

## Chapter 7

# Planning for the learning of literacies across the curriculum: Using authentic assessment to engage students

**Adrienne Vanthuyne and Robyn Henderson**

### **Abstract**

This chapter reflects on planning for the teaching and learning of literacies in a range of learning areas. Using examples of planning provided by four pre-service teachers, the authors reflect on the use of authentic assessment to engage students in learning across a range of curriculum learning areas.

### **Chapter foci**

- ✓ planning for the learning of literacies
- ✓ authentic assessment tasks
- ✓ engaging students
- ✓ effective learning and teaching
- ✓ teachers writing the texts they expect their students to write

### **Key terms**

authentic assessment tasks  
backward mapping  
curriculum  
pedagogical approaches  
student engagement  
teaching strategies  
unit overviews

### **Introduction**

Chapters 2 and 3 discussed planning for the teaching of literacies and Chapters 5 and 6 offered some specific ideas about planning in the learning areas of English and The Arts respectively. In this chapter, we explore some plans for content and literacies learning designed by pre-service teachers, as a way of building on those earlier chapters. We hope the chapter offers some further ideas about putting planning into practice.

As experienced teachers and teacher educators, we argue here that planning for the learning of literacies requires detailed consideration of curriculum, the context/s of learning, pedagogy and associated teaching/learning strategies, the monitoring and

assessment of learning and judgements about students' achievements. In this chapter, we use plans produced by a group of pre-service teachers to discuss planning for literacies learning within a range of curriculum areas, or learning areas as they are called in the Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2018a).

All of the pre-service teachers were preparing to become secondary school teachers, so their plans were linked to a specific teaching area, using the Australian Curriculum for up to Year 10 (ACARA, 2018a) and the Queensland syllabus documents for Years 11 and 12 that were current at the time (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2018). We wish to make the point, however, that any discussion of curriculum in this chapter is for illustrative purposes only, as we recognise that there are variations in the ways that the Australian Curriculum has been taken up by different states and that national curriculums for senior schooling are currently being developed. However, despite state differences, we still ask the same types of questions about curriculum and learning: What curricular documents will inform our planning? Which sections of the curriculum will we focus on? What is the intent of the learning we are planning?

In the sections that follow, we provide some examples of planning, along with a conversation about that planning. We wish to state quite clearly that we have not set out to provide examples that might be regarded as 'best practice'. Rather, we are interested in thinking through the opportunities that are made available in plans for the teaching and learning of literacies. Our conversations will also consider how plans offer possibilities to be rethought, modified and extended. We use the plans with the permission of the original authors.

## **Engaging students in literacy learning**

Our past experiences as school teachers and teacher educators have taught us that students are most likely to learn when they regard the learning as relevant to their lives. As Ryan (2008) highlighted, building learning around literacies projects that are 'community based, cross-curricular, and connected to students' complex textual lives' helps to make the learning authentic (p. 191). Such projects are therefore more likely to help students see that the learning is relevant to their lives, both at school and outside school. A question we continue to ask is whether school is providing opportunities to make connections between school literacies and those that students need in their out-of-school lives and may need in the future.

Faulkner (2005) argued that literacies education in the middle years of schooling—the important years across the transition from primary to secondary school—tend to focus on 'public literacies', the literacies that she described as 'those school-based literacies linked to the literate practices that allow students to function in the classroom and also that help to prepare students for a life beyond school' (p. 108). Faulkner identified these literacies as ones that are used for reading, writing and interpreting text. In this book, we have already discussed the specialisation of literacies that occurs in relation

to the curriculum that is on offer as students progress through schooling. (MN Chapter reference 1)

MN Chapter reference 1

The increasing discipline-specialisation of literacies is discussed in Chapter 2.

However, Faulkner (2005) also argued that these public literacies tend to belong to a narrow range that is highly valued by education systems, schools and teachers, but does not necessarily link to students' private lives. In referring to students' 'private literacies', she highlighted 'the out-of-school literacies linked to literate practices that influence the personal, social, and individual lives of students' (p. 109). In fact, there has been considerable discussion about home and community literacies since the seminal research of Shirley Brice Heath in the 1980s (e.g., Comber & Kamler, 2005; Comber & Reid, 2007; Gregory & Williams, 2000; Purcell-Gates, 2008).

Heath's (1983) study, *Ways with words*, demonstrated that not all school students have had opportunities to engage with the particular social practices and the 'ways with words' used by schools and institutions. Indeed, Heath's study showed that the use of language in some communities prepared children well for 'what lies ahead in school and in work or other institutional settings' (p. 347). Yet, in other communities, that match does not occur and there is an increased likelihood that children will experience failure in the school system.

What seems evident, however, is that the purpose of school literacies learning is not an either or situation. As Heath (1983) suggested, we need to be committed to 'the merits of bridging between classrooms and communities' (p. 376). And, with the changing technologies of today and the associated new and hybrid texts, we need to accept that there are no guarantees that the literacies we are currently using and teaching are in fact the ones that young people may need to operate in the world of the future. We want our students to:

- enhance and build on the literacies that they use as part of their lives;
- learn the literacies that school regards as important;
- become proficient in literacies that will set them up for future success;
- develop the capacity to deal with new and hybrid literacies that emerge.

