Evaluation of the
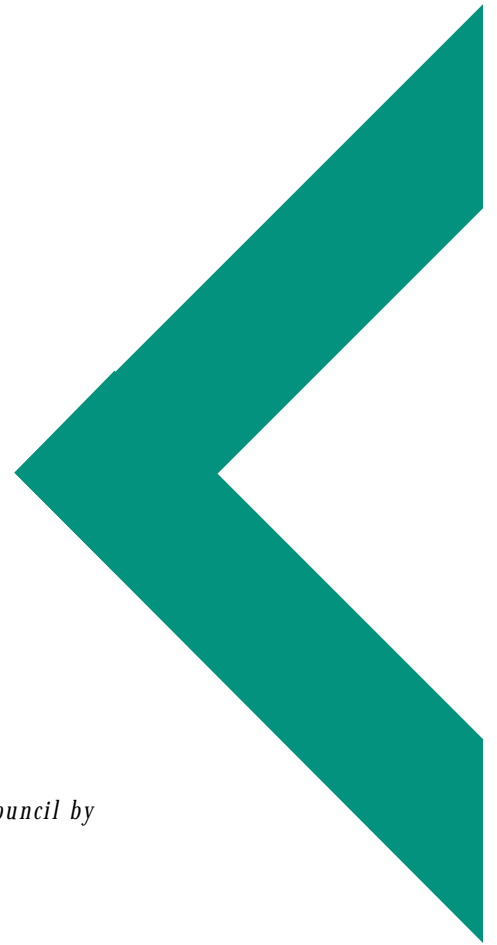# Years 1 to 10 English Key Learning Area
Curriculum Development Project

Report 1

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Acknowledgments

This evaluation was designed and supervised by Ted Hobbs. Patricia Connell managed the project and Lynne Hais was quality assurance manager. Chief evaluator was Patricia Connell. Associate evaluators were Helena Austin, Anne Hobbs and John Byrne. Helena Austin, Patricia Connell, Lynne Hais, Anne Hobbs and Ted Hobbs conducted the interviews with co-development teachers.

Patricia Connell, Lynne Hais and Ted Hobbs prepared the report with assistance from Helena Austin, Anne Hobbs and John Byrne. Lyn Calcutt did final editing.

We acknowledge and very much appreciate the participation of the co-development teachers in interviews and the cooperation of the principals of their schools.

Contents

Executive Summary

This report is concerned with the external evaluation of the Years 1 to 10 English Curriculum Development Project. The purpose of the curriculum development project is to review and revise the *English in Years 1 to 10 Queensland syllabus materials* and to design, develop, publish and disseminate a Years 1 to 10 syllabus for English, online support materials/sourcebooks and initial in-service materials for Queensland schools. The project consists of a co-development phase, a trial and a pilot phase.

The external evaluation is mainly concerned with the final stage of the co-development phase and the trial phase. The present report covers activity during Semester Two, 2000. During this period, 37 co-development teachers worked with the project team to produce draft-in-development curriculum materials and provide input to their refinement in preparation for the trial phase. The main emphases for the project team were the establishment of productive relationships with the co-development teachers and the preparation of draft materials for the trial phase planned for 2001.

The focus questions for the external evaluation during the co-development phase were:
- How well were the co-development processes established for the purpose of drafting curriculum materials in preparation for the trial phase?
- How appropriate and practical is the draft structure for the syllabus?
- How do the co-development teachers perceive the draft curriculum-in-development in terms of change from current programs in English?

The approach used was a set of interviews with the co-development teachers: 18 were visited in their schools for the interview and 19 were interviewed by telephone.

The evaluation found that:

1. The co-development phase was successful in terms of process. The co-development teachers were well prepared for their role, communication processes were effective, cluster meetings and project team visits were valued by the teachers and a sense of partnership developed.

2. Communication by email during the co-development phase was generally quite effective, but participation by teachers in the online forum was low. Networking with colleagues in other schools on a regular basis through their own initiative does not appear to be a high priority for most teachers.

3. A strong sense of learning community developed among the teachers except for some teaching in isolated situations, indicating the importance of continuing to explore effective ways to facilitate and encourage the participation of teachers in networking processes.

4. The proposed strands and substrands for the draft Years 1 to 10 English syllabus were seen by the co-development teachers as appropriate, workable for planning and likely to focus attention on important aspects of English teaching.

5. The proposed syllabus is likely to change planning and teaching in English by improved definition of what is to be taught in terms of scope, emphasis and focus. For most teachers, the extent of change from current programs will be to direct planning more towards what students will be expected to learn and place more emphasis on critical literacy.

The co-development teachers' responses indicate that the project team has successfully created and tapped a rich source of input to the curriculum development task.

The organisation of the draft syllabus into the proposed strands and substrands is well supported by the co-development teachers. Most found the organisation familiar and agree with the new emphasis it is likely to bring to the teaching of English.

Three processes were highly effective in working with co-development teachers: cluster meetings, personal visits by project officers and exchange of email. By contrast, the establishment of an online forum to encourage communication among the co-development teachers in their own time was less successful, even though many commented that they were working alone in their schools.

The results overall indicate that a good basis has been established for the next phase of the development project.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the external evaluation of the Years 1 to 10 English Key Learning Area Curriculum Development Project is to provide advice on the draft Years 1 to 10 English syllabus-in-development and online support materials/sourcebooks, including guidelines and sample modules, in terms of:

- Appropriateness in meeting the needs of students, teachers and school administrators
- Effectiveness as resources in planning and implementing school and classroom English programs
- Efficiency of use

The primary audience for the evaluation consists of the Queensland School Curriculum Council and the English project team for the curriculum development project.

1.2 The Years 1 to 10 English Curriculum Development Project

1.2.1 Project Outline

The purpose of the English Curriculum Development Project is to review and revise the *English in Years 1 to 10 Queensland syllabus materials* and to design, develop, publish and disseminate a Years 1 to 10 syllabus for English, online support materials/sourcebooks and initial in-service materials for use in Queensland schools.

The project consists of a co-development phase, a trial and a pilot phase. The co-development phase involved 37 teachers in primary and secondary schools across Queensland.

Teachers were selected using a process that involved submissions of expressions of interest and negotiation with Education Queensland, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland Inc. (AISQ). Submissions were considered in relation to various factors including:

- Clustering possibilities
- Teacher experience with the current English syllabus as well as information and communication technologies
- Representation of school authorities, year levels taught, school size and organisation
- Representation of particular groups of students – geographical location, socio-economic status, students with disabilities, students for whom English is a second language, students with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

The co-development teachers provided feedback that contributed to the development of draft core learning outcomes with elaborations. Material collected from co-development teachers may also form the basis for sample support materials for the sourcebook modules. In the trial phase, schools will develop and implement programs based on the draft materials (e.g. classroom units, year overviews), collect assessment information related to these programs and provide feedback using this information.

