

1998

AISWA literacy working party (Project No.3): a review of the establishment of databases for literacy achievement

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Rivalland, J., & Huber, A. (1998). *AISWA literacy working party (Project No.3): a review of the establishment of databases for literacy achievement*. Perth, Australia: Edith Cowan University.

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AISWA LITERACY WORKING PARTY
PROJECT THREE

A Review Of The Establishment Of Databases
For Literacy Achievement

April, 1998



EDITH COWAN
UNIVERSITY

PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Introduction

Project Three of the AISWA Literacy Research Project reviewed the establishment of databases in Literacy achievement at a systems and schools level with a view to providing resource information for schools. The purpose of Project Three was to provide information to facilitate schools' ability to respond to requests for evidence of literacy achievement. This report begins with a summary of the history of the national, state and territories move to outcomes based learning over the past decade. In 1993, the responsibility for implementing this change was given to the states and territories which has resulted in great variation across Australia. A detailed summary of each state and territory can be found in the Resource Section of this report. In order to map the landscape of AISWA schools' involvement in the creation and maintenance of literacy databases, a survey was conducted with a small sample of AISWA schools. The purpose of the survey was to identify current practice in literacy achievement and performance. The results of this survey are discussed in this report. It is intended that this document provide a resource for schools as they plan for Curriculum Framework implementation. As implementation is a mandated procedure, schools will be asked to report on their progress.

National Statements and Profiles

In 1989 the Australian Education Council identified eight broad areas of learning and commissioned the writing of Statements and Profiles. Each statement lays out the scope of the curriculum while the profiles reflect student achievement. By 1993, the National Statements and Profiles were completed in their present form. Publication and implementation has been the responsibility of each state and territory. (The table below illustrates the variations across Australia.) Thus, the National Statements and Profiles have different status in each state and territory. The National Profiles work effectively as a national assessment framework for collecting data on literacy achievement which is being used in the establishment of national benchmarks. A key difference in the statements and profiles from earlier curriculum guidelines is their focus on student learning outcomes, rather than pedagogy.

Table 1 illustrates the variations across Australia.

Table 1:

WA	Curriculum Framework - Outcomes and Standards Framework
ACT	ACT Curriculum Frameworks and National Profiles
Queensland	Student Performance Standards (SPS) - English and Mathematics
SA	Curriculum Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools
Tasmania	National Statements and Curriculum Profiles
Victoria	Curriculum and Standards Framework
NT	Common Curriculum Statement; Common Assessment Statement
NSW	<i>on hold</i>

Implementation of the West Australian Curriculum Framework and Implications

The Curriculum Framework is underpinned by a clear expectation that schools must either implement the Framework or obtain exemption and that there are reporting requirements.

All schools, government and non-government, will be required to implement the Curriculum Framework' (p. 6)¹

Although the Curriculum Framework and the Outcomes and Standards Framework are both West Australian they were designed independently. Government Teachers work with the Outcome and Standards Framework. Non-government teachers can work with the Curriculum Council Framework as a guide for planning and programming. It is the Curriculum Framework which gives schools and teachers the broad scope of their planning. The Outcomes and Standards Framework provides teachers and schools with a means of reporting on student progress using language which describes learning.

Background to Benchmarks

The July 1996 meeting of the Ministerial Council in Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) resolved that there should be a new national goal in literacy and that development should commence on an agreed national framework for reporting achievement in literacy. The framework was limited to those essential elements to which all States and Territories agreed upon. The project is overseen by a Benchmarking Taskforce.

MCEETYA approved progress towards literacy benchmarks in Writing, Spelling and Reading on 11 December, 1997. Final sign-off is scheduled for early 1998.

Benchmarks and Profiles

The National Profile and Benchmarks are both about accountability. Benchmarks are standards describing student achievement at a year level and consist of a set of indicators or descriptors in non-specialised language. The National Benchmark is not a curriculum development tool, it is used as a standard to gauge performance and allows state comparability. Benchmarks are distinct from progress maps like Profiles.

Profiles allow educators to set students on a continuum of learning, in response to, 'How is this student progressing?'

Benchmarks answer another question, 'At this point in the child's schooling is this sufficient progress?'

¹ Draft Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia. Formal Consultation Draft. (1997) Curriculum Council of Western Australia.

Table 2 :

Review of Australian State and Territory Databases in Literacy Achievement

	1995	1996	1997
NT	<i>Multilevel Assessment Program in Urban Schools</i> (Multilevel Assessment Program) Primary Years 5 and 7 Reading Comprehension tests Writing (moderated yrs 5&7)	<i>Multilevel Assessment Program in Non-Urban Schools</i> (NTAP) ATSI (but all students 11-16 yrs assessed) Reading Comprehension	Common Curriculum Statement T-10 Draft Northern Territory Outcome Profiles for each eight learning areas, ESL and Special Ed. (these will replace curriculum T-10)
NSW	<i>Basic Skills Testing Program</i> Years 3 and 5 Aspects of Literacy - reading skills, language skills - spelling, punctuation, grammatical knowledge	<i>Basic Skills Testing Program</i> Years 3 and 5 Aspects of Literacy - reading skills, language skills - spelling, punctuation, grammatical knowledge	<i>Basic Skills Testing Program</i> Years 3 and 5 Aspects of Literacy - reading skills, language skills - spelling, punctuation, grammatical knowledge
VIC			<i>Learning Assessment Project</i> (LAP) English, Reading and Writing All students in Years 3 & 5
QLD			<i>The Queensland Year 6 Test</i> Reading, Writing and Viewing All year 6 students <i>Year 2 Diagnostic Net</i>
SA	Basic Skills Test	Basic Skills Test	Basic Skills Test in Aspects of Literacy
WA			<i>Literacy Net K-3</i> Trial completed January 1997 <i>Monitoring Standards in Education 1995</i> Reading, Viewing, Writing, Speaking, Listening. Years 3, 7 & 10
TAS		<i>Year 5 Literacy Monitoring Program</i> Reading, Writing, Listening Year 5 students DART materials ACER	
ACT			<i>Literacy Assessment Program</i> all Year 3 & 5 students Five strands of literacy. DART development. by ACER
National		<i>National School English Literacy Survey</i> Three Strands (spelling, reading, writing) sample Australia wide Years 3,5 DART materials ACER	

Introduction

This section reviews the history of outcomes based learning and the assessment of systems level achievement in Literacy for each state and territory of Australia.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Curriculum Framework

In 1995 a new statutory body, the Curriculum Council of Western Australia was established. A major task activity for the Council was the development of the Curriculum Framework. This document has an overarching curriculum statement and eight learning area statements. It articulates the knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes identified as desirable for all Western Australian students to develop during schooling. The Curriculum Council will also develop supporting documents and professional development plans.

Standards and Outcome Statements

These are not part of the Curriculum Framework but describe a progression of student achievement in relation to the major learning outcomes. They will be available as support documents for teachers using the Curriculum Framework.

Non-government Schools

The implementation of the Curriculum Framework is mandatory for all schools in Western Australia.

Systems Level Assessment and Database

Western Australia established the Monitoring Standards in Education Project in 1988 for the purpose of monitoring student progress in key curriculum areas.

During 1995 the five strands of English, Reading, Writing, Viewing, Speaking and Listening were assessed in Years 3, 7 and 10. The tests are criterion referenced, curriculum based and linked to the Student Outcome Statements (now known as the Outcomes and Standards Framework). That is, student performance is measured against the Outcome Statements for the English Learning Area.

No individual results are returned to schools. Comparisons are made between major subgroups - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI), Non-English Speaking Background (NESB), and gender.

Further details are provided in the appendices.

Resources

Project: Literacy Net K-3
Trial completed January 1997

Contact: Di Rees Tel: (08) 9264 5711

Project: Monitoring Standards in Education 1995
Reading, Viewing, Writing, Speaking, Listening.
Years 3, 7 & 10

Availability: Copies of Assessment Tasks and support materials supplied on request.