Our thinking about these issues raises a couple of questions:

- How might we make sure that our teaching and the learning opportunities we offer to students are seen as relevant to students' lives now, as well as relevant to the outcomes that education systems, schools and teachers see as important?
- How might we make sure that literacies education is seen as relevant to students' lives now, as well as for the future?

In thinking about planning, teachers consider their students as part of the context for learning. The types of questions teachers might ask about the context for learning include:

- What prior knowledge do the students have?
- How do the students learn?
- Where does this learning fit in their overall learning?
- How does the curriculum link to current, local or global issues?
- Will the learning be relevant to students?
- Will students be interested and engaged in the learning?
- How do we teach for the diversity of learners in our context?

Another consideration is assessment, both formative and summative. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, planning for literacies and content learning requires us to think about how students will demonstrate their learning. Backward mapping (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) is a useful strategy for making sure that we have provided appropriate learning opportunities and experiences through a unit of study. By beginning with the end in mind, we can make sure that we are helping students to develop the knowledges and skills that they need to meet curriculum expectations, as well as to develop the literacies that they will need to demonstrate their learning. It is also important for teachers to think about:

- How will learning be assessed and monitored?
  - What will be assessed?
  - When and how?
  - What strategies will be used to collect evidence of learning?
- How will students' achievement/s be judged?

## **Reflecting on planning**

We wish to now set the scene for the planning task undertaken by the pre-service teachers we were teaching. Before we introduce examples of their planning, we need to set the scene for how those examples were constructed. Because pre-service teachers are not yet employed in a school, we created a scenario for their practice attempts at planning. The scenario was built around a real life event in the city of Toowoomba, where the main campus of the university is located. Toowoomba is a regional city, the second largest regional city in Australia, with a population of approximately 150,000.

### ***The scenario: A controversial event in a community***

In 2011, parts of Toowoomba, a regional city in southeast Queensland and west of Brisbane, flooded following heavy rainfall. The effects of that flooding were major. Huge amounts of water ran off the Great Dividing Range where Toowoomba is located and caused major flooding to the east, across the Lockyer Valley and in Brisbane. Over 40 lives were lost in those floods, although the damage and losses in Toowoomba itself were mainly in relation to buildings and cars.

As a result of the flooding, the Toowoomba Regional Council decided to build water detention basins along Toowoomba's East Creek, with a plan of preventing future deluges from causing so much damage, even though the occurrence in 2011 was described as a one in a 100-year event. Indeed, as one newspaper article stated: 'Lives lost, houses washed away, cars washed away, businesses ruined, in a city with no river, no dam, no lake and a couple of culverts cutely called "creeks"' (Johnson, 2015). The photograph in Figure 7.1 shows the beginning of flooding across one of the streets that crosses East Creek.

INSERT FIGURE 7.1 HERE

Figure 7.1. Early flooding in one of Toowoomba's streets  
Photographer: Robyn Henderson

The idea of the water detention basins was that they would temporarily store water and slow down the movement of water in East Creek. Geographically, two creeks—East Creek and West Creek—cross Toowoomba. The two creeks join just north of the Toowoomba central business district and become Gowrie Creek, which runs west then south as part of the Murray-Darling Basin system. The water that flows into Gowrie Creek eventually flows to the sea near Adelaide, approximately 3,000 kilometres from Toowoomba.

Despite the damage caused by the flood, the building of the water detention basins was controversial and this was evident in many news items at the time (e.g., Backhouse, 2015; Madsen, 2014). As Johnson (2015) highlighted, the local paper was 'awash with letters to the Editor,' while 'the airwaves spoke of doom and gloom, environmental groups sprang from nowhere, protest signs adorned trees' and so on. One of the main complaints was the removal of mature native trees. Nevertheless, the detention basins were constructed in suburban areas of Toowoomba along East Creek, with extensive earth moving and landscaping, which included lawn, trees and shrubs. Some of the initial work is shown in the two photographs in Figure 7.2.

INSERT FIGURE 7.2 HERE (Figure 7.2 has 2 photographs – Figures 7.2a and 7.2b)

Figure 7.2. Initial construction work on the detention basins  
Photographer: Taryn Glenn

Over time—and as the lawn and vegetation began to grow—the public's attitude seems to have changed. The basins have become areas where children play on the grassy slopes and adults walk their dogs. In other words, the basins are now well used by the community on a daily basis. In fact, one proclamation in the local newspaper said, 'I'm loving the new Garnet Lehmann detention basin!' (Johnson,

2015). The photographs in Figure 7.3 show details of one of the basins and its surrounds.

