

Making connections across the Australian Curriculum for quality learning

Australian Curriculum: Aligning Learning Areas mini-conference, 22 March 2014

Transcript of presentation

This video is available from www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/27327.html

Session chair

Janice Chee
Assistant Director,
Australian Curriculum
Branch, Queensland
Studies Authority

Welcome to this session of our conference today. It is with great pleasure that I introduce Dr Jenny Nayler. Jenny is an independent education consultant who works directly with schools. She's editor of the *Primary and Middle Years Educator*—a journal for teachers, published by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association.

Jenny is passionate about quality and equity in education and I've had the pleasure of working with her on a number of projects that I believe have broken new ground about how we plan teach and assess. At the QSA she's done some fabulous work about Year 10 and how it bridges to the senior phase of learning. A couple of years ago, she was the imaginary principal of a school of teachers from across Queensland, and across the school sectors, that had come together to work with a very, very new Australian Curriculum at that time, and to develop strategies about how to effectively plan the whole-year units and whole-school planning. This work has formed the basis of the resources that the QSA developed to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

Building on from that work, she then went on to do research and to work out some strategies for how to plan for multiple year level classrooms that make up 25 per cent of classrooms in Queensland. Not just classrooms that have sequential year levels in them, but classrooms that have, you know, the NAPLAN class, 3, 5, 7 and 9 all in the one grade, one room. The thought is scary.

As Kathy mentioned at this morning's session, Jenny has again broken some new ground with looking at concepts, some principles for planning around purposely connected curriculum. That's what she's going to be talking about today. Jenny's paper went up on our website yesterday and it will be included in your conference proceedings. You'll notice that Jenny has a 'wanted ad' on her screen and she wants people right now. Also, in your bags there is a handout for today's session so you can have a little rummage for one minute while you're thinking about who's going to come up and help Jenny. Thank you Jenny.

Jenny Nayler

Independent Education
Consultant — Learning
aJeNcy

Hello everyone and thank you for making the choice to be here today, and I don't just mean in my workshop, but to be here at this conference. To not be cycling the Western Freeway—I'm projecting a little bit there, but I intend to be out on my bike tomorrow morning. I seriously never do a presentation without, say, you know; what do you do? What do you do to renew and refresh in this exciting, but very challenging field of education?

I'm just inundated with the interest with regard to my 'wanted ad'. I think you're sitting up there at the back thinking, I'm afraid, I'm not going near her and something that involves a lemon tart. But let the fear go. As I say, there's world poverty to worry about; not this. But I have some helpers who are going to participate in a discussion while you are participating in a discussion. You'll see references to collaboration and interaction in this session, and we will persist, I did as the numbers went up—50, 100, 150, 220, 230—I thought, we still must interact. So thank you to Vicky from North Lakes State College and to Gladys Martu who's saving it as a surprise for later to tell me where she is now.

Caroline Hollis from QSA, Katrina Wootten from Holy Spirit in Townsville, Judy Menary from Morayfield East State School, and Tracey Chappell from Goodna Special School. Thank you very much. They didn't so much as volunteer, but they got in my line of sight.

So, making connections across the Australian Curriculum—as I begin, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and pay my respects to the Elders, past and present of the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples.

I'd invite you just to think about the context in which I'm making this presentation today. The Queensland Studies Authority commissioned the paper, *Enacting Australian Curriculum*, making connections for purposeful learning. As with the three other papers I've written and the book for which I was chief external writer, *Building Student Success*, the titles evolve as the work proceeds. As you know, you'll have a copy of that.

The purpose of that paper is to support schools to deliver high-quality curriculum within the context of student entitlement to the range of learning areas and subjects of the Australian Curriculum. Just something for you to ponder; I work with many of you. If you hear some shameless advertisements, or you think they're shameless advertisements, they probably are. So I'm working with some of you and you know I've posed that question. How many learning areas or subjects will teachers need to program if the full suite, or under the current arrangements of the Australian Curriculum, occur? So that's something for you to ponder, and, how many at Year 5, 6 level?

A key message of the paper is that schools might take up what we're calling a purposefully connected curriculum approach along with a single curriculum approach. Of course, we understand that a review of the Australian Curriculum is occurring with an interim report possibly out, due at the end of this month, and findings in early July. So I'm speaking about the arrangements as they currently are.