Contact: Jocelyn Cook, Monitoring Standards in Education,
Education Department Western Australia . Tel: (08) 9264 4508

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Northern Territory Outcomes Profile

At the present time NT Outcomes Profiles are presented as documents separate from the Subject Curriculum Statements. Eventually the NT Board approved curriculum - Learning Area Curriculum Statements, Board Approved Courses of Study and support material will be consistent with the Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools.

Systems Level Assessment and Database

Both KIDMAP and Chancery Software were trialed as part of a pilot program which informed decision to develop a program locally. This is the (CBASS) Computer Based Administrative System for Schools. It is planned that this system will enable schools to access data and transmit data to a central point.

In 1984, a system-wide assessment program, the Multilevel Assessment Program was introduced to urban primary schools. This program aimed to monitor system-wide performance to provide feedback to schools and the system on student performance in Reading.

In 1995 all Year 5 and year 7 students from urban schools underwent testing in Reading Comprehension. Teachers' knowledge of students was used to determine which stage of the test individuals would attempt. The tests are criterion referenced and linked to the NT English Curriculum T-10. Individual, school and system results are reported with comparisons made between the school and the system performance. A profile of reading attainment is demonstrated on the Multilevel Assessment Program Reading Test and a summary provides 'what students deemed to have successfully undertaken' at each stage. Comparisons are made between major subgroups - ESL/Non-ESL, ATSI and non-ATSI and gender.

The Northern Territory Assessment Project also undertakes a system-wide moderation on writing from students in Year 5 and Year 7 from selected schools to give a representative sample system attainments. This process helps teachers to assess their student's writing according to NT norms. The moderation uses criteria from the NT English Curriculum. This is undergoing review as the NT Board of Studies intends to replace the Subject Curriculum Statements with Learning Area Statements.

In 1996 all Aboriginal students aged 11-16 years (inclusive) were assessed in Reading Comprehension for Stages 2-6 through the Multilevel Assessment Program for Aboriginal Non-Urban Students 1996 (in place since 1986). The reports included individual results, individual schools and system level performance. Comparisons were made between subgroups based on gender and age. The tests were developed from the approved curriculum.

Resources

Project: Multilevel Assessment Program Years 5 and 7.

Reading Comprehension

Writing Moderated Years 5 and 7

Linked to Northern Territory Common Curriculum Statement T-10

Contact: Sen Huang Manager Curriculum and Assessment

Evaluation, Research and Accreditation Section

Northern Territory Department of Education

Tel: (08) 8999 6376, fax (08) 899 6010

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The ACT Curriculum Frameworks

The ACT Curriculum Frameworks were developed from the National Statements and Profiles to become the ACT Curriculum Frameworks. The Frameworks have been realigned into strands with scope and sequence added. In 1994 all schools were issued with the ACT Curriculum Frameworks. This was a consistent, centrally developed core document which set out the parameters within which ACT schools make decisions about curriculum.

The Outcomes and Reporting Team, conducted a review of assessment instruments from all states and commercial suppliers. The team recommended the ACER DART materials as these, "best fit with school-based curriculum development and the ACT Frameworks and Profiles".

Schools implementation of the profiles

A computer program, designed to be used as a curriculum or course planning device, was made available to all government and non-government schools as "it has the potential for identifying thematically linked learning outcomes across a number of learning areas" (Lokan, 1997, p.47).

System Level Assessment and Database

The ACT implemented the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Developmental Assessment Resource Teachers (DART) materials with Years 3 and 5 in 1997. The Outcomes and Reporting Team have developed a computerised data base for use with assessment.

ACT is also using the computerised program known as EDSAS which was developed in (for more details see South Australia) South Australia.

Resources

Project: Literacy Assessment Program
All Year 3 & 5 students
Five strands of literacy.
Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (ACER)

Availability: Major Educational Suppliers
Australian Council for Educational Research
Tel: (03) 9277 5656

NEW SOUTH WALES

National Profiles

NSW was faced with the disparity between the eight levels outlined in the National Profiles and the requirement of the NSW Education Reform Act (1990) for syllabuses to be constructed around stages or levels, K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10. The Eltis Review of Profiles and Outcomes (1995), "endorsed continued participation by NSW in the development of further national curriculum initiatives but the Board of Studies will no longer be required to incorporate national profiles directly into NSW syllabuses. Syllabus outcomes will be developed directly from subject content and then related to the national framework" (p.97).

System level assessment and databases

The Basic Skills Testing Program began in 1989 and continues to be administered to all Year 3 and 5 students in government schools and some non-government schools. Tests are developed each year and are based on the NSW syllabus outcomes.

Catholic Education

In 1996 and 1997 the Diocese of Sydney assessed Year 3 and 5 students using the ACER DART materials which relate to the outcomes of the National English profile.

Resources

Project: Basic Skills Testing Program Years 3 and 5
Aspects of Literacy - reading skills
language skills - spelling, punctuation, grammatical knowledge

Availability: Participation in the Basic Skills Testing Program is open to any school in Australia. The test can be centrally marked at cost.

Contact: Robert Cordaiy. Schools Assessment and Reporting Unit.
New South Wales Department of Education and Training.
Tel: (02) 988 67457
Fax (02) 988 67479

VICTORIA - LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT

The Victorian Curriculum and Standards Framework

This document is derived directly from the National Statements and Profiles. Implementation is supported by resources printed by both the Board of Studies and the Directorate of School Education.

The Board of Studies is responsible for the Curriculum and Standards Framework support documents and the Directorate of School Education assists schools in the implementation of the outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and reporting.

Support Materials for the Implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework

SOFNet, the Directorate's Schools of the Future satellite network transmits *Science and Technology* programs to Primary schools and extensions of LOTE programs, *The Primary and Secondary Access to Languages via Satellite* (PALS/SALS). Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) teacher networks operate within each administrative district across the state in the eight key learning areas. Network leaders have been appointed at the local level.

KIDMAP, a computer software program is designed to assist teachers plan an outcomes-based curriculum and assess and record student progress against those outcomes. This has been distributed to all government schools and Catholic schools. "It is as yet too early to quantify accurately the uptake of KIDMAP by schools and teachers and to describe the way it is being used" (p.133).

System Level Assessment and Databases

The Learning Assessment Project (LAP) was introduced in November 1994 as a statewide standardised testing program and English was tested in 1995. Criterion referenced, curriculum based centrally assessed tasks in English - Reading and Writing Conventions and Writing (a piece of writing on one or two set topics) and Teacher Assessed Tasks in Writing. The task is to produce a piece of writing on a topic which fits in with current classroom activities.

Catholic and Non-government schools have participated in the LAP.

Resources

Project: Learning Assessment Project (LAP)
English, Reading and Writing
All students in Years 3 & 5

Contact: Lynne Redley. Project Officer. Learning Assessment Project
Board of Studies. Victoria
Tel: (03) 9651 4300
Fax (03) 9651 4324

QUEENSLAND

Student Performance Standards

The Student Performance Standards (SPS) in English are intended to be used to report on student achievement in English. The structure of the Student Performance Standards (SPS) follows the structure of the Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools with Levels and Strands. The use of the Student Performance Standards (SPS) depends on the implementation of the English Syllabus for Years 1-10. The Queensland School Curriculum Office oversees the implementation of the English Syllabus and the Student Performance Standards.

Systems Level Assessment and Database

The Year 2 Diagnostic Net monitors and reports on childrens' literacy development during the early years of schooling in Queensland. It identifies students who are experiencing difficulties and provides a framework for developing appropriate learning programs for those students. Teachers observe and map all children's progress using developmental continua for Writing and Reading. The reporting is summative and not intended for benchmarking purposes.

