English for the Australian Curriculum

I have recently come across resources that can be used with confidence, at the English for the Australian Curriculum site. The resources are described as:

> *new elaborations of <u>curriculum content</u> for the Australian Curriculum (Version 8), to support [your] use of the curriculum in teaching.*

> http://e4ac.edu.au/early-years-curriculum-content/

These resources are a joint initiative between the Australian Literacy Educators Association (ALEA), Education Services Australia (ESA), the Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA) and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE). These organisations represent more than 10,000 teachers of English. The resources are funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

In a previous blog on this site, What should we look for in an effective resource? the point was made that the best resources are those that support us to meet the learning needs of our students. One of the criteria suggested in that blog was that the authors should be credible. This line-up of expertise is pretty convincing.

The resources

These are not 'scripts' but rather developments of ideas, with potential for teacher input and adaptation.

The resource is built around units of work for each grade, each unit consisting of 12 'Sequences'. There are several pathways that can be followed, and timing is flexible. This gives the teacher considerable control. Each sequence incorporates assessment tasks:

Three units for the early years Foundation to Year 2 addressing the three strands of English - literacy, literature and language, together with mathematics, geography and science.
Five units for Years 3-7 using literature and inquiry and *'supported by learning areas of geography, science and history'*.

There are also four units for Years 7-10.

Strengths

Layout is clear and unambiguous – the site is easily navigable

Interrelationship of the three strands of English is addressed – Literature, language and literacy

Literary, factual and multimodal texts are investigated as students explore across subject areas

Each unit includes a table which directly links **cross-curriculum priorities** and **general capabilities** to its location in the content.

Australian curriculum summaries are provided, with content descriptors. All are cross-referenced

Students will be provided opportunities through the activities to engage with aspects of the …
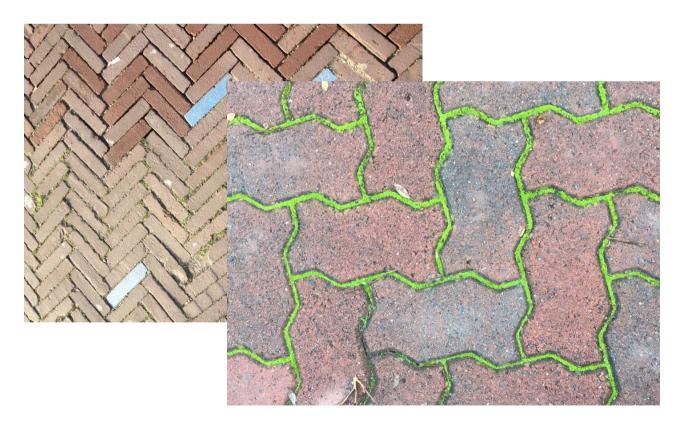*content descriptions, through their elaboration in this unit of work.*

Opportunities for talk are built into the plans

Making connections by students is encouraged

Inferential understandings of text are examined

Vocabulary is at the level that provides a basis for further learning ('Tier 2' and technical, subject-specific vocabulary)

Grammatical structures are included appropriately

Cross-curriculum content

Each Unit relates the study of English to another curriculum area:

- Foundation – Mathematics - patterns
- Year 1 - Geography - landscape
- Year 3 – Science - cross-cultural understandings of night and day
- Year 4 – History - early settler contact with indigenous people
- Year 5 – Geography – Macquarie Island
- Year 6 – History - democratic rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Other strengths

- The resources are Creative Commons licensed (check Copyright and acknowledgments)
- HTML files can be downloaded and edited for adapting or creating your own resources
- The Supporting Resources tab contains links to an extensive variety of supporting resources
- Each unit includes individual resource lists

Issues

Some of the links are to Wikispaces, a site that has not supported resources since 31 July 2018. However, many are still findable, including the excellent Primary Connections: Linking science with literacy and the 8-Ways: Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning.
To return to the list of requirements for an effective resource:

- Accuracy – Information on this site is both accurate and consistent, and is drawn from the Australian Curriculum.
- Accessibility – the structure is easily navigated. Supplementary resources are included. There is some copying of worksheets required. The Technical help dropdown includes a statement about assistance for people with disabilities. It states that '*This resource has been created to the highest standards for accessibility*', and suggests contacting Vision Australia. Other advice is provided.

    Education Services Australia (ESA) acknowledges that some elements in this website, specifically some of the interactive PDF forms, do not comply with conformance level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines v2.0. The elements have been included because of the significant value they offer to members of the education community.

- Usefulness – materials are easily adaptable, and format is editable. Guidance is provided for teachers.
- Efficiency – a strength here. Clear, uncluttered.
- Relevance - clearly curriculum-related, and content an obvious component of the wider subject within the Australian Curriculum. Cross-curriculum links and connections to other learning should are integral.
- Origin – as stated, credibility is high. The units do not over-simplify or gloss over complexity.

Adapted from Hessey 2016

Well worth having a look at, to build into your programming in 2020.

Resources

8-Ways: Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning at https://www.8ways.online/about

English for the Australian Curriculum, at http://e4ac.edu.au/

Primary Connections: Linking science with literacy at https://primaryconnections.org.au/