I have another life in which I use other terms. People with whom I've worked will know of the professional development materials, *Inquiry for a change*. I've refocused those to talk about productive teaching for powerful learning that's in line with current curriculum and assessment;

it's inclusive, it supports intellectual rigour. It's innovative, it's inquiry based and it utilises integration of the curriculum. So here we're referring to it as purposefully connected curriculum.

We are in a big room but I think it was really important to leave this slide in. So I invite you to be truly present, not to be thinking of the bike ride, not to be thinking of the laundry. But, in fact, this is your time to do—and you have, I think, so little time, we all do, to really think—to think about big issues in education that matter. Be kind to yourself and others; the learning is the work. Challenge ideas not people because you will get to talk to your neighbour. I hope the first thing you do is introduce yourself, build a connection, exchange phone numbers, Twitter accounts, that type of thing.

Remember, the talk doesn't cook rice. It's a big effort for you to be here today. You have to give up a lot of things as a teacher. In many professions there's many more opportunities in mainstream time to be at professional learning. I just want to challenge you. How will what I say, what I suggest, have some impact on what you do? It might be just to reinforce—I'm not really sure that I agree with what Jenny said, that's fine. But I invite you to think about action because talk doesn't cook rice. Who's heard me say that before?

You have a handout and the handout talks about the process. Just basically, I'm going to invite you to reflect on a brief definition of purposefully connected curriculum. Brainstorm with your neighbour opportunities and challenges associated with such an approach. I'll give you another collaborative space, a cSpace to talk about two examples; a Year 5 example and a Year 6 example.

Then we will—I invite you to reflect on your view of purposefully connected curriculum. That is, taking a learning area or subject and connecting it in a unit of study. I'll invite you to formulate your actions, and if you're with someone from school it's always a good idea to actually share ideas so that there's a witness to someone. You know, when you're excited and anything's possible and when I get back to school I'll do these 11 things before Tuesday afternoon. If you share those with a colleague, you're more likely to do them.

So take a moment, then, to think about what you're learning intentions are and how you'll measure success at the end of this session as you walk out. If you've had a look at the process there—I'd like to suggest that the learning intentions I have for you on the basis on the abstract I wrote, you read and signed up to. Was that, your understandings of Australian Curriculum may be enhanced? That your ideas of connecting curriculum beyond one learning area in a unit study might be enhanced? That you'll consider the opportunities in this QSA paper? You'll see the challenges and you'll be formulating some responses to those challenges.

So I invite you—even if you come up with one thing, one learning intention and how you'll measure success at the end of it—and invite you to think about that lovely little bonsai there that's not mine. If I took a picture of mine it would be without the lichen and without the leaves because the possum loved the bonsai.

So what is purposely connected curriculum? Just in a snapshot, it involves planning for teaching and learning, drawing on two or three curricula areas. So when throughout I talk about curricula areas, I'm talking about a learning area or a subject. There are two conditions,

two key conditions to purposefully connected curriculum. One, we must maintain the integrity of the curricula areas, and I'll talk about that a bit further.

There must be a clear, conceptual link. In many ways, people have been doing this with other curricula frameworks over a period of time. Especially if you're in one of those 25 per cent of Queensland classrooms where you have eight year levels, a large number of learning areas and subjects, you are looking for conceptual links. The conceptual links specifically are among the content descriptions, with links of two types. I think they're overlapping or common concepts. We shouldn't see too much overlap because if we did, you know, something is within a learning area because that's a distinct area of study.

But we look for what's overlapping, what's common, or we look for complementary concepts. Concepts that go together because of a particular learning context. So, here's a cSpace. Remember, say hello. Some of you have heard me say it before. Feel free to ask the person next to you how they are as if you really care. Use a Think-Pair-Share.

Well I say that to allude to the fact that in your working life it's, hi, how are you? Have you got that report? Hi, how are you? Where are those books? School can be a very unreal place, can't it? So use a Think-Pair-Share to consider opportunities and challenges associated with purposefully connected curriculum. I've just talked about two aspects. I've said it involves two or three learning areas or subjects. It must have a conceptual link that's either common or overlapping or complementary in a learning context.

You've got five minutes, which might seem like three. So I wouldn't be extravagant with asking people how they are. I'm going to—I have a particular task for my special helpers down here so five minutes, which might seem like three, for you to have a chat; opportunities and challenges and that's scaffolded on your handout.

Thanks everyone and welcome back. Some opportunities in purposefully connected curriculum. Could I hear three in fast succession? Yes?

