

QHTA

Queensland History Teachers' Association



Queensland History Teachers' Association

Submission

to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and
Reporting Authority
(ACARA)

on the

7-10 History Consultation Curriculum

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A comment about lack of clarity affecting this response

The page numbers used in this section refer to the 'Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS): History – All elements 7-10 Consultation Curriculum (ACARA 2021)

QHTA's analysis of and response to the ACARA 7-10 History Consultation Curriculum were limited by some specific lack of clarity about key aspects of the documents, as follows:

1. What elements of the curriculum are mandated?

In the entire 7-10 History Consultation Curriculum ...

The word 'mandate' occurs only twice, in reference to the 'Mandate of Heaven' in China. (p.29)

The word 'compulsory' does not appear at all.

The word 'must' appears only once, in the Economics expression 'choices must be made about how resources are allocated' (p.7).

Rather, in specifying content for study, the curriculum uses the terms 'essential', 'expected to' and 'should'.

For example, the curriculum states that

'Year level descriptions provide an overview of the learning that students should experience at each year level' (p.2)

'Content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn, and teachers are expected to teach, in each year' (p.2)

'The core concepts for History 7–10 have been developed to identify the essential content students should learn' (p.5)

'It is expected that in each year level students will be taught the content from the overview sub-strand and one of the topics in at least two other sub-strands ...' (p.17)

'In Year 9 it is expected that the World War I (1914–1918) sub-strand and at least one of the other sub-strands, The Industrial Revolution (1750–1914), Movement of peoples (1750–1901) or Australia and Asia, be studied in depth' (p.52)

'In Year 10 it is expected that at least the sub-strand of World War II (1939–1945) and Rights and freedoms (1945–the present) be studied in depth' (p.68)

However, the following statement seems to indicate a mandatory requirement:

'Two or more subsequent sub-strands focus on a particular society, event, movement or development and are to be studied in-depth' (p.17).

The almost interchangeable use of the terms 'essential' and 'are to be studied' on one hand and the terms 'expected' and 'should' creates confusion about what, if anything, 'must' be taught and/or learned. This confusion is particularly acute in the expression 'the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn, and teachers are expected to teach' (p.2) If the 'knowledge, understanding and skills' are essential, why are teachers only expected to teach them, rather than required. If, on the other hand, this content is not being mandated, then it

seems illogical to describe it as essential. Further, if it is not being mandated, are teachers free to ignore some or all of it?

Recommendation 1

QHTA recommends that, throughout the curriculum, the use of terms signifying whether structural elements and content are mandatory or not be revised so that meaning is clear in all cases.

2. How are the ‘Knowledge and understanding’ sub-strands to be applied

2.1 Must a (selected) sub-strand be taught in its entirety?

The curriculum states that any (selected) sub-strand is to be ‘studied in depth’.

Each sub-strand is structured in a number of ‘Content descriptions’, varying in number from three (3) to nine (9). The curriculum states that

‘Content descriptions specify the essential knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn, and teachers are expected to teach, in each year’ (p.2).

The term ‘essential’ suggests that all the elements in all the Content descriptions in each (selected) sub-strand must be taught.

However, other statements in the curriculum seem at odds with this assumption. One states that

‘It is expected that in each year level students will be taught the content from the overview sub-strand and one of the topics in at least two other sub-strands. (p.17)

The term ‘topics ... (in) sub-strands’ is confusing, as the term ‘topic’ is not used anywhere in the curriculum to name/describe a ‘component’ of a sub-strand.

In particular, the expression

‘... students will be taught the content from ... one of the topics ... in World War I in Year 9 and World War II ... in Year 10’ (p.17)

seems to contradict the statements that

‘the World War I sub-strand be studied in depth’ (p.52) and

‘the sub-strand of World War II ... be studied in depth’ (p.68)

In practical terms, this means that teachers could be uncertain whether they have to teach the entire content in each (selected) sub-strand or whether they can choose to teach a part of the content in each (selected) sub-strand.

2.2 Must all Content descriptions be taught to the same depth?

Such statements as ‘the World War I sub-strand be studied in depth’ (p.68) suggest that the entire topic, through its various Content descriptions, must be studied in depth. However, this represents a severe limitation upon teachers and students.

It would preclude, for example, a teacher choosing to teach several of the Content descriptions in great depth (for example, ‘the causes of World War I ...’, ‘the places of significance where Australians fought ... including Gallipoli’ and ‘... the nature and significance of the Anzac legend and the war’) while teaching other Content descriptions in lesser but adequate depth as ‘contextual’ content for the studies of ‘greater depth’ (for example, ‘significant events and turning points’ and ‘the effects of World War I, particularly ... in Australian society’). Another option could see a teacher deciding to

teach 'the causes of World War I' in a brief, 'transmissive' way across several lessons, thus freeing up valuable time for students to undertake an in-depth source-based inquiry into other aspects of the war.

2.3 Must a sub-strand be taught as a single bloc, and in the sequential order of the Content descriptions?

... as a single bloc ...