INSERT FIGURE 7.3 HERE (Figure 7.3 has 3 photographs – Figures 7.3a, 7.3b and 7.c)

Figure 7.3. One of the detention basins three years after its construction  
Photographer: Robyn Henderson

The real life transformation of the basin areas of East Creek provides the type of community scenario that can be used by teachers. We used Toowoomba's detention basins as a way of getting pre-service teachers to think about the learning potential of community resources and we hope that readers can see how they might extend the curriculum into the community surrounding their own schools. Our argument was that school does not have to be confined to inside classroom walls, and that there is merit in providing real life experiences and relevant literacies learning. Like Ryan (2008), we wanted to encourage a view that literacy projects matter and they can help to make the learning of literacies relevant and engaging. However, we also wanted to show that there are multiple benefits in such teaching, by:

- linking school learning with the community;
- providing ways of using literacies for community benefit;
- incorporating real life issues into school learning;
- including community members in the learning on offer for school students.

Part of the planning task for the pre-service teachers was to create a unit overview that incorporated the water detention basin. Figure 7.4 shows the pre-service teachers' task.

The scenario:

You have been appointed as a teacher at a secondary school in Toowoomba. The school is located across the street from the water detention basin that was constructed along East Creek. See the video provided on StudyDesk. Further information about the basin can be obtained from the internet:  
<http://www.tr.qld.gov.au/our-region/major-projects/infrastructure/10663-east-creek-detention-basins>

The building of the detention basin as a flood mitigation strategy was initially controversial, because many trees had to be removed and the natural creek bed was changed beyond recognition. However, the area is now turning into a well-used outdoor community area, enjoyed by children, those with an interest in nature, and walkers and their pets. Because of its location across the street from the school, the area offers a resource that teachers can use to achieve the curriculum aims for their students.

The school is a large high school. Multiculturalism is evident, with 10 per cent of students identifying as Indigenous and about 8 per cent identifying as EAL/D (English as an Additional Language/Dialect). Multiple languages and cultures are valued and practised within the school. The school draws students from nearby primary schools and it has a reputation for integrating the local community—both the location and the people—into school learning. The school is regarded highly for its innovative approaches to teaching the curriculum.

The task:

On your arrival at the school, you are allocated a Year ... class for the learning area ... (Nominate the year level and the learning area, as appropriate to your teaching area/s.) Your task is to plan a unit for this class with embedded literacy learning. The detention basin will provide a context for your planning. The assessment at the end of the unit will be a persuasive piece of writing linked to the detention basin.

Figure 7.4 The scenario and task in the pre-service teachers' assignment

The pre-service teachers were asked to develop a unit overview that included the class/school context (based on the scenario), content descriptions (drawing on relevant curriculum and literacy learning), formative and summative assessment and a sequence of learning activities or experiences, with an associated list of teaching resources. They were expected to develop a summative assessment task based on persuasive writing and to 'backward map' (MN Chapter reference) the sequence of learning activities and experiences.

As part of the backward mapping process, the pre-service teachers were expected to write the persuasive task that they were setting for their students. This meant that they would have a first-hand experience of the content demands and the literacy demands of that piece of writing. They were expected to annotate their piece of writing, so that the literacy demands were identified explicitly.

MN Chapter reference

The process of backward mapping is detailed in Chapter 3.

### **CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS: Unit overviews and assessment tasks**

We now present some of the planning that the pre-service teachers prepared. The examples represent several teaching areas:

- Example 7.1: Year 11 Business Management
- Example 7.2: Year 9 Drama
- Example 7.3: Year 11 Agriculture
- Example 7.4: Year 8 Languages: Japanese

In developing their plans, the pre-service teachers had much to consider, including:

- the selection of relevant curriculum objectives in relation to the learning area as well as literacies;

- how they would incorporate the scenario location and members of the community into the unit they were planning;
- the culminating assessment that would be used as summative assessment;
- the literacy demands of the assessment task;
- the pedagogical approach;
- the teaching strategies they would use throughout the unit.

Please note that we do not present the examples as exemplars. Rather, we want to use them as discussion starters, to consider some aspects of planning for the teaching of literacies that we regard as important.

***Example 7.1: Year 11 Business Management***

The unit overview for Year 11 Business Management focused on the nature of business, in particular the business organisation and the business environment. By the end of the unit, students were expected to be able to:

- discuss the nature of business, its role in society and the types of business structures;
- explain the internal and external influences on businesses;
- analyse the responsibilities of business to internal and external stakeholders;
- plan and conduct investigations into contemporary business issues.

The summative assessment for the unit was a persuasive essay, which required students to research and write about a council plan to upgrade the detention basins.

Students will identify and research the Toowoomba Regional Council’s decision to upgrade the detention basins at East Creek. They will write a persuasive essay stating their opinion about whether they agree or disagree with the construction project. Students will draw upon internal and external influences, including various stakeholders impacted by the project’s approval.

The essay written by the pre-service teacher is shown in Figure 7.5. This piece of writing is an exposition or argument, which Wing Jan (2015) explains is designed to ‘plead a case or put forward a point of view. Supporting evidence is used to justify the stance and to try to convince others to accept the given point of view on the basis of the provided information’ (p. 233).