Conference
delegate 1

Half the workload, double the time, and in depth.

Jenny Nayler

Independent Education
Consultant — Learning
aJeNcy

Great, excellent. Yes?

Conference
delegate 2

Deeper understanding.

Jenny Nayler

Independent Education
Consultant — Learning
aJeNcy

Yes, terrific. If you don't hear what anyone says, please put your hand up and I'll ask them to say it again because it's very clever what they're saying. Other opportunities?

Conference
delegate 3

Teacher professional development.

<p>Jenny Nayler Independent Education Consultant — Learning aJeNcy</p>	<p>Great. Anything else? Yes?</p>
<p>Conference delegate 4</p>	<p>Engagement of students.</p>
<p>Jenny Nayler Independent Education Consultant — Learning aJeNcy</p>	<p>Yes, excellent. If you're not hearing, please put your hand up. What about challenges? Yes?</p>
<p>Conference delegate 5</p>	<p>Maybe missing out something.</p>
<p>Jenny Nayler Independent Education Consultant — Learning aJeNcy</p>	<p>Right, maybe missing out something. Can you miss out something with a single curriculum approach as well?</p>
<p>Conference delegate 5</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Jenny Nayler Independent Education Consultant — Learning aJeNcy</p>	<p>Yeah, sure, okay. But good point.</p>
<p>Conference delegate 6</p>	<p>Where you have a variety of skills.</p>
<p>Jenny Nayler Independent Education Consultant — Learning aJeNcy</p>	<p>A variety of skills to be informed. Yeah it sounds like the real world, doesn't it?</p>
<p>Conference delegate 7</p>	<p>Planning time.</p>
<p>Jenny Nayler Independent Education Consultant — Learning aJeNcy</p>	<p>Yes, planning time. Whatever I talk about here I think it's all contingent on resourcing. Could I just say that I spoke recently at the Social Educators' Association of Queensland—do we have anyone from that association here? Fantastic; they do an absolutely wonderful job. These were my provocations; the Australian Curriculum Organisation in learning areas and subjects along with reporting requirements makes curriculum integration difficult or impossible. That's a provocation; it's possible. The other provocation; you can't have depth in a learning area or subject when it's integrated with other learning areas or subjects. It's a provocation; you can. In fact, that's the way to get depth.</p> <p>Another provocation; guides to make judgments, criteria sheets,</p>

rubrics, should only contain criteria or valued features from one learning or subject. That's a provocation. That doesn't have to happen. Integrated curriculum will result in soup. I've actually—some of those are direct quotes but I'm not going to speak any more on that matter.

Now, the task I gave these wonderful people who were seconded, I've made that a small picture of—I'm seeing here but I'm not seeing it there. Isn't that a curious thing? There it is. So I didn't think that I would actually be photographing this pie that I picked up at Brookside the other afternoon. So it's not exactly photogenic. I just said to my partner this morning while he was cooking me breakfast, I think I need a picture of my pie and I want to put it in my PowerPoint. He didn't wait for a briefing on the angle or making it look good; he snapped the photo and got on with cooking my breakfast. I guess I should be quite happy.

Here was the challenge for my group of colleagues down here. What can the Year 5/6 curriculum leaders share in to how they could [make] purposeful connections across the curriculum? I asked them to use the Three Storey Intellect; Bellanca & Fogarty. A powerful version of Bloom's Taxonomy where one gathers, processes and applies. If you missed out on Susan Drake's workshop yesterday afternoon, you really missed out on something because it was absolutely fantastic. One of the things we talked about was scaffolding students for higher-order thinking. This is what integrated curriculum or purposefully connected curriculum is about. This is what enquiry-based learning is about. It's about higher-order thinking.

I'm inviting my colleague, Caroline Hollis to come up. As she [comes] up—can you describe the pie?—is a gathering question. How does this compare with what you already know?—a level two processing question. At the top level, what judgments would you make in relation to how best to enact the Australian Curriculum?

Caroline Hollis
QSA

Well that was an interesting exercise because what we all did is, I first of all ran over there and went, I want the humanity and social sciences because that's my favoured area. Then when we had it, we realised is—that amongst us, there was some pieces of pie, the large pieces like maths and science and English, that we all wanted, and there were the little ones that we really didn't want. Those included—because they were out of our preferred, I suppose, learning areas—they're the ones that are coming. So it was the arts, HPE, which no-one wanted, and the languages which was left last.