The 'single bloc' question applies most clearly to the 'Overview' that is listed as the first sub-strand in each of Years 7-10. The Overview traverses the entire historical scope of the particular year's history studies. While some teachers might prefer to teach this content as a bloc, as context for the subsequent two (or more) sub-strands, others might prefer to 'insert' various content from the Overview into various stages of the year's studies, where thought more appropriate. In Year 10, for example, it would see the 'interwar period' from the Overview introduced prior to the study of World War II sub-strand, but the post-war emergence of the Cold War (from the Overview) not taught until after the study of World War II. This particular example is stark, as the Year 10 Overview jumps from the 'interwar period' to the 'Cold War' without actually looking at World War II itself – a situation that students might find confusing.

The 'single bloc' question raises a pedagogical issue. For example, the Year 10 Overview - particularly as exemplified by the elaborations – involves an enormous historical scope, including the following:

Versailles/ Inter-war period/ Depression/ Cold War/ United Nations
Decolonisation/ Struggles for rights and freedoms: race, gender, LGBTQI+
Wars in Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf, Afghanistan
Rise of China and India since 1989/ Key technologies since 1945
Population growth in C20th/ Resource depletion/ Environmentalism.

It is difficult to envisage such a wealth of content being taught and learned using approaches faithful to an 'inquiry' methodology. Taught in a bloc, it could be characterised by teacher-based transmissive approaches in pursuit of an elusive 'coverage'. Inserted instead 'in parts' at appropriate points in the year's studies, even if still heavily 'transmissive' at times, it would probably be more palatable an approach for student and teacher alike.

... in the sequential order of Content descriptions ...

The Content descriptions across Years 7-10 sub-strands generally follow a logical, often chronological sequence (as seen in the World War I example of 'causes/course/effects/memorialisation'). While many teachers could see this as appropriate, others could see valuable opportunities for 'mixing and matching' elements from different Content descriptions. In Year 9, for example – with five Content elaborations – a teacher might want to introduce the 'emergence of the Anzac legend' (from the fifth Content description) after students have learned about the 'Gallipoli campaign' (from the second Content description).

Recommendation 2

QHTA recommends that, across the Years 7-10 Knowledge and Understanding, the curriculum be revised to ensure clarity about:

- Whether a sub-strand must be taught in a single bloc, particularly in the case of the Overview sub-strands, where it could be more effective and valuable to 'insert' particular content from the Overview into appropriate stages of the year's study, producing the benefits of contextual, linking and comparative content.

- Whether, in the study of a sub-strand, all of the individual Content descriptions must be taught to some extent.
- Whether teachers can choose to ‘teach the Content descriptions’ in a sequence different from the sequence in which they appear in the curriculum document.
- Whether teachers can choose to teach the content of some Content descriptions to a significantly greater or lesser depth than the content of other Content descriptions.
- Whether teachers can choose at appropriate times to combine content from different Content descriptions.

QHTA is convinced that revisions signalled in Recommendations 1 and 2 are essential if teachers are to navigate the final curriculum in a clear and informed way to produce an effective and valuable course of study for their students.

Recommendation 3

QHTA recommends that a section be added to the Curriculum explaining the parameters of the process teachers need to undertake to translate the Curriculum into a programme of study for their classroom.

END OF SECTION

‘An initial comment about lack of clarity affecting this response’

Submission on specific elements of the ACARA 7-10 History Consultation Curriculum

The page numbers used in this section refer to the 'Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS): History – All elements 7-10 Consultation Curriculum (ACARA 2021)

Introduction

QHTA's aim in making this submission is to assist ACARA in producing a final version of the 7-10 History Curriculum that can support teachers in producing a taught curriculum that is based on sound principles and that offers students an interesting, challenging and manageable course of study.

In making this submission, QHTA has worked within the established general parameters of the Consultation curriculum. However, QHTA hopes that – in future iterations of the 7-10 History Curriculum – ACARA will entertain more imaginative and innovative proposals for reforming the curriculum.

In the following pages, QHTA identifies and describes aspects of the ACARA 7-10 History Consultation curriculum that it considers problematic in some way, and makes recommendations for dealing with those problematic aspects.

1. The reduction in the minimum number of sub-strands to be taught

The Consultation curriculum states that the minimum 'expected' content in each of Years 7-10 comprises three sub-strands: one overview sub-strand and two other sub-strands. In effect, this reduces the minimum from an equivalent one overview and three other 'studies' in the existing ACARA curriculum.

QHTA is ambivalent about this change, identifying both positive and negative consequences. The positives include the provision of more time for the teaching and learning of each sub-strand, something likely to be welcomed by most teachers and likely to enhance that teaching and learning. The negatives include a reduction in the overall number of historical 'topics' studied by a student over the four years, reducing the scope of the historical knowledge developed by the student.

At the same time, this adverse effect could be eliminated if a teacher took advantage of the Curriculum's statement that additional sub-strands beyond the minimum can be studied in any year.

On balance, and thinking about this proposed 'reduction' in isolation, the reduction appears to be a positive change. However, QHTA has identified some potential 'flow-on' adverse effects, depending on whether other changes are made to the curriculum. See the following sections.

