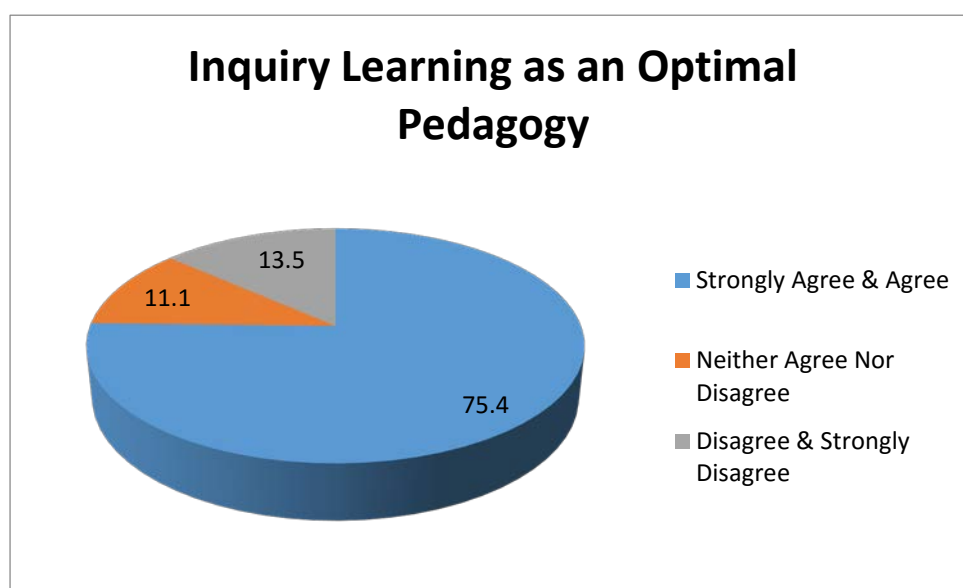
Despite any shortcoming in the Australian Curriculum documentation, teachers in Independent Schools have overwhelmingly endorsed inquiry learning. Approximately one in four strongly agreed that an inquiry based approach is the optimal teaching and learning pedagogy. A further one out of every two teachers agreed. These figures are shown in Figure 6.29.

Figure 6.29: Inquiry Learning as an Optimal Pedagogy



Furthermore, if the five choice categories were condensed to three, indicating those who agreed and strongly agreed as one category, those who disagreed and strongly disagreed as a second category, and those who neither agreed nor disagreed as the third; a huge 75.4 per cent of independent teachers agreed with the proposal that Inquiry Learning is an optimal pedagogy, while only 13.5 per cent disagreed, with the remaining 11.1 per cent being non-committal (see Figure 6.30).

Figure 6.30: Inquiry Learning as an Optimal Pedagogy – 3 Categories



When given the opportunity to consider what might be the implications for teacher education as a result of implementing the Australian Curriculum, comments from respondents included the need for ‘a greater emphasis of 21st century learners’ needs in addition to content in specific disciplines’ (Respondent 56); ‘more time on analytical skills’ (Respondent 214); ‘more thinking pedagogy’ (Respondent 187); and ‘need to be taught inquiry skills as well as content’ (Respondent 43).

6.6 Theme 5: Teachers in Independent Schools in Australia believe they have had inadequate preparation for the inclusion of each of the three cross-curriculum priorities into their disciplines as required by the Australian Curriculum.

6.6.1 Cross-Curriculum Priorities - Introduction

The inclusion of three Cross-Curriculum Priorities in the Australian Curriculum has previously been mentioned in Chapter 5. These three priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture, Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia, and Sustainability reflect a local, regional and global perspective. For the purposes of this thesis a focus will be directed to one of these: Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia.

The nationally agreed goals for schooling in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) affirm that young Australians need to be ‘Asia literate’ and ‘to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia’ (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 9). This policy agenda is being implemented in large part through the Australian Curriculum, particularly through the cross-curriculum priority.

The focus expressed in the Melbourne Declaration has been endorsed and extended in two later major documents. One was the White Paper on *Australia in the Asia Century*. National Objective 10 from that White Paper stated that ‘every Australian student will have significant

exposure to studies of Asia across the curriculum to increase their cultural knowledge and skills and enable them to be active in the region’ (Asian Century Taskforce, 2012, p. 170). The second document was *The Australian Education Bill 2012* which was released on 28 November, 2012, and stated that under a National Plan for School Improvement ‘every Australian student will have significant exposure to studies in Asia across the curriculum’ (DEEWR, 2012). This was also to include access to studying an Asian language from their commencement of schooling in the Foundation Year.

The role of the Australian Curriculum will be crucial in attaining this goal for Australia’s students. Kathe Kirby, the Executive Director of Melbourne University’s Asialink Centre has called the Australian Curriculum a ‘game changer’ and has enthused that the Melbourne Declaration and the Australian Curriculum ‘provide the strongest policy levers we have ever had in place to progress Asia literacy’ (Kirby, 2013, p. 11). However, Kirby tempers this by adding that we will not achieve this without investment in our education workforce – our teachers and our school leaders. (Note: Asia literacy has been defined as ‘the knowledge, skills and understandings of the histories, geographies, literatures, arts, cultures and languages of the diverse countries of the Asian region. It includes both cross-curriculum studies of Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia, and learning Asian Languages’). (Asia Education Foundation, 2012, p. 7). The 2013 Report of a study commissioned by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations and managed by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) concurred with Kirby, stating that the success of the policy initiative would depend on the capacity of teachers and principals to deliver the cross-curriculum Asia priority in the Australian Curriculum (Halse, et al, 2013).

A number of issues arose from this study, conducted by a team of researchers from Deakin University, which are relevant to this discussion. Briefly, four of these were as follows:

- Teachers and principals defined Asia literacy in terms of what was at the time practical and possible within their own classrooms and schools. A major factor in this was the expertise and/or the interests of a particular teacher or school.
- There was a close alignment between teachers and principals’ views of the key benefits of teaching and learning about Asia and the Australian Curriculum’s general capability of Intercultural Understanding. However, the teaching workforce did not view individual or national economic benefits as an important rationale for teaching and learning about Asia, leaving the researchers to call for a closer alignment between the teaching workforce and public policy.
- The research findings were categorical that an Asia literate teaching workforce hinged on the provision of continuous, high-level tertiary study; and
- It was acknowledged that the majority of teachers completed their initial education without addressing teaching and learning about Asia. (Halse, et al, 2013).

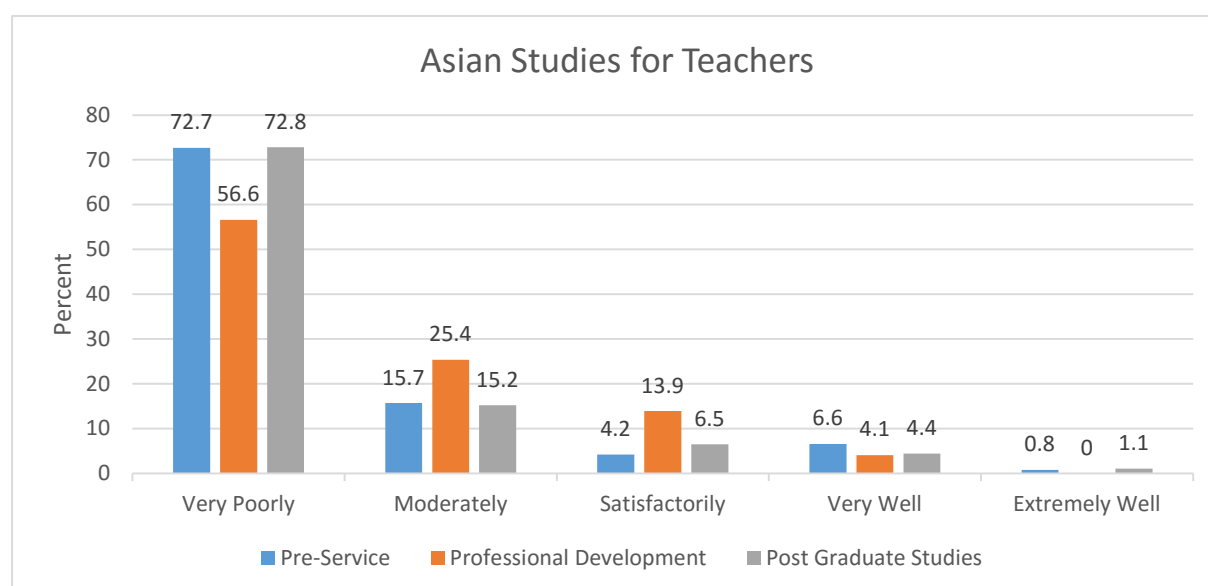
Eight recommendations were contained in this report, two of which are particularly relevant to this study. Recommendation 5 was that a national strategic plan be developed and implemented to ensure that principals and teachers at all stages of the career continuum have access to Asia

related professional learning, including advanced tertiary study. Recommendation 8 was that Asia relevant content knowledge and skills be included in initial teacher education, to equip all graduate teachers with a strong basis for implementing the Asia priority in the Australian Curriculum (Halse, et al, 2013).

6.6.2 Cross-Curriculum Priorities – Survey Results and Analysis

The results from teachers in Independent Schools, as obtained in this study, certainly validate the views expressed above. Over 70 per cent of respondents rated their pre-service education in Asian Studies as very poor with less than one per cent saying it was extremely well done (see Figure 6.31). This emphasises the case that a major change such as the introduction of the Australian Curriculum requires Higher Education Institutions to be given a lead-in time to prepare teachers at both the pre-service and graduate levels to accommodate that change, particularly when an area to be changed is raised as a priority.

Figure 6.31: Inclusion of Asian Studies in Teacher Education

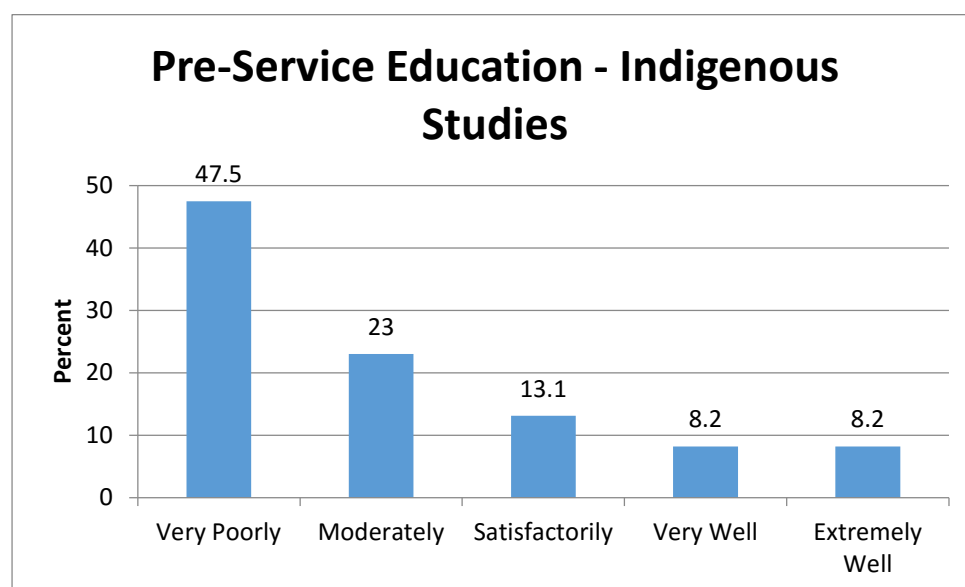


The situation did not change to any marked degree when teachers commented on the professional development they had undertaken during their careers or on the post-graduate studies they had undertaken (where applicable) as is shown in Figure 6.31. A skew to the left in the graph was prominent for all categories of pre-service, professional development and post graduate studies.