So in terms of that, I think what we noticed is, that there was an uneven distribution of pies. Some of us went along—went for—had a large slice, and I suppose that relates to the time allocation and the space that some of those pieces of pie already have in the curriculum. I suppose the judgment I would make in terms of that is that if we're actually going to do the best for our students, we'd have to actually look at the distribution of those pies and really consider how we can find a balance and share them so that they don't miss out on a piece of pie, because it was certainly an inequitable carve up there. Some of us would be feeling less hungry than others. Thank you, Jenny.

Jenny Nayler
Independent Education
Consultant

Thank you, Caroline. There's so much involved in that. Now we're not suggesting that at any moment in time or across a term or a semester one would carve it up and you would only have—for example, what

proportion did the arts look like, Gladys Martu, which would have offended you, I have to say.

Gladys Martu
Conference delegate

It would be little, kind of one millimetre slice.

Jenny Nayler
Independent Education
Consultant

Does that have to be carved up further?

Gladys Martu
Conference delegate

I would think so.

Jenny Nayler
Independent Education
Consultant

Into how many bits?

Gladys Martu

Oh, just a few, yes.

Jenny Nayler
Independent Education
Consultant

Just a few, into five areas, into five subjects. So the point I wanted to make here is that whilst we could talk about the rationale and the significant rationale for making some areas more significant than others, that isn't accepted by everyone all of the time. In fact, I have to tell you a little story. This morning was hygienically prepared, this, I have to say, printed-out, plate cut, placed on the pie with skewer and then cut. So you may eat it without fear that anything terrible—I did forget to nick some spoons at morning tea so that is a bit of a shame, or serviettes. But apart from that, feel free to eat it.

I have to say, I was cutting it up and when I got to the end, I just had my pin wheels, my flags for each area. I couldn't find one—I had the arts pin wheel but I didn't have a little wedge. I said, but I had to cut it up; it was on the original diagram. This was the pie from the paper. This is the draft pie.

So I got another pie, cut it up, put it on. There was space in the discretionary time for it. Then I saw that the arts had been sucked into the mire of the lemon tart filling. I thought, isn't that an interesting metaphor?

Because I go to schools all the time where they say, oh no, we don't teach science—not so much—that anymore. Oh, there's no time for history. There's no time for geography. I think these things are professional issues and industrial issues too. In terms of planning and resourcing, people having time and space to do good things. Is there anything that anyone wants to add? I hope the last 10 minutes of your life has been useful, this discussion of pies. I want to—Caroline raised so many points there about the need to think about the whole picture.

I've talked about integration in the paper—that when you integrate something you take elements from entities and you bring them together to form a whole. You purposefully connect. You take things from one. But those entities you've taken them from, they still exist. So more of this will be revealed. So I think you can have your curriculum pie and integrate it too.

So this is the draft, and the paper's sort of out there, but I understand that it's going to be maybe—it's up, yes, and with that pie. So why purposefully connect curriculum? This is what you want to know. Caroline has alluded to some of them. I think there are philosophical reasons about the nature of knowledge, about the nature of the world, what it means to be a teacher, what learning means in the twenty-first century.

People mention, teaching for—and learning for deep and connected knowledge and understandings build connectedness to students' lives and to the world for pragmatic reasons. I asked a teacher the other day and she didn't go into any epistemological debates at all about the nature of knowledge. She said to survive. In other words, that's what I've got to do to survive; a practical solution to programming. To the programming of the range of curricula areas that currently make up the Australian Curriculum.

Consult the paper to have a look at where the—and I've used the word integration in talking about the literature. The integration movements have basically come, I think, from some student-centred approaches. Susan's presentation this morning I thought was absolutely wonderful. I'm glad she also introduced the terms interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary. We made a conscious decision that we wouldn't explore all of those terms in the first version of the paper that had seven types of curriculum approaches. We thought possibly you were too busy to be worried about that.

But one movement has certainly been centred on students. That really—you know about Mr Bean? Again, some of you have heard me talk about him. Not the Mr Bean who got the turkey on his head through a series of unfortunate events. But James Bean who's been writing about middle schooling for 40 years in the United States.

He says that curriculum in school should be about things that are personally meaningful to learners, and they are socially meaningful. They matter to the world. That has been my guiding light, I have to say, for the last 10 or 15 years. There's another movement, really, Susan talked about late 1800s. I looked at research and practice from 1910s that came from a social efficiency movement of organising the curriculum, bringing things together to be efficient.