ADD ESSAY HERE (Figure 7.5)

Figure 7.5 An annotated assignment task written by the pre-service teacher during the planning of the unit

Adrienne: Overall, the persuasive essay in Example 7.1 responds well to the task requirements of the assessment we asked pre-service teachers to do.



The pre-service teacher has written a text in the form of an essay, stating her opinion on Toowoomba Regional Council's decision to upgrade the detention basin. While the essay begins well and states the author's opinion, it seems a bit unclear as to who the intended reader was meant to be.

- Robyn: Yes, it is. Being explicit about the intended audience is important, as this impacts on how we write. The way we say things depends on the background knowledge of intended readers and on the relationship between the writer and intended readers.
- Adrienne: However, despite the vagueness of the intended audience, the structure of the essay clearly depicts that of a persuasive argument. First, the pre-service teacher begins with a strong introduction, including a hook and ensuring that the opinion – to support the upgrade of the detention basin – is clear.
- Robyn: The annotations on the left hand side of the text show how the pre-service teacher structured the essay, with background information in the two paragraphs following the introduction, then a series of paragraphs that present numbered reasons for supporting the upgrade of the detention basin. And, of course, there's a conclusion at the end. I think the annotations are self-explanatory.
- Adrienne: I agree. Another aspect that is shown here in this example is the list of language features. Part of the pre-service teacher's task was to think through the important language features of a persuasive essay. For many pre-service teachers, this can seem like a difficult endeavour, especially if they are native speakers of English and have not learned or experienced the grammatical forms in a purposeful way.
- Robyn: However, teachers and pre-service teachers don't need to reinvent the wheel. There are really useful books available where the language features of particular types of texts have been identified for us. I really like the Wing Jan book *Write Ways* that identifies the structure and language of persuasive texts, for example. There is also an old book by Derewianka that offers similar information. We have listed those as texts for further reading.
- Adrienne: In this essay, the pre-service teacher has indicated examples of the language of a persuasive essay. For example, the annotations both identify the language feature, such as descriptive language, and provide a short explanation about why particular grammatical and word knowledges are significant elements to emphasise.
- Robyn: It is so important for teachers and pre-service teachers to know the features of the type of text that they are asking their students to write, because those features need to be included as part of the learning in the unit. To teach school students, we must include not only the content of the learning area, but also the literacies that are required to be successful in that learning area. Once the teacher has identified the text structure and language features – the text, grammar and word

knowledges of the Australian Curriculum – it is possible to backward map relevant learning activities into the unit.

**Example 7.2: Year 9 Drama**

The unit overview for Year 9 Drama was based on the Australian Curriculum for The Arts (ACARA, 2018c) and identified four relevant content descriptions:

- Practise and refine the expressive capacity of voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in a range of forms, styles and performance spaces, including exploration of those developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dramatists (ACADRM049)
- Improvise with the elements of drama and narrative structure to develop ideas, and explore subtext to shape devised and scripted drama (ACADRM047)
- Manipulate combinations of the elements of drama to develop and convey the physical and psychological aspects of roles and characters consistent with intentions in dramatic forms and performance styles (ACADRM048)
- Perform devised and scripted drama making deliberate artistic choices and shaping design elements to unify dramatic meaning for an audience (ACADRM051)

The summative assessment task had two parts, as shown in Figure 7.6. The pre-service teacher's written text based on this task is shown in Figure 7.7.

**Background/stimulus:**

Over the past two weeks you have engaged in a variety of process drama activities that have been based on issues, concerns and people involved with the controversial building of the East Creek water detention basins. You have investigated the different roles of the people involved in this controversial issue, such as the mayor, councillors, greenies and parents, and you have learnt that they have a variety of opinions for and against the basins.

**Part A:**

Your assignment task is to adopt the role of one of the people and write a persuasive monologue as to why you believe the detention basins are a good or bad idea. You may place your character in time either before the basins were built (hypothetically, in the past) or after the detention basins were built (now, current period).

A list of possible character roles include the mayor, a council member, a greenie, a developer, a parent, a school student or a community member. In writing your monologue, it is important that you state your opinion clearly (for or against), that you provide three arguments with evidence or reasons to support your opinion, and that you sum up your case with a solid concluding statement. The monologue should be written in first person. The lengths should be between 500 and 600 words.

**Part B:**

You are to perform part of the monologue with a team of fellow supporters (others who have chosen the same side). The scene is a community meeting

between the council and community members. As a group, you will work together to plead the case of your chosen side. You will only need to perform part of your monologue, as others in your team may have written similar arguments. The use of ICTs, visuals and an initial/final tableau to represent your case is welcome. Become your character, be convincing and be creative!