So an added burden for teachers with the implementation of the new Australian Curriculum has been to deal with a Cross-Curriculum Priority for which they have had little or no training or preparation. Clearly, those schools and teachers who have managed this successfully are, in the main, those with a specific interest in this area or a degree of expertise; but to include this section of the Australian Curriculum without sufficient training for teachers and school leaders was, it could be argued, imprudent.

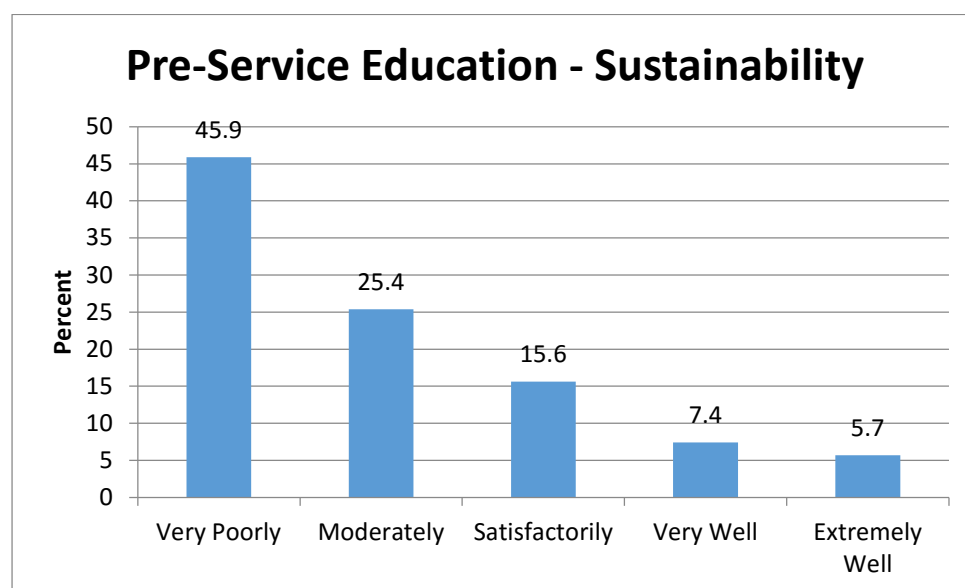
The situation is somewhat better for the other two Cross-Curriculum Priorities, although the lack of sufficient training for teachers prior to the introduction of the Australian Curriculum remains an issue. Looking at the pre-service education of teachers in relation to Indigenous Studies, just over 16 per cent believe this was done well – a much better figure compared with Asian Studies. However, the number who believed this was very poorly covered is still quite high at 47.5 per cent, as can be seen in Figure 6.32.

Figure 6.32: Inclusion of Indigenous Studies in Pre-Service Education



Similar figures to these were found for the inclusion of Sustainability in pre-service education programs, as can be seen in Figure 6.33 below.

Figure 6.33: Inclusion of Sustainability in Pre-Service Education



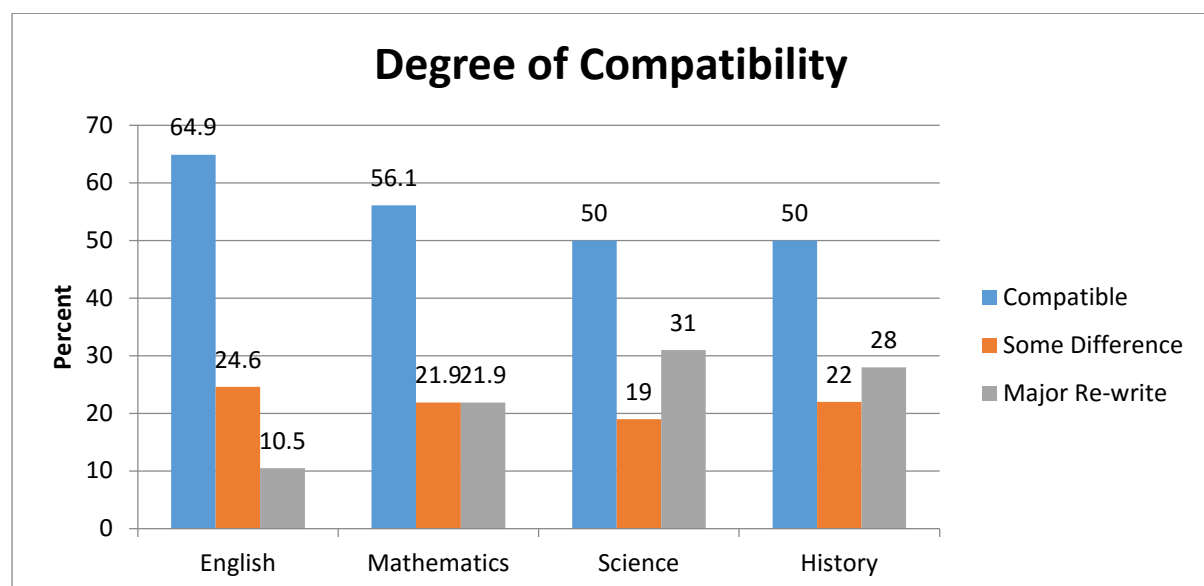
A further factor relevant to these findings is the claim by Maxwell (2014) that the detail on the Australian Curriculum website about the intentions behind the cross-curriculum priorities is scant, with little guidance provided to teachers about what is expected of them (Maxwell, 2014, p. 30).

6.7 Further Research Findings: Compatibility of Curricula; Pedagogical Adjustments; Assessment Issues

6.7.1 Compatibility of Curricula

Other research findings from this survey add further dimensions to what can be ascertained regarding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Independent Schools throughout the nation. One of these factors would be the degree of compatibility between the new Australian Curriculum and the curriculum that was being offered in schools prior to this change. It could well be argued that the greater the compatibility between the two, the greater the likelihood of a smoother and more successful transition to the national curriculum. In the discussions above on pre-service education with regards to knowledge, pedagogy and differentiation, a special case has emerged around History and, to a lesser extent, Science when compared with English and Mathematics. A similar trend emerged when teachers responded to questions on subject compatibility. Each of the four Phase 1 subjects is briefly examined below, following an overview shown in Figure 6.34.

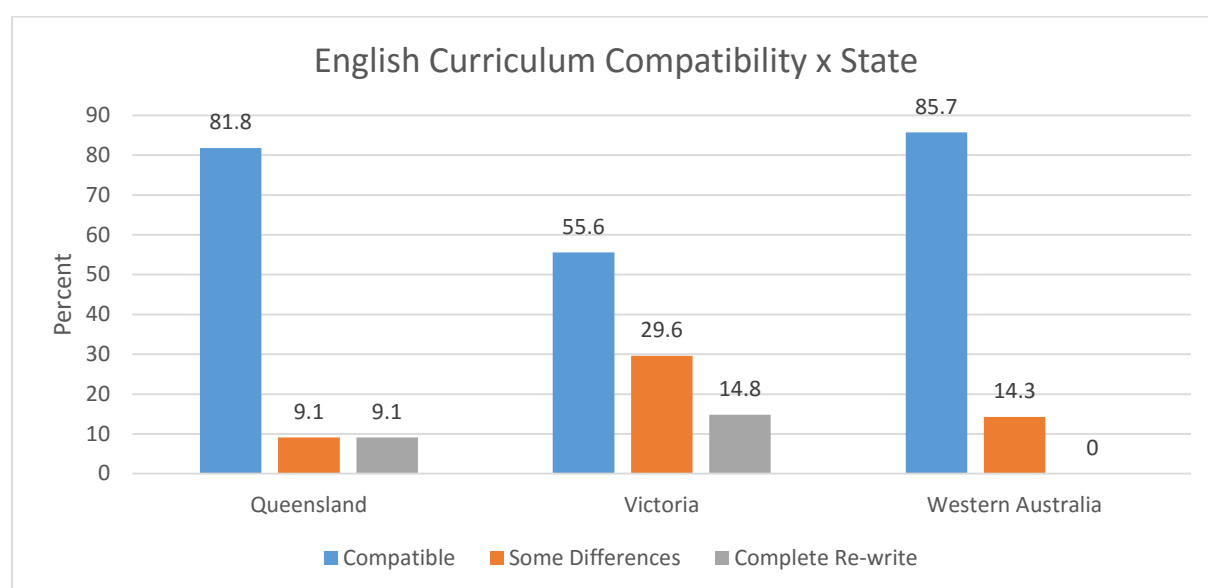
Figure 6.34: A Comparative Look at the Degree of Compatibility of Phase 1 Subjects with Current School Curriculum Documents



English Curriculum Compatibility: The Australian Curriculum in English was considered to be the most compatible of all the four disciplines with what was previously being taught in Independent Schools as is shown in Figure 6.34. Teachers reported that overall there was a strong compatibility between the Australian Curriculum English document and their own school's English curriculum. Only 10.5 per cent indicated that a major re-write of their school curriculum had occurred following the on-line publication of the Australian Curriculum by ACARA; with 24.6 per cent indicating that there were some differences and almost two thirds (64.9 per cent) stating that the two documents (school and national) were compatible.

With the three states that had the greatest number of respondents, however, (Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia) a different picture emerged, as is shown in Figure 6.35. In both Queensland and Western Australia, approximately four in every five teachers had a positive response for compatibility (81.8 per cent and 85.7 per cent respectively); while in Victoria this was lower with 55.6 per cent. Likewise, in Victoria, 14.8 per cent indicated that a complete re-write of the school's curriculum was carried out, whereas the figure for Queensland was a low 9.1 per cent with Western Australian teachers not choosing that option at all.