We see in the work of Heidi Hayes Jacobs, and I know many of you know her, really useful work where she maps the curriculum. I'd like to suggest today that, purposefully connected curriculum is about managing the tension between a student-centred approach—is these kids' lives. As Dewey said, school isn't a preparation for life; it is life. Why would we have them in this holding pattern at school, and that then they'll go out in the world and then they'll start to live?

I think it's a tension between a student focus and a subject-centred approach because we do have accountability. What's mandated? What is required curriculum is what we must plan with. So I'd just like to suggest that a really important aspect of the paper has been the use of big questions. Susan referred to them as essential questions. Other people talk about big. I write big in uppercase always because I think how we drive our teaching learning units must matter to learners, must matter to the world. This is where kids spend their time from 9:00 until 3:00. Then they have other tasks to do afterwards.

Before I get on to those questions, I'm in my sixth year, Steph, at Townsville Catholic Education, and many of my questions come from the excellent work of people like Katrina and her colleagues in Townsville Catholic Education. For example, one teacher—actually this is an EQ example this one—a Year 2 class, the big question that was driving the unit was, why don't worms have wings? They were looking at adaptations.

So instead of we're going to learn about worms, we're going to learn about butterflies, these categories—if someone stumbled into that class, the little Year 2 person would say, we're trying to work out why worms don't have wings. What about the Year 7 EQ teacher who suggested, and I love this one, do only clowns have big footprints? I love that question so much I said it about three times in talking about it. I looked down, in front of me, to the slightly anxious person and I said, are you okay? She said I've got clown phobia.

The reason I mentioned that—I mean it can be amusing when the person who's suffering is not here—but I just want to say that you think that you're on safe territory and everyone's safe in your classroom and they're not safe. So we've had wonderful, wonderful questions.

Cairns Cath-Ed prep, could your mother have planted this tree? I'll just get to more specific ones that I'll map to a particular learning area. But lots of absolutely wonderful big questions. I'm stalling a bit for time here but I do that maths one. That is, how can I use non-linear functions to decide which mobile phone plan is best for me? So there are a whole lot of big questions.

I first got into them—Wilhelm's book, he's an American professor and he's written a book called *Engaging Readers & Writers with Inquiry*. He really supports great curriculum within a discipline and across. I'll give you the example of *Romeo and Juliet*. Year 10 say, you could say, Bron could say, we're going to—she wouldn't. She'd have a big question because she's really good. From St Michael's Gold Coast, she's really good at big questions.

It could be, we're going to do *Romeo and Juliet*, we'll look at sonnets. You'll write a sonnet. We'll look at themes, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Or as Wilhelm says, you could say, what makes a good relationship, because they did need to communicate, Romeo and Juliet, didn't they? There's no question about that. It's a big question. What makes a good relationship? That could be talked about in health and physical education. It could be talked about in English. It has applications beyond one learning area. As it does when we think about it and we draw on.

James Bean who advocated integration trans-disciplinary approaches said disciplines aren't my enemy. I bring them in and I use them when they make sense and they're about the real world. But if I ever meet Jeffrey Wilhelm I'm going to say, oh, I think I improved on your question. Because my big question for Romeo and Juliet if I were lucky enough to be in a school at present teaching English after lunch on a windy Thursday afternoon; my big question would be, what would you do for love?

I should stop right there—but I—the part I usually add there is 15-year-olds are pretty interested in love, or something else that starts with L. So I'd like to say that Karen Casey, Catholic School of Collinsville, who owns Australia?—a Year 4 question. That is a big question. That

matters to people. That matters to the world. History and English, I'll just leave those up for you to look at. Should criminals who commit crimes be given a second chance?

I'd like to suggest that a lot of my questions come from—well listening to Radio National—just being in the world and hearing what's going on. Now I believe very strongly, we have to deliver on the curriculum; we have to deliver. Our big questions must connect and lead to the content descriptions and the portion of the achievement standard that we are supporting our students to attain; there's no question about that. However, if we just talk about covering the curriculum and doing them—let me quote Hilary Whitehouse, my good friend, James Cook University, Cairns, who is just wonderful in sharing her deep knowledge with regard to sustainability.