Figure 7.6 The summative assessment task for Year 9 Drama

Over the past few years, the community of Toowoomba has experienced great debate and controversy over the building of the East Creek detention basins. Thousands of people have been disappointed and heartbroken at the outcomes and feel that their voices went unheard. Perhaps the council should have listened to all those who were against the building of the basins, as it does appear that the building of these basins was not a good idea after all. I will explain why.

Firstly, the basins do not appear to be doing their job at all. Poor engineering perhaps? Prior to the development of the basins, community members had advocated that the basins may not work effectively, but council refused to listen and went ahead. Following the recent flooding events on the 10 January this year, it is evident the East Creek basins do not have the capacity to mitigate flood waters effectively enough. According to one report conducted following this flood, 'the steep and narrow nature of East and West Creeks, coupled with the rapid and intense surface run-off, generated waterway floods that were sudden, deep, of high velocity and extremely hazardous.' Furthermore, flooding was due to heavy rainfall that occurred over the space of hours, not even a whole day! Given the basins' ineffective mitigation after hours of rain, what benefit would the basins have provided after a day or two of heavy rainfall? Council Mayor, Peter Taylor, may call the events of that day 'a freak of nature that no amount of town planning could have prevented', but is that not just a big excuse? A natural flooding disaster – is this not what the basins were supposedly designed to conquer?

Secondly, happiness has been taken away from community members who had so much appreciation and love for the Garnet Lehmann and Ballin Drive Parks. It is unjust to deny so many people simple happiness, sanctuary and a space that was therapeutic for them. A space of well-being has been taken away and, as a result, this has made so many people unhappy. How is this justifiable? Some of the community members had played in, walked and enjoyed the now destroyed parks for entire lifetimes. After flood waters recede, do you think community members will say, 'Oh, there is the beautiful basin again. Let's go play'? I doubt it! Though, I do believe, had the original parks still been there, it would be said, 'Oh there is Garnet Lehmann Park again. Let's finally go for a walk through those beautiful trees.'

Finally, the mature trees that have been replaced served many crucial purposes, roles that cannot be filled by the fresh shrubbery and small trees that have taken their place. Not only did the former mature trees serve as drainage

vessels themselves, a job far too big for the new shrubbery, these trees also represented many memories that have just been ripped away. The trees had so much purpose – their aesthetic value, their job of continual drainage and their provision of homes to wildlife – which are now gone! The basins are no longer aesthetically pleasing; they look and feel barren and boring!

The development of the East Creek basins has clearly been a mistake and is unfortunate! As evidenced by the flooding events of this January, the basins do little as a flood mitigation strategy. All that has changed is that the beauty and history of the trees are gone, memories have been ripped away, and happiness along with it! We need to ask ourselves: Should those responsible for such injustices still be running our city?

Figure 7.7 The pre-service teacher's written persuasive monologue

### Tutorial exercises

1. Although Example 7.2 is about a similar topic to Example 7.1, it is a very different type of text. How is Example 7.2 similar and different from Example 7.1? Consider:
  - a. the genre, audience and purpose;
  - b. text structure;
  - c. language features (grammar and word knowledge).
2. Example 7.2 presents opposition to the detention basin. How does the text present that point of view? What are some of the strategies used by the author to present a negative view?
3. Example 7.2 is a script for an oral presentation, as described in Figure 7.6. How has punctuation been used to demonstrate how the oral performance should be delivered?
4. From your answers to the first three questions, what aspects of literacies might need to be included in learning activities during the unit? In other words, what should be backward mapped into the sequence of activities?

### ***Example 7.3: Year 11 Agriculture***

The unit overview for Year 11 Agriculture focused on land and soil management. The summative assessment was a 700 word persuasive essay and the target audience was identified as readers of the *Land Management Journal*.

Write a response to an essay that was recently published in the *Land Management Journal*. The essay questioned the practicalities and environmental advantages of the detention basin.

This assessment piece gives you the opportunity to apply the theory learned in the unit and to use the information learnt on the field trip to the detention basin and the information from the guest speaker who joined the class on the field trip. Your response is to be sent to the journal for publication.

The sequence of learning activities planned for the unit are shown in Figure 7.8. In this example, the pre-service teacher chose to organise the unit around ten topics.

Topic 1: Introduction to soil production and Australian soils

- Students to identify what they already know about soil production and Australian soils.
- Teacher to go through textbook with students to identify soil production properties and to revise the concept of note-taking.
- Students to construct a word bank on whiteboard to describe Australian soil (extras added by teacher).
- Students to research factors that affect soil production (choice of textbook or internet research) – scientific terminology to be learned and used.
- Students are to individually take notes on what they believe farmers can/are doing to solve this issue. Teacher and students to converse to add to students' efforts on whiteboard.
- Throughout the topic, teacher adds to a specialised word bank on the board for literacy appropriate to the summative assessment (separated into modals, action verbs, exaggerated words and specialised terms).
- Students are to complete a 321:RIQ (Recalls, Insights, Questions) of the lesson on a sticky note. Display sticky notes for a gallery walk and class discussion.