The project commenced in January 1999 and is expected to be finalised by December 2002, when a set of curriculum materials will be available for implementation in schools.

The evaluation is mainly concerned with the final stage of the co-development phase and the trial phase. The present report covers activity during Semester Two, 2000 when 37 co-development teachers worked with the project team, producing draft curriculum materials and providing input to their ongoing refinement in preparation for the trial phase.

The current Project Update (Number 7) prepared by the project team describes project activity during the co-development phase:

> *The co-development phase of the* Years 1 to 10 English Curriculum Development Project *has continued as English project officers and the 37 co-development teachers work together with a major focus on refining the scope, levelness and precision of outcomes and elaborations. Co-development teachers have informed the syllabus development process by:*
> - *planning for teaching and assessing using the draft English syllabus materials*
> - *developing ways of collecting assessment information*
> - *investigating ways of documenting planning and assessment*
> - *discussing classroom-based data (such as samples of units, assessment tasks, student work) with the project team*
> - *raising issues such as the relationship between outcomes-based and criteria- and standards-based approaches to assessment in secondary schools, the relationship between the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Reading and Writing continua and the syllabus and the role of non-unit-based learning*

1.2.2 Draft Materials for the Co-development Phase

The core learning outcomes for the draft syllabus were organised by strands and substrands.

The strands were:
- Cultural: making meaning in contexts
- Operational: operating the language system
- Critical: analysing and evaluating texts

Each strand was divided into three substrands:
- Speaking and Listening
- Reading and Viewing
- Writing and Shaping

The co-development teachers were provided with materials to assist them in their role in the development of the draft materials. The main components provided were:
- The *Design Brief* for the project
- A copy of the Council's *Literacy Position Paper*
- Copies of various research papers
- Resources that focused on current approaches to teaching literacy and English
- Scanned core learning outcomes and elaborations for Levels 1 to 6 in the three strands Cultural, Operational and Critical and three substrands Speaking and Listening, Writing and Shaping and Reading and Viewing
- Redrafted core learning outcomes and elaborations in the Cultural, Operational and Critical strands of Writing and Shaping Levels 1-3

Elaborations for each level in each strand and substrand were organised under the headings:
- Students typically know
- Students typically can

The draft outcome statements with elaborations were compiled through a scan of existing syllabuses from other national and international syllabuses. The co-development teachers were asked to comment on their appropriateness and provide additional examples if needed. Revised draft outcomes in the Cultural, Operational and Critical strands of Writing and shaping, Levels 1-3 were sent to teachers in August.

1.2.3 Project Team Activity in the Co-development Phase

During the co-development phase, project team activity consisted of:
- An introductory cluster meeting for teachers and administrators in April 2000 to describe the project and explain the role of the co-development teachers (separate meetings in Brisbane and Townsville)
- Two follow-up visits to teachers in their schools
- A second conference for co-development teachers in October 2000 (held in Brisbane) drawing on the learnings of the co-development phase to review and revise draft materials and processes for the next phase of the project
- The collection of unit plans from teachers
- The establishment of communication channels among teachers and project team members including email and an online forum
- Production and revision of the draft outcomes and elaborations
- Consultations with various English and literacy associations, experts in the field and representatives of the three schooling authorities
- Meetings of the Syllabus Advisory Committee
- Publication of project updates
- Participation in a range of English-related projects

The timing, focus and duration of the visits to schools were responsive to individual teacher circumstances and therefore flexible. Many discussions focused on the teachers' current planning processes and how they would work with outcomes. Subsequent discussions focused on assessment tasks based on the draft outcomes and elaborations. The tasks were subsequently used at the October Conference for the purposes of sharing assessment information and reviewing the draft outcomes and elaborations.

The online forum was set up to explore the feasibility of this form of communication and strategies for its use in the context of curriculum development.

1.2.4 Issues for the Co-development Phase

The Years 1 to 10 English Curriculum Development Project differed from other syllabus development projects in that the project team did not plan for a trial phase in its usual form. Instead, the project team set up a process to have practising teachers participate as co-developers of the draft materials. In that way, the team hoped to gain insight into teachers' current planning, teaching and assessing in English.

The team members were looking for help from the teachers to identify and build on the strengths of the *English in Years 1 to 10 Queensland syllabus materials* (1994) and deal with areas in need of greater clarity and explication.

The final syllabus materials are required to include the National Literacy Benchmarks used in the current State-wide testing program and make links to the Year 2 Diagnostic Net Reading and Writing continua.

The budget for the project had also been reduced, necessitating a reduced number of project officers than originally planned for the task of writing the draft syllabus and guidelines for the trial stage of the project in 2001.

The project team raised the following questions for the evaluation of the co-development phase with respect to the syllabus-in-development:

- Is the co-development process progressing the development of the draft syllabus materials?
- Do the teachers see links between the current syllabus and the draft materials?
- Can the co-development teachers help the team find usable ways to plan and assess using the outcomes and elaborations?
- What is it that the co-development teachers believe the teachers in the trial phase will need to further the development of the syllabus?

Questions related to the process used in this phase included:

- Do the teachers believe that communication channels are meeting their needs?
- Do the co-development teachers feel part of a learning community?
- Do the co-development teachers feel partners in the development of the draft materials?

1.3 Evaluation Focus

This, the first of three evaluation reports, is concerned with the progress of the co-development phase, when the main emphases for the project team were the establishment of productive relationships with the co-development teachers and the preparation of draft materials for the trial phase planned for 2001.

The focus questions for the co-development phase were:

- How well were the co-development processes established for the purpose of drafting curriculum materials in preparation for the trial phase?
- How appropriate and practical is the draft structure for the syllabus?
- How do the co-development teachers perceive the draft curriculum-in-development in terms of change from current programs in English?

The issues raised by the project team as presented in section 1.2.4 were addressed within the framework of these focus questions.

1.4 Evaluation Approach

The approach used in this phase of the evaluation was a set of interviews with the co-development teachers. Some of the co-development teachers were visited in their schools for the interview and the others were interviewed by telephone.

Most of the interviews occurred during October and November 2000. A few were held during August 2000. Of the 37 co-development teachers, 18 were interviewed in person and 19 by telephone. Appendix 1 presents a list of the co-development teachers and their locations, showing which were interviewed in person and which by telephone.

The interviews followed a set sequence of questions, shown in Appendix 2. Most of the questions asked the teachers to rate various aspects of the co-development process or the draft materials. All items asked for teachers' comments. The set of issues identified in section 1.2.4 above were used as the basis for the interview design.

Summaries of all interview responses (without identification of the interviewees) were supplied to the curriculum development project team.

A chart of the ratings is presented in Appendix 3.

2. Progress of the Co-development Phase

> Focus Question 1: How well were the co-development processes established for the purpose of drafting curriculum materials in preparation for the trial phase?

Most of the interview questions explored the effectiveness of the co-development processes.