Figure 6.35 English Curriculum Compatibility – State

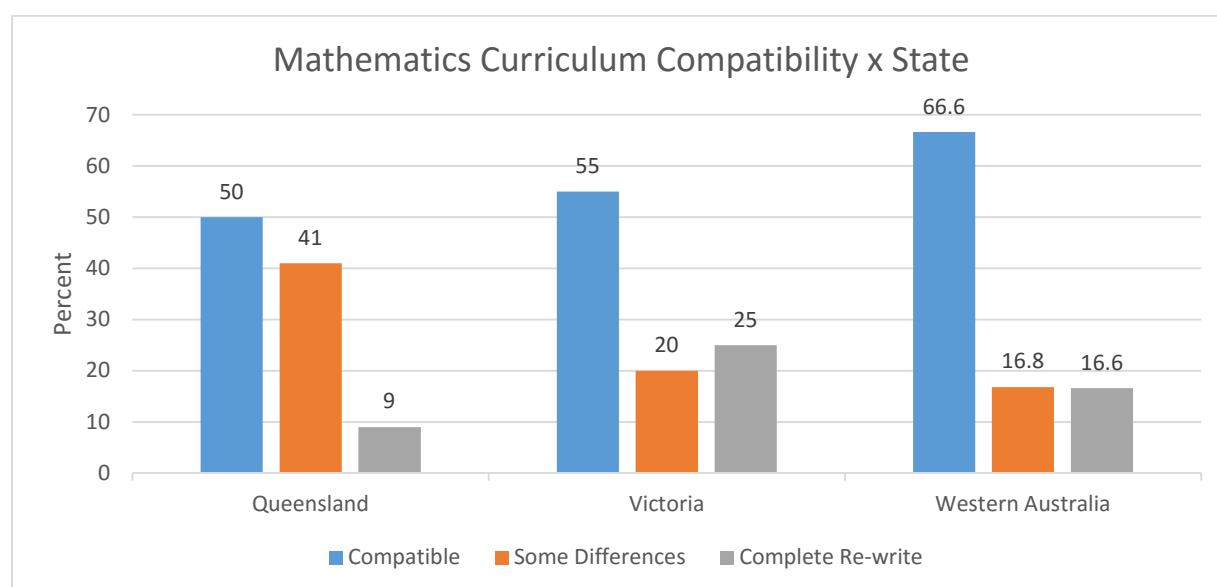


Teachers who took the opportunity to comment were, in the main, from the group who had indicated a major re-write at their school had occurred and therefore were mainly negative. Typical of the comments were that 'the general capabilities made for an onerous overload' (Respondent 23); there was 'too much emphasis on deconstruction of texts' (Respondent 9); that the Australian Curriculum either 'fell far short of what we expected' (Respondent 150) or was 'less flexible and less interesting' (Respondent 106); that part of the content was 'aspirational, unrealistic and promoted disengagement' (Respondent 41) down to a concern that 'new texts would be needed to meet the Sustainability cross curriculum priority when teaching English' (Respondent 214).

Mathematics Curriculum Compatibility: The response from Mathematics teachers showed some differences to teachers of English (see Figure 6.34). Just over half of the teachers surveyed (56.1 per cent) regarded the Australian Curriculum Mathematics curriculum as being compatible with their school's curriculum. This was lower than the figure recorded for English. A further 21.9 per cent (approximately 1 in 5) indicated that there were some differences while the same percentage cited a major re-write of the Mathematics curriculum was carried out in their schools to bring it into line with the national document.

The discrepancy between the three major states was not as marked as English when looking at the compatibility factor, see Figure 6.36. In Queensland 50 per cent of teachers of Mathematics indicated that the two curricula documents were compatible, while for Victoria and Western Australia the figures were 55 per cent and 66.6 per cent, respectively. Interestingly, only 9 per cent of Queensland teachers indicated a complete re-write of the curriculum in Mathematics while Victoria recorded 25 per cent and Western Australia 16.6 per cent.

Figure 6.36 Mathematics Curriculum Compatibility – State



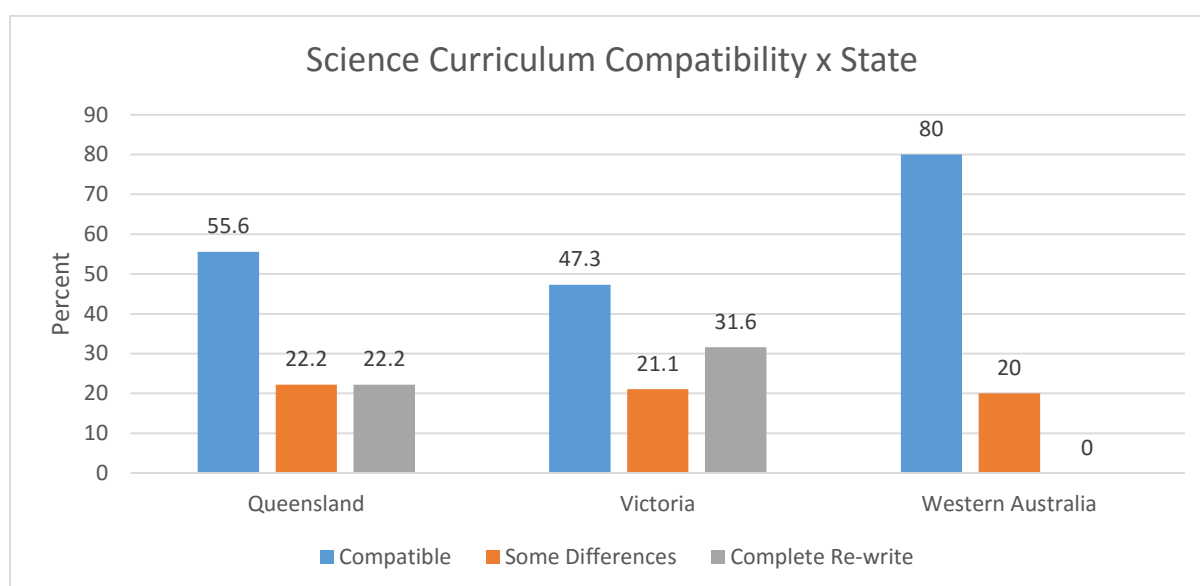
Mathematics teachers were more reticent than their English colleagues in providing comments, although what was interesting was the diversity, with some indicating that the Australian Curriculum was ‘a major step up from previous curriculum with unrealistic gaps between what we were teaching and the new curriculum’ (Respondent 41) to the other end of the spectrum where it was felt that ‘the Australian Curriculum expects less of the students than what we have taught in the past’ (Respondent 119).

Science Curriculum Compatibility: In the past it has been argued that in the senior years of schooling, 95 per cent of chemistry content and 85 per cent of physics content was common to

all states and territories (Masters, 2007, p. 16). From this it would be reasonable to assume that this ‘commonality’ would have flowed through to the Science curriculum in the earlier years of schooling, aiding the writing of an Australian Curriculum Science syllabus. This appears not to have been the case, as can be seen in Figure 6.34. Only 50 per cent of respondents considered the Australian Curriculum in Science to be compatible with their school’s curriculum.

Of the three states with larger numbers of respondents, teachers in Western Australia were more likely to identify compatibility (80 per cent), with teachers in Victoria less likely to acknowledge this (47.3 per cent), see Figure 6.37. Considering incompatibility, that is, the need for a school to engage in a major re-write of the curriculum, just under one in three (31 per cent) of Science teachers identified this as an issue (Figure 6.34). This was the largest percentage from any of the four Phase 1 subjects. However it was in Western Australia where teachers went against the trend, indicating that whilst there were some differences between the Australian Curriculum in Science and the school version they were using, there was no confirmation that a *major* re-write was required (Figure 6.37). This differed from both Victoria and Queensland where the figures indicating the need for a major re-write of the Science curriculum were 31.6 per cent and 22.2 per cent, respectively.

Figure 6.37 Science Curriculum Compatibility – State

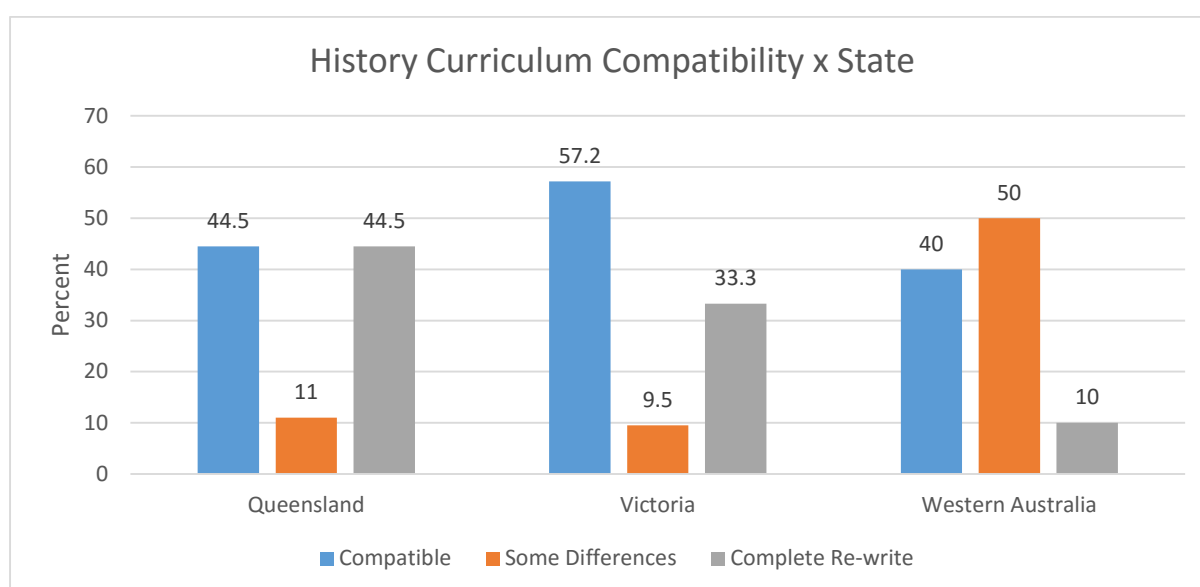


Like the teachers of Mathematics, Science teachers offered sparse comments other than on the degree of compatibility. But the breadth of the comments was interesting. Some respondents indicated that there was compatibility between the Australian Curriculum and the school curriculum as far as content was concerned but a mismatch as to the year level in which it was being taught (for example, Respondent 202). Science as an entitlement subject at Year 10 was also contentious, with views expressed that it should be an optional elective (for example, Respondent 40). That the Science curriculum was seen to be restrictive was another interesting

teacher perception, with the comment being made that there was ‘not enough flexibility in the Australian Curriculum to meet the range of student abilities’ (Respondent 40).

History Curriculum Compatibility: History again presented as a unique case. As shown in Figure 6.34, like Science, only 50 per cent of respondents found the Australian Curriculum in History to be compatible with their school’s curriculum overall but on a three-state comparative basis (see Figure 6.38) teachers in Victoria were more likely to indicate compatibility (57.2 per cent). Western Australian respondents were less likely to indicate a major re-write of the curriculum was needed at just 10 per cent of the population, which was far different from respondents from Queensland where 44.5 per cent saw the need for a major change to their current History curriculum documents and Victoria where the percentage was 33.3.

Figure 6.38 History Curriculum Compatibility – State



Comments by respondents, as one would expect, tended to show polarised views ranging from the negative (‘Too much content’: Respondent 4; ‘Too laboured’: Respondent 45) through to the positive (‘More sequential and planned, thus not so repetitive for students’: Respondent 20; ‘Our teaching of History is now more explicit’: Respondent 97). That the Australian Curriculum was more prescriptive was another common comment. The mismatch between the content and the year level in which it was being taught, which was raised as an issue with Science, also came through as an issue for History. One respondent (Respondent 106) made the specific comment that ‘with the Australian Curriculum most topics are now taught a year earlier than we had been teaching them’.