2. The listing of specific sub-strands 'expected' to be taught

The Consultation curriculum lists eight (8) specific sub-strands that a teacher is 'expected' to teach. They comprise the Overview sub-strand in each of the four years 7-10 and the sub-strands 'Early First Nations peoples of Australia (Year 7); World War I (Year 9); World War II and Rights and Freedoms (Year 10). This constitutes eight 'expected/(mandated?)' sub-strands in a total minimum of 12. Clearly, this is a severe restriction of a teacher's ability to exercise choice in the selection of content to teach.

This restriction is most serious in Year 10. Because the Year 10 Overview, World War II and Rights and Freedoms are all 'mandated' content, a teacher who decides to teach the minimum requirements (three sub-strands) in Year 10 will have no scope to choose other content to teach.

In turn, that teacher's decision would have serious implications for the overall scope of the 7-10 course of study. The only 'post-1945' content studied in depth in the entire 7-10 course would be the post-1945 elements of the 'Rights and Freedoms' sub-strand. This is contrary to the Curriculum's aims to 'provide a broad understanding of the world in which we live' (p.1); to help students 'appreciate ... the significant continuities that exist to the present day' (p.15); 'to equip students for the world (local, regional and global) in which they live' (p.15); and to 'to appreciate Australia's ... global interrelationships' (p.15).

World history after 1945 is dealt with in the Year 10 Overview sub-strand. However, the likely 'coverage' of the Overview is immense, described in the Curriculum elaborations as including: Versailles/ Inter-war period/ Depression/ Cold War/ United Nations/Decolonisation/ Struggles for rights and freedoms: race, gender, LGBTQI+/ Wars in Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf, Afghanistan/ Rise of China and India since 1989/ Key technologies since 1945/ Population growth in C20th/ Resource depletion/ Environmentalism (pp.69-70). Clearly, it would not be possible (nor is it intended) to teach all or even most of these aspects 'in depth'. And yet, for many students, this Overview would constitute almost all of their learning about the post-1945 world.

Where a teacher chooses to teach the 'minimum' required, the students would not study the other Year 10 sub-strand 'The globalising world'. This sub-strand is arguably the most valuable sub-strand in 7-10 History for realising the Curriculum's aims listed in an above paragraph, most notably 'to equip students for the world (local, regional and global) in which they live' (p.15). A corollary of this is that many teachers might think that 'The globalising world' is a more valuable study for students than, for example, the two sub-strands on World War I and World War II – both of which are 'mandated'. The following recommendation reflects the analysis in the two above sections of the submission.

Further, the potential value of 'The globalising world' could be increased if the sub-strand is reorganised into three separate sub-strands reflecting the three different historical developments in the sub-strand: Popular culture since 1945; movements of people since 1945; Environmentalism since 1945. This would enable a teacher to design the Year 10 course of study with a strongly 'global' and 'contemporary' emphasis reflecting the previously mentioned Curriculum aim 'to equip students for the world (local, regional and global) in which they live' (p.15)

Recommendation 4

QHTA recommends that the Curriculum provide for the following interdependent elements:

1. The minimum content required in each of Years 7-10 be the Overview sub-strand and two other sub-strands.
2. That, other than the four Overview sub-strands, there be only one mandatory requirement in the Knowledge and Understanding strand in Years 7-10, viz: the teaching of **either** the sub-strand 'Early First Nations peoples of Australia (Year 7) **or** the sub-strand 'Rights and Freedoms' (year 10). This requirement reflects the Cross-curriculum priority 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures'. (This allows a teacher to teach 'The globalising world' in Year 10 within the minimum requirements of three sub-strands.)
3. That the sub-strand 'The globalising world' be reorganised into three separate sub-strands with emphasis respectively on 'Popular culture since 1945', 'Movements of people since 1945' and 'Environmentalism since 1945'.

3. The teaching and learning of the four 'Overview' sub-strands

The point was made earlier that the Overview sub-strands in particular might be more logical and valuable if – instead of being taught in a single bloc – the teacher could 'insert' elements of the Overview into the year's course of study at appropriate points, to provide contextual, linking and comparative content that situates the other sub-strands in chronological and geographical contexts.

Recommendation 5

QHTA recommends that the curriculum document advise teachers that, in teaching the Overview sub-strands, they are free to teach it as a single bloc or to teach elements of the Overview at appropriate points in the year's course of study to provide contextual, linking and comparative content that situates the other sub-strands.

4. The teaching and learning of the K&U sub-strands other than the Overviews

The point was made earlier that there could be value for students if a teacher can choose to teach selected Content descriptions in a K&U sub-strand, instead of all; or alternatively, can choose to teach one or more selected Content descriptions in depth, while teaching others in much lesser depth. The example was provided of a teacher's choosing to teach several of the Content descriptions in great depth (for example, 'the causes of World War I ...', 'the places of significance where Australians fought ... including Gallipoli' and '... the nature and significance of the Anzac legend and the war') while teaching other Content descriptions in lesser but adequate depth as 'contextual' content for the studies of 'greater depth' (for example, 'significant events and turning points' and 'the effects of World War I, particularly ... in Australian society').

Recommendation 6

QHTA recommends that the curriculum document advise teachers that they have flexibility in the teaching of any Knowledge and Understanding sub-strand, such that a teacher can decide what emphasis and depth to ascribe to the various Content descriptions in a sub-strand, allowing much greater depth to be ascribed to some and much lesser to others.

