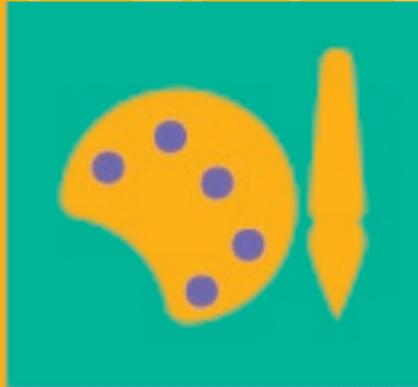


Curriculum Guidance Materials

Supporting rigorous school-based
curriculum planning



Introduction

The research is clear that the curriculum – what we teach – matters. High quality curriculum resources can enhance both teacher practice and student learning outcomes – especially when paired with effective teacher professional learning.

This document shows how we can support curriculum planning and decision making for all our teachers, Principals and Leadership Teams.

Within this document, we have set out a generic (non-

subject specific) **Curriculum Resource Quality Framework** that teams across all learning areas and year levels can adapt or adopt as they work collaboratively to review curriculum resources for quality.

It also sets out a process for curriculum planning teams to follow as they use the framework, along with “look fors” and key questions to encourage school-based curriculum teams to incorporate the Framework into their work.

What are curriculum resources?

Curriculum resources are simply resources that support teaching and learning of the curriculum.

Curriculum resources may be discrete or comprehensive in nature.

A **discrete** resource may focus on a small part of the curriculum, such as a single content descriptor or dot point.

A **comprehensive** resource will cover a larger part of the curriculum – perhaps an entire strand or sub-strand – or even the whole curriculum.

All teachers need access to a high-quality resources to assist them to effectively teach to the *whole curriculum*.

Examples of curriculum resources



Tasks and activities



Textbooks and workbooks



Online programs

What are “high-quality” curriculum resources?

In the simplest terms, curriculum resources are high-quality when they help to produce teaching that drives student learning.

Characteristics of high-quality curriculum resources

Curriculum resources that have scored highly on these characteristics have been found to have a significant positive impact on teaching and learning, especially when paired with effective professional learning.

1

Aligned

Aligned to the curriculum

2

Evidence-based

Reflects best practice evidence of effective teaching

3

Coherent

Effectively sequenced to build knowledge and skills

4

Instructional supports

Contains information to support practice

Curriculum Resource Quality Framework

The framework has been developed with CECG teachers to reflect these characteristics of high-quality curriculum resources. Curriculum planning teams should feel free to make additions and adjustments to the framework to reflect their needs and experiences. It is important that curriculum resource quality frameworks are co-constructed with those who will use them.

Alignment	Evidence-based	Coherence	Instructional supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the resource aligned to the content descriptions for the Australian Curriculum / the dot points of the NSW Syllabuses?• Does the resource reflect the relevant “big ideas” of the subject?• Does the resource reflect the relevant general capabilities?• Does the resource allow for ongoing formative assessment of students’ learning of the curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the resource help build teacher content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge? Consider whether the resource:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Embeds evidence-based pedagogies (both general and subject specific)○ Is clear, accurate, and well structured to help develop teachers’ knowledge of content and teaching• Does the resource reflect the research on how students learn (for example, the evidence on Cognitive Load Theory)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the resource demonstrate a logical and effective sequence and progression of learning to build the relevant knowledge and skills over time?• Does the resource effectively connect with the resources used to support teaching and learning in adjacent year levels?• Can the teacher and students reasonably engage with the resource within the specified time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there teacher-facing supports, including resources that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Anticipate student thinking for the teacher?○ Enhance curriculum understanding?○ Support sequencing?○ Build vocabulary?• Are there clear options to support teachers in scaffolding instruction for diverse learners, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Options to support the learning of students with gaps in their prior knowledge and understanding?○ Options to support appropriate challenge and stretch for all students over time?

Using the Curriculum Resource Quality Framework

Teachers can find a collated suite of high-quality curriculum resources in the Curriculum Resource Hub in their school's Catalyst Channel in MS Teams.

As part of **Catalyst**, we are also working to develop high-quality curriculum resources and offer aligned professional learning opportunities in other learning areas.

In the meantime, curriculum planning teams in all other learning areas and year levels can use the Curriculum Resource Quality Framework to select or develop high-quality curriculum resources.

The following workflow will help guide this important work.

Step 1.

Review and adapt the Curriculum Resource Quality Framework



Read the Curriculum Resource Quality Framework

Take some time individually to read the framework and write down any questions or comments you may have.



Check for common understanding of the framework

Meet with your team to discuss your comments and questions.

Discuss each element of the framework and consider what it means to your team. Some parts of the framework are broad: each dot point is intended as a discussion prompt to encourage the pooling of collective expertise and critical reflection on practice – not part of a prescriptive checklist.



Adapt the framework to reflect your collective expertise and meet the needs of your learning area

Using the Curriculum Resource Quality Framework

Step 2.

Collect commonly used curriculum resources



Make a list

Note down all the curriculum resources you commonly use in the relevant subject / year level, including activities and tasks, textbooks, websites, and online programs



Check the list is as specific as possible

For example, instead of listing Scootle, try to list the specific resources from Scootle that are commonly used in classrooms.

Step 3.

Review commonly used curriculum resources for quality



Review curriculum resources

Review each of the curriculum resources on your list using the Curriculum resource quality framework.



Take notes

Take notes of your discussion using the templates, including your final assessment of each resource (see appendix for templates).

Using the Curriculum Resource Quality Framework

Step 4.

Identify and fill gaps



Review your final list

Review and consider whether these resources support effective teaching and learning across the whole curriculum.