The Year 6 Test is an externally designed and marked test which provides information about the performances of Year 6 students in Reading, Viewing and Writing. It is curriculum based and not linked to any Profile levels or benchmarks. Schools are provided with student, class and school reports.

Resources

Project: The Queensland Year 6 Test
Reading, Writing and Viewing
All year 6 students
Year 2 Diagnostic Net

Availability: the materials are not printed for other agencies
Contact: Chris Toms. Queensland School Curriculum Council
Tel: (07) 3237 0957 Fax: (07) 3237 1285

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Curriculum Statements and Curriculum Profiles

The Curriculum Statements are for curriculum planning and teacher programming. The Curriculum Profiles set out in progressive levels of achievement, are to be used as a reporting framework.

Systems Level Assessment and Database

The Basic Skills Testing (BST) Program is one essential component of the comprehensive Early Years Strategy, a priority for the Department of Education and Training (DECS). All students in Years 3 and 5 are tested in Literacy, Reading and Language. The test is based on the South Australian Curriculum Statements and Curriculum Profiles. The tests provide diagnostic information to students, parents and teachers about the achievement of students. It is externally administered and the information can be used in conjunction with achievement information gathered by teachers through the Curriculum Profiles. Individual student results can be compared with the skill band marker.

Further Assessment Information South Australia

The *Quality Assessment Tasks Project* is developing quality assessment activities embedded in teaching programs, ranging from 4-6 weeks in length which began in 1995.

The *Consistency Project* provides teachers with professional development to ensure curriculum profile levels which describe student achievement are assigned in a consistent way within and across schools.

The *Using Student Achievement Information to Improve Student Learning Outcomes Project* involved eight schools in 1997. Schools documented and shared with other schools ways in which student achievement information can be used to improve learning outcomes.

Contact: Barry Schmitt <bschmitt@camtech.net.au>
Ros Maio <rmaio@camtech.net.au>

EDSAS

This consists of three base modules designed to record school details, student records and staff records. A Profiles Module assists in the collection and analysis of students' Curriculum Profile levels of achievement. A module for reporting to parents is being trialed in the ACT and QLD.

Resources

Project: Basic Skills Test in Aspects of Literacy
EDSAS

Availability: Test Package on request.

Contact: Barry Schmitt. Project Officer. Basic Skills Test.
Department for Education and Children's Services, South Australia.
Tel: (08) 8226 5385
Fax: (08) 8359 3001
Customer Service Centre Tel: (08) 8373 6077

TASMANIA

Statements and Profiles

In 1993 Tasmania accepted the Statements and Profiles intact and issued them to government schools and colleges. Prior to this Tasmania had produced the Framework for Curriculum Provision K-12 which reflected outcomes-oriented syllabuses and curricula. The Framework is a practical planning tool for the eight learning areas. School level implementation has been supported by intensive professional development with key teachers in each of the eight learning areas.

The Primary Project, sponsored by the Curriculum Corporation, published a program of 52 units based on the achievement of outcomes through an integrated approach to learning. The programs draw on profile outcomes and indicate explicit outcomes which could be achieved within each unit.

Systems Level Assessment and Database

In 1996 there was statewide testing of all Year 5's. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) material was used. The summary of major findings in reading gives graphed performances of Year students on each strand and The English Profile for Australian Schools and compares performance from 1976 to 1996. A comparison is made between major groups, gender, 10 and 11 yr olds, ESL, ATSI, school districts and socio-economic groups. Raters' comments on the Listening, Reading and Writing Assessment Tasks are available.

Resources

Project: Year 5 Literacy Monitoring Program
Reading, Writing, Listening
Year 5 students
Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (ACER)

Availability: Major Educational Suppliers
Australian Council for Educational Research
Tel: (03) 9277 5656

1996 National School English Literacy Survey

Resource Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (ACER)
Three Strands of Literacy (Spelling, Reading and Writing)
Australia wide sample Years 3 and 5

Availability: Major Educational Suppliers
Australian Council for Educational Research
Tel: (03) 9277 5656

INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND TESTING PROGRAMS IN LITERACY

A computer search for international assessment programs was undertaken and although web sites were identified it proved extremely difficult to obtain specific information.

UNITED KINGDOM

National Assessment Arrangements

All pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) in England and Wales are required to follow a basic curriculum comprising the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The curriculum is divided into levels and external assessment is done at Key Stage 3. Schools must send parents at least one written report every school year and this must include the pupil's National Curriculum assessment results and how these compare with results of pupils of the same age in the same school, and also national comparative information about pupils of the same age.

The site below is very comprehensive although specific details of assessment tasks are not available.

URL site: <http://www.eurydice.org/Eurydice/files/UKVO/UKVO223.htm>

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

This is also known as the "Nation's Report Card" and was mandated by Congress to report on the educational achievement of American students and to provide accurate and useful information to parents, educators and policy makers at the national, state, and local levels.

NAEP is the only nationally representative and on-going assessment of student achievement and provides the only comparable state-by-state data on academic achievement .

NAEP 1994 Reading Report Card: Findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (March 1996).

This report provides a broad examination of students' reading achievement. In addition, specific aspects of students' reading performance and their experiences at home and school are reviewed in some depth. This is the nation's only ongoing survey of student's educational progress in reading and is a mandated assessment of students at grades 4, 8, and 12. There are three levels of achievement, Basic, Proficient and Advanced and these are reported in percentiles. The report gives major findings on the nation, regions and states. Comparisons are made between States, White, Black and Hispanic students, the education level of parents, and gender. Students complete a questionnaire about home and school experiences related to reading, achievement and literacy development. Teachers and school administrators complete a questionnaire about instructional experiences.

The New Standards Project (NSP)²

The NSP is a consortium of 17 states and six major school districts which will draw upon sets of content standards to develop a new system of national assessment. The NSP has two purposes: to set common and high standards for all students, and to use assessment as a lever for change. That is, it has an explicit agenda of influencing teaching and learning (p.19).

Publications

NCS has provided software development, database management, performance assessment scoring, and data transmission services to the Educational Testing Service for the NAEP.

The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST) has an extensive website of reports.

URL site: <http://www.ncs.com/ncscorp/education/asmt.htm>

Emerging Educational Standards of Performance in the United States (1997).

NEW ZEALAND : The National Monitoring Program

New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), has published ten new research items from some of the leading specialists in New Zealand and Australia, eg., Standards and Curriculum Assessment, Monitoring Children's Literacy Growth, Assessment Resource Banks and the National Education Monitoring Project.

Source: Livingstone, I. (1997) (Ed). Best of Set: Assessment.

Distribution Services NZCER

PO Box 3237, Wellington

New Zealand.

Tel: 64-4-384-7939

Fax: 64-4-384-7939

CANADA

Ontario

Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) will begin annual, province wide testing of children's skills and knowledge in reading and writing. In March and April, every Grade 3 student in the province will participate in an assessment process over a 10 day period. The assessments are based on provincial standards and curriculum. Individual results will be sent to schools for distribution to parents but no individual result will be made public.

Alberta

Performance Assessment Activities in Provincial Achievement Testing. This test assesses student achievement in grades 3, 6, and 9 in core subjects (language arts) by pencil and paper tests as well as performance tasks.

URL site: http://www.eqao.com/eqao/search/html_docs/public/search.html

²Willis, S. & Kissane, B. (1995). Systemic approaches to articulating and monitoring expected student outcomes. Education Department of Western Australia

AISWA LITERACY PROJECT SCHOOL SURVEY

A survey was conducted in a cluster sample of twenty schools to document the current use of databases in AISWA schools. The cluster sample included six large suburban schools, a small outer suburban aboriginal school, three small country schools and six outer suburban schools. The five remaining schools were inner suburban of small to medium student population. Of the five schools which did not reply, three were remote schools, one a suburban primary school and one a large, suburban school K-12.