5. The revised set of core historical concepts

QHTA is offering critical comment on several aspects of the revised set of historical concepts, namely the deletion of the concepts of 'empathy' and 'contestability'; the defining and describing of the newly-added concept 'Interpretations'; and the defining and describing of the concepts of 'evidence', 'perspectives and 'significance'.

'empathy'

It is puzzling that the concept 'empathy' that was deemed a key historical concept in the *Australian Curriculum: History* for the past decade has been not only deleted from the Consultation curriculum's suite of core concepts, but has been literally purged from the curriculum. The term 'empathy' does not appear once in the Consultative curriculum, while the word 'empathise' appears once in a section of the cross-curriculum priorities on 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures'.

Yet the importance of empathy is unprecedented today, in a globalised world that has brought people into contact with other people with vastly different origins, beliefs, values, experiences and aspirations. Empathy – the deep understanding of 'where someone is coming from' – is an essential

tool in fostering relationships and navigating conflict. School is an essential location for the teaching and development of empathy, and History – the subject in which young people encounter peoples and practices of immense diversity and difference – is the subject best placed to promote that learning and development.

Recommendation 7

QHTA recommends that ‘empathy’ be reinstated as a core historical concept in 7-10 History.

‘contestability’

As the Consultation curriculum emphasises, History ‘is interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking about human values, including present and future challenges.’ (p.15) These essential characteristics – interpretation and debate – mean that ‘contestability’ is an essential and inescapable aspect of historical learning.

In today’s world, the contestation of ideas and battles over ‘truth’ have become gargantuan. Pervasive social media convey this contestation into people’s daily lives, where ‘versions of the truth’ and ‘fake news’ challenge people’s sense of everyday reality. Politics - increasingly adversarial - highlights contestation of visions for the future and intense competition for ‘hearts and minds’, while global relations - increasingly bellicose – take both ideological and mundane contestation to new depths.

In this context, the need for young people to encounter and critically engage with the contestation of ideas is urgent. For ‘contestability’ to be deleted as a core historical concept is an unwise and inexplicable move. Rather, ‘contestability’ needs to be named, understood and investigated as an essential element of historical learning.

Recommendation 8

QHTA recommends that ‘contestability’ be reinstated as a core historical concept in 7-10 History.

‘interpretations’

In principle, QHTA accepts the logic of ‘interpretation’ being included as a core historical concept – in the singular, not the plural ‘interpretations’, which is not the accurate term for a concept (in the same way that ‘perspectives’ should be ‘perspective’ as a concept).

However, the way in which ACARA has defined and described ‘interpretations’ is not appropriate or useful. The Curriculum defines ‘Interpretations’ as ‘Contestable explanations of the past about a specific person, event or development, typically as a result of a disciplined inquiry made by historians’ (p.6).

There are two main problems.

First, this definition is a definition of the products of the process of interpretation. It is not a definition of a concept. To introduce this new ‘historical concept’, the curriculum needed to use and define the term ‘interpretation’ (singular). For example ...

‘Interpretation’ is a conceptual practice through which a person infers and explains the implicit meaning or significance of a text, statement, action or artefact. These explanations are called ‘interpretations’ and they can be contested. Interpretation is a key characteristic of the discipline of history, and is practised by school students and academic historians alike.

Second, to define ‘interpretations’ as ‘typically’ the work of ‘historians’ sends an unhelpful and contradictory message to students that they will not be involved in producing interpretations. To be useful, the definition of ‘interpretation’ and of ‘interpretations’ needs to make a connection with the actual process of historical inquiry that school students engage in.

The Curriculum's 'Rationale' states that 'History, as a discipline ... is interpretative by nature', 'develops transferable skills such as the ability to ... critically analyse and interpret sources ... (and) ... develop and substantiate interpretations' (p.15).

To match that Rationale statement, the Curriculum needs to include a definition that identifies 'interpretation' as the historical concept but also describes 'interpretations' as the products of the (interpretative) process of historical inquiry – as in the example provided above by QHTA for the purposes of this submission. Such a definition will help students understand such Curriculum statements as 'using the student's own historical knowledge to interpret sources' (p.65).

Recommendation 9

QHTA recommends that ACARA change the name of the newly introduced historical concept to 'Interpretation' and provide a definition that explains both 'interpretation' and 'interpretations' in terms that relate to the actual historical concepts and skills that students develop in 7-10 History. (See QHTA example above.)

'evidence'

The Curriculum states:

Evidence – The information obtained from primary and secondary sources that is valuable for a particular narrative and/or inquiry to support a hypothesis or to prove or disprove a conclusion. (pp.5, p.18)

History is a 'truth-seeking' discipline, but its very nature precludes the development of 'provable' knowledge. Its knowledge is provisional and tentative, is dependent on the sufficiency of its source base and the quality of the inquiry that produced it, and is subject to reflection, challenge and revision. In historical inquiry, the knowledge produced is 'supported' and can be termed 'credible' and 'convincing' as an explanation, interpretation or argument ... but is never 'proved' in the absolutist meaning of that word.

Thus, the terms 'prove' and 'disprove' are inappropriate in the above usage.