2.1 Messages

For the first interview question, co-development teachers were asked, "What messages do you have for the Project Team, the Evaluator or the QSCC?" This question allowed the interviewees to focus on issues seen as important to their set of priorities.

The majority of the teachers wanted to assure the project team and the QSCC that the co-development process had been a worthwhile learning experience for them, and one that was likely to result in an effective draft syllabus. Many commented favourably on the collaborative nature of their involvement on the curriculum development process and the work of the project team:

- *I like the way the teachers are involved and how the project team confers with us about what direction to take. I like how they emphasize that a new document is part of a gradual change process.*
- *It's very good that teachers are listened to and their input is valued in the co-development phase.*
- *Overall I think the project team is doing a fabulous job. They are accessible and easy to work with. I feel this is a collaborative process.*
- *The co-development process was really effective in developing what will be the trial syllabus.*
- *This has been a challenge and lots of hard work but very motivating and I've enjoyed it greatly.*

One teacher thought that the curriculum development was unnecessary:

- *This whole thing is a total waste of time when other states (Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia, New South Wales) have a perfectly established syllabus. Why are we reinventing the wheel?*

Assessment and reporting using outcomes was a point of dissatisfaction for a couple of the secondary teachers:

- *For the Council: Clarify the issues of criteria and standards in assessment. I don't think this has been very well clarified for any of us yet.*
- *It's ridiculous that we're writing a syllabus when we don't know how to assess and report. The assessment in secondary schools has to be so continuous that the paper overload is enormous. We're always assessing and not spending our time teaching. Criteria-based assessment is the better way to go. Parents are used to it.*

A couple of the primary teachers expressed concerns about a syllabus based on learning outcomes:

- *It has been an interesting year for me to try the whole thing. I've been teaching for a long time and switching to the outcomes-based approach has been very challenging for me. I know I do a good job now but I don't feel I am yet fully in tune with the outcomes way of doing things.*

- *I am not 100% convinced about outcomes based education yet. There are so many – too many – outcomes across the 8 KLAs. It will be a reporting nightmare and there is the possibility that we will fall into the trap of not using it the way it is supposed to be used.*

A great majority of the messages were supportive of the co-development process and the work of the project team.

2.2 Progress of the Co-development Phase

The second interview question asked, "How is the co-development phase progressing in your school?" This question was designed to elicit the teachers' main issues in relation to their roles in the co-development process.

The wording of this question may have carried an implication that the co-development process was to involve schools rather than individual teachers, but the project team did not expect that the co-development teachers would work with others in their schools. The teachers were expected to work with co-development teachers in other schools if they could and with the project team. Taking the work of the project further into the school would have been premature as the syllabus materials were still in such early development.

Nonetheless, many of the teachers commented on the fact that they were working alone in their schools. Their comments seemed to suggest a need to discuss their ideas and experiences with someone else in the school:
- *Because I am the only one in the school doing this, it has been hard. I haven't had anyone else in the school to bounce ideas off. I don't think it is going as well as it would have been if there had been two teachers doing it.*
- *I am the only teacher in the school or in the whole area, which is surprising. It has been all up to me. The Deputy is interested and supportive, but not involved.*
- *There's only me doing this. Not a lot of priority is given to it in the school at the moment as they are still working on Science and HPE.*
- *It is a very lonely experience in the school. A lot has been clarified for me since the second conference. I am very excited to be working on it.*
- *Basically, it's just me. I've tried to do things but I still have to keep within the framework of what other classes are doing. I know we need to become more critical.*

Some of the teachers reported good progress:
- *It's going very well. I have lots of support from my principal and teaching partner.*
- *It's progressing – doing quite well. I'm planning a unit for next term.*

Some of the teachers had been able to connect with teachers in other schools:
- *I'm part of a network of co-development teachers all looking at Level 2.*
- *Last term I planned a unit with a teacher on the other side of town. We implemented the unit in both schools.*
- *Unlike most other schools, our school has three people involved in the process. In our planning for each term, we've tried to focus on either Reading or Writing or Listening and come up with ideas i.e. we don't try to do too much at once.*
- *We networked with a group of other early childhood teachers and that was fabulous. We were able to share ideas.*

Some reported slow progress:
- *It's progressing slowly at this stage.*
- *I have still found the evaluating of the outcomes difficult to implement.*
- *I have been able to identify different levels of student work within the framework for outcomes but I haven't been able to create learning or develop materials of my own.*

Some had difficulty finding enough time to devote to the co-development tasks:
- *Between my other commitments, I haven't been able to find enough time to do what I want yet.*
- *The reality is that it gets lost in the everyday routine and pressure in the school.*
- *It is only progressing insofar as I get time to do something about it. I am working in isolation here. I feel I have only just started.*
- *We could be progressing faster, but the hectic pace of fourth term has limited progress.*

The results here indicate that while some teachers were satisfied with the progress of the co-development phase, many felt isolated within their schools or had difficulty finding time among their various commitments.

2.3 Teachers' Understanding of Co-development Expectations

The third interview question asked, "To what extent do you understand what is expected of you in the co-development process?" Interviewees were invited to provide a rating and a comment.

The ratings were mostly high:

Very High: 6	High: 23	Moderate: 6	Low: 1	Very Low: 1

The comments indicated that for most of the teachers, the expectations became clear as they worked through the process:
- *I have a good idea of what I need to do. On occasion I clarify this with the team or other teachers in the district.*
- *I know what to do. I only ask the project team if I don't know what to do.*
- *No problems. The team is very approachable and open, so that if there is a question, I've felt free to contact them and have the issue clarified.*
- *The team is very clear in its instructions and they keep us well informed.*
- *Laid out well at the start. I get muddled wading through levels, etc. If I sit and look at it calmly it falls into place. I know what I have to do.*

Some teachers had felt uncertain of their role in the process until they attended cluster or conference meetings:
- *Initially I had no idea but after the first cluster meeting, it started to click and now I know exactly where I'm going.*
- *The meetings in small cluster groups and with project officers clarified the expectations for my participation.*
- *It is clearer after the second conference. If we want to continue I have a higher understanding. Before the second conference it was only moderate, now it is high.*
- *I didn't feel clear before the last visit from the project team but I feel much clearer now.*

Only a few teachers were still unclear about their role:

- *I sort of know what they are expecting but there is nothing set out clearly anywhere.*
- *Still grappling with this.*
- *I've been looking to the project team for answers along the way, but I feel I don't get straight answers.*

Generally, working with the project team generated good understanding among co-development teachers of their role in the process.

2.4 Initial Cluster Meetings

Interview question 4 asked teachers to, "Rate the effectiveness of the first cluster meeting in clarifying what is expected of you as a co-development teacher". This question and items 5, 6, 7 and 8 provide evaluation of specific aspects of the co-development process.

The ratings were fairly evenly distributed from moderate to very high:

Very High: 10	High: 12	Moderate: 11	Low: 3	Very Low: 0

One teacher did not rate this item.