So, in summary, the question that needs to be asked is to what extent were the Australian Curriculum Phase 1 documents compatible with the various curricula teachers were using in

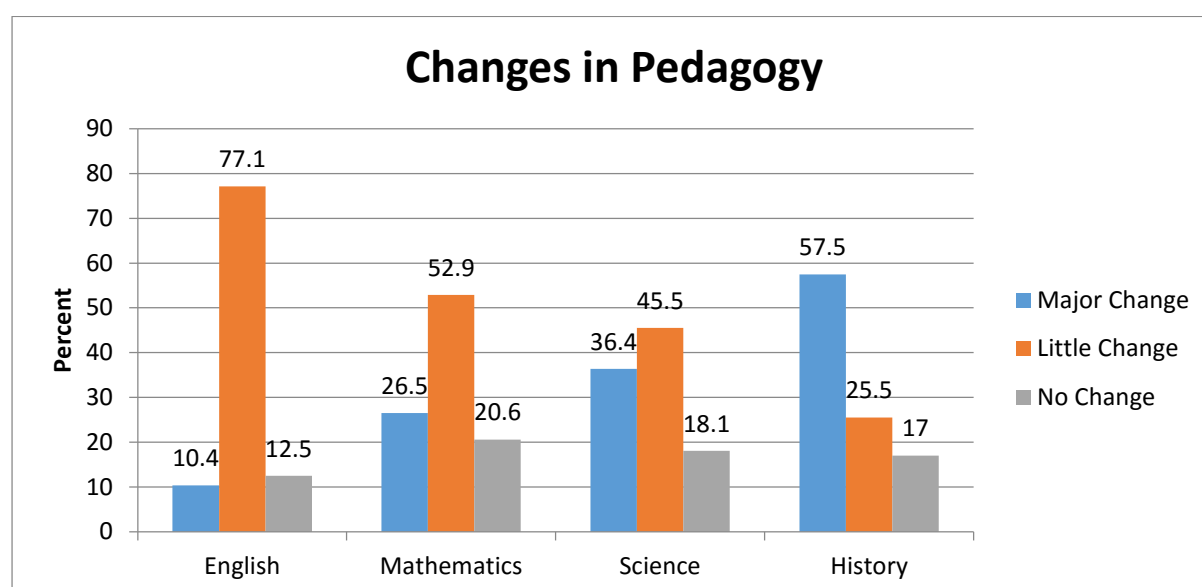
schools prior to this major change? Clearly the English syllabus was the most compatible as was indicated by almost two out of every three teachers (64.9 per cent). For the other three areas, the number was around one in every two (56.1 per cent for Mathematics; 50.0 per cent for both Science and History). For those that indicated incompatibility with a major re-write of the school curriculum being necessary, Science (31 per cent) and History (28 per cent) were the most significant.

Considering the three states with the greatest number of respondents, teachers from Western Australia indicated the greatest degree of compatibility in three of the four Phase 1 disciplines with 85.7 per cent for English, 66.6 per cent for Mathematics, and 80 per cent for Science. At the other end of the spectrum, teachers in Victoria were more likely to indicate that a major re-write of the curriculum was required in English (14.8 per cent), Mathematics (25.0 per cent) and Science (31.6 per cent); while teachers from Queensland indicated a similar sentiment of incompatibility in History with a large 44.5 per cent. These discrepancies amongst the states and territories provide the advocates of the Australian Curriculum with a strong vindication for the advent of a national curriculum based on a ‘consistency across the nation’ argument.

6.7.2 Pedagogical Adjustments

A further factor impacting on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum is the degree to which teachers, as professionals in the field, believe that their pedagogy would need to be reviewed and adjusted to accommodate the curriculum changes in their discipline. Again, the likelihood of change by teachers was far greater for Science and History than it was for English or Mathematics. For example, in English, 10.4 per cent of teachers in Independent Schools indicated that they would need to incorporate a major change to their pedagogy; to their *modus operandi* in the classrooms. The figure for Mathematics was 26.5 per cent. For Science it grew to more than one in three teachers (36.4 per cent) while History was an overwhelming 57.5 per cent. The extent of the changes and the direction of these changes are discussed for each discipline below, following an overview, as shown in Figure 6.39.

Figure 6.39: Changes in Pedagogy and Classroom Teaching Practices



Pedagogical Changes in English: Amongst teachers of English although 12.5 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that the new Australian Curriculum would not necessitate any changes to their pedagogy and teaching practices in the classroom, 77.1 per cent recognised that they would be required to make some adjustments, while for another 10.4 of respondents, major changes were anticipated.

Some of the changes that were identified for the ‘little change’ group included the effective incorporation of ICT (Respondent 138) and a more inquiry based approach (Respondent 197). The need to integrate English more with other disciplines (Respondent 206); to have a more literature-based approach (Respondent 214), and to plan lessons with more differentiation (Respondent 183) were also noted by these and a number of other respondents. Those who identified major changes to their pedagogy were of the opinion that a more ‘traditional’ approach to teaching would result from the Australian Curriculum, with comments such as ‘we need to be more explicit in our teaching’ (Respondent 146); ‘need to focus more on etymology’ (Respondent 92); ‘refocusing on specific content’ (Respondent 175); and ‘now a more formal focus on grammar which previously was taught incidentally as a part of literacy studies’ (Respondent 150) being typical of respondents’ views. Even more discouraging was the viewpoint that the English curriculum ‘does not encourage teachers to try new ideas. The Australian Curriculum supports a more conservative approach’ (Respondent 106), and, we are changing ‘from teaching for deep understanding to skimming across content descriptors’ (Respondent 55).

Those who saw no need for change were more positive. Schools that had already embarked on a school-wide pedagogy, whether using the Marzano (2007) model or Wiggins and McTighe’s (2005) version or another school-wide model, found the implementation of the Australian Curriculum complementary to the approach they had taken. ‘The Art and Science of Teaching (Marzano) is our identified pedagogy/teaching framework. This reflects several of the foundational aims of the Australian Curriculum’ (Respondent 56) is indicative of the endorsing comments. ‘We are being challenged in our teaching pedagogy. This has been a focus for several years and is a work in progress. I feel we are working alongside the new curriculum positively’ (Respondent 200) was another positive reflection from teachers of English that indicated that they were challenged but were up to the challenge. However that some teachers were not fully aware of the Australian Curriculum requirements was evident with comments such as ‘I am mindful of the elaborations that need to be met’ (Respondent 76), when that clearly was not a requirement at all.

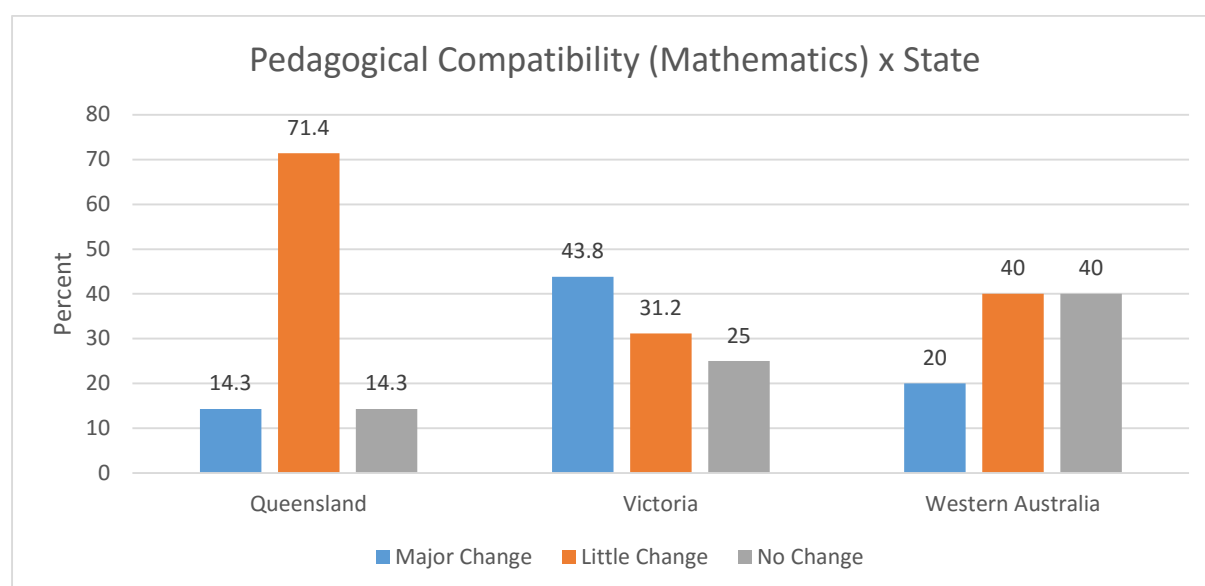
Pedagogical Changes in Mathematics: As can be seen from Figure 6.39, teachers of Mathematics were far more likely to see the implementation of the Australian Curriculum requiring major changes to their pedagogy and teaching practices in the classroom than were the teachers of English (26.5 per cent compared to 10.4 per cent). Likewise they were more likely to consider that no changes would be required (20.6 per cent to 12.5 per cent). However,

while the numbers vary, the reasons for responding to the various choices were very similar. A third of those who saw a major change cited a change from teaching for deep understanding to pushing through intensive content as the major reason. On a more positive note, some respondents working in schools that were about to embrace a school-wide pedagogy saw this as a major change but one that they welcomed. ‘We are using the introduction of the Australian Curriculum to revisit our school pedagogy. We are moving the school towards a Backwards by Design (UbD) model and towards more formative assessment. This, we believe, is more in line with both modern research and the goals of the Australian Curriculum’ (Respondent 73).

Teachers of Mathematics in schools that had already adopted a school-wide pedagogy, as with teachers of English, saw no reason for change. Again, those who identified little change in their pedagogy listed issues such as ‘more specific teaching’; ‘more emphasis on mental strategies’; ‘more differentiation’; and ‘need to incorporate inquiry learning’ (Respondents 175, 144, 183 and 230 respectively) as did the teachers of English.

From a state perspective, Mathematics teachers in Victoria were more than twice as likely to cite the necessity for a major change (43.8 per cent) in their classroom pedagogy and teaching practices as their counterparts in Queensland (14.3 per cent) or Western Australia (20.0 per cent), see Figure 6.40.

Figure 6.40 Pedagogical Compatibility (Mathematics) x State



Pedagogical Changes in Science: The percentage of Science teachers who saw a need for a major pedagogical change in their classrooms was significantly higher than those who taught English and also greater than Mathematics teachers. While more than one in three Science teachers (36.4 per cent) indicated the need for a major change, the figure was around one in four for Mathematics (26.5 per cent) and as low as one in ten (10.4 per cent) for English.

The major reason cited for the need for a major pedagogical change was an abundance of content which had to be covered at the expense of deep understanding. 'The Australian Curriculum encourages inquiry based learning however in some year levels our curriculum is too crowded to allow frequent opportunities for this' (Respondent 105) was a comment that summed up the opinions of a number of respondents. Some teachers saw the need to teach skills as well as content as a change for them while some primary school teachers noted that Science, under the changes brought about by the Australian Curriculum, was to be taught as a stand-alone subject in their schools, whereas previously it had been integrated. (This, incidentally, was obviously a deliberate school decision or a misinterpretation of the communications from ACARA as teaching Science as a stand-alone subject in primary schools was clearly not mandated by ACARA). However, supporting the move by some primary schools to Science as a standalone subject, it was noted that the new Australian Curriculum in Science was 'difficult to integrate' (Respondent 4).

The need to incorporate inquiry learning and the expressed need to be more explicit in their teaching were the two major reasons for those who indicated that there would be little change to their classroom teaching practices.