Topic 2: Soil weathering (continually adding to word bank)

- Students to identify their knowledge of what weathering is (beginning of a KWL chart).
- Students set the task to identify further knowledge they need to acquire (next step of KWL).
- Teacher to introduce types of weathering through textbook and website on weathering (including animation).
- Teacher raises question about whether there is anything that farmers can do to decrease the amount of weathering that takes place. Students to give their ideas which are recorded on whiteboard.
- Students to identify the effects of weathering through prior knowledge and research in groups. Recorded as a whole class document for utilisation in future classes.
- Students to research the East Creek Detention Basin and the students are required to draw reasonable conclusions of what weathering would take place in the basin.
- Students to complete an exit ticket on what they found during the research task.

Topic 3: Soil erosion (continually adding to word bank)

- Students view YouTube resource on weathering to secure understanding from previous topic. Video also links to erosion.
- Students to provide their understanding of erosion after the video. Responses are recorded on whiteboard.
- Students to read textbook on erosion, the types of erosion and the causes.
- Students to take notes on the knowledge gathered.

- Group collaboration of learnings and each student is to add in information they missed.
- Students to research East Creek Detention Basin and interpret where erosion would be most likely and what types of erosion would be likely.

#### Topic 4: Practical on weathering and erosion

- Teacher revises techniques for recording results of practical/experimental work.
- Teacher and students to go through the procedure for the practical. Students to create an aim for the experiment based on what factors can have an effect on weathering and erosion (e.g., flow rate, ground cover, volume, soil type, slope).
- Students are expected to complete the experiment and record data to an appropriate standard to enable an effective report in the next topic.
- Exit ticket – students are required to complete an exit ticket (on a sticky note) stating what it seems their results have proven in regards to weathering and erosion.

#### Topic 5: Student write-up of results from Topic 4

- Students have the opportunity to utilise their knowledge and information from numerous sources (e.g., internet, textbook) to justify the results of their practical experiment. This specific text must be written as a scientific report.
- Students are reminded of the structure/layout of a report through an exemplar and provided with a structure template.
- This activity allows for students to utilise the specialised vocabulary that has been collected in the word bank for effectively writing a scientific piece.
- Students are required to create an annotated bibliography to help them to critically analyse the sources they utilise. Students will have access to the YouTube clip that explains how to complete an annotated bibliography successfully.

#### Topic 6: Erosion and weathering cause soil degradation

- Students are required to self-research the topics for the lesson to develop their research skills building up to their summative assessment – soil degradation, effects, degradation, causes and whether they are natural or human caused.

#### Topic 7: Field trip to East Creek Detention Basin

- Students are informed about their summative assessment task and what is required from them as a basic overview before embarking on the field trip.
- Students are provided with a topographical map of the detention basin for their utilisation.
- Students are then allowed ample time to explore the basin and take notes on areas that students believe have been affected or protected against weathering/erosion, and in relation to other topics discussed so far in the unit. Students may take photos to increase their understanding for when they get to writing their assessment piece.
- Guest speaker addresses class and guides them around the basin, informing them about the construction of the basin and the theory behind it. Students may ask any questions they wish.

Topic 8: Introduction to mitigation techniques for weathering and erosion

- Students to provide their ideas on mitigation.
- Students to research how each of these techniques minimise the effects of weathering and erosion.
- Student information added to a large flow chart on the whiteboard to enhance student knowledge.
- Class discussion on whether students think all of these methods are viable in relation to the East Creek Detention Basin.

Topic 9: Explicit lesson on writing a persuasive text

- Teacher informs students about assessment piece purpose, audience, word length and format required.
- Students to provide their definition of persuasion, who uses persuasive texts and why they are written.
- Students are shown a video presentation of a persuasive speech. Students are asked to take notes on what they believe are the most important aspects of the speech. Teacher takes notes on whiteboard.
- Students provided with guidelines on how to write a persuasive text and an annotated persuasive essay to identify the literacy requirements of the assessment piece they will need to write – class activity.
- Students are then given an unmarked exemplar and are asked to mark the literacy components required for a persuasive text. Once completed individually the whole class discusses the exemplar.
- Students are then asked to research the East Creek Detention Basin in regards to topics completed in the unit, along with community and human aspects, so that students can begin to form an opinion about the practicality of the basin. Notes are to be written into notebooks.
- Exit ticket – students are to list five requirements of a persuasive text.
- Homework – students select a persuasive text of their choice and annotate appropriate structure and language.

Topic 10: Research and writing assessment piece – Summative assessment

- Warm up – Students are asked to construct a persuasive paragraph on why they believe students should get free ice-cream on Fridays, using correct formatting and language. Students share their work with the class.
- Students to individually research the East Creek Detention Basin through any means they wish – textbooks, library books, internet research or even contacting the Toowoomba Regional Council for further information.
- Students are required to write an appropriate essay with reliable information. Teacher to monitor progress from students, emailing drafts and assisting throughout assessment writing time.