Approximately one-third of the teachers gained confidence in their role in the co-development process following the first cluster meeting:

- *Very good. I came away knowing exactly what to do for that phase.*
- *I came away with a fairly clear understanding.*
- *The project was explained with specific details as to involvement of co-development teachers.*
- *That was excellent. Until that I had no idea what we were doing at all.*

A few of the teachers said their role became clear as they talked or worked with other teachers and the team after the first meeting:

- *Subsequent visits helped to clarify it for me.*
- *I came away with a general idea and this unfolded and was clarified after time spent with other teachers – about 6 from other schools.*
- *The penny didn't drop until I was working on it with other teachers after that first meeting.*

A similar number of teachers said they felt confused for some time after the meeting:

- *I knew what I had to do next but I didn't have a big picture of what I was doing.*
- *I didn't find it as helpful as it might have been. I felt that the big picture was clear but I just didn't know exactly what I was to do.*

A couple found lack of definition at the start:

- *The elaborations were such a rough draft at that point and we were just coming to terms then with what was expected of us. The project team was meeting many people for the first time and was still getting to know what they could expect.*
- *I felt that I knew as much as they knew – the project team didn't have a clear idea themselves. They were working through and learning themselves. They came across as 'leaders' rather than 'experts'.*

In summary, most of the teachers found the initial meeting to be quite effective in clarifying the expectations of them as co-development teachers, but uncertainty remained for others.

2.5 Value of Project Team Visits to Co-development Schools

Interview question 5 asked, "To what extent have visits by the project team helped you with your co-development tasks?"

The ratings were mostly very high or high, but two teachers selected very low.

Very High: 18	High: 12	Moderate: 4	Low: 1	Very Low: 2

Generally the co-development teachers found the project team visits to be quite valuable. The great majority of responses described the visits as helpful:
- *The project team is excellent: They are supportive and knowledgeable.*
- *Visits to them and visits at school have been very helpful. The team has been wonderful. I can't speak highly enough of them.*
- *That's been terrific. I have enjoyed working with the two project team members and they have certainly clarified things for me. I feel that I am still getting my head around it and it has been a growth process for me.*
- *The team has been very useful in focusing on what's possible, and in the questioning and challenging of people.*

Some of the teachers found the visits particularly helpful in clarifying or focusing their work:
- *It has been the visits from the team that have clarified, supported and reassured. I came away from the last visit a lot more confident and feeling that I was on track. That was wonderful. The visits have been one of the really good parts of the process.*
- *It was very high in terms of clarifying the relevance of what I was doing in developing units for other teachers as opposed to developing units for my own classroom use.*
- *The visits have allowed me to clarify areas where I wasn't sure if I was on the right track.*

A few of the teachers saw the visits as being data gathering exercises for the team, some implying that they had hoped for something more:
- *There have been two visits. No suggestions offered – they just accepted what was being done here.*
- *They were affirming but not of great help to me. I told them what I had done, but they didn't give me much in return.*

A couple found the visits confusing:
- *I didn't know if they wanted me to write a new criteria sheet, or new elaborations or something else. It wasn't clear.*

The responses indicate that with a few exceptions, the visits by project team members were highly valued by the co-development teachers.

2.6 Communication between Project Team and Co-development Teachers

Interview question 6 asked, "To what extent are the channels of communication between you and the development team working effectively?"

The ratings were mostly very high or high:

Very High: 15	High: 15	Moderate: 5	Low: 1	Very Low: 1

The greatest number of comments related to email. Most of the teachers found this to be an effective means of communication:

- *It has been terrific in that we have a good source of communication in email, and I have been using it.*
- *To start with we used the telephone but they have moved to email, which has worked exceptionally well.*
- *Very well. I email them and they email back promptly.*
- *Super. Email is wonderful because I get it at home. They keep sending me snippets and helpful material.*
- *Emails are helpful, although I'm sometimes slow to respond.*

Some had problems with email, apparently because they did not or could not receive or send regularly:

- *I have been slow to email and some information only comes on email so I have not known some dates and times.*
- *I can't download attachments at my computer – I have to do it through the admin officer. I don't have A3 printer to download A3 sheets.*
- *It is partly my fault that it is not better. It is all done through email and sometimes you are busy and your email builds up or the computer breaks down etc*
- *Only moderate due to the lack of a personal email facility – everything has to come through the school office.*

Several comments revolved around communication with the team, noting the accessibility and approachability of the team members themselves:

- *They are keeping me up to date – they communicate with me more than I do with them.*
- *They kept us well informed with latest updates and attachments.*
- *There is always someone there when you phone and they are always helpful.*
- *I feel I have ready access by phoning, talking and email and I have had good responses at length when needed.*

Some of the teachers commented on the online forum, finding it to be unsuccessful during the co-development phase mainly because teacher participation was low:

- *The online forum is not being used effectively because we are all so busy.*
- *Online forum was a good idea but didn't take off as well as they had expected.*
- *The online forum is useless – not many contributions.*
- *The group is not connected.*

The results indicate that communication between the project team and co-development teachers was highly effective for most teachers, especially via the medium of email, except for the few who didn't or couldn't receive or send regularly. The project team members were seen as accessible and approachable. The online forum was unsuccessful during the co-development phase with low participation by teachers.

2.7 Sense of Partnership in the Co-development Process

Interview question 7 asked, "To what extent are you a partner in the curriculum development process?"

The ratings were mostly moderate or high:

Very High: 8	High: 11	Moderate: 15	Low: 2	Very Low: 1

About half of the co-development teachers felt they had a high or very high level of partnership in the curriculum development process:

- *I feel that our opinions are valued and that the team respects what I have to say.*
- *We're made to feel as if we are a very integral part of the unit development.*
- *I feel real ownership of this.*
- *I feel that I am contributing. The partner thing comes from not feeling you are just doing something for someone else. I am doing stuff that I think is important and beneficial and it is useful and beneficial for my students now. The strategy is very good.*
- *They have been inclusive of all team members and respectful of what people can give them.*
- *The whole process of co-development means that teachers know the project team are using classroom practice to base the curriculum on. This has been very important. But, it means that co-development teachers have to accept part of the responsibility.*

Most of the teachers who gave moderate ratings felt more like participants than partners, sometimes due to their own limited contributions:

- *I feel part of it but we are not partners.*
- *I know it is important to be there and give feedback to the project team. I feel privileged to be part of it but I am still a low-key partner.*
- *I'm helpful but I don't feel as knowledgeable as the co-development team.*
- *The structure/formatting of the document is imposed on us, but the elaborations are very much put forward by the co-development teachers.*
- *This moderate rating is mainly because of my not fully understanding how it all works. I feel I am not an equal and so not an effective partner.*
- *I feel I am a participant rather than a partner, but this is not a reflection on the team.*

One concern was the lack of time people were able to devote to the process due to other commitments at school:

- *The opportunity was there to be more of a partner, but due to time constraints and the school situation, I didn't really feel I could be a partner.*
- *It is probably a reflection on the time I have to do anything about it.*

Four of the teachers were dissatisfied, for various reasons, with the opportunities to be a partner in the process:

- *Sometimes you don't even know why we are doing something. They seem to have an agenda that we do not always understand.*
- *I'm too isolated.*
- *Perhaps my expectations were too high, but I expected to make more contribution. I expected a lot more input into developing the embryonic outcomes and elaborations. It has been more like professional development.*
- *I have no way of evaluating what I've done, due to lack of feedback, guidance or clear expectations.*

Overall, the results indicate that high levels of partnership were created in the co-development process, but some of the teachers felt more like participants than partners because of perceptions of their own capacity to contribute or limitations on their time.