Schools were asked to comment on the databases used to monitor student performance and achievement in literacy

Table 3 : Number of schools which completed the survey, school type and student population:

Enrolment	Years 8-12	Years P, K-12	Years P, K-10	Years P, K - 7
500+	1	5		
200+	2		3	1
100+	1		2	3
less than 100			1	1

Whole School Policy

Schools appear to be aware of the need for a whole school policy with regard to collecting information on student achievement and performance in literacy. Twelve schools have a school policy in place and four were in the development stage. Four as yet had no policy.

Although the survey did not ask what schools did with the information they collected, many volunteered this stating that it was used both for reporting and monitoring student performance and achievement.

Schools use the following formats to present information:

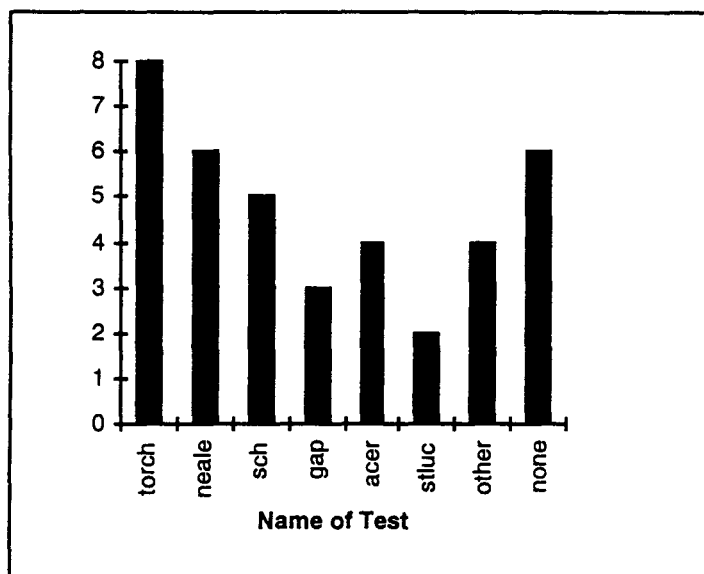
class reports
class profiles
individual student records
individual profiles

Year level profiles
individual student profiles
upper secondary students ranked
individual portfolios

Schools were asked if they used Standardised Tests to Monitor Literacy Performance. Shaded areas in the table four indicate a 'yes' response.

Table 4

Use of Standardised Tests



Discussion

Of the schools surveyed, six are not using any standardised tests. Four of these schools reported using First Steps, Monitoring Standards in Education WA, Reading Recovery, the Literacy Net and Miscue Analysis as a means to monitoring students' performance and achievement in Literacy. This may reflect an awareness by these four schools that assessment procedures need to reflect the pedagogy and philosophy. That is, if a school has adopted a learning outcomes based curriculum, the assessment must indicate the extent to which the learning has occurred. Age related norms may not inform about the extent of the learning and make no links to curriculum. For example, a spelling age does not give a teacher an indication of the skills and strategies the student uses.

Two schools did not respond to the question.

The survey data clearly indicates TORCH to be the most widely standardised test. It was developed in Western Australia and is interpreted from content-referenced criteria or group-referenced (normative) criteria. Criteria were developed from a standardisation study done in WA in 1984. TORCH can be used from Years 3 - 10 and results are given in percentiles and stanines. Teachers can interpret students' responses to determine reading ability.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) have since published the Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART). The DART is an assessment package for upper primary and early secondary and assesses skills in the five strands of literacy. Basic Skills Test, Orchid Series 1997, which starts at Year 4. Both assessments are linked to the Curriculum Profiles 1994 and reflect curriculum developments in Australia.

Schools which chose to use the ACER materials will need to decide how to monitor and assessment K-3 students. The First Steps program which was developed in WA is one way of tracking student learning over a period of time. By observing student behaviours in literacy, teachers can place the learner on a continuum and develop a profile of the student’s progress.

Use of Standardised Tests:

Question: Does your school use any standardised tests to monitor student performance and achievement in literacy?

Table 5:

	500+	200+	100+	Less than 100	Total
YES	6	3	4	1	14
NO		3	2	1	6

Table five indicates that schools are committed to monitoring student performance and achievement in literacy.

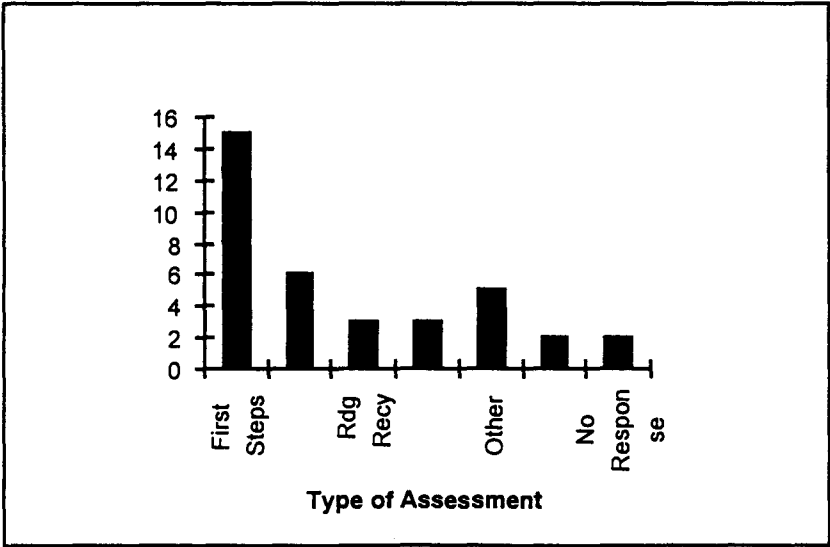
Alternative Methods for Assessment and Monitoring

Schools use a variety of methods other than standardised tests to monitor student performance and achievement in literacy. No trend was evident from the data analysis to suggest that school size, type or location had any influence on the type of method used.

The table six graphs the ‘yes’ responses to the question, “does your school use any of the following to gather information about students’ literacy achievement?”. First Steps monitors literacy achievement and maps student progress. Teachers and schools can develop a student, class and school profiles from their observations and judgments about student performance. The use of First Steps may reflect preference for a program which is accompanied by readily available professional development .

Table 6:

Methods of Assessment



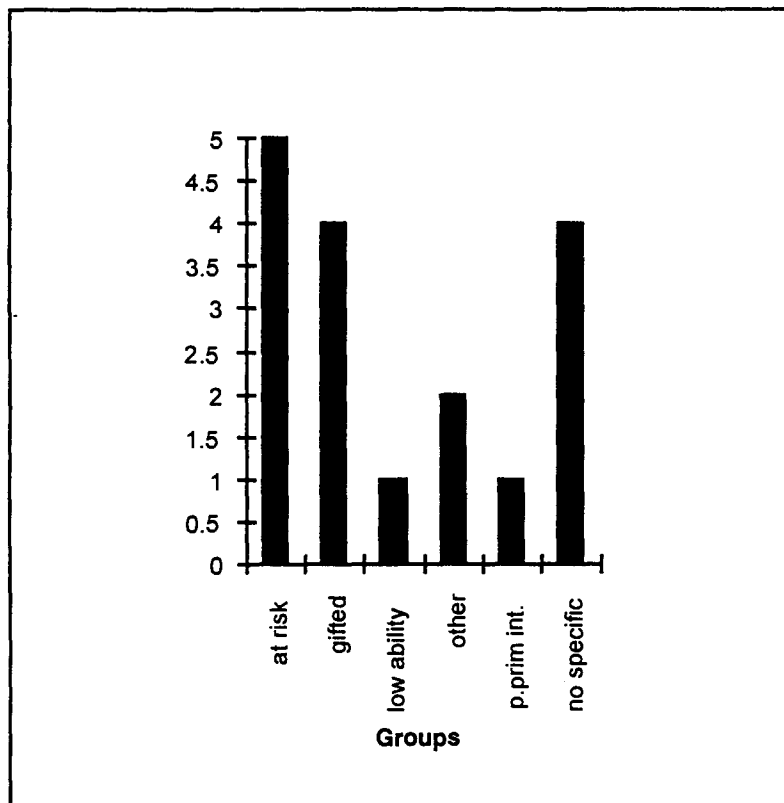
ESL and Other Groups

Schools were asked if they had assessment/monitoring procedures for ESL or other groups of students. Of the schools surveyed, only three have ESL students populations who are monitored as a special needs group. Five schools monitor groups considered to be 'at risk' in literacy and four schools monitor their gifted and talented students. One school has a Pre-Primary intervention program in place and another school monitors its low ability students.