So Hillary's written about the fact that schools do sustainability projects, and sometimes I ham up examples, you might have noticed. The example I give is that schools can have chickens; great sustainability project. But we know what happens to those chickens at the end of the year. It's curtains for the chickens. But we've done sustainability through the year so it's okay. It doesn't matter that the chickens came to a dastardly end and found their way to someone's table for Christmas dinner.

So where was that going, all of that conversation? I'm sure in a second I'll get back on track and say we absolutely have to be directed by content descriptions. How can we represent our community's history through art? I was visiting the EQ school at Hughenden when I was so impressed with the sculptures in the town; that made me think about that. What a great project for kids.

Does it matter where my lamb comes from? I'll just mention that one because I heard that, if you buy a steak in Ireland, not that I would be—I'd be in Ireland but I wouldn't be buying a steak—but if I did, I could find which farm it came from and the carbon footprint of that particular farm. So that would lead—that is a really important question. My challenge to you is, are we addressing the really big questions? So I know where I was going. If we know what the curriculum is, we know that we have to deliver on accountability.

But we are in the world. We care about what matters to young people today. We care about what matters to the world. We'll actually have a rich and exciting curriculum with personal connections across the curriculum. I think delivered or enacted through enquiry that will not be a, what I call a join-the-dots curriculum. Join the dots. Right. Knock off those content descriptions. Yeah, we can do those content descriptions. But is it about real life? Is it about stuff that will sustain your Year 9 class on a windy Thursday afternoon?

So a bit more detail. For every learning area that's connected with another, it's about ensuring that the rationale is enacted at the classroom level; aims are brought to life. So the rationale, why study it, for example. If we look at the English learning area, for example, and consider the rationale—English is about supporting individuals to analyse, understand, communicate and build relationships with others and the world around them. Look, it's pretty well known that most of us would have been better teachers in our classrooms if we'd looked at what we used to call the syllabus.

If we looked at the rationale at the beginning. Why teach it? But we zero in. We're busy. We go straight to those content descriptions. Do we know that the words, beauty, appreciation and elegance appear in the rationale of the maths? Catherine probably knows. Yes, I knew you would because you're a wonderful mathematics educator. But what I'm saying is that, to maintain the integrity is to truly understand why English is important. Why do I read novels? Sure, I did read eight crime novels one after the other in a series, immediately after doing that project *Building Student Success* for QSA. That was my therapy to recovery.

But essentially I would say, I read fiction because it's about the human condition. Is that what we're thinking when we're teaching the English learning area? That literature is about the human condition. It helps us understand who we are, who we want to be. I think that's the thing. The aims, do we read the aims of geography? Do we know that geography is about building a sense of wonder, curiosity and respect about places?

So when we integrate, and we put in a bit of geography or when we make purposeful connections, are we building a sense of wonder? A deep, geographical knowledge of our own locality, Australian, the Asian region. Are we supporting students to think geographically? Are we building their capacity to be competent, critical and creative users of geographical enquiry? Are we supporting them to be active citizens? Dewey sometimes, in the 1920s or '30s; a similar thing to what Janice Chee said one day. So I had to email her and say, what did Janice Chee and John Dewey have in common? Janice could have thought of many things.

But Dewey actually made a comment that, don't throw the maths in just for the sake of it being joined up with another area. It has to be connected to the rationale.

So moving right along. It has to maintain the integrity of the content, and there I mean the content descriptions which, of course, are knowledge skills and understanding, general capabilities, and cross-curriculum priority. The key concepts need to be evident. Again, more detail could be made there about key concepts in geography, sustainability, environment change and so on. This is really important. We must ensure that the year level achievement standards are used for assessment purposes and, look, if you're not using the valued features of the Queensland Studies Authority standard elaborations, I don't know how you're managing to have common, consistent conversations around the type of assessment information you're gathering from particular tasks.

So whether it's a guide to making judgment, task-specific standards, which is what the QSA calls it now which I don't like—but I have to build a bridge and get over that—or you're calling it a criteria sheet or rubric, it needs to identify the learning areas in subjects because that is a reporting requirement. That is accountability. So your guide to making judgment has to contain valued features of the learning areas and it has to do that for any learning area that you're collecting information on. But it is possible, and it's real life and it makes sense.

I wouldn't go to the effort of having one for History and one for English. We've been doing that—we did that in QCAR. There was an example of Five Mile Creek in *Building Student Success*. So there's two

examples which you might read later at your leisure. Remember, I said integrated curriculum must build on conceptual links where they're overlapping.