The inclusion of the term 'narrative' in the definition of 'Evidence' is puzzling. The terms 'narrative/narratives' occur only four times in the entire 7-10 History Curriculum –in this repeated definition (twice), in the section on 'Literacy' and in one Elaboration. Instead, the Curriculum uses the terms 'explanation', 'interpretation' and 'argument' throughout the document.

The inclusion of the term 'hypothesis' is similarly puzzling. In the entire curriculum, the term is not used anywhere except in this definition!

It seems illogical, inconsistent and confusing to define a key historical skill by using terms that are not used anywhere else in the curriculum document.

Recommendation 10

QHTA recommends that the terms 'prove', 'disprove' 'narrative' and 'hypothesis' be deleted from the definition of 'Evidence' and a revised definition be produced, for example:

Evidence – The information derived from primary and secondary sources that can be used to support, revise or challenge a particular historical explanation, interpretation or argument.

'Perspectives'

In the Consultation curriculum 'perspectives' is defined as: "Historical perspectives are the point of view, beliefs, values and experiences from individuals and groups at the time" (p. 6).

This definition is at odds with the previous ACARA Australian Curriculum document for 7-10 History where 'perspective' and 'point of view' were defined separately and not collapsed into one.

Perspective in the glossary of the 2015 curriculum document is defined as "a world view or a set of ideas or beliefs that guide actions. Perspectives draw on a person's or group's age, gender experiences, culture or religious background, ideologies and/or intellectual contexts, which influence their world view and inform their opinions, values, and actions..." (p.62).

Point of view is defined as "an individual's view about a particular person, event or phenomena, which may be irrational and/or immediately sensed or deeply considered and reflective" (p.62).

Recommendation 11

QHTA recommends that authentic and workable definitions of perspective/s and point of view be included in the new curriculum document.

'Significance'

The Curriculum defines 'Significance' as:

The importance that is assigned to an issue, event, development, person, place, process, interaction or system over time and place (p.5).

Arguably, teachers and their students will need further explanation of the concept and its use in the curriculum. In the Achievement standards for the various Years 7-10, students are required to 'use criteria to evaluate historical significance' (Year 7), 'select and apply criteria' ... (Year 8), 'develop criteria to evaluate ...' (Year 9) and 'develop, refine and apply criteria to judge ...' (Year 10) (pp. 20, 36, 52, 68). Given this importance of 'criteria' – and given that in Years 7 and 8 students will 'use' and 'select' criteria (but not 'develop' criteria), it would be helpful if guidance about criteria were provided in the definition.

Further ... in the Content related to 'significance', there is some inconsistency.

In Years 7 and 8, the content does match the Achievement standards. Students are provided with criteria to use to evaluate significance (although the term 'criteria' does not appear in the Year 7 Elaborations).

However, in Year 9, the stated focus is on 'develop, refine and use criteria', but the four Elaborations actually specify four criteria through descriptive sentences – for example 'had a significant impact in scope or depth' (p.67).

In Year 10, while the Content description asks students to 'develop, refine and use criteria' (p.83), the Elaborations actually specify the criteria for the students even more clearly than in Year 9 – 'identifying a significant event, person or idea and evaluating its significance using the criteria of importance, profundity, quantity, durability and relevance' (p.83). This actually repeats the Elaboration from Year 8! As well as contradicting the Content description and the Achievement standard, this Elaboration appears to have a 'circulatory' nonsensical character; it asks the student to 'identify a significant person' – presumably using the criteria for 'significance' – and then to 'evaluate' that person according to those criteria (which they had already used to 'identify' the person).

Recommendation 12

QHTA recommends that:

- the definition/description of the historical concept 'Significance' be revised to provide additional details about the various types of historical significance (e.g.: 'had a significant impact in scope or depth' and about the corresponding terms used for criteria (e.g.: 'durability').
- the inconsistencies related to the 'match' among Achievement standards, Content descriptions and Elaborations related to 'Significance', and described above, be eliminated and the curriculum text adjusted accordingly.

6. Explaining the core historical concepts in detail

The section above on the historical concepts suggests that neither the concepts themselves nor their application in the teaching of history are simple and easy to explain.

QHTA believes that the Consultation curriculum provides far too little explanation of the core historical concepts (a fault also in the existing curriculum).

It is significant that the Consultation curriculum provides only 162 words in total to define/describe the six historical concepts – an average of under 30 words per concept. This seems to assume that teachers need no further help in understanding the concepts and their place in the teaching of history.

By contrast, the Consultation curriculum provides 1200 words to explain the seven General capabilities and 641 words to explain the three Cross-curriculum priorities.

Recommendation 13

QHTA recommends that the Curriculum document provide substantially more detailed explanations of each of the six historical concepts in 7-10 History

7. The use of General capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities

The General capabilities and the Cross-curriculum priorities both figure prominently in the 'preliminaries' of the Consultation curriculum.