Figure 7.8 The sequence of learning activities for the Agriculture unit on land and soil management

Adrienne: In this unit, the pre-service teacher has done a good job of designing purposeful literacy integration into the curriculum content. We can see this in the activities that activate prior knowledge, build word

knowledge especially around scientific terms through a word bank on an ongoing basis, and explicit teaching about scientific reports and research texts.

- Robyn: I agree. It is clear that the unit is developing students' scientific knowledge in Agriculture, as well as making sure that students are enhancing appropriate literacies capabilities.
- Adrienne: Although there has been successful literacies integration through the unit, I wonder if the summative assessment should have been introduced earlier in the unit.
- Robyn: That's a good point. By introducing the summative assessment task earlier, there would be more opportunities to engage students in the authentic task that is required.
- Adrienne: Plus it also means that there are more opportunities to backward map the content demands and the literacies demands into the unit. For students, this will help to ensure that they are more successful in the assessment task, because they will have had more time to develop the necessary skills and knowledges.
- Robyn: And it also means that teachers have more time to consider formative assessment and to evaluate how students are going in their learning of those skills and knowledges.
- Adrienne: We can see formative assessment in the learning activities. For example, there are a number of strategies that check for students' understandings, such as KWL and exit tickets.
- Robyn: Yes, those strategies are quite evident throughout the unit. I'm wondering what other strategies might have been included here?
- Adrienne: It's always good to try and have different types of formative assessment throughout a unit. Varied assessment tools offer a differentiated approach to checking for understanding and for students to be aware of what they have learned and what further skills and knowledge they need to develop and acquire.
- Robyn: So what's a useful resource for students?
- Adrienne: The Teacher Toolkit provides a database of examples of different types of formative assessment. The assessment tools are categorised for partner, group, independent and teacher techniques to check for understanding. There are even videos that show how it's done in real classrooms with instructions.
- Robyn: Having a wide repertoire of strategies for formative assessment is important, isn't it?
- Adrienne: Absolutely! Just as important as having a broad repertoire of pedagogical strategies. 😊
- Robyn: You're right. And in this sequence of activities we can see a number of different ways that the pre-service teacher has included the different components of a pedagogy of multiliteracies. For example, critical framing was included in the task relating to the annotated bibliography, helping students to see that there are different viewpoints and perspectives on the topic.



- Adrienne: Yes, and I can also see evidence of situated practice in a few of the topics. The preservice teacher has included opportunities for students to make connections between ‘the known and the new’. For example, in Topic 1 a KWL is a way for students to access their prior knowledge of weathering. In Topic 2, there is group collaboration of learning and, in subsequent topics, the teacher continues to make connections to students’ previous learning.
- Robyn: Overt instruction is also included more explicitly in the unit in Topic 9, where the teacher provides scaffolding of the requirements of the summative assessment task. If the summative assessment had been introduced earlier in the unit, as we suggested before, then it might have been possible to have introduced the literacies learning earlier and given some additional time for students to consolidate their literacies learning prior to doing the summative assessment task.
- Adrienne: The other interesting part I’ve noticed about overt instruction is that there is a community guest speaker while the students are on the excursion to the detention basin. We often don’t think of this as a form of overt instruction, but this really is a good opportunity to integrate community members and authentic engagement, isn’t it?
- Robyn: And the students also engage with the library and the Toowoomba Regional Council. Authentic engagement has been a characteristic of this unit.

#### ***Example 7.4: Year 8 Japanese***

Example 7.4 comes from a unit overview for Year 8 Japanese, based on the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* (ACARA, 2018b). The unit focuses on the topic of leisure activities and links to the following content descriptions from the curriculum:

- Interact with peers and the teacher to socialise and to exchange information about self, personal worlds and immediate environment, and to express feelings, likes and dislikes, using appropriate gestures (Key concepts: self, family, home, interests; Key processes: interacting, describing, expressing) (ACLJAC001)
- Present factual information about aspects of Japanese and Australian lifestyles in spoken, written and digital forms (Key concepts: community, cultural practice, personal world; Key processes: composing, designing, presenting, reporting, comparing) (ACLJAC005)

One of the summative assessment tasks involved writing a letter to Toowoomba Regional Council, lobbying for a Japanese Garden to be developed in the East Creek detention basin area. The other was a listening comprehension task, that used the Japanese language and vocabulary developed during the unit. Part of the unit’s sequence of activities is shown in Figure 7.9.