The science concept, living things have structural features and adaptations. The geography concept, people influence their environments, then build a conceptual link. I hope you appreciate the idea that I wrote conceptual link, purple, green, purple, green. I used to say to my Year 10 history class at Woodridge High School, now, with your assignment, don't spend the time burning the edge of the page. Although if you want to make it look like an appropriate artefact, fine. But under no circumstances, count every word. You've got better things to do with your time. Under no circumstances design every page with flowers around it.

However, I have coloured every second letter there to indicate that the conceptual link has come from those learning areas. Thank you very much to Kathryn Tully who gave such wisdom along the way when I was writing this and the point of connecting two or three. I think it's really great advice. We have to make it so that we can maintain the integrity. Then there's a big question, what does it take to survive? In your handout you'll see that we've proposed—I say 'we' because this was a collaborative effort. Become familiar with the key concepts, consider school and the demographics. I've put dot, dot, dot because there's so much to say about it and I don't want to appear reductionist.

Identify the common or overlapping concepts; develop a conceptual link, developing an overarching or big question. Big question's the term I use. In the paper we've said overarching. These papers need to fit in with QSA terminology. All I can say is, it's wonderful to work with QSA and I so much appreciate their leadership across Australia. I have to say, with regard to many areas and especially assessment, identify other content descriptions to support deep learning and complete the unit planning.

The unit planning, of course; using a template that utilises the five processes that EQ people will recognise with a slight tweaking of words in terms of the dimensions of teaching and learning. So complete the planning with, identify the curriculum; develop the assessment to ensure it's front ended. This is about quality assessment, this purposefully connected curriculum. Develop the sequence and learning, not the way I did when I taught Year 8 Geography, Year 8 History. See? I couldn't even remember what kind of subject it was. But it was Year 8 History.

Some of you might have heard the story, sorry, it's a good one. Year 8 History, it was a day in the life of a slave. I thought it was good preparation for the public service.

Draw Tutankhamen's mask, a map showing the upper Nile, the lower Nile, no big question. How did the river unite Ancient Egypt? How did the desert protect Ancient Egypt from invasion? No, it was just colour in Tutankhamen's mask, maps, beautiful maps, beautiful colouring in; a day in the life of a slave. Until one day I looked down and Douglas, whose last name I used once in a Master's course at QUT, I've never, ever, ever used his name publicly since, since someone came up to me and said, oh, that family is a good friend of ours. But there's been no legal action.

I looked down and Douglas had pinned three flies on his pencil case as I was telling them, I thought, a very interesting story about removing the brain through the nostril after death prior to mummification. It was a good behaviour management policy I used to use. If adolescents are getting a little bit uneasy, just share an example of an organ being removed via another one and, look, you'll have them for at least a minute-and-a-half and then you've got to think of something else.

But I actually planned the teaching, I thought it was interesting. Then as we got near the end of the time period, I thought of the test; that still happens in some places. Someone told me only two years ago, I set the test the night before because I want the students to do well and I want to make sure where they're up to—that person has not understood standards-based.

Here's the other one; builds on conceptual links. Now this one is about concepts that are complementary in a particular learning context. So the science concept, the effect of geological changes. So these are quite different concepts. In English, differences and similarities in various texts and specifically related to drought. Drought is a very important matter.

Big question: What can the scientists tell us about the impact of drought in Australia? That is a sub-question to scaffold those kids to think scientifically but not to use a bit of English to communicate the science—I am not saying that at all; someone did and I've made reference to that in the paper. They said, science is great for concepts, really good stuff, and you can use the English learning area to communicate it. Science has its own way of communicating. So in purposefully connected curriculum we use, as you know—I hope you're not insulted that I've said that, you know I just get carried away sometimes.

Another sub-question: What can we learn from literature about the impact of drought in Australia? There was a bush poet, I think his name was Marco Gliori, just on Radio National a day or two ago. He was talking about being in the bush and talking to people about drought. He had a line; it's so dry the cows are giving powdered milk. I actually think it's a serious topic; all of the mental health issues, the financial issues associated with drought. What a wonderful project to talk about text and share text and go out in the community and share. Does this help you understand the drought? I mean, what a fantastic thing to do. I hope you're as excited about that as I am. What's the impact of drought?

So we might actually have time for some questions in just a couple of moments. So I've created that image. If I had a live image of that, I would actually be able to focus on that and highlight those particular areas. That's a Tagxedo image created from the definition of purposefully connected curriculum that you have there. We will take some questions but I want you to think about what actions you might take, if any, as a result of being here today. But I think we should have some questions first. If you've had a chance to have a look at the examples, feel free to ask any questions.