2.8 Creation of a Learning Community

One of the project team's goals was to engender a sense among the co-development teachers that they were members of a learning community. Interview item 8 asked, "To what extent do you feel part of a learning community in this project?"

The ratings were mostly high or very high:

Very High: 12	High: 13	Moderate: 7	Low: 4	Very Low: 0

One teacher declined to rate this item.

Most of the teachers felt part of a learning community in this project:
- *I like the way we can bounce ideas off each other. I particularly liked the two days spent with the other teachers.*
- *I think this has been the biggest plus for the whole thing that I am part of a learning community and we are all in it together.*
- *Everyone's been going through the same learning curve. Everyone has been helping each other.*
- *I've learnt so much and contributed a lot and I feel I represent the broader community of teachers in this.*
- *It's not set up as an "us" and "them." WE are all contributing together.*

Some of the teachers commented that they had personally learned a lot from the co-development experience:
- *It's been a good learning experience.*
- *I've learnt a lot through doing this – a real educational process.*
- *We're certainly learning a lot.*

Most of the low and a couple of the moderate ratings came from teachers who spoke of a sense of isolation. Their responses show the need for conferences and web-based networking in overcoming isolation:
- *It's nobody's fault, but because other schools are closer together, they've networked and I haven't been involved. We're also smaller than other schools so different issues are important to us.*
- *Most of the time I don't feel part of a learning community. I am too isolated here. The conference helps.*
- *That's a difficult one because I don't get to see others. They probably thought the online forum would overcome that but I don't have a computer at home.*

One of the low ratings came from a secondary teacher who had questions about the basic format for the syllabus:
- *No question of whether we want outcomes-based; it's just "This is what we're doing". It's a big selling process, but it hasn't sold us yet. They don't want to answer the challenging questions so we can't learn as much as we should.*

Taken together, the results indicate that a strong sense of learning community had been developed among the teachers except for those teaching in isolated situations.

2.9 Contact among Co-development Teachers

In the co-development process, the project team worked to facilitate and encourage high levels of communication among the co-development teachers. Interview item 9 asked, "To what extent do you have contact with other co-development teachers?"

The ratings were distributed fairly evenly across the full range, with a tendency towards low and very low:

Very High: 3	High: 6	Moderate: 8	Low: 11	Very Low: 9

The majority had very little or no contact with other co-development teachers except during the cluster meetings. Several reasons were given for this, but most seemed to indicate that such contact on a regular basis was a low priority for teachers.

Some blamed themselves:
- *I haven't had much contact with the others but that is largely my fault.*
- *The opportunity was there if I had wanted or needed to take it.*
- *The project team have done all they can to facilitate that contact.*

Some said there was not enough time:
- *The issue is the perennial one of teachers and time. We have talked about it and we say we should get together but we don't find the time.*
- *The opportunities have been there but time restricts involvement.*
- *It gets down to your daily job and your more immediate pressures. You still have a class and a school to contend with. Time is a constant issue.*

Some said it was not a strong need for them:
- *There's always a lot to do and I haven't really needed to see others.*
- *We are no longer doing that (emailing and face-to-face contact) so that indicates that we feel more comfortable and don't need that support.*
- *I've had no contact at all with other co-development teachers due to the uniqueness of the school situation. Our focus is different to most other schools.*
- *Only in the cluster meetings, no contact otherwise. Some teachers have formed groups, more by accident than design.*

A few teachers found their geographic situation hindered contact with other teachers:
- *There are only three at secondary level in this area. It's geographically difficult.*
- *Distance is a problem, but it's been OK because my Head of Department is knowledgeable.*

Most of the high or very high ratings came from teachers who had been part of a regular group or meeting pattern:
- *Emails all the time and regular meetings with a group of six others.*
- *Last semester the early childhood group were talking once a month by phone or email.*
- *Networks have been set up based on areas of interest, sharing units etc.*

The results indicate that networking with other teachers through their own initiative on a regular basis is not a high priority for most teachers. In spite of efforts by the project team to encourage and facilitate networks, few of the teachers had contacted others outside of the various cluster meetings. This result stands in contrast to the finding in section 2.9 that some teachers felt isolated and needed meetings or web-based interaction with peers. This suggests an asymmetrical relationship: Many teachers have ample personal contact with others and feel no necessity for networking, but some are in isolated situations and need regular contact with others. The potential benefits of networking stand on one side of the relationship between the two groups. This may help to explain why the project team's efforts to create networks were not successful. This result has implications for processes used by QSCC in curriculum development generally.

2.10 Summary and Conclusions

For the majority of the co-development teachers, the co-development process was a worthwhile learning experience that was likely to result in an effective draft syllabus. Many commented favourably on the collaborative nature of their involvement in the curriculum development process and on the work of the project team.

Some teachers were quite satisfied with the progress of the co-development phase, but others felt isolated within their schools or had difficulty finding time among their various commitments.

Generally, the co-development teachers achieved good understanding of their role in the co-development process as they worked with the project team. Most of the teachers found the initial meeting to be quite effective in clarifying the expectations but uncertainty remained for others, which generally diminished during the co-development phase.

With few exceptions, the visits to schools by project team members were highly valued by the co-development teachers.

Communication between co-development teachers and the project team was highly effective, especially via the medium of email. The exceptions were those who didn't or couldn't receive or send email regularly. For the most part, the teachers saw the project team members as accessible and approachable.

The online forum was less successful with low participation by teachers.

High levels of partnership were created in the co-development process, although some of the teachers felt more like participants than partners because of perceptions of limits on their own capacity to contribute or restrictions on their time.

A strong sense of learning community had been engendered among the co-development teachers with the exception of those teaching in isolated situations.

Networking on a regular basis seems to hold a low priority for most teachers among their other commitments. In spite of efforts by the project team to encourage and facilitate networks, few of the teachers had contacted others except at the various cluster meetings, and contributions to the online forum were few. Further discussion of this issue appears in section 5 of this report.

We conclude that:

1. The co-development phase was successful in terms of process. The co-development teachers were well prepared for their role, communication processes were effective, cluster meetings and project team visits were valued by the teachers and a sense of partnership developed.