Of the four schools identifying "no specific group", two had recently undergone staff and management restructure and explained they had not had the opportunity to put in place monitoring procedures.

Table 7:

ESL and Other Groups



CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

Discussion

In response to the question, 'how do you see your school implementing the Curriculum Framework?' the degree of implementation extends from 'wait and see' to 'in place for some time'. This highlights the difficulty in mandating response in the AISWA sector. However, the following are data-driven observations from which recommendations could be drawn. All schools are aware of the mandated Curriculum Framework implementation. This has implications for schools with the following key considerations:

- **An outcomes based approach to teaching and learning requires a change in focus for planning, programming and teaching.**

Traditional teaching objectives are replaced by intended learning outcomes. Teaching strategies and activities need to meet learning outcomes. When planning a program, teachers must think about the strategies they will employ to attain various outcomes. When teachers plan a lesson based on outcomes they need to ask, 'How can I structure this activity/lesson for the learning to happen? How do I know the learning has happened?'

- **Use of assessment strategies and the methods of data collection to provide evidence of students' learning.**

How do teachers know that 'the learning has occurred or that the learning outcome has been achieved'? How can performance be monitored over time? Teachers need to collect evidence to demonstrate and report on student performance and achievement. The types of assessment, tests, anecdotal records, work samples and profiles need to be congruent with the teaching philosophy. The Curriculum Framework includes assessment strategies for each Learning Area.

- **The storage and use of this data**

With changes in focus from teaching objectives to learning outcomes, the collection, storage and presentation of data becomes a major issue for teachers and schools. If schools follow the trend towards the use of portfolios to store data, decisions will have to be made about the nature of the portfolio. The actual physical presentation, the contents and the length of time the information is to be stored in school will need to be considered. Some of these decisions will require a whole school discussion.

- **Time management for teachers**

The process schools and teachers must undergo to accommodate mandated change will require both commitment and time. Teachers will need to reflect on their teaching practice, talk through and document the necessary changes. This has implications for 'time away from teaching' and the key consideration may be, 'when can we do this?'

It also means teachers may need to learn how to reflect on their own teaching practice. Professional development can assist teachers in developing the skills of 'in action' reflection and reflection 'on action'. These skills will help teachers to evaluate their planning and teaching programs.

- **Possible change in classroom climates**

An outcomes based approach to learning and teaching requires students to accept more responsibility for their learning and to engage in self assessment procedures. Teachers need to negotiate these with their students and keep parents informed. Negotiated evaluation may appear complex and time consuming but the outcomes give a clear direction and a framework for observation of student learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **For implementation of the Curriculum Framework**

That the AISWA Literacy Working Party develop an Action Plan for Implementation of the Curriculum Framework. Such a plan would recognise the diverse needs across the sector, location, school size, staff experience, access to resources and previous literacy planning. This would provide schools with a support structure and 'models' of implementation.

- **Recommendations for Accommodating Change.**

Teachers be offered Professional Development in the following;

- 1 **Planning and programming**

It needs to be understood that the Outcomes are not a curriculum, but indicate the degree to which the knowledge, skills and understandings within the Curriculum are being learned. Programs need to be evaluated from the basis of 'What has the student learned' as compared to the past when teachers asked, 'What have I taught? Have I achieved my objectives?' Teachers may need professional development by way of discussions with a Literacy Consultant to make the 'shift' in planning and programming for outcomes based learning. A move 'from an input mindframe to an output mindframe' (p.292).³ is required.

- 2 **Methods of data collection**

Outcomes based learning means student progress has to be monitored over time. Assessments must be realistic and purposeful in providing a 'map' or profile of student progress. The data collected provides evidence of the learning. Some methods which are currently being used by sector schools include observation, monitoring, portfolios, conferences, student journals and videos. The outcome and assessment drives the data collection. A teacher might ask, "what do I need to collect or observe in order to assess this student's learning? Do I need to collect a few samples of writing?" Teachers may benefit from professional development sessions which offer them the opportunity to become familiar with data collection methods. Schools could develop whole school guidelines to maintain consistency over time.

- 3 **Assessment procedures**

How to ensure that the information collected is in fact an assessment of student learning. A collection of artefacts does not guarantee assessment of student performance and achievement. Does the assessment 'fit' the learning process. Again, 'what tells me that the learning has occurred?'

- 4 **Understanding the purposes of assessment**

Who are the major stakeholders? If teachers and students negotiate assessment then both parties need to understand the reasons for doing so. Teachers and students can use assessments to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of a program or strategy. This a process of 'plan, negotiate, act, assess, reflect, evaluate' for both teacher and student.

³Draft Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia. Formal Consultation Draft. (1997) Curriculum Council of Western Australia.

5 Reporting to parents

Outcomes based learning requires a major change in reporting procedures. Parents need to be informed of the reasons for change and develop an understanding of the benefits of change. A working party consisting of parents and teachers could design a reporting format and procedure suited to their schools own philosophy and requirements. Some AISWA schools who participated in the survey have developed their own reporting formats and were open to sharing their ideas.

6 Resource needs

At school/teacher level the allocation of resources, funding and time management needs to be identified through the development of an action plan for implementation of the Curriculum Framework.

7 Teaching strategies and classroom activities

The First Steps Program is an excellent resource for teaching strategies which reflect an outcomes-based teaching philosophy. Integration and cross-curriculum learning is one way of "achieving coherence and continuity in learning program" (Fantasia, 1997, p.24). Teachers may need professional development in cross-curricular planning and teaching.

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RESOURCE SECTION

SYSTEM LEVEL ASSESSMENTS IN LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Purpose

At level

to monitor and report on system level performance in key curriculum areas.

To give parents, teachers and the community information about the standard of student performance in Western Australian Government Schools.

To provide precise information about the quality of education in Western Australian schools.

To provide a basis for initiating developments that will further improve the quality of education in WA schools - students practices, teaching practices, curriculum and resource design.