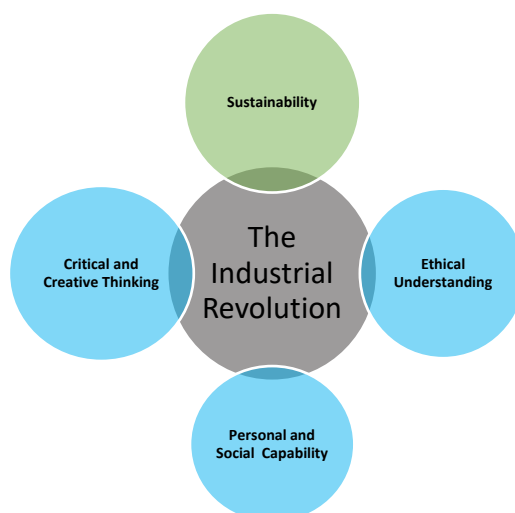
The General capabilities 'equip young Australians with the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions to live and work successfully' (p.8). Importantly, the Curriculum states that 'General capabilities are developed through learning area content; they are not separate learning areas, subjects or isolated skills' (p.8); and they 'are identified in content descriptions' ... and 'are also identified in content elaborations when they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning'.

The Cross-curriculum priorities 'support the Australian Curriculum to be a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum' (p.11). As with the General capabilities, the Cross-curriculum priorities 'are incorporated through learning area content; they are not separate learning areas or subjects' (p.11). Their value is in providing 'opportunities to enrich the content of the learning areas ... allowing students to engage with and better understand their world' (p.11).

QHTA believes that these lofty ideas are not translated strongly or effectively into the Knowledge and Understanding and the Skills strands of the Consultation curriculum.

QHTA demonstrates this shortcoming by referring to the failure - in one specific sub-strand – to develop the potentially-rich intersection of selected content, selected ‘capabilities’ and one selected ‘priority’.

8. Critiquing the Industrial Revolution sub-strand



The sub-strand is Year 9’s ‘The Industrial Revolution’. The rationale for its selection is clear and stark. It provides the opportunity to study the historical origins and ongoing effects of the major ‘driver’ of climate change – popularly termed ‘the greatest moral challenge of our time’ and the catalyst of global action by, among others, school students who have responded to the youthful call for ‘Skolstrejk för klimatet’. It is a historical topic whose ‘time has come’.

The topic embodies one of the six ‘Aims’ of *The Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences*:

‘...to ensure that students develop an understanding and appreciation of historical developments, geographic phenomena, civic values and economic factors that shape society, influence sustainability and create a sense of belonging’ (p.2).

The potential of studying ‘The Industrial Revolution’ resonates with other laudable statements from the Consultation curriculum, as follows:

Critical and Creative Thinking

‘Students ... thinking deeply ... imagine alternative futures in response to social, environmental, civic and economic challenges ... proposing appropriate and alternative courses of action and considering the effects on their own lives and the lives of others’ (p.10).

Personal and Social Capability

‘... providing opportunities to express and reflect on their opinions, beliefs, values and questions’ (p.10)

Ethical Understanding

‘... students develop informed, ethical values and attitudes ... explore different perspectives, ambiguities and ethical considerations related to social and environmental issues’ (p.10).

'They discuss and apply ethical concepts ... become aware of their own roles, rights and responsibilities as participants in their social, economic and natural world.' (pp.10-11)

Sustainability

'Students respond to the challenges of sustainability requiring an understanding of the key historical, geographical, political, economic and societal factors involved' (p.13)

'... the development of students' world views, particularly in relation to judgements about past social and economic systems, and access to and use of Earth's resources'.

For many teachers, these statements would likely prompt them to seize the opportunity to choose to teach 'The Industrial Revolution' in Year 9. But, if so, they would find limited value in the Curriculum's content.

The following aspects of 'The Industrial Revolution' sub-strand are telling:

- the words 'sustainable' and 'sustainability' do not occur at all
- the words 'environment' and 'environmental' do not appear at all.
- the words 'critical' and 'critically' do not occur at all.
- the words 'ethical', 'ethically' and 'values' do not appear at all.
- The word 'debate' does not appear in the 'Knowledge and Understanding' content and appears once as a suggested 'communication form' in the 'Skills'.

It strains credulity to find that, in 2021, a proposed Australian Curriculum in 7-10 History can advocate the teaching of 'The Industrial Revolution' in a way that makes no mention at all of the environmental impacts of the revolution, that makes no recommendation that students engage in discussion and debate about those impacts, or about the ongoing impacts of fossil-fuel based industrialisation on today's world, or about about current moves to reduce those impacts and create sustainable futures. These failures contradict the lofty aims of the 7-10 curriculum and demonstrate the failure to integrate valuable General Capabilities and a pertinent Cross-curriculum priority into the teaching and learning of a key topic.

Beyond the parameters of the Industrial Revolution topic, it is telling also that:

- the words 'sustainable' and 'sustainability' appear only six times in the entire 7-10 History K&U and SKILLS, and not at all in Year 9.
- the word 'critical' appears only once in the entire 7-10 History K&U and SKILLS Referring to a 'critical shortage of manpower' in WWII.
- the words 'ethical' and 'ethically' do not appear at all in the entire 7-10 History K&U and SKILLS.

This example of 'The Industrial Revolution' suggests that there are deficiencies in the integration of General Capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities into the Consultation curriculum.