Pedagogical Changes in History: This again was a key area of concern as can be seen in Figure 6.39. Of the four Phase 1 subjects of the Australian Curriculum, it was the History teachers who indicated most strongly that major changes to their classroom teaching practices would be necessary for successful implementation. Almost six out of every ten teachers of History who responded to the survey did so with comments such as:

'We are struggling to cover content and teach the research and investigative skills that students require.' (Respondent 135)

'Significant changes are needed and funding resources to support these pedagogical changes has been challenging.' (Respondent 97)

'The inquiry approach has to be more embedded in my delivery.' (Respondent 205)

'More inquiry is required on particular topics.' (Respondents 116, 138, 155, 187, 197, 206, 214)

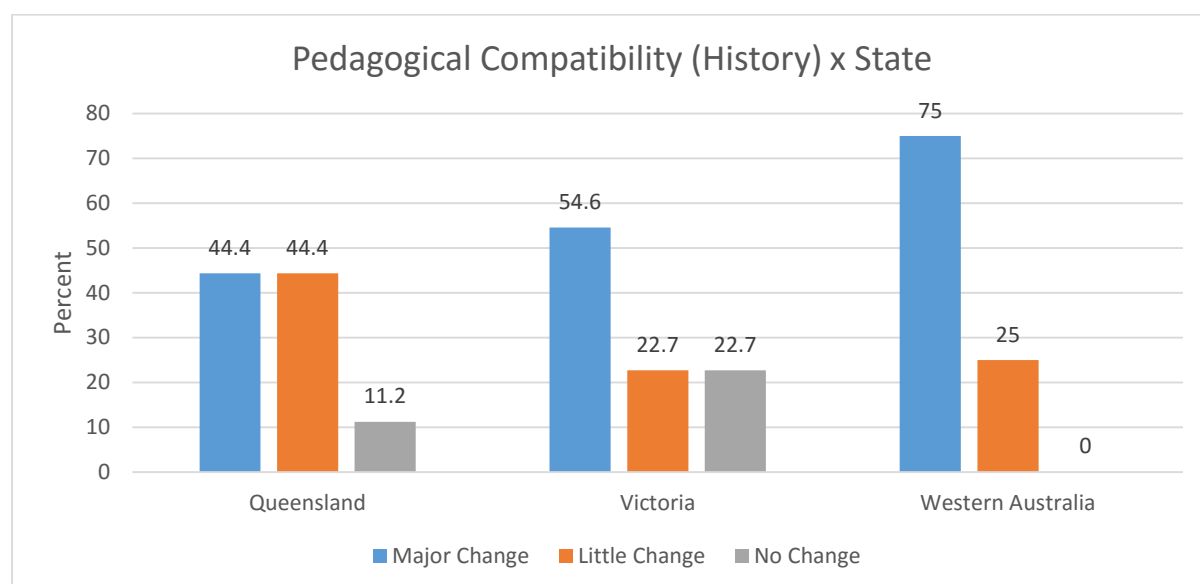
'This is a huge change. The volume of four extensive chapters in the Pearson History which is our set textbook is overwhelming and there is not enough time to teach all of that and have an inquiry based learning schedule.' (Respondent 180)

Given these challenges, it was also noted that very few respondents indicated the need (or the willingness) to take on the task of integrating the various disciplines.

As can be seen in Figure 6.39, a significant number of History teachers indicated a major change in their pedagogy (57.5 per cent), more than five times the number of teachers of English.

From a three-state perspective, a majority of teachers in Western Australia identified the need for a major pedagogical change in History (75.0 per cent) while those in Queensland were less likely to do so (44.4 per cent), see Figure 6.39. Incidentally, although the number of respondents from Tasmania was statistically insignificant, they were very vocal as a group in indicating that significant changes in their pedagogy and classroom teaching practices in History would result from the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

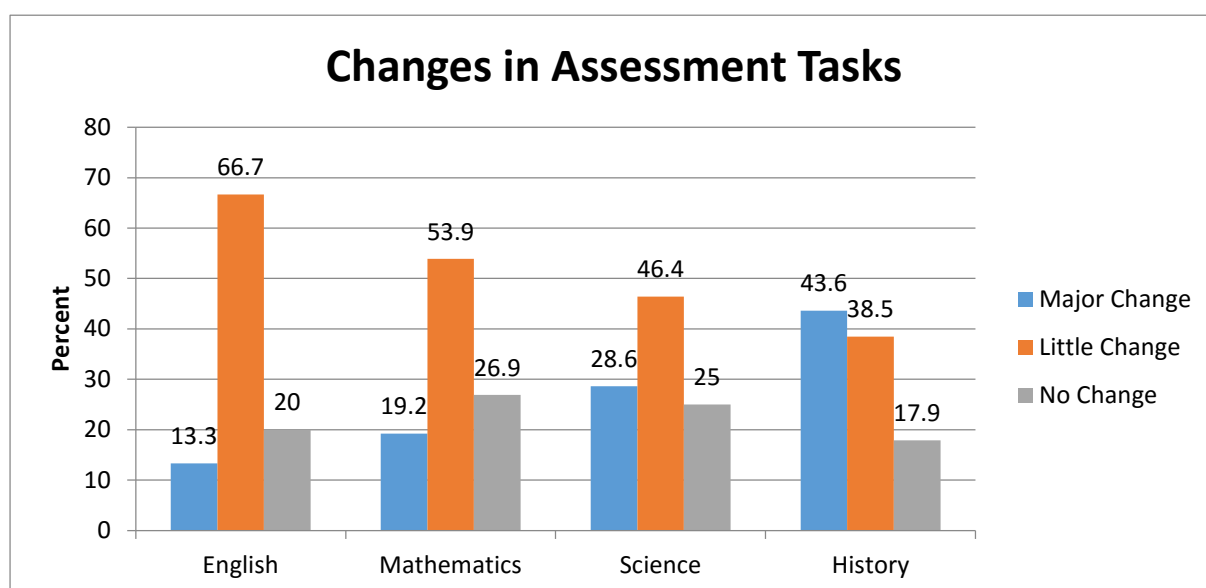
Figure 6.41 Pedagogical Compatibility (History) x State



6.7.3 Assessment Issues

The use of various assessment tasks is another key element in a classroom teacher's repertoire. A change in curriculum may require changes in assessment practices and procedures. With the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, again it was teachers of the discipline of History who indicated that the greatest change in assessment tasks was required. This is shown in the overview in Figure 6.42, prior to each discipline being discussed individually.

Figure 6.42: Changes in Assessment Tasks



Changes in Assessment Tasks – English: The amount of change teachers indicated for English in the choice or frequency of their assessment tasks is shown in Figure 6.42. While one in five respondents indicated that with the Australian Curriculum in English there would not be any change in their choice of assessment tasks, the majority of respondents (two-thirds) saw that minor changes were necessary. Of this latter group, one-third identified that new assessment tasks would be required.

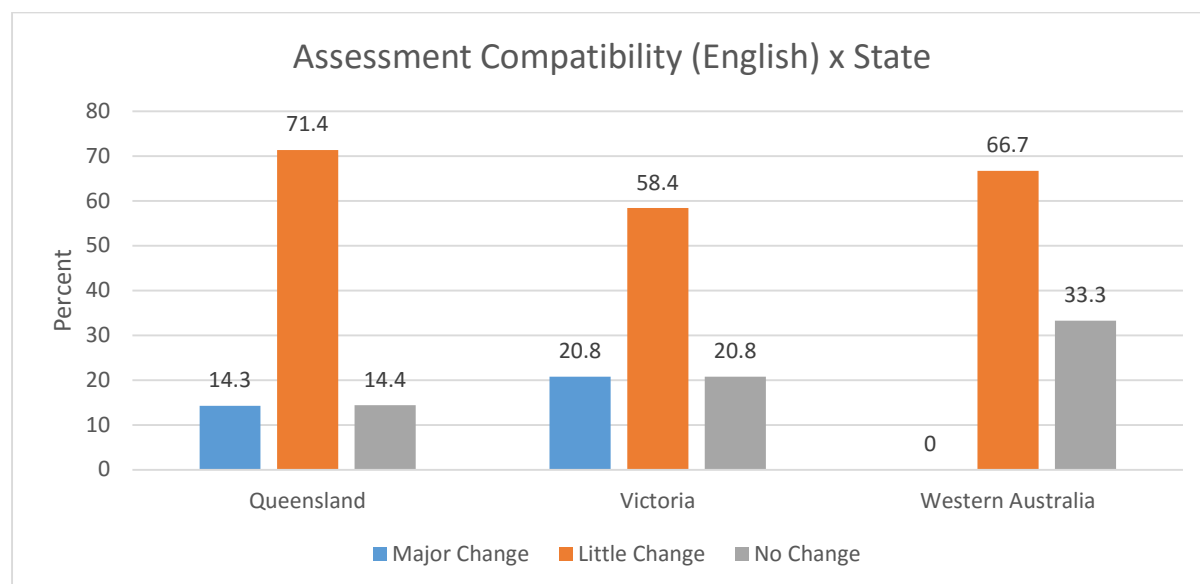
Although the group that indicated that major changes to assessment tasks in English was the smallest group, representing just over 13 per cent, they were the most vociferous in their comments. Comments such as ‘Teaching is now more concentrated on assessment rather than learning’ (Respondent 55) were the norm. Others made comments that were relevant to their state in particular, for example, that ‘The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) interpretation of the Australian Curriculum is overwhelming’ (Respondent 23). Approximately 50 per cent of this group said there was ‘too much assessment’ although it was also noted that ‘the intensity of assessment tasks needs to be increased’ (Respondent 31). That it was ‘more difficult to assess students’ skills rather than knowledge (content)’ (Respondent 214) was also expressed. Furthermore, it was identified by some respondents that a major change would be getting used to and understanding the 5-point grading scale (presumably for teachers, students and parents).

On a more positive note, approximately one-third of the ‘major change’ group noted that a broader range of assessments to identify deeper learning was required, with comments such as ‘I will probably be more deliberate and lateral in the way I assess English. I will look more closely at the General Capabilities.’ (Respondent 206).

Comparing the responses from the three states under consideration, the most noticeable difference was between Western Australia and Victoria (see Figure 6.43). Teachers of English in Western Australia overwhelmingly felt that any changes they had made to their assessment

tasks could not be classed as significant, with one third of all respondents indicating ‘no change’ and two thirds ‘little change’. By contrast, while 1 in 5 respondents from Victoria indicated that no change was required, a further 1 in 5 (20.8 per cent) indicated the need for a major change, the largest percentage of any of the states. Queensland teachers were the largest group to express a ‘little change’ preference (71.4 per cent).

Figure 6.43 Assessment Compatibility (English) x State



Changes in Assessment Tasks – Mathematics: As shown in Figure 6.42 teachers of Mathematics intimated that, overall, the Australian Curriculum led to fewer changes in their assessment tasks than those required of their English teaching colleagues, although only marginally so. However a major change in assessment tasks was being undertaken by almost 1 in 5 Mathematics teachers (19.2 per cent), while for English, the corresponding figure was just over 1 in 7 (13.3 per cent). At the other end of the scale, more Mathematics teachers indicated that no change had been necessary with their assessment arising from the Australian Curriculum, than teachers of English (26.9 per cent and 20.0 per cent respectively). Little difference was noted across the various states.

Comments such as ‘too much assessment’ (Respondent 15); ‘teaching is now more concentrated on assessment rather than learning’ (Respondent 55); and ‘(we have) moved towards more formative assessment and assessing more specific outcomes’ (Respondent 73) were predominant.