At school level

to assist schools in monitoring the performance of students in key curriculum areas

To provide a reference framework for schools to compare their students' performances against the state as a whole

to provide a new framework for reporting on individual student achievement and progress

Subjects Assessed

English learning area:

Reading

Viewing

Writing

Speaking and Listening

Within each strand the outcomes are further grouped into three interdependent sub-strands- Texts, Contextual Understandings and Linguistic Structures and Features.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Item	Monitoring Standards in Education 1995 Achievement in English
Students/Year Levels	Samples Years 3, 7 and 10 students in 750 Government schools in WA, overall sample size 17,500 students.
Resource Impact	<p>“To improve learning outcomes for all students by refining and improving current pedagogy” (p. 91).</p> <p>Schools may use the test materials to assess their school population or the development of individual students (this information could be used to justify staffing allocations, school priorities, funding applications etc.)</p>
Test Format	<p>Reading</p> <p>Year 3 - a cloze narrative, a recount, an informational text on dolphins, a recipe and a folktale. Questions short answer or cloze.</p> <p>Year 7 - a first person narrative, a selection of letters to the editor and adaptations of material extracted from longer transactional texts. Questions cloze, short answer or multiple choice.</p> <p>Year 10 - adaptations of articles and material taken from scientific and other longer transactional texts and a poem. Questions cloze, short answer or multiple choice.</p> <p>Viewing</p> <p>Video and print stimulus - questions in a variety of formats: multiple choice, short written answers and pictorial responses, Questions read to students.</p> <p>Writing</p> <p>Year 3 - students write a narrative recount or both.</p> <p>Year 7 - students wrote a narrative or persuasive letter or both.</p> <p>Year 10 - students wrote a narrative or persuasive letter or both.</p> <p>Speaking and Listening</p> <p>The tasks designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- investigate the relationship between achievement in speaking and listening- assess student performance within the framework of the Student Outcome Statements <p>Speaking</p> <p>Three different aspects assessed:</p> <p>whole group performance</p> <p>performance of a nominated student within the group</p> <p>individual presentation to the class by a randomly selected subset of students</p>

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Monitoring Standards in Education 1995 Achievement in English (Continued)

Listening	Students complete a pencil and paper test in response to audio or video stimulus (p.58).
Implementation Date	1995 (ongoing policy since 1988)
Test Type	Criterion-referenced and curriculum based; linked to English Student Outcome Statements (1997 now called Outcome and Standards Framework).
Timing: Administration	Administration of tests responsibility of school principals centrally marked by trained markers analysis completed by ACER (using Rasch model of analysis).
Reporting	At State level. Published in a formal public report. No individual results returned to schools.
Comparisons	Statewide major subgroup comparisons; gender, ATSI, NSEB. Relationship between Speaking and Listening - scores cannot be aggregated with any validity (p.59). Relationship between Reading and Viewing-results suggest that students perform differently in reading and viewing and that students may progress in each at a different rate (p.28).
Links to Profiles	The 1995 Monitoring Standards in Education Report describes the performance of the sample Years 3,7 and 10 against the Student Outcome Statements for the English learning area.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Literacy Net - Stage One K-3

Item	<p>A systematic monitoring and assessment of children to identify those children who may require additional support . The LITERACY NET provides a framework for Early Identification Procedure</p> <p>LITERACY Net has four main components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitoring and assessment of young children's development• identification of children in need of additional support• development of intervention plans for individual children• implementation of intervention plans for individual children
Literacy Checkpoints	Identify critical literacy behaviours to be checked at designated times
Early Literacy Portfolio	To provide specific evidence about the acquisition of literacy skills
First Steps Development Continua	Profiles which provide explicit information about a child's progress as a reader, speaker, writer (over an extended period of time).
Making Judgements	Judgements about children's progress are made through analysis of the First Steps Developmental Continua Profiles, and/or Students Outcomes achievements in relation to the Literacy Checkpoints, and assessment of portfolio evidence. (Individual teacher judgements will be validated through a moderation process involving other K-3 teachers)

January 1997 - A Literacy Net Trial was completed in 1997 to determine the Literacy Checkpoints.

Contact: Di Rees, Education Department WA.
Tel: (08) 9264 4111

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Item	1995 Multilevel Assessment Program in Urban Schools (MAP)
Stated Purposes	<p>To provide feedback to schools and the system on student performance in reading across the Northern Territory in urban schools.</p> <p>To monitor system-wide performance and report individual, school and system results.</p> <p>To provide a diagnostic tool for identifying areas of strength and weaknesses in reading that assists informed decision making regarding curriculum development and policy.</p>
Subjects Assessed	1995, reading comprehension tests.
Students and Year Levels Involved	Year 5 and year 7.
Implementation Date	30th October - 10th November, 1995.
Resource Impact	Assist decision making regarding curriculum development and delivery.
Test Format	<p>Written by panels of school and office-based teachers.</p> <p>A reading comprehension test of eight passages and 121 questions. Tests designed for each stage Pre-Stage Five to beyond Stage Seven, each comprising two strands: factual and literary. (these are the Stages of the Northern Territory curriculum levels).</p>

NORTHERN TERRITORY

1995 Multilevel Assessment Program in Urban Schools (MAP) (Continued)

Administration	Teachers use their knowledge of the students to decide which stages of the tests individual students should attempt.
Scoring	Results provided with graphs showing question difficulty.
Reporting	<p><i>Report to Schools</i> contains individual results (students issued codes by school), summary school and system results, and comparisons between school and system performance</p> <p><i>Report to School Councils</i> subset of the information contained in the <i>Report to Schools</i>, distributed to school councils via school principals</p> <p><i>Results of the 1995 Multilevel Assessment Program in Urban Schools</i>, an extensive report prepared for wide circulation. Provides a comprehensive analysis and discussion of performance of year 5 and 7 students in reading.</p> <p>A profile of reading attainment is demonstrated on the MAP reading Test and information is given on the texts and indicators of student performance at each stage, along with a summary of what students 'deemed to have successfully undertaken' at each Stage, eg, Stage 5 - have demonstrated they can independently read longer tests.</p>
Comparisons Made	ESL/Non-ESL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students and Non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Gender
Links to Profiles	The tests were developed using the Northern Territory curriculum as the 'benchmark'.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Northern Territory Multilevel Assessment Program.

Item	The current instrument for the assessment of students' narratives and for the moderation of those assessments.
Purpose	<p>To help teachers in Northern Territory schools to assess their students' narrative writing according to agreed criteria.</p> <p>To help teachers in Northern Territory schools to assess their students' report writing according to agreed criteria.</p> <p>To evaluate their attainments according to Northern Territory norms.</p>
Students and Year Level	<p>Students in Northern Territory schools all year levels.</p> <p>System-wide Moderation 1995 - Darwin, Years 5 and 7.</p>
Resource Impact	<p>Moderation identifies school needs and future directions. These can be incorporated into the Action Plan for School Improvement.</p> <p>Provides empirical evidence when advisory staff are requested.</p> <p>Identifies professional development needs, eg, is the teaching methodology effective?</p> <p>May indicate the adequacy of existing resources.</p>
Assessment Format	<p>Definitions are given for assessment and moderation (p.2):</p> <p><i>assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the process through which individual teachers make judgement about the extent of their students' knowledge and skills- the extent to which students have attained the intended learning outcomes of units of work. <p><i>moderation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ensuring that the judgements of individual teachers make about students' attainment levels are, as far as possible, the same as would be made by other teachers using the same criteria and samples of students' work.

Assessment Type	<p>Criterion referenced; curriculum based benchmarks have been developed from the English Curriculum - assessment and moderation.</p> <p>Framework provides a set of descriptors for each genre of writing - subject matter, organisation, language use, conventions of writing and ownership samples provided give external benchmark.</p> <p>The Framework - stages refer to levels of attainment, not age related, indicates a stage along the learning continuum and demonstrates attainment in a particular piece of writing.</p>
Comparisons Made	<p>Individuals - to indicate strengths and weaknesses of any genre (there is no expectation of a typical student of a year level) moderation - school based, interschool and system-wide Years 5 and 7 from selected schools to give a representative sample system attainments.</p>
Timing	<p>System-wide Moderation, Darwin, 1995 February-October.</p>
Reporting	<p>Schools may choose to use the information to report to parents and the wider community provides uniform reporting across time and locality.</p>
Links to Profiles	<p>Uses terms 'benchmarks', 'learning outcomes', 'learning continuum'. Benchmarks appear to be developed from the English Curriculum. This is confirmed in the Report on 1995 System-wide Writing Moderation, p5 '.... stages of the curriculum have been used as benchmarks for reporting on student achievement these benchmarks have proved unsuitable new benchmarks are required' goes on to suggest that the National curriculum profile is expected to form the basis of the equivalent Northern Territory profile.</p>