I'd like to say that, in the paper you'll see that the questions have been slightly updated. For example, one is, how do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in traditional settings rather than how do they live? Of course it's more appropriate to talk about traditional. So do you have

any comments you'd like to make or questions you'd like to ask? Yes, Catherine.

Conference
delegate 8

Yeah, I was just thinking with that example you gave before the science and the English about drought, you talk about [unclear] and keeping the integrity. Would there be two separate assessment tasks in each discipline or are you thinking that ...

Jenny Nayler

Independent Education
Consultant — Learning
aJeNcy

That is a fabulous question. Did other people hear it? I talked about combining the assessment task. Now there's no reason in [a] unit of work not to have more than one assessment task. But I can see a way—in the paper I've talked about how you might have a community forum. The students might participate in the community forum. They have their science hat on. They might talk about the geological impacts of drought. So they're talking about that. They're clearly presenting research from science. They're scientific findings. They may also then be sharing information in terms of texts with a very, very clear delineation that they have done some research, some investigation, some enquiry that was about science, and that some that was to do with English.

So I could see that would be very, very powerful to have the one task and to have the one guide to making judgment. Of course, there are times—and I've never liked host KLA or host learning area—it sounds too parasitic to me; but then, I don't like feeder schools either because it sounds like—people like primary school principals like Judy are just preparing their kids to go into the big secondary school and we better make it that they're fine in secondary school. So I've used the term in things I've written where I talk about the lead; the lead learning area. So which is the lead one?

Thank you for the question. Is that a satisfactory reply Cath?

Conference
delegate 8

Yes.

Jenny Nayler

Independent Education
Consultant — Learning
aJeNcy

Thank you. Any other questions or comments? Who's interested...

Conference
delegate 9

C2C.

Jenny Nayler

Independent Education
Consultant — Learning
aJeNcy

I suppose there's an implied question when you say C2C. Look, I've already said I'm an independent consultant available to work in your schools. Quite seriously, I have a set of processes to engage with C2C. Look, there are fantastic resources there; absolutely fantastic. Most people haven't got enough time and shouldn't spend that amount of time, and I know people in independent and Catholic schools have access to them now via Skoodle.

But I would like to say that I think it's really important not to start on page one and go through to page 16 and 32. I've talked to people who didn't know what the assessment was because they're not up to that page yet. But what I'd like—I've got a process where I say, what's the curriculum that's being identified, who are your students, what is the task? Can you enhance that task? Can you make it more intellectually rigorous? Can you make it more relevant? Work on the task. I do an alignment checker. Take a content description; find it in the assessment task.

We did that with the whole school. Didn't we Judy? With 80 people in October; it was fantastic. Wasn't it? Then, what you do then if you want to modify the C2C, I heard early years people saying—we know now if we take this bit out what we're not including. So C2C, I think you need a process to engage with it and I think you need privilege. Is it rigorous enough, the assessment for my kids? How can I improve that? Just for my context while keeping the integrity of that portion of the achievement standard and the content descriptions.

When you've done all of that, then I get people to say if that's what you want, the range of your students to be successful on, what teaching and learning do you need? I get them to look at direct teaching, indirect, experiential and interactive, a bit of that stuff. Then I say now go to C2C and have a look. Come at it as a highly skilled professional, not as Stephen Ball would say, a pedagogic technician. Is that enough of a C2C response? I could give more but you've really got to go to lunch.

Any more comments? Who's inclined to have even a brief look at the paper, *Purposefully connected curriculum*? It's fantastic. Who is connecting curriculum in their school? Who wants more support from their system in terms of how to purposefully connect? Okay. The other people either aren't interested or they don't need support. So if someone didn't put their hand up, ask them. They can probably help you.

Thank you everyone, you're truly wonderful.

Session chair

Janice Chee
Assistant Director,
Australian Curriculum
Branch, Queensland
Studies Authority

Thank you, Jenny, as we can always rely on you for something that is entertaining and provocative and inspires to further action. Yes, please do read Jenny's paper when you get an opportunity. Do look at the valued features that are in the standard elaborations. That's a bit of a shameless advertisement, as Jenny would say, because they do start to chunk up some of the big ideas that sit behind some of those learning areas and may help you with those big questions.