Changes in Assessment Tasks – Science: With Science, the number of teachers indicating that a major change in the choice and frequency of assessment tasks was required increased quite significantly. (Refer to Figure 6.42.) A noticeable response from teachers of Science was that 28.6 per cent indicated that they had undertaken or were in the process of undertaking a major change in their choice of assessment tasks as a result of the Australian Curriculum. This was more than double the number of responses from teachers of English (13.3 per cent). The

number that indicated that no change was required (25 per cent) was similar to that of the Mathematics cohort (26.9 per cent). Little difference was noted among the states. The comment that we ‘now require a broader range of assessments to identify deeper learning’ (Respondent 197) was one of the low number of positive comments made by teachers of Science.

Changes in Assessment Tasks – History: Of the four Phase 1 subjects of the national Australian Curriculum, far more changes in the choice and use of assessment tasks were required in History. Just over 2 in every 5 teachers (43.6 per cent) of History indicated a major change – a figure that exceeds the responses for Science (28.6 per cent), Mathematics (19.2 per cent) and English (13.3 per cent). (Refer to Figure 6.42.)

Comments from respondents, despite the increased recognition of the need for change, were in the main positive. These included those that referred to changes due to the greater emphasis on inquiry learning in History as well as comments from teachers ‘looking for greater numbers of ‘richer’ assessment tasks’ (Respondent 205) and those implementing a ‘broader range of assessments to identify deeper learning’ (Respondent 197). A need to ‘now assess skills not just knowledge’ (Respondent 200) was acknowledged as was the need to include ‘assessment based on research’ (Respondent 20). However the cry of ‘too much assessment’ (Respondent 15) was echoed by a number of teachers.

While the findings of this study are significant at the micro level, the analysis clearly indicate five key findings as a significant contribution to research in this field. They include:

1. Teachers in Independent Schools in Australia rate the knowledge and associated pedagogy they received in their Pre-Service Education much lower for the Phase 1 subjects of History and Science than they did for Mathematics and English, to the extent that, particularly with History, there was a large degree of dissatisfaction in terms of being ready for the Australian Curriculum.
2. Teachers indicated that while the ability to teach differentially is being addressed to some degree in on-going professional development and through post graduate studies, there needs to be a closer alignment between teachers’ need for a knowledge of differentiation and teacher education at the pre-service level.
3. Teachers of History and Science in Independent Schools in Australia in the main are not confident that their training enables them to integrate the literacy and numeracy capabilities of the Australian Curriculum into their teaching. Again a closer alignment between this area of the Australian Curriculum and teacher education is desirable.
4. Teachers in Independent Schools in Australia overwhelmingly endorse inquiry learning as the optimal pedagogy for implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
5. Inadequate preparation of teachers in Independent Schools in Australia for the inclusion of each of the three cross-curriculum priorities into their disciplines as required by the Australian Curriculum was noted.

Arising from this a set of recommendations are presented forthwith.

6.8 Recommendations

Based on the findings, and limitations, several recommendations for further research are made.

First, the scope of this study was limited to Independent Schools in Australia. For future studies, the research should be extended to include state government education systems and the Catholic school system. Allied to this, the study was confined to gaining an insight into teachers' perspectives and capturing data close to the implementation of Phase 1 subjects of the Australian Curriculum. A later study, which encapsulates Phase 2 and Phase 3, may yield different results in some areas such as teachers' understandings and confidence to work with the General Capabilities, which was a new concept during Phase 1 and, as time passes, will be more familiar to teachers. Thus, the researcher was aware that the data on which the thesis is based may have become somewhat dated by the time the thesis is completed and that some changes might already have occurred in the schools. Added to this is the reality that since the collection of the data took place, there has been a change in government at the federal level with the current Liberal-National Coalition government instigating a review into the Australian Curriculum.

Related to the scope of the study, in hindsight, a flaw in the survey implementation process, as described in Section 5.7, was that with principals of Independent Schools being asked to forward the request and the survey to teachers in their school, there was no data to indicate who or who had not done this. Further, to protect the anonymity of the respondents, their location was identifiable by postcode only. Thus the state of origin, and whether the location was a major city, inner regional area, outer regional area or remote could be ascertained but not the actual school. Putting these two factors together prevented the ability to calculate percentage response rates from the various locations at a later date. It is recommended that future research avoid this unintentional error.

Secondly, this study revealed through an examination of the open-ended comments, that among the schools that considered their implementation of the Australian Curriculum to be successful and reasonably seamless, were those that had previously adopted a school-wide pedagogy. Briefly, according to Crowther, Andrews and Conway (2013) a school with a school-wide pedagogy has several qualities in common: purposeful and motivating shared leadership; a culture of high aspirations; within-school alignment of philosophy, structures and practices; well-organised school-wide professional learning; and an holistic approach to teaching, learning and assessment (Crowther, Andrews & Conway, 2013, p. 3). This contrasts with schools where individual teachers plan and implement lessons in the 'privacy' of their classrooms, which 'engenders inconsistency, lack of understanding, and a fragmented approach to learning', and where students move from class to class and year to year 'without encountering or being served by common agreed approaches to teaching and learning' (Crowther, Andrews & Conway, 2013, p. vii). The concept and development of school-wide pedagogy can be aligned to the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) Project, which developed from an alliance begun in 1997 between the University of

Southern Queensland's Leadership Research Institute and the Queensland Department of Education (Crowther & Andrews, 2006).

In a similar vein, the respondents to the survey who expressed the view that their school had a school-wide pedagogy and found the implementation of the Australian Curriculum a relatively straight forward task, also indicated that they had adopted either McTighe and Wiggins (2005) model of 'Understanding by Design', Marzano's (2007) framework on the art and science of teaching, Claxton's (2002) 'Building Learning Power' model, Bloom's Taxonomies (1956) or something similar as their school-wide pedagogy. However, the questions that then arise include to what extent has the school-wide pedagogy been embraced by staff, how shared is the leadership, and why is the presence of a school-wide pedagogy important for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum? On school-wide pedagogies Conway and Abawi (2013) caution us when they say:

Some would say that in their school the adoption of an authoritative approach such as Habits of Mind, Bloom's Taxonomies or the Productive Pedagogies is a school-wide framework. To some extent they are, but what is often lacking is the intellectual and social capacity that is built through collective professional sharing and articulation of strongly held beliefs about contextually relevant teaching and learning practices. Without this sense of ownership, teacher adoption ends up being sporadic at best with some teachers paying only lip service to improved quality frameworks. (Conway & Abawi, 2013, p. 175).

This opens up an area for further research into those schools that identified themselves as having a successful and seamless implementation of the Australian Curriculum into their existing structures, programs, processes and curricula, due to their adoption of a school-wide pedagogy. This research could not only consider the correlation between school-wide pedagogy and the successful implementation of the various phases of the Australian Curriculum, but also consider, in the light of ACARA's non-involvement in the implementation stage, what is needed to establish a proactive approach to communicate this. As Conway and Abawi (2013) argue:

We put forward that educational authorities have at hand clear understandings regarding the sorts of capacities that must be built in schools. Yet, studies have shown that the majority of school Principals, systems and policy-makers still find it difficult to build these capacities in their teaching teams and subsequently embed quality practices and improvements. (Conway & Abawi, 2013, p. 177).

Following on from this, another recommendation attached to this discussion would be for schools and faculties of education in HEIs throughout Australia to include in their pre-service and post-graduate courses in educational and/or school leadership, a unit related to school-wide pedagogies.

This leads to a third recommendation, which specifically relates to the teaching program for pre-service teachers at the various schools and faculties of education in each state and territory. Arising from an analysis of the responses to the survey, it is recommended that the following

areas be an integral part of every pre-service education course for aspiring teachers, in line with the results and discussions earlier in this chapter.

- That the minimum standards as suggested by the History Teachers' Association of Australia in their February 2010 statement be adopted to ensure that teachers of History at both the primary and secondary levels are capable of implementing the Australian Curriculum in History.
- That HEIs review their pre-service programs in Science to ensure that teachers at both the primary and secondary levels are capable of implementing the Australian Curriculum in Science and have the content and pedagogical knowledge to do so.
- That HEIs review their pre-service education courses to ensure that units on differentiation go beyond identifying learner traits, to ones which have an explicit focus on pedagogy and methods of teaching, particularly those including the classroom management skills necessary to support differentiated teaching.
- That HEIs review their pre-service education courses to ensure that graduates have sound content knowledge in all Phase 1 disciplines; an understanding of, and an ability to apply literacy, numeracy and ICT capabilities in *all* subject areas; and an understanding of, and an ability to integrate, the Australian Curriculum Cross Curriculum Priorities into the various Phase 1 disciplines.
- That Asia relevant content knowledge and skills be included in pre-service education courses to equip all graduate teachers with a strong basis for implementing the Asia priority in the Australian Curriculum as per Recommendation 8 of the *Report on Asia Literacy and the Australian Teaching Workforce* (Halse, 2013)

This study has revealed a dissonance between independent school teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of their pre-service training to implement the Australian Curriculum, particularly in History and Science, and the realistic expectations one would have of their content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to be successful and competent classroom teachers. It has also revealed a dissonance between the theory of differentiated instruction and the reality, based again on independent school teachers' responses indicating the need for a closer alignment between the Australian Curriculum and teacher education. The same could be said of independent school teachers' confidence in implementing both the general capabilities and the cross-curricula priorities of the Australian Curriculum. There is a need for further research to compare these findings with teachers in the various government systems and the Catholic system in Australia; with teachers, after the implementation of Phase 3, to see if the same holds true particularly with respect to the capabilities and cross-curricula priorities; and to determine if these dissonances contribute to dissatisfaction and impede the successful implementation of the Australian Curriculum in the long term. More importantly, this apparent dissonance between the knowledge and skills that teachers' need, both content and pedagogical for the

Australian Curriculum, and the degree to which this has been available at a pre-service level to date needs to be addressed.

6.9 Conclusion

The advent of a national curriculum for Australian schools provided the catalyst for this research. The creation and implementation of the Australian National Curriculum placed Australia as the first federation in the world to implement a national curriculum. Thus it was a major and significant curriculum reform. As such it was deemed important to investigate a number of factors and issues surrounding this innovation. The initial proposal was to examine teachers' perspectives on the ways in which the reform would influence their professional practices. It was considered that unless data were captured, analysed and reviewed during the introduction of the Australian Curriculum a significant opportunity for analysis and review would have been lost to Australian education. Thus, working from the assumption that it was imperative that researchers capture the essence of the newly released Australian Curriculum from a schools' and teachers' perspective, this thesis set out to critique the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, in particular, the four Phase 1 subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and History. Furthermore, teachers were asked as to whether they felt well prepared to implement a new Australian curriculum. Such a perspective, it was argued, should ensure that any required curriculum renewal in higher education teacher education programs are aligned with the reform and are authentic and reliable.

However, as the research unfolded it became apparent that the context for the research required a deeper analysis of additional factors. As the design of the Australian Curriculum was delivered and the various stages of its development came to the fore, it became apparent that a theoretical model underpinning the ACARA documents was not explicit. Thus this study began with an examination of the curriculum conceptualisations on which the current Australian Curriculum is founded. In the absence of any official theoretical model of the curriculum reform, a model was presented which argued that the Australian Curriculum is a hybrid curriculum predominately reflecting a duality of a Reconstructionist curriculum conceptualisation along with a Third Way political ideological influence in its underlying philosophy, but with a reflection of essentialism in its design and development. The model, proposed by the researcher, was thus presented as a complementary pluralistic model. The development of the model provided a conceptual framing of the study.