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Item	A Northern Territory initiative under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educational Policy (AEP), funded by the Commonwealth and aims to improve the Aboriginal access to, participation in, and outcomes from education.
Purpose	<p>Gives an analysis of the results from the Multilevel Assessment Program tests administered to 11-16 year old Aboriginal students in non-urban schools.</p> <p>To provide a detailed analysis of performance on the subtests and of subgroups such as by age and gender.</p> <p>To monitor system-wide performance.</p> <p>To report individual students, school and system results in useful and easily understood formats.</p> <p>To provide an accurate guide to students' progress along the reading learning continuum outlined in the Board approved curriculum.</p> <p>To provide a diagnostic tool for identifying areas of strength and weakness in reading.</p> <p>To provide information that assists informed decision making regarding curriculum development and delivery and needs of schools.</p>
Subjects Assessed	Reading comprehension for Stages 2-6 two strands; factual and literacy.
Students and Year Levels	All students in non-urban schools aged 11-16 yrs (inclusive).
Implementation Date	Annually since 1986 Non-urban tests administered 15 -26th May, 1995.
Resource Impact	Curriculum development and delivery needs of schools.
Test format	Reading: ten passages (five factual, five literary). 147 questions (some cloze). two passages and questions at every Stage 2-6.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Reporting

Report to Schools

A specific report to individual schools and provides information to principals and teachers.

Individual student results (code assigned by school), summary school and system results. Comparisons between school and system performance.

School Councils

A subset of the information contained in the *Report to Schools*, for schools principals when presenting and explaining their school's performance on the Multilevel Assessment Program to the school council.

Public Report

Results of the 1995 Multilevel Assessment Program in Non-Urban Schools, an extensive report for wide circulation, to give comprehensive analysis and discussion of the performance of non-urban students in reading.

Comparisons

Gender analysis.

Age.

Number participating for Stages in the reading test by age.

Links to Profiles

Tests developed from the approved Curriculum.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Item	Results of the First ACT Literacy Assessment Program Year 3 & 5 Students in ACT Government Schools. ACT Department of Education & Training and Children Youth and Family Services Bureau. August 1997.
Purposes	<p>To provide base line data from which interested groups can compare performance of ATC literacy education over time.</p> <p>To provide teachers with important diagnostic information on the literacy skills and understandings of students.</p> <p>To provide government with an informed statistical base.</p>
Subjects Assessed	English literacy skills in the five strands: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Viewing.
Students Assessed	All Year 3 and 5 students in ACT Government schools.
Implementation Date	Four weeks, term Two 1997, integrated with language teaching.
Resource Impact	<p>Development of better class teaching programs.</p> <p>Development of professional training courses which target specific needs.</p> <p>Distribution of resources to address learning needs.</p>
Test Format	Criterion referenced; National English Curriculum Profile (NEPL). Developmental Resource for Teachers (DART) ACER.
Scoring	<p>Marked by ACER (except for speaking strand).</p> <p>Speaking strand marked by classroom teachers.</p>
Reporting	<p>Schools, system.</p> <p>Release of a departmental Literacy Discussion paper released for public comment, names eight proposed strategies.</p>

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Results of the First ACT Literacy Assessment Program Year 3 & 5 Students in ACT Government Schools. ACT Department of Education & Training and Children Youth and Family Services Bureau. August 1997. (Continued)

Comparisons

Gender.
Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
Growth in performance levels between Years 3 and 5.

Future Assessment Programs

To track performance levels of students across the system.
Introduction of high school assessment program to pilot a new assessment process in early 1998.

Links to Profiles

Performance is measured against the National English Profile Levels (profile levels do not equate to year levels).

NEW SOUTH WALES

Item	Basic Skills Testing Program 1997: School Report Year 3. Basic Skills Testing Program 1997: School Report Year 5.
Stated Purposes	<p>Provide parents with detailed and reliable information about the literacy achievements of their children.</p> <p>Provide parents and teachers with a means of comparing individual student performance against statewide performance.</p> <p>Assist teachers to identify individual or groups of students who require additional assistance.</p> <p>Provide schools with reliable information to assist them to plan and implement programs for the improvement of students' literacy.</p> <p>Provide schools and government with accurate information that can be used to monitor standards in literacy over time.</p> <p>Provide reliable information to assist the Government to make decisions about system-wide policy directions and to target areas of need.</p>
Subjects Assessed	<p>Literacy - Reading and Language.</p> <p>The literacy skills are those required in all Key Learning Areas of the primary curriculum.</p> <p>Reading skills - six descriptions are given of reading skills which are based on the English K-6 Syllabus.</p> <p>Language skills include spelling, punctuation and grammatical knowledge.</p>
Students and Year Levels Involved	All students in Year 3 and Year 5 in government schools.
Implementation Date	August each year (some students may be exempt).

NEW SOUTH WALES

Basic Skills Testing Program 1997: School Report Year 3.

Basic Skills Testing Program 1997: School Report Year 5 (Continued).

Resource Impact

State Literacy Strategy: curriculum materials, teacher training and support, specialist teachers, parent programs, assessment and intervention for students needing additional assistance.

Schools - assist with programming and planning
the selection of teaching strategies
the provision of specialist teachers for intervention programs, eg, Reading Recovery. Develop effective monitoring systems, ie, to chart student achievement and growth within a standards framework

Teachers - gauge the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

Test Format

Criterion referenced, curriculum based
(English K-6 Syllabus)
Centrally assessed.
(Tests can be provided in)
Common items included in Year 3 and 5 to allow for comparison of individual growth and progress over time.

Administration

Centrally, tests carried out in schools with the Teacher Handbook for Basic Skills Tests

Scoring

Centrally.
The reporting scale is divided into Skill Bands
There is a 'standard' embodied by each skill band.
"skill bands provide a clearly defined standard, and a common language in which to talk about achievement and a way of describing the range of achievement within a year " (p.11).

Skill Bands - represent increasing levels of difficulty. There is no mention made of National Profiles or Learning Outcomes. It appears that the Skills Bands are created direct reference to the Test Tasks which are developed from the K-6 Syllabus.

Performance is measured against skill bands, a separate score is given for Literacy as well as scores for aspects of reading.
Skill bands describe the range of achievement within a year.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Basic Skills Testing Program 1997: School Report Year 3.

Basic Skills Testing Program 1997: School Report Year 5 (Continued).

Reporting

Individual student reports to teachers:
include all information given to parents;
compare responses to statewide group.

School report packages:
Principals' notes;
a school summary (with trends);
means and standard deviation;
all student results;
percentages in skill bands;
percentages of students choosing each response;
chart showing students in order of achievement and items
in order of difficulty;
Basic Skills Progress Maps Year 5 only.

Comparisons Made

Performance of each individual student is compared with state performance.

Performance of groups - gender, NSEB, ATSI.

Growth and progress over time of state and subgroups.

Links to Profiles

The New South Wales Board of Studies developed statements of outcomes for each of its syllabuses across Years K-12.

The set of outcomes were broad indicators of learning expectations arising from the syllabus (similar to the work done by WA's Monitoring Standards in Education in 1990, benchmarks were developed from existing syllabus documents).

New South Wales review of Profiles and Outcomes⁴ *'New South Wales Outcomes will be related to the national framework. The Board of Studies, however, will no longer be required to incorporate national profiles directly into New South Wales syllabuses. Syllabus outcomes will be developed directly from the subject content and then related to the national framework'* (p.97).

⁴Eltis, K. & Mowbray, B. (1997). New South Wales. In J. Lokan (Ed.). *Describing Learning: Implementation of Curriculum Profiles in Australian Schools 1986 -1996*. Melbourne: ACER.