Recommendation 14

QHTA recommends that the Year 9 sub-strand 'The Industrial Revolution' be revised to integrate appropriate elements of 'Critical and Creative Thinking', 'Personal and Social Capability' and 'Ethical Understanding', along with the concept of 'Sustainability', particularly as they relate to the historical and ongoing environmental impact of industrialisation and to the envisioning of sustainable futures.

9. General capabilities: problems with 'Critical and creative thinking'

The Curriculum states that:

Critical and Creative Thinking

In the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences, students develop critical and creative thinking as they investigate historical, geographic, civic and economic concepts and ideas through inquiry-based learning. ...

Students develop creative thinking dispositions when they are encouraged to be curious and imaginative in investigations and fieldwork, to consider multiple perspectives about issues and events, and when thinking deeply about questions that do not have straightforward answers. They imagine alternative futures in response to social, environmental, civic and economic challenges that require problem-solving and innovative solutions, proposing appropriate and alternative courses of action and considering the effects on their own lives and the lives of others. (p.10)

The Curriculum's description of 'Critical and Creative Thinking' is valuable, but needs further elaboration and rearrangement.

Elaboration...

What is missing is specific reference to the idea that 'critical thinking' is most powerful when students are engaged in identifying, understanding and critically evaluating the deep-seated assumptions and values that underpin the institutions and practices of a society. This process is essential if students are to understand 'challenges that require problem-solving and innovative solutions' and are to consequently 'imagine alternative futures. This 'critical thinking' necessitates an understanding of the nature and power of 'ideology'. However, the terms 'ideology/ideologies' do not appear at all in the 'Content descriptions' in 7-10 History, and appear only twice in the entire 7-10 History curriculum, in 'Elaborations' - a reference to 'Christian and Islamic ideology' in Year 8 (p.37) and to 'competing ideologies of communism and democracy' in Year 10 (p.70). Explicit use of the term 'ideology' in the curriculum, to augment 'ideas that emerged' (p.55) or 'ideas about the world' (p.37) would enrich students' understanding.

Rearrangement ...

The distinction between 'critical thinking' and 'creative thinking' is not clear. For example, the expression 'thinking deeply about questions that do not have straightforward answers' is in the paragraph on 'creative thinking', whereas it is arguably better described as 'critical thinking'.

Recommendation 15

QHTA recommends that:

- the Consultation curriculum's description of 'Critical and Creative Thinking' be strengthened by including 'ideology' as an essential concept of 'critical thinking'.
- the the Consultation curriculum's distinction between 'Critical Thinking' and 'Creative Thinking' be clarified.

10. General capabilities: Adding to 'Personal and Social Capability' (1)

The Curriculum states that:

Personal and Social Capability

Through learning experiences that enhance reflective practice, students develop an appreciation of the insights and perspectives of others (p.10)

This sentence is effectively a definition of 'empathy', the term that has been deleted entirely from the Consultation curriculum. It will enhance students' conceptual knowledge if the term 'empathy' is inserted here in a slightly revised text, as in the following recommendation.

Recommendation 16

QHTA recommends that the 'Personal and Social Capability' statement should be strengthened by adding specific reference to 'empathy' as a useful term for conceptually framing the 'appreciation of the insights and perspectives of others'. For example:

Through learning experiences that enhance reflective practice, students develop empathy - an appreciation of the insights and perspectives of others.

11. General capabilities: Adding to 'Personal and Social Capability' (2)

The Curriculum states that:

Personal and Social Capability

Learning through inquiry enables students to develop self-management skills by directing their own learning and providing opportunities to express and reflect on their opinions, beliefs, values and questions. (p.10)

In studying history, students should be reflecting not only on 'opinions, beliefs, values and questions', but also on the 'knowledge' that they develop, acquire, encounter and engage with.

Recommendation 17

QHTA recommends that this statement be strengthened by adding 'knowledge' to the list of what students 'express and reflect on'. For example: 'providing opportunities to express and reflect on their knowledge, opinions, beliefs, values and questions'.

12. General capabilities: Inserting 'Ethical Understanding'

The Curriculum states that:

Ethical Understanding

students develop ethical understanding as they investigate the ways that diverse values and principles have influenced human activity. As students develop informed, ethical values and attitudes they are able to explore different perspectives, ambiguities and ethical considerations related to social and environmental issues. They discuss and apply ethical concepts such as equality, respect and fairness, examine shared beliefs and values that

support Australian democracy and citizenship, and become aware of their own roles, rights and responsibilities as participants in their social, economic and natural world. (pp.10-11)

As noted earlier, the term 'ethical' appears only once in the entire 'Content' of 7-10 History, and that is a reference to the 'Ethical System' in the East Indies. This is despite the lofty ideals expressed in the extract above, and the frequent use of the term 'ethical' in the 'preliminaries' of the Curriculum.

Recommendation 18

QHTA recommends that the 7-10 History content be audited and revised in order to identify and enact opportunities to insert 'ethical' aspects into the historical content and the historical skills, to align with the aspirations expressed in the 'preliminaries' of the Curriculum.

Recommendation 19

QHTA recommends that the 7-10 History Consultation Curriculum be audited and revised to ensure that there is, where appropriate, a stronger integration of the General Capabilities and the Cross-curriculum priorities with the 'Knowledge and understanding' and Skills' strands.