2. Communication by email during the co-development phase was generally quite effective, but participation by teachers in the online forum was low. Networking with colleagues in other schools on a regular basis through their own initiative does not appear to be a high priority for most teachers.

3. A strong sense of learning community developed among the teachers except for some teaching in isolated situations, indicating the importance of continuing to explore effective ways to facilitate and encourage the participation of teachers in networking processes.

3. Appropriateness and Workability of the Co-development Versions of the Draft Materials

Focus Question 2: How appropriate and practical is the draft structure for the syllabus?

Two interview items related to this focus question.

3.1 Opinions of the Strands and Substrands

Interview item 10 asked, "What is your opinion of the strands and substrands as organisers for the syllabus?"

Some confusion was apparent between strands and substrands. Some responses indicated that some of the teachers were talking about the strands when they were referring to the substrands, and vice versa.

Nonetheless, there were many positive responses to the strands and substrands as organisers for the syllabus.

Some positive responses were quite general:
- *Good. Really well developed.*
- *It's a big improvement on the current syllabus. It's better organised and it's good that it's set out under levels.*
- *I think they are good. I like the way it's broken into strands and the three substrands are really good.*

Some of the teachers were pleased that the concepts were familiar:
- *Spot on. They're very clear. They're familiar. I wouldn't like to see them changed.*
- *The reading/listening etc are not very different from the current syllabus, so I have no trouble with them.*
- *I don't mind it. I can deal with it. It's similar to what's used in Years 11 and 12.*
- *The Senior program strands correspond with the criteria we're using, therefore it's easy for us here.*

Some saw the organisation as potentially workable in planning:
- *I am happy with this because it organises the English. When I planned I found that because there are only a few strands I was happy with them.*
- *The notion of pulling apart cultural, operational and critical is good for us as teachers in terms of thinking through what kids are doing with language. These are three simple organisers.*
- *I like them – they're very workable.*

Some teachers had difficulty in comprehending the strands:
- *It is a problem always trying to decipher the language of the strands especially because you have all of the other KLAs to deal with as well.*
- *I think the substrands are fine. The strands I still haven't got really clear in my mind.*
- *It takes a while to get used to it. I had to sit down and really think about it.*
- *I find them confusing and difficult. I have to think carefully to try to distinguish between cultural and critical.*
- *I think when teachers look at it they will be blown out of the water by it.*
- *Once teachers become familiar with them, they'll be fine, but it will take a little bit of work and in-service to achieve this.*

Some of the teachers saw the strands as providing a way of shifting teaching emphases in beneficial ways:

- *I appreciate the viewing and shaping being made explicit.*
- *The strands have shifted teacher emphasis from heavily operational, to include cultural and critical aspects.*
- *They keep me focused and ensure that I don't leave out any part of English.*
- *The critical strand gets more emphasis, which is necessary, and there is less emphasis on operational (which was overdone in the past). It is more balanced this way.*

A few commented thoughtfully on relationships among the strands and substrands, teasing out the difficulty of trying to compartmentalise something that is essentially, closely interwoven:

- *I understand what they are trying to do in showing the inter-relationships among the strands. They are not putting in stuff that is related to a strand that is isolated from the other strands. They are trying to weave them together.*
- *Strands are really important but they need to be more integrated. It's not good to separate operational, cultural and critical as they work hand in hand.*
- *I would have liked to see structural separated from operational, creating a fourth substrand. For example, what do we do with extreme, polarised results of different levels within the operational?*

Most of the co-development teachers liked the strands and substrands, found them to be familiar, considered them workable for planning or saw them as likely to focus teachers' attention on important aspects of English teaching. However, a few found that the strands took some effort to comprehend, indicating that careful explanation will be needed as part of initial in-service upon implementation.

3.2 Workability of the Strands and Substrands

Interview item 11 asked, "Are the strands and substrands working for you?" This question was intended to indicate the co-development teachers' opinions of the strands and substrands from a practical point of view.

The majority of responses were positive, with many simply saying "Yes":

- *Yes – I'm very positive about this. It has a lot of potential.*
- *I haven't trialled all of them but those that I have are OK.*

Some teachers found the strands and substrands workable for planning, but some said they used them not as a starting-point, but in the final planning stages to ensure that their planned learning experiences would address the core learning outcomes:

- *Yes, they are. I'm still grappling with how to adjust my planning and assessment to record it, but in the actual classroom it fits well with the program.*
- *Yes they are and I am using them in my planning. They really focus you on what you are going to do with each unit. I am also learning particularly about the critical element.*
- *They are working for me. I've been planning my units then going through and seeing which substrands fit into the unit. The strands and substrands are relevant and necessary. They are things that need to be taught.*
- *I plan a unit based on kids' needs and see how I need to adapt the plan to meet outcomes.*
- *Yes, I work backwards from what I want them to know and do, to unit planning, then I match this with the strands. Then I go through my planning and fill in the blanks.*

A few of the teachers expressed concerns about the need for adequate introductory in-service for teachers:

- *When I've got to pick it up off the shelf and use it, it may not be so easy. I'm also conscious of the fact that first-year teachers and those who have had time away from the classroom would need the detail. I think we will need a lot of in-service on this.*

Some comments were made in terms of structure and format:

- *The inclusion of discourses across the three strands is useful rather than cultural context (which might confuse people).*
- *I would have liked to see listening and speaking separated.*

In summary, most of the co-development teachers found the strands and substrands to be quite workable in the planning process.

3.3 Summary and Conclusions

Most of the co-development teachers liked the strands and substrands. Some said they were familiar, some found them to be quite workable in the planning process, others said they would focus teachers' attention on important aspects of the teaching of English. However, a few of the co-development teachers found the strands and substrands difficult to comprehend, and some confusion between strand and sub-strand – which was which – was evident.

We conclude that:

4. The proposed strands and substrands for the draft Years 1 to 10 English syllabus were seen by the co-development teachers as appropriate, workable for planning and likely to focus attention on important aspects of English teaching.

4. Difference from Current Programs

Focus Question 3: How do the co-development teachers perceive the draft curriculum-in-development in terms of change from current programs in English?

4.1 Perceived Differences

Interview question 12 asked, "How different will the new curriculum be from current programs in English?"