VICTORIA

Item	LAP Reporting Guide 1997. Board of Studies: Victoria.
Stated Purposes	<p>1997, to assess students of Years 3 and 5 in English (Reading and Writing) to show students achievement in the English learning area.</p> <p>To report these results to parents and schools.</p> <p>To compare student progress in relation to the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF).</p> <p>To compare students across the State.</p>
Subjects Assessed	English - Reading and Writing.
Students and Year Levels Involved	All students in Year 3 and 5.
Implementation Date	February - June, 1997.
Resource Impact	<p>Evaluation of school programs.</p> <p>Results can identify needs for action.</p> <p>Can identify needs of students.</p> <p>Can assist future planning.</p>
Test Format	<p>Criterion referenced, curriculum based (derived from learning outcomes of the CSF).</p> <p><u>Centrally Assessed Tasks</u></p> <p>English (Reading;Writing Conventions) - responses to questions in a mark sensitive booklet.</p> <p>English (Writing) - a piece of writing on one or two set topics.</p> <p><u>Teacher Assessed Tasks</u></p> <p>Writing - to produce a piece of writing on a topic which fits in with current classroom activities.</p>
Timing	February - June, 1997.

VICTORIA

LAP Reporting Guide 1997. Board of Studies: Victoria (Continued)

Administration	Centrally and in schools.
Scoring	Teacher Assessed Tasks. Writing - three strands- Strategies (S), Texts and Contextual Understandings (TCU) and Linguistic structures and features (LSF). Centrally devised marking Guide provided.
Reporting	<i>Learning Assessment Project 1997 Reporting Guide. Learning Assessment Project. Board of Studies: Victoria.</i> School Results - group summary compares all students and subgroups, boys, girls, NSEB and ATSI.
Comparisons Made	School Results - the performance of the school's Year 3 and 5 cohort; the school and state performance are compared; performances of different groups, eg, girls/boys. with LAP96. Previous LAP reports. Class or group results (boys, girls, NSEB and ATSI) - an item analysis of subgroups to compare with entire State cohort. Individual students scores (p.5). Summary of Student Writing. Individual Students Results Individual student profiles - strengths and weaknesses in each strand; with other students in the class and State. LAP Maps - performance of a single student on the assessment items in a particular strand.
Links to Profiles	The Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF).

QUEENSLAND

Item	The Queensland Year 6 Test 1997.
Stated Purposes	<p>To provide information about the performance of Year 6 students in aspects of literacy at school and system level.</p> <p>To provide independent information to supplement other assessment information.</p> <p>To assist teachers to provide additional information to parents/caregivers about student achievement.</p> <p>To support teacher judgement about students' learning outcomes.</p> <p>To provide information for literacy, based on the strands of reading and Viewing, and Writing in the <i>English Syllabus in Years 1-10</i> (Dept. Ed. Qld, 1994).</p> <p>To provide the Minister of Education information on trends in literacy in Queensland.</p>
Subjects Assessed	Reading and viewing writing.
Students Year Year levels	All Year six students in all state schools and non-state schools who wish to participate
Implementation date	2nd/3rd September, 1997.
Resource impact	the baseline information can be used to monitor the achievements of the full range of students and cater appropriately for special needs. Schools and systems may use this information, together with other information, to inform decisions about curriculum and resource management.
Test format	Criterion referenced and curriculum based two testing sessions.

QUEENSLAND

The Queensland Year 6 Test 1997 (Continued).

Administration	Test conducted within a classroom context by a registered teacher. Reading - 45 minutes. Writing - 25 minutes discussion, 25 minutes for the writing task.
Scoring	External; reading and viewing by machine, writing - each piece marked by two trained markers (independently).
Reporting	The Educational Testing Centre (ETC) at the University of NSW provides the test and student, class and school reports. Students report - for parents/caregivers, a graphic representation of the student's performance in relation to the cohort for each strand level (translations provided in nine languages). Class report - a class summary, item by item summary of each student's responses on the test and information about the performance of the cohort. School report - aspects of literacy (strands), school summaries which show trends in student performance on the test and specific populations from the cohort.
Comparisons Made	Gender. ESL. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Item	Department for Education and Children's Services: The Basic Skills testing Program in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. 1997.
Stated Purposes	<p>The Basic Skills Testing (BST) Program is one essential component of the comprehensive Early Years Strategy, a priority for DECS. The tests provide diagnostic information to students, parents and teachers about the achievement of students.</p> <p>Specific purposes:</p> <p>To show the growth and progress made by each student over time;</p> <p>To provide a state and school picture that is meaningful and accurate;</p> <p>To have the capability to monitor educational standards over time;</p> <p>To show the achievement of groups of students;</p> <p>To act as a checkpoint to identify students who have not acquired basic skills in the early years of schooling.</p>
Subjects Assessed	<p>Literacy - Reading and Language.</p> <p>Reading: understanding written texts and diagrams sorting information understanding of the sequences of events reaching conclusions</p> <p>Language: spelling, punctuation, grammar</p>
Students and Year Levels Involved	All students Year 3 and Year 5.
Implementation Date	Introduced 1996 June - November, 1997
Resource Impact	Assist in programming and planning for improved student outcomes.
Test Format	Externally administered. Results used in conjunction with achievement information gathered by teachers through the curriculum profiles.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Department for Education and Children's Services: The Basic Skills testing Program in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy. 1997. (Continued)

Administration	Externally administered.
Reporting	To all parents.
Comparisons Made	Individual students results can be compared with the skill band marker.
Links to Profiles	Curriculum Statements and Curriculum Profiles.

Further Assessment Information South Australia

The *Quality Assessment Tasks Project* focussed on developing quality assessment activities embedded in teaching programs, ranging from 4-6 weeks in length, began in 1995.

The *Consistency Project* provides teachers with PD to ensure curriculum profile levels which describe student achievement are assigned in a consistent way within and across schools.

The *Using Student Achievement Information to Improve Student Learning Outcomes Project* involved 8 schools in 1997, to document and share with other schools ways in which student achievement information could be used to improve learning outcomes.

TASMANIA

Item	1996 Year 5 Literacy Monitoring Program.
Purpose	To monitor all Year 5 students in Literacy. To compare results to 10R tests in use from 1975 to 1993.
Subjects Assessed	Reading (DART Form A) Speaking Listening Writing.
Students	All Year 5 students in government schools.
Test Format	The ACER DART materials.
Implementation date	1996
Test Type	criterion referenced, linked to the National Profiles.
Reporting	schools and school districts.
Comparisons	Tasmanian students against the ACER 'national sample' used by ACER to trial and develop the DART assessment tasks. A longitudinal comparison of reading performance by 10-year-olds in government schools from 1975 to 1993. (ACER used a 'linking' process with previous data from the 10R tests and the 1996 Literacy Monitoring Program). Major groups, NSEB, ATSI, socio-economic (based on the Educational Needs Indexes (ENIs).

APPENDIX ONE

Published Resources

Forster, M. & Master, G. (1996). *ACER Assessment resource kit*. ACER: Melbourne.

ARK is a kit which contains five magazines and one video. The kit examines and provides information on a broad range of assessment methods and strategies.

Forster, M., Mendelovits, J. & Master, G. (1994) *Developmental assessment resource for teachers. (DART)*. ACER: Melbourne.

Australian Council for Educational Research. (1997). *ACER Tests of basic skills, Orchid Series*. (1997). ACER: Melbourne.

This latest assessment resource from ACER reflects curriculum developments in Australia and covers Reading, Writing, Listening and Viewing. The tests were developed originally for use as state-wide tests in Victoria and Queensland and are cross-referenced to the English Curriculum Profiles. They can be reported in terms of States' equivalents, for example, Student Outcome Statements, WA. There are three levels of Literacy, A, B, C. This package includes a Literacy DIAMAP. This is a resource with which teachers can diagnose strengths and weaknesses of student performance. Teachers can plan definite interventions based on this information, and review the allocation of resources.

KIDMAP

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