1. What is your hobby?
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- Introduction to unit.
  - View and explain PowerPoint covering relevant vocabulary for weekend, hobbies and activities. Teach grammar and sentence structure to say what your hobby is, express what leisure activities you like and dislike, and ask someone what their hobby is and what they like to do on the weekend. Students repeat examples after the teacher.
  - Whole class listens to three examples from Mykikitori.com Lesson 11. Students write down what hobbies and leisure activities the people like to do. Check answers in self-selected pairs.
  - In skills-based groups of four, students practise in Japanese asking and saying what their hobbies are and what they like doing on weekend.
  - In the same groups, students write what their group's hobbies/leisure activities are in Japanese and English on A3 paper. Attach these to the classroom wall so that all ideas are shared.
2. What are Japanese leisure activities?
    - In pairs, students write Japanese leisure activities on A3 paper in English and Japanese.
    - Students persuade classmates to take part in one of these Japanese activities. Conduct this activity in small groups, then tease out the features of persuasive text.
    - Card sort activity: Students re-arrange a cut-up persuasive letter. Use the letter for further discussion about the structure and language features of a persuasive letter.
    - Divide students into skills-based groups of four to start doing research into assigned Japanese leisure activities (one will be about Japanese Gardens). Groups to develop a three slide PowerPoint with Japanese and English words and pictures to persuade classmates to try this activity. Students to use the persuasive writing checklist developed during earlier lessons.
  3. Let's persuade our classmates.
    - Students complete group work on PowerPoint and presentation, then present to class for three minutes. This is an opportunity to practise persuasion in a supportive environment.
    - Further discussion of Japanese Garden – cultural significance and popularity.
    - Students to start building supporting arguments to be used in letter for summative assessment.
  4. Let's ask our local Japanese residents.
  5. Final preparation for interviews and revision.
  6. Undertake interviews.
  7. What did we learn from our interviews?
  8. A Japanese Garden in Toowoomba? Field trip
  9. Let's write to Council
  10. Let's practice persuasive writing

Figure 7.9 Part of the sequence of learning activities from a Year 8 Japanese unit

## Tutorial exercises

1. Example 7.4 required students to write a letter to Toowoomba Regional Council. What other texts might have been suitable as a summative assessment task for this unit? Justify your suggestions.
2. What types of knowledges would be required to complete the writing task in Example 7.4? Consider text knowledge, grammar knowledge, word knowledge and visual knowledge, as per the literacy as a general capability materials of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2018d).
3. The activities of the unit begin with an introduction about ‘what is your hobby’. Consider how you might ‘hook’ students into this unit and engage students from the beginning. Provide some details of the activity that you would design to encourage all students in the class to participate and to arouse their curiosity about the focus of this unit. Think about how this unit has been designed to engage the wider community, to integrate community members into the students’ learning and to make the learning authentic.
4. Figure 7.9 provides some details of a sequence of activities, but much of the detail has been removed. Select one of the numbered points from 4 to 10, then tease out the literacies learning activities and the content learning activities that you would use for that section of the unit. Make sure that you:
  - include activities and teaching strategies that will allow students to engage in situated practice;
  - organise activities and teaching strategies that are examples of overt instruction. Make sure that you identify what will be taught explicitly to students;
  - consider how and where critical framing will be included;
  - include activities that will require the students to demonstrate transformed practice;
  - integrate content learning and literacies learning throughout your planning.

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided examples and a discussion of planning from four different learning areas. These examples offer ideas about authentic tasks, student engagement and the need for teachers to develop flexible repertoires of pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies.

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## Further reading

For many years the Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA) has been producing short papers (originally called PENs and now called PETAA Papers) that present targeted and practical information for teachers. The following selection

provides useful further reading on the topics of EAL/D learners, the literacies of geography, history and mathematics, literacies across the curriculum, and joint construction of text.

- Butler, J. (2013). *The literacy of geography* (PETAA Paper 189). Marrickville Metro, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.
- de Courcy, M., Dooley, K., Jackson, R., Miller, J., & Rushton, K. (2012). *Teaching EAL/D learners in Australian classrooms* (PETAAPaper 183). Marrickville Metro, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.
- Hutton, P. (2011). *Writing persuasive texts* (e:update 016). Marrickville Metro, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.
- Hutton, P., & Smythe, C. (2015). *The literacy of history* (PETAA Paper 190). Marrickville, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.
- Rossbridge, J., & Rushton, K. (2014). *The critical conversation about text: Joint construction* (PETAA Paper 196). Marrickville Metro, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.
- Ward, L. (2013). *Literacy within, across and beyond the curriculum* (PETAA Paper 190). Marrickville, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.
- Way, J., & Bobis, J. (2017). *The literacy of mathematics* (PETAA Paper 208). Marrickville Metro, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association Australia.

Other useful texts for teachers and pre-service teachers are those that provide information about the structure and features of particular types of text. The following books are beneficial for that purpose.

- Derewianka, B. (1990). *Exploring how texts work*. Rozelle, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Wing Jan, L. (2009). *Write ways: Modelling writing forms* (3rd ed.). South Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press.
- Wing Jan, L. (2015). *Write ways* (4th ed.). South Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press.

Another useful resource is The Teacher Toolkit, an online site produced by the Education Service Center Region 13 in Texas in the US:

Education Service Center Region 13. (n.d.). The teacher toolkit: Engaging techniques for effective teaching [Website]. Retrieved from <http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/all-tools>

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- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2018). Senior secondary [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior>
- Ryan, M. (2008). Engaging middle years students: Literacy projects that matter. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(3), 190–201.
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