Past attempts at national curricula collaboration in Australia were then reviewed including a historical deconstruction of school curriculum development in Australia. The period from 1968 to 1988 was considered in the first instance and the legacy of projects such as the Australian Science Education Project, the Social Education Materials Project, and the Language Development Project were analysed; as was the role of the Curriculum Development Centre in facilitating national curriculum collaboration. A second period extending from 1989 to 1993 was then considered; an era when a national curriculum almost became a reality centred on curriculum statements and profiles, only to be scuttled by political and state rivalries.

A further two periods were then examined and scrutinised. One, referred to as ‘a period of influence’ covered the years 1993 to 2003, and analysed the revisiting of the National Goals of Schooling, as well as the influence of the Discovering Democracy Project on national collaboration. The final period, 2003 to 2007, delved into the period leading up to the introduction of the current Australian Curriculum, and appraised the attempt to instigate an Australian Certificate of Education at the senior years of schooling. This was followed by an account of the proposals by both of the major political parties for a national curriculum leading into the 2007 general election.

Throughout the review of the history of national curriculum conceptualisation from 1968 to 2007, the migratory argument, commonly and consistency used as a justification for such a national curriculum, was considered with arguments for, and alternatives to, considered.

This accounted for the first research question that had been posed: What is the history of curriculum reform at a national level in Australia?

Having provided a conceptual framework for the study, and an account of the history of curriculum development in Australia, the next logical step was an examination of the justifications and processes surrounding the current initiative. The creation of the National Curriculum Board, following the election of the Rudd Labor government, was considered along with its successor, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. As the journey towards the creation of the Australian Curriculum was underway, this research shared the peregrination, considering the pluses, the shortfalls, the degree of acceptance, and the barriers encountered along the way. Reference, at this stage, was made to past attempts at national collaboration, discussing what lessons had been learned and what follies were being repeated. This was done as a way of developing a lens for the ongoing work of this study.

Thus, the second research question, namely, ‘How is the current national curriculum development process positioned in relation to the earlier attempts at restructuring the school curriculum in Australia?’ was addressed.

The final research question was ‘What are the perspectives of teachers in Independent Schools concerning curriculum reform and the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and how well were teachers prepared for this reform by initial teacher education programs?’ A mixed methodology approach was adopted. Using a survey (N=235) to gather data from teachers in Independent Schools throughout Australia, perspectives, issues and teacher concerns surrounding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum were determined. Five major interrelated propositions emerged from the analysis of the data which were presented as five themes. The first was that teachers of History and Science in Independent Schools in Australia in the main are not confident that their preparation enables them to integrate the literacy and numeracy capabilities of the Australian Curriculum into their teaching to the level required by the Australian Curriculum. Secondly, the inadequate preparation of teachers in Independent Schools in Australia for the inclusion of each of the three cross-curriculum priorities into their disciplines was identified by teachers as problematic. Thirdly, that teachers in Independent Schools in Australia rate the knowledge and associated pedagogy they received in their pre-

service education much lower for the Phase 1 subjects of History (in particular) and Science than they did for Mathematics and English was identified. The lack of alignment between teachers' perceived needs and the pre-service education in History methodology was also noted and discussed. The fourth proposition that emerged was that teachers in Independent Schools in Australia overwhelmingly endorsed inquiry learning as the optimal pedagogy for implementation of the reformed Australian Curriculum. The final proposition was that teachers indicated, that while the ability to teach differentially is being addressed to some degree in on-going professional development and through post graduate studies, it is not being addressed to the same extent in pre-service education courses.

In the closing sections of the thesis recommendations were presented as to possible further areas of research. One recommendation was that this study, which was restricted to teachers working in the Independent Schools sector, be extended or replicated to include teachers in the various state systems and those in Catholic schools. A second recommendation was that research be conducted to examine if there is a nexus between a seamless and successful implementation and acceptance of the Australian Curriculum in its various phases and the existence of a school-wide pedagogy being in place at the so-called 'coal-face' level. This was a proposition that arose from the data analysis. Finally, a number of recommendation were made that were relevant to pre-service teacher education. These included those related to the minimum standards for teachers of History; a review of pre-service programs in Science; the need for an explicit focus on pedagogy to support differentiated teaching; the application of numeracy, literacy and ICT capabilities across all subject areas; and the support required to implement the Asia cross curriculum priority successfully.

This study, therefore, in essence captured, analysed and reviewed data during the introduction of the Australian Curriculum in its formative years thus ensuring that such a significant opportunity for analysis and review was not lost to Australian education. It has contributed to an understanding of the issues that are important to teachers in schools when a major change is being undertaken. It is accepted by the researcher that these findings cannot be generalised to all teachers. That this research was conducted in the early stages of the Australian Curriculum implementation, when aspects of the curriculum such as the general capabilities and the cross curriculum priorities were new and evolving for teachers, and consequently that later research may provide different data, is understood. As is the limitation of this research to teachers in Independent Schools only. This research has, however, highlighted a need for curriculum innovations to be placed firmly within a conceptual model to enable more open and vigorous debate and to provide a deeper understanding of the motives, reasons and purposes of the educational change.

In concluding this thesis, the researcher has in mind the words of American historian, biographer and journalist, Sam Tanenhaus (1984), 'In literature, and in life, we ultimately pursue, not conclusions, but beginnings'.

Appendix 1: Australian Curriculum Implementation Survey (as at August 2012)

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY (August 2012)

The following information is based on advice provided to ACARA by jurisdictional officers along with a review of current, relevant State and Territory websites. More detailed information should be sourced from State and Territory school and curriculum authorities.

Jurisdiction	2011	2012	2013	2014
ACT Including all sectors	<p>Implementation of phase 1 began and will be substantially completed by 2013 with the option for schools to implement at a faster rate.</p> <p>English and Science were taught in <u>classrooms</u> in all primary schools.</p> <p>Years 7 and 9 English, Mathematics, Science and Year 7 History were taught in <u>classrooms</u> in secondary schools. Teachers also participated in consultation.</p> <p>School-based professional development was provided with two pupil-free days available to schools</p> <p>Principals were expected to undertake whole school planning for the Australian Curriculum, including aligning timetables and providing professional development.</p>	<p>History and Mathematics will be taught in <u>classrooms</u> in primary schools and the teaching of English and science will be consolidated.</p> <p>English, Mathematics and Science will be taught in <u>classrooms</u> in Years 8 and 10, with History taught in Years 7, 8 and 9.</p> <p>Secondary schools will consolidate the four learning areas in Years 7 and 9.</p> <p>Teacher professional development: Central and school-based professional development will be conducted for all four phase 1 learning areas including pedagogy and assessment practices. The emphasis will be on writing and sharing units of work. Lead Schools will provide professional development for other schools.</p>	<p>All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in <u>classrooms</u> across all levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>Professional development to meet school needs will continue with a focus on assessment and pedagogical practices.</p> <p>Consultation on learning areas in phase 3 of the Australian Curriculum will commence.</p>	<p>All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in <u>classrooms</u> across all levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.</p>

Implementation	2011	2012	2013	2014
	<p>A user-friendly bridging document was provided, from the existing <i>Every Chance to Learn</i> curriculum to the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>Governance – There was a cross-sectoral curriculum reference group.</p>	<p>Introduction of available phase 2 learning areas.</p>		
<p>New South Wales including all sectors</p>	<p>The NSW Minister announced that implementation will be delayed until 2014. The Official Board of Studies Notice indicated that in NSW new K-10 syllabuses were being developed for English, Mathematics, Science and History which were not required to be taught before 2014.</p> <p>The Board of Studies continued its development of syllabuses that gave expression in the NSW style to the Australian Curriculum content descriptions.</p> <p>The Board of Studies sought the views of teachers on draft syllabuses for Foundation to Year 10 English, Mathematics,</p>	<p>Existing NSW K-12 syllabuses will continue to be used for 2012.</p> <p>A joint memorandum on the implementation schedule of the new syllabuses was released on 31 July 2012.</p> <p>The new K-10 syllabuses will be available by the end of September 2012.</p>	<p>Professional development for teachers will commence.</p> <p>This is a year for familiarisation and planning.</p> <p>Schools will not be required to teach new syllabuses before 2014.</p> <p>In the year preceding the adoption of the new syllabuses, schools will need to have prepared a plan for implementation.</p>	<p>The Australian Curriculum will begin to be taught in classrooms using the NSW syllabuses according to the implementation schedule A copy of the schedule is available on the Board's website at: http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/australian-curriculum/pdf_doc/120731-memo-to-principals-update-on-ac-implementation.pdf</p>

Jurisdiction	2011	2012	2013	2014
	<p>implementation.</p> <p>Governance – cross sectoral advisory group met regularly.</p>	<p>schools to prepare to implement science and history.</p> <p>DET schools have access to Queensland developed 'Curriculum into the Classroom' materials for English and mathematics including whole of school curriculum and assessment plans and unit plans.</p>		
<p>Queensland <i>Including all sectors</i></p>	<p>Teachers became familiar with the Foundation to Year 10 English, Mathematics and Science curricula by auditing and reviewing current programs and engaging with targeted professional development.</p> <p>Discipline-specific teacher professional development was provided in English, Mathematics and Science followed by History.</p> <p>Individual schools ran trials in some learning areas and levels.</p> <p>The Queensland Studies Authority undertook curriculum mapping and developed curriculum resources (including</p>	<p>English, Mathematics and Science will be <u>taught in classrooms</u> across Foundation (Prep) to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>Teachers become familiar with the new Foundation to Year 10 history curriculum.</p> <p>Discipline-specific teacher professional development provided in History.</p> <p>Teacher professional development on operationalizing the Australian Curriculum achievement standards and assessment and reporting for English, Mathematics, Science and History.</p>	<p>English, Mathematics, Science and History will be <u>taught in classrooms</u> across Foundation (Prep) to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.</p>	<p>All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all Foundation (Prep) to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.</p>

Implementation	2011	2012	2013	2014
	bridging materials to current QSA curricula). Subject specific and whole of curriculum briefings were available. Education Queensland developed a 'Curriculum to Classroom' project that included online provision through the intranet of whole of school curriculum and assessment plans, unit plans and lesson plans. Governance -- cross-sectoral monthly meetings of CEOs were held to plan implementation.			
SA Catholic Schools	Schools had the flexibility to design their own timelines for the implementation of Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum. A professional development consultancy service was provided to schools.	A consultancy service will be provided to schools for professional development.	All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all levels to Year 9 using the Australian Curriculum by the end of 2013.	All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all levels to Year 9 using the Australian Curriculum and possibly in Year 10.
SA Government Schools	This was a familiarisation year for secondary since their main focus was on the second year of implementation of the new South Australian Certificate of Education.	Teachers will plan, teach, assess and report using the Australian Curriculum (content and achievement standards) in <u>Mathematics and Science</u> in primary schools.	Teachers will plan, teach, assess and report using the Australian Curriculum (content and achievement standards) in <u>Mathematics, Science, English and History</u> in primary schools.	English, Mathematics, Science and History will be taught in classrooms in primary schools. <u>English, Mathematics, Science and History</u> will be taught in classrooms in Years 8 and 9 and possibly in Year 10 in all schools.