Most of the responses to this question fell into three equal groups:

- Those who saw significant differences in teaching and reporting flowing from syllabus based on an outcomes approach
- Those who believed the new curriculum would be more specific and comprehensive
- Those who saw little difference

Close to one-third commented that outcomes-based teaching and reporting will be very different for schools:

- *It's outcomes-based and for schools where outcomes are new, it will require in-service to familiarise them with this philosophy. It will influence planning at the school, at the class/year and the unit level.*
- *Incorporating the outcomes into unit plans will be the biggest hurdle for teachers to overcome.*
- *Very different, because there's a big shift away from content and genre to what the children can do. This is much more child-centred.*

- *It is a mind change in assessment because we are not used to levels – this is the big change.*
- *There will be significant differences in terms of looking at outcomes instead of objectives, in terms of changing from a genre approach.*

A similar number said that the new curriculum would be more specific and would ensure that all important aspects of English are covered:
- *I think the elaborations in the new syllabus will help to define what has to be covered or could be covered. This is different from past programs and it is a lot better.*
- *It will focus on a more balanced approach. The present syllabus is very genre-focused.*
- *It'll leave less to chance – especially the listing of the 'knowing' and 'doing'. We know what must be taught e.g. grammar.*
- *More specific, and give teachers a better idea of where they're heading and which areas to cover.*
- *It's more specific and explicit.*

Again, a similar number thought that there would be little difference beyond a change in emphasis:
- *I think it is just a different organisation of the assessment otherwise it is the same as present.*
- *I think it will build on the current.*
- *The philosophy is the same but it goes further and includes areas not well addressed in the current syllabus.*
- *There won't be a huge difference but there is a greater focus on visual text, multimedia and technology.*
- *Probably not a huge difference. The program currently in use is fairly traditional but varied, for example we do place emphasis on visual language.*

A few people felt that the new curriculum would be easier for teachers to use:
- *Having not as many books makes it more user-friendly.*
- *It will be a lot easier to plan for programs in English than in previous programs.*

Some teachers welcomed the likelihood that planning would be more focused upon what students are expected to learn:
- *My teaching is the same but I'm looking at the outcome initially and how I'm going to get there. Now I'm planning as I go after selecting the outcome. My focus is now on what children 'know and can do' rather than what genre they can write.*
- *Planning with outcomes and elaborations makes you very focused and specific. It impacts your choices of activities. I choose activities that are tailored to specific outcomes, rather than activities that are creative and fun. They are trying to make every teaching moment count.*
- *Planning will be much more focused on children's learning outcomes rather than content.*

Some welcomed what they saw as a shift towards the critical element:
- *More emphasis is on critical literacy and teachers may need some professional in-service in this.*
- *I'm hoping it will reflect more of a change – that children will become more critical and questioning rather than the passive recipients that they can be at the moment.*
- *It will be a bit different. More critical and analytical but I think children will be able to do it more easily.*

- *I think it will mean we will have to start looking at critical literacy in a way that we haven't adequately in the past.*

The outcomes approach should not represent a change for most teachers at the time of implementation because by then, syllabuses based on an outcomes approach will have been implemented in most of the other KLAs. While some secondary English teachers may be working with outcomes for the first time, in most cases it will not be new within their schools. For most teachers, the extent of change from current programs will be to focus planning on what students will be expected to learn, improved definition of what is to be taught and a shift in emphasis towards critical literacy.

4.2 Summary and Conclusions

When the co-development teachers were asked how different the new curriculum would be from present programs, most of the responses fell into three equal groups:
- Those who saw significant differences in teaching and reporting flowing from syllabus based on an outcomes approach
- Those who believed the new curriculum would be more specific and comprehensive
- Those who saw little difference

A few of the teachers felt that the new curriculum would be easier for teachers to use and some welcomed the likelihood that planning would be more focused on what students are expected to learn.

The outcomes approach should not represent a change for most teachers at the time of implementation because, by then, syllabuses based on an outcomes approach will have been implemented by schools in most of the other KLAs. Some secondary English teachers may be planning with outcomes for the first time.

We conclude that:

5. The proposed syllabus is likely to change planning and teaching in English by improved definition of what is to be taught in terms of scope, emphasis and focus. For most teachers, the extent of change from current programs will be to direct planning more towards what students will be expected to learn and place more emphasis on critical literacy.

5. Concluding Comments

The Years 1 to 10 English Curriculum Development Project differed in process from previous QSCC projects in the use of a co-development phase. The strength of this phase can be expected to manifest in the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the curriculum materials that will form the basis of the trial phase scheduled for 2001.

The co-development teachers' responses indicate that the project team has successfully created and tapped a rich source of input to the curriculum development task.

The organisation of the draft syllabus into the proposed strands and substrands is well supported by the co-development teachers. Most found the organisation familiar and agree with the new emphasis it is likely to bring to the teaching of English.

Three processes were highly effective in working with co-development teachers: cluster meetings, personal visits by project officers and exchange of email. By contrast, the establishment of an online forum to encourage communication among the co-development teachers in their own time was less successful, even though many commented that they were working alone in their schools.

The low level of teacher networking at this stage may not be surprising, considering that teachers are known for their independence and have many higher priorities in their busy days. Another factor is probably that in the present nature of their work, teachers do not routinely sit down in front of computers as part of their working day. Practices not part of a regular routine are likely to be overlooked under the pressure of other tasks.

The project team pursued a deliberate strategy by working with individual co-development teachers in most schools. This strategy was quite successful in providing a greater spread of schools within the limits of the project budget than would have been possible otherwise. However, an attendant effect of this approach was that some of the teachers felt the need for someone else, in the school or nearby, with whom to share and discuss their thoughts and experiences.

Nonetheless, the results suggest that teachers working alone on the project in isolated situations would benefit from the chance to interact with other teachers. Simply encouraging this kind of interaction however is unlikely to induce most teachers, who work in schools where opportunities for professional interaction with colleagues are high, to communicate regularly with those in small, isolated schools. Other strategies need to be found.

The results overall indicate that a good basis has been established for the next phase of the development project.

Appendix 1: The Co-development Teachers

Teacher	School	Location	Phone/Visit
Rosemary Inskip	Eaton's Hill State School	Brendale	Phone
Coral Swan	Hambledon State School	Edmonton	Phone
Amanda Witt	James Nash State High School	Gympie	Phone
Jan Kearney	Loreto College	Coorparoo	Phone
Helen Byrne	Milpera State High School	Chelmer	Phone
Fiona Greulich	Our Lady of Lourdes School	Toowoomba	Phone
Dorothy Parnell	Southern Cross Catholic School	Aitkenvale	Phone
Mary Ferguson	St Francis' School	Ayr	Phone
Cathy Conaghan	St Joachim's School	Holland Park	Phone
Deborah Webb	St Joseph's School	Bracken Ridge	Phone
Roy Wojciechowski	St Laurence's College	South Brisbane	Phone
Marie Rosborough	St Mark's School	Inala	Phone
Paulina Skerman	St Mary's College	Dalby	Phone
Amanda Sheridan	St Oliver Plunkett School	Cannon Hill	Phone
Genevieve Hudson	Sunshine Coast Grammar School	Forest Glen	Phone
Leanne Brosnan	Thallon State School	Thallon	Phone
Joanne Kliese	Thursday Island State School	Thursday Island	Phone
Jan Hargreaves	Toowoomba State High School	Wilsonton	Phone
Wendy Wakefield	Waterford State School	Logan	Phone
Kym Dickman	Brisbane School of Distance Education	West End	Visit
Margaret Miller	Clifton State High School	Clifton	Visit
Fiona Connor	Deception Bay North State School	Deception Bay	Visit
Kate Moloney	Moreton Bay College	Wynnum Central	Visit
Carol Cochrane	Nudgee State School	Nudgee	Visit
Kim McDonald	Pimlico State High School	Townsville	Visit
Carla Picone	Pimlico State High School	Townsville	Visit
Lea Harrison	Ryan Catholic College	Townsville	Visit
Joanna Gardiner	Somerville House	South Brisbane	Visit
Michelle Young	St John Vianney's School	Manly	Visit
Connie Duncan	St Joseph's School	Cairns	Visit
Helen McCarthy	Sunnybank Hills State School	Sunnybank Hills	Visit
Lindeen Drinkwater	Taabinga State School	Kingaroy	Visit
Elizabeth Bowen	The SCOTS PGC College	Warwick	Visit
Cheryl Kybus	Townsville Grammar Junior School	Townsville	Visit
Elizabeth Gauld	Townsville Grammar Junior School	Townsville	Visit
Janne Minge	Trinity Lutheran Primary School	Gold Coast	Visit
Donna Crothers	Warwick State High School	Warwick	Visit