If your answer is no

Identify the gaps in curriculum coverage. Conduct a targeted search of curriculum resources to fill these gaps or consider creating your own resources that meet the criteria for quality.

Step 5.

Integrate high-quality curriculum resources into professional learning

The impact of high-quality curriculum resources is enhanced when they are paired with effective teacher professional learning. In-school professional learning will provide

- The **time** all teachers need to review curriculum resources and engage in the intellectual preparation required for effective teaching.
- The **support and expertise** all teachers require to identify their students' learning needs, plan to meet these needs, and reflect on progress towards learning goals.
- Opportunities for **collaboration, coaching and continuous improvement.**

Reflective questions for school and system leaders

The following “look fors” and reflective questions demonstrate how the principles of high-quality curriculum resources apply to the school-based curriculum at every level. They are intended to support effective professional conversations about curriculum between teachers and school and system leaders across CECG, and to encourage school-based curriculum teams to incorporate the Curriculum resource quality framework into their work.

Alignment	Evidence-based
<p>Look for</p> <p><i>Alignment</i> is about ensuring that the ambitious expectations set out in the Australian Curriculum and NSW Syllabuses about what students should be able to do, say, make or write as a result of their schooling are maintained in every day, in every classroom, and for every student.</p> <p>Question to ask</p> <p>Does the school have a clearly documented whole-school plan for curriculum delivery?</p> <p>Does the documented curriculum at each level align with the content descriptions in the Australian Curriculum or the dot points in the NSW Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum?</p>	<p>Look for</p> <p>Specific evidence-based pedagogies and practices in unit plans and lesson. Unit plans and lesson plans will also reflect the Science of Learning, for example, by connecting to prior learning.</p> <p>Question to ask</p> <p>Do unit plans and lesson plans specify evidence-based pedagogies and practices?</p> <p>Are high-impact teaching practices integrated into the documented curriculum?</p> <p>When asked, can teachers explain why they have taught a specific lesson or topic in a particular way?</p> <p>Does the documented curriculum reflect the science of learning?</p>

Reflective questions for school and system leaders

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Coherence

Look for

Coherence is about ensuring the resources identify the “big ideas” or essential elements and reflect a clear progression of knowledge and skills over time and across year levels.

The resource should support teachers understanding of what students should have learned in the prior year and know what they can expect to learn next year.

Students are encouraged by their teachers to make connections between new and prior learning – and they can make those connections

Question to ask

Does the documented curriculum identify the “big ideas” or essential elements of content?

Do school teams meet regularly to discuss the progression and viability of documents that articulate essential content and timing of delivery?

Do school teams meet regularly to discuss the vertical alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across the years of school?

When asked, can teachers identify students’ prior and future learning?

Can students make connections between new and prior learning?

Has essential vocabulary been identified for all year levels and subject areas?

Instructional supports

Look for

Instructional supports can include internal and external subject experts, and curriculum resources.

Question to ask

When asked, can teachers name the person they go to when they have questions about teaching and learning in a specific subject?

Is professional development provided to build staff skills in effective curriculum planning and development?

How are high-quality curriculum resources integrated into professional learning?

Do teachers have regular, meaningful access to subject experts, either within the school or outside of the school?

Do the curriculum resources specified include teacher facing supports that anticipate student thinking for the teacher, enhance curriculum understanding, support sequencing and build vocabulary?

Do the curriculum resources specified in the documented curriculum support teachers to scaffold instruction for diverse learners?

Appendix

Alignment

Guiding questions	Notes
Is the resource aligned to the content descriptions for the Australian Curriculum / the dot points of the NSW Syllabuses?	
Does the resource reflect the relevant “big ideas” of the subject?	
Does the resource reflect the relevant general capabilities?	
Does the resource allow for the ongoing formative assessment of students’ learning of the curriculum?	
Final assessment Is the resource aligned to the curriculum?	

Evidence based

Guiding questions	Notes
<p>Does the resource help build teacher content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge? Consider whether the resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embeds evidence-based pedagogies (both general and subject specific)• Is clear, accurate, and well structured to help develop teachers' knowledge of content and teaching	
<p>Does the resource reflect the research on how students learn (for example, the evidence on Cognitive Load Theory)?</p>	
<p>Final assessment Is the resource evidence based?</p>	

Coherence

Guiding questions	Notes
Does the resource demonstrate a logical and effective sequence and progression of learning to build the relevant knowledge and skills over time?	
Does the resource effectively connect with the resources used to support teaching and learning in adjacent year levels?	
Can the teacher and students reasonably engage with the resource within the specified time?	
Final assessment Is the resource evidence based?	

Instructional supports

Guiding questions	Notes
<p>Are there teacher-facing supports, including resources that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anticipate student thinking for the teacher?• Enhance curriculum understanding?• Support sequencing?• Build vocabulary?	
<p>Are there clear options to support teachers in scaffolding instruction for diverse learners, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Options to support the learning of students with gaps in their prior knowledge and understanding?• Options to support appropriate challenge and stretch for all students over time?	
<p>Final assessment: Does the resource include appropriate instructional supports?</p>	

Summary

Guiding questions	Notes
Do we recommend this resource to teachers?	
What are the identified strengths of this resource?	
What are the identified weaknesses or omissions?	
Is the resource comprehensive and sufficient to address the learning targets of the curriculum without requiring supplementary resources?	
What additional resources or professional learning address the identified weaknesses and omissions?	
How can professional learning opportunities: <ul data-bbox="287 1249 937 1353" style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate this resource (if recommended)• Provide highly effective targeted support for effective mathematics teaching?	

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