Jurisdiction	2011	2012	2013	2014
	<p>Consultation supported the notion that primary implementation will be phased with Mathematics and Science implemented by 2012 and English and History by 2013.</p> <p>Teachers had access to professional learning and support through workshops and online resources. (Science Connections and Mathematics workshops, based on the Australian Curriculum were available for primary teachers.)</p> <p>Governance – the three sectors met regularly to coordinate and share plans, but each worked towards its own objectives.</p>	<p>There will be continuing professional development support for primary Mathematics and Science, pedagogical approaches, use of the achievement standards and digital learning.</p> <p>This will be a familiarisation year for secondary schools for Years 8 to 10.</p>	<p>English, Mathematics, Science and History will be <u>taught in classrooms</u> in Year 8. This includes planning, teaching, assessing and reporting using the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>To ensure a seamless transition to the new Australian Curriculum, enabling students who have commenced learning the new curriculum to continue to do so throughout their school years, the curriculum will be implemented in remaining secondary school years in sequence.</p> <p>English, Mathematics, Science and History will be <u>taught in classrooms</u> for Year 9 in either 2013 or 2014.</p>	
SA Independent Schools	<p>Curriculum mapping; familiarisation for English, Mathematics, Science and History was undertaken, though schools could choose to implement earlier.</p> <p>Teacher professional learning was available.</p>	<p>English, Mathematics and Science will be <u>taught in some classrooms</u>.</p> <p>There will be ongoing familiarisation with history.</p> <p>Teacher professional learning will continue.</p>	<p>English, Mathematics, Science and History will be <u>taught in some classrooms</u>.</p> <p>Teacher professional learning will continue.</p> <p>Full Implementation involves teachers using the Australian</p>	<p>All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all levels to Year 9 and possibly Year 10 depending on the development of the Australian Curriculum senior secondary being ready for implementation in 2015.</p>

Jurisdiction	2011	2012	2013	2014
Tasmania Catholic schools	Teacher professional learning was available. Preparation was provided for all phase 1 learning areas.	Full implementation with English, Mathematics, Science and History being taught in classrooms in all levels to Year 10.	Curriculum to plan, teach, assess and report on student achievement using the achievement standards. All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.	All four phase 1 learning areas will be fully implemented across all levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum. Geography will be taught in classrooms across all levels using the Australian Curriculum.
Tasmania Government schools	This was a preparation year for phase one subjects - English, Mathematics, and Science. History was introduced. The three sectors worked together and shared plans.	Full implementation of three learning areas with English, Mathematics and Science being taught in classrooms in all levels to Year 10.	Full implementation of History . All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.	All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.
Tasmania Independent schools	Schools prepared for implementation from 2011 but at different levels and in varied contexts. Professional learning was available to prepare for all phase 1 learning areas. There was collaborative planning for English and Mathematics across sectors.	Continuing professional learning will be available to all schools. Implementation of phase 1 learning areas with English, Mathematics and Science to be taught in classrooms Foundation to Year 10 and supported by the IST Curriculum Project Officer.	All Australian Curriculum phase 1 subject areas, including History will be implemented and taught in classrooms Foundation to Year 10.	All four phase 1 learning areas will be taught in classrooms across all levels to Year 10 using the Australian Curriculum.
Victoria Including all sectors	Professional development focused on whole school curriculum and assessment.	Preparation and professional development in curriculum planning and assessment will	Government and Catholic schools will use AusVELS for curriculum planning and assessment purposes, which includes the four phase 1 learning areas of	

Australian Curriculum Implementation Survey – Updated version August 2012

Jurisdiction	2011	2012	2013	2014
	<p>planning.</p> <p>AusVELS curriculum framework was developed. (AusVELS is a new single curriculum portal that integrates the Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history with the remaining state-based areas of the curriculum (the current VELS). The framework provides for the subsequent integration of the learning areas in the later phases of Australian Curriculum development and the other areas of the Australian Curriculum).</p>	<p>be provided.</p> <p>A professional development program for principals will also be provided.</p> <p>Schools will have the opportunity to participate in a pilot implementation program.</p>	<p>assessment purposes, which includes the <u>four phase 1 learning areas of the Australian Curriculum for Years F-10.</u></p> <p>AusVELS will be available to all independent schools.</p>	<p><u>the Australian Curriculum for years F-10.</u></p> <p>AusVELS will be available to all independent schools.</p>
Western Australia <i>Including all sectors</i>	<p>There was no expectation of implementation for 2011.</p> <p>Validation activities occurred in Terms 2 and 3.</p> <p>All sectors provided professional learning and support for teachers to become familiar with the Australian Curriculum.</p> <p>Further consultation occurred on the commencement of implementation and an implementation schedule.</p>	<p>During 2012 The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) will develop the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline which will replace the existing WA Curriculum Framework.</p> <p>The formal three-year implementation period commenced in July 2012.</p> <p>Schools, pre-primary (Foundation) to Year 10, have three years in which to fully</p>	<p>The SCSA will publish the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline which will provide schools with Western Australian guidelines and policy relating to implementation of the Australian Curriculum, including reporting requirements.</p> <p>Schools, pre-primary (Foundation) to Year 10 will continue to implement the Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science</p>	<p>Schools, pre-primary (Foundation) to Year 10, will teach the Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History.</p>

Jurisdiction	2011	2012	2013	2014
		<p>Implement the Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History.</p> <p>Full implementation of phase 1, in July 2015, involves teachers using the Australian Curriculum to teach, assess and report on student achievement.</p> <p>Schools will decide on their implementation schedule to achieve this goal.</p> <p>During all stages of the implementation process the systems/sectors will continue to provide professional learning and support for teachers.</p> <p>Schools will continue to collaborate to make full use of the expertise distributed within and across school networks.</p>	and History.	

Appendix 2: Australian Curriculum Survey

National Curriculum Survey

Part A

*1. What is the job title for your current position?

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Deputy Principal
- ☐ Curriculum Head / Manager
- ☐ Subject / Faculty Leader
- ☐ Classroom Teacher
- ☐ Other

Other (please specify)

*2. In which State or Territory do you reside?

- ☐ Western Australia
- ☐ South Australia
- ☐ Victoria
- ☐ ACT
- ☐ New South Wales
- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ Northern Territory
- ☐ Tasmania

*3. What is your postcode?

*4. What type of school are you currently employed in?

- ☐ State Government
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Independent

National Curriculum Survey

5. What is your highest level of tertiary completion?

- ☐ Bachelor degree
☐ Bachelor Honours degree
☐ Post Graduate diploma
☐ Masters degree
☐ Doctorate

Other (please specify)

6. In which year did you complete this qualification?

Part B

7. A focus in the Australian Curriculum is on proficiency. A state of being proficient is premised on not only having the knowledge, but also the flexibility and inclination to apply this knowledge in diverse contexts.

To what extent do you believe your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development, and post graduate studies provided you with adequate knowledge in the areas of Mathematics, English, Science and History?

	Pre-Service Teacher Education	Professional Development Seminars	Post Graduate Studies
Mathematics	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
English	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Science	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
History	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

8. To what extent do you believe your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development, and post graduate studies enabled you to enact this knowledge through flexibility of thought and the inclination to identify, interpret, and respond to others' ideas and ways of thinking?

	Pre-Service Teacher Education	Professional Development Seminars	Post Graduate Studies
Mathematics	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
English	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Science	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
History	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

National Curriculum Survey

9. Rather than providing an alternative curriculum for disadvantaged students, the Australian Curriculum advocates setting the same high expectations for all students and to provide differentiated levels of support.

To what extent do you believe your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development, and post graduate studies prepared you to provide for differentiated instruction in a mixed-ability classroom?

	Pre-Service Teacher Education	Professional Development Seminars	Post Graduate Studies
Mathematics	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
English	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Science	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
History	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

10. The Australian Curriculum includes literacy and numeracy as general capabilities. While recognising that the foundation for literacy will be built primarily in English and the foundation for numeracy primarily in Mathematics, it is also expected that both literacy and numeracy will be strengthened in other disciplines.

To what extent do you believe your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development, and post graduate studies prepared you to develop literacy in Science and History?

	Pre-Service Teacher Education	Professional Development Seminars	Post Graduate Studies
Science	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
History	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

11. To what extent do you believe your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development and post graduate studies prepared you to develop numeracy in Science and History?

	Pre-Service Teacher Education	Professional Development	Post Graduate Studies
Science	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
History	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

National Curriculum Survey

12. The Australian Curriculum encourages teachers to facilitate successful learning through 'inquiry and active participation in challenging and engaging experiences'.

Do you agree that an inquiry based approach is an optimal approach to classroom learning and teaching?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

13. The Australian Curriculum emphasises the need for all Australians to become 'Asia literate'.

To what extent did your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development and post graduate studies include Asian Studies?

	Very Poorly	Moderately	Satisfactorily	Very Well	Extremely Well
Pre-Service Teacher Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional Development Seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Graduate Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. The Australian Curriculum emphasises Indigenous perspectives to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and respect the history and culture of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

To what extent did your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development and post graduate studies include Indigenous Studies?

	Very Poorly	Moderately	Satisfactorily	Very Well	Extremely Well
Pre-Service Teacher Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional Development Seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Graduate Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

National Curriculum Survey

15. The Australian Curriculum embraces a commitment to sustainable patterns of living which is reflected in the various curriculum documents.

To what extent did your pre-service teacher education, on-going professional development and post graduate studies include Environmental Studies and the issue of sustainability?

	Very Poorly	Moderately	Satisfactorily	Very Well	Extremely Well
Pre-Service Teacher Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional Development Seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post Graduate Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part C

16. To what extent has the Australian Curriculum confirmed, or is compatible with, your school's vision and values?

17. To what extent is the Australian Curriculum incompatible with your school's vision and values?

18. To what extent is the content of the Australian Curriculum in English compatible with your school's existing curriculum documents? Please comment if you teach this subject.

19. To what extent is the content of the Australian Curriculum in Mathematics compatible with your school's existing curriculum documents? Please comment if you teach this subject.

20. To what extent is the content of the Australian Curriculum in Science compatible with your school's existing curriculum documents? Please comment if you teach this subject.

National Curriculum Survey

21. To what extent is the content of the Australian Curriculum in History compatible with your school's existing curriculum documents? Please comment if you teach this subject.

22. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in English necessitate a change in your pedagogy and teaching practices in the classroom? Please comment if you teach this subject.

23. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in Mathematics necessitate a change in your pedagogy and teaching practices in the classroom? Please comment if you teach this subject.

24. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in Science necessitate a change in your pedagogy and teaching practices in the classroom? Please comment if you teach this subject.

25. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in History necessitate a change in your pedagogy and teaching practices in the classroom? Please comment if you teach this subject.

26. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in English necessitate a change in your choice of assessment tasks? Please comment if you teach this subject.

27. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in Mathematics necessitate a change in your choice of assessment tasks? Please comment if you teach this subject.

National Curriculum Survey

28. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in Science necessitate a change in your choice of assessment tasks? Please comment if you teach this subject.

29. To what extent will the Australian Curriculum in History necessitate a change in your choice of assessment tasks? Please comment if you teach this subject.

Part D

30. In light of the changes that you have encountered during the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, what do you think are the implications for teacher education at both pre-service and post-graduate levels for Higher Education Institutions from a content perspective? Please comment.

English

Mathematics

Science

History

31. In light of the changes that you have encountered during the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, what do you think are the implications for teacher education at both pre-service and post-graduate levels for Higher Education Institutions from a pedagogical perspective? Please comment.

English

Mathematics

Science

History

32. If you have any further comments about the Australian Curriculum, not included in this survey, please use the space below.

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