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

THE YEARS 1 TO 10 ENGLISH KLA CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – CO-DEVELOPMENT PHASE
EXTERNAL EVALUATION TERM THREE 2000

This interview is for teachers taking part in the co-development phase of the Years 1 to 10 English KLA curriculum development project during Term Three 2000.

Questions 3 to 6 (indicated by [**R**]) require a rating as well as a brief comment. Other items require a comment only. The scale for ratings is:

Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

Our reports will not show the source of any ratings or comments. We will report your ratings and comments but we won't identify which school or person they came from.

Our main aims are to identify how well established is the co-development process at this stage and to gain your current impressions of the developing syllabus.

Section 1: General
1. What messages do you have for the Project Team, the Evaluator or the Queensland School Curriculum Council?
2. How is the co-development phase progressing in your school?
Section 2: The Co-Development Process
3. To what extent do you understand what is expected of you in the co-development process? [R]
4. Rate the helpfulness of the first cluster meeting in clarifying what was expected of you as a co-development teacher. [R]
5. To what extent have visits by the project team helped you with your co-development tasks? [R]
6. To what extent are the channels of communication between you and the development team working effectively? [R]
7. To what extent are you a partner in the curriculum development process? [R]
8. To what extent do you feel part of a learning community in this project? [R]
9. To what extent do you have contact with other co-development teachers? [R]
Section 3: The Developing Syllabus
10. What is your opinion of the strands and substrands as organisers for the syllabus?
11. Are the strands and substrands working for you?
12. How different will the new curriculum be from current programs in English?

Appendix 3: Interview Ratings

3. To what extent do you understand what is expected of you in the co-development process?

4. Rate the helpfulness of the first cluster meeting in clarifying what was expected of you as a co-development teacher?

5. To what extent have visits by the project team helped you with your co-development tasks?

6. To what extent are the channels of communication between you and the development team working effectively?

7. To what extent are you a partner in the curriculum development process?

8. To what extent do you feel part of a learning community in this project?

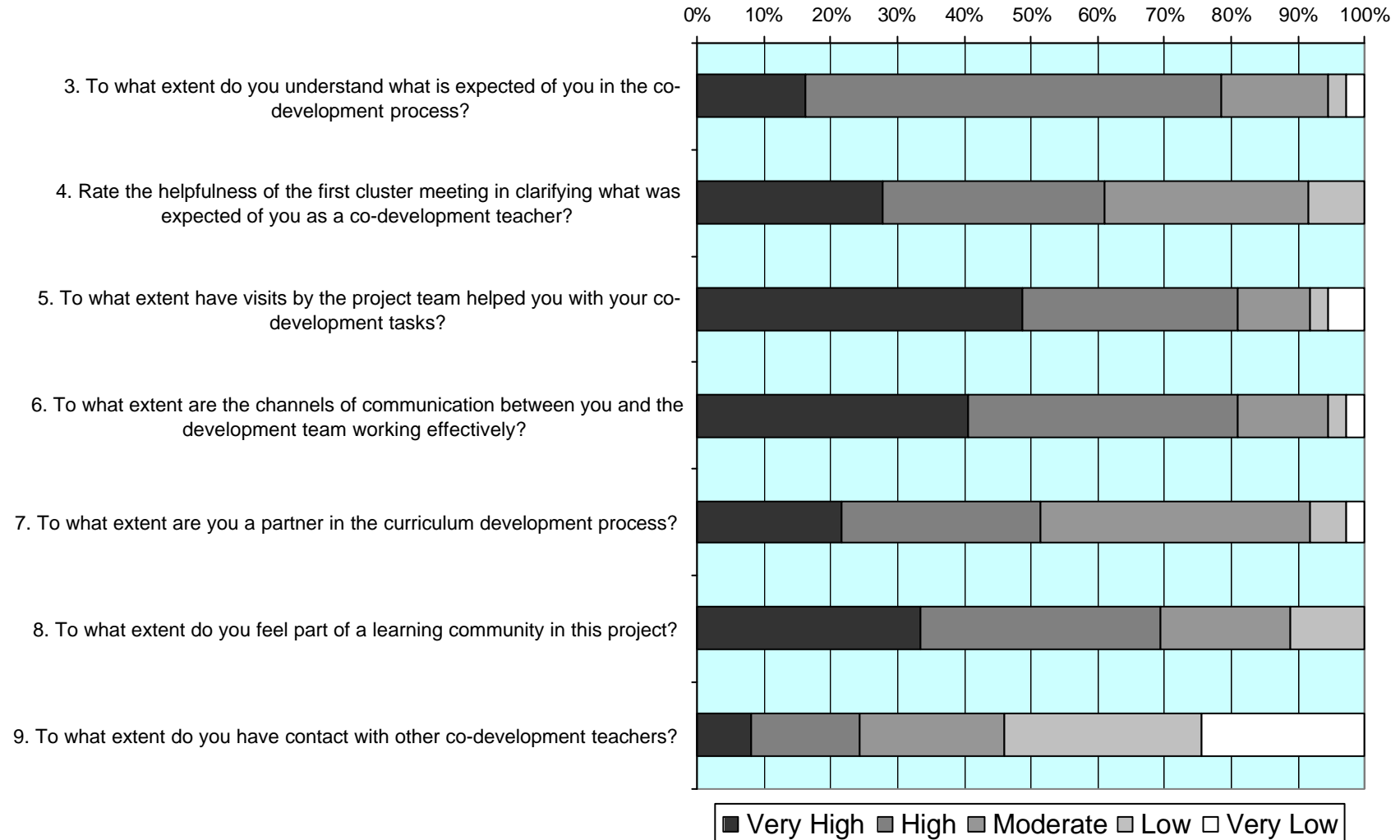9. To what extent do you have contact with other co-development teachers?

■ Very High ■ High ■ Moderate ■ Low □ Very Low

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