13. Problems with Historical Skills: 'developing a historical explanation'

QHTA identifies problems with the Consultation curriculum's 'Historical Skills'. A major problem is the absence of a key skill that is essential in historical inquiry – the skill that could be termed 'developing an interpretation, 'developing a historical explanation' or 'answering a historical inquiry question'. It is the skill that references a historical inquiry question and that draws together the outcomes of analysing, interpreting, evaluating and corroborating historical sources, weighing up the evidence to produce a supportable interpretation, explanation or judgment about the inquiry question.

This particular skill is included in the 'History Years 7-10 Rationale':

The process of historical inquiry develops transferable skills such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations and communicate effectively (p.15).

However, the 7-10 History 'Aims' describe 'Historical Skills' in a way that departs from the linearity of the Rationale's description of the 'process of historical inquiry'. It lists:

undertake historical inquiry, including skills for asking historical questions, sequencing chronology, analysis and use of sources and communicating a historical explanation about the past (p.15).

That list includes 'communicating a historical explanation' but does not include 'developing a historical explanation' as a vital step prior to communicating that explanation.

Further, in the 'Skills' strand, the difference becomes more stark as the 'Skills of historical thinking' are listed as:

asking historical questions; sequencing chronology; using historical sources as evidence; identifying continuity and change; analysing causes and effects; evaluating historical significance; communicating (p.18).

Here, there is no reference at all to any 'historical explanation'.

Instead, in each year level, the vital historical skill of ‘developing a historical explanation’ is relegated to the Skill sub-strand of ‘Communicating’. The terms used in the ‘Communicating’ Skill across the years differ slightly:

Years 7 and Year 8: ‘develop an explanation’ (pp.35, 51)

Years 9 and 10: ‘develop a historical argument’ (pp.67, 84)

To locate ‘develop a historical explanation/argument’ in the ‘Communication’ Sub-strand is illogical, given that the 7-10 History ‘Rationale’ states clearly that ‘develop and substantiate interpretations’ is the vital historical skill that is preceded by skills including ‘critically analyse and interpret sources’ and is followed by the skill ‘Communicating’.

This illogicality could be eliminated if there were a separate Sub-strand focused on the development of an historical explanation or argument. (That ‘argument’ or ‘explanation’ would usually be the student’s ‘answer’ to the historical inquiry question posed early in the study.) It could then be followed by the Sub-strand ‘Communicating’ that focuses on communicating or presenting that historical argument or explanation in an appropriate mode and format.

To achieve greater clarity, a future revision of all the 7-10 History Skills Sub-strand could look at the approach in the 7-10 Geography Consultation curriculum. The Geography set of ‘Skills’ reads simply and coherently:

- Investigating using geographical methods
- Interpreting and analysing geographical data and information
- Concluding and decision-making
- Communicating

Recommendation 20

QHTA recommends that the Sub-strands and Content descriptions in the ‘Skills’ strand be revised to include a separate Sub-strand and a matching Content description focused on the development of a historical explanation/interpretation/argument that answers a historical inquiry question, using historical sources of evidence. This Sub-strand – possibly titled ‘Developing a historical explanation’ - would precede and articulate with the ‘Communication’ Sub-strand.

14. Problems with Historical Skills: ‘interpretation’

As noted previously, QHTA thinks that the definition of the Historical concept ‘Interpretations’ detracts from the use of the term ‘interpret’ as a fundamental skill in historical study.

QHTA notes that The Curriculum’s ‘Rationale’ states that

‘History, as a discipline ... is interpretative by nature’, ‘develops transferable skills such as the ability to ... critically analyse and interpret sources ... (and) ... develop and substantiate interpretations’ (p.15).

There is a contradiction here. While the Consultation curriculum emphasises the vital role of the ‘interpretative’ process in History, the Curriculum plays down that role in its ‘Knowledge and Understanding’ and ‘Skills’ Strands.

Even though the Rationale uses the term ‘interpret sources’, the term ‘interpret historical sources’ appears only twice in the 7-10 ‘Knowledge and Understanding’ and ‘Skills’ - in an almost identical ‘Elaboration’ in the ‘Skills’ of Years 9 and 10:

- using the student’s own historical knowledge to interpret sources (AC9HH10S06_E4) (p.65)
- using the student’s own historical knowledge to interpret primary written sources (AC9HH10S06_E7) (p.81)

The word 'interpret' – used to describe what students do with historical sources - does not appear at all in any 7-10 History Sub-strand, Content description or Achievement Standard. This is despite the Curriculum stating – in relation to the 'Historical Skills' strand – 'Within this strand there is an increasing emphasis on historical interpretation and the use of historical sources as evidence' (p.18).

Recommendation 21

QHTA recommends that the Consultation curriculum be audited and revised to place greater explicit emphasis on the historical skill 'to interpret historical sources of evidence', so that the presence of this skill in the 'Knowledge and Understanding' and 'Skills' strands matches the importance given to the skill in the Rationale and other 'preliminaries' of the Curriculum.

15. Problems with Historical Skills: the terminology of historical skills

QHTA has identified a problem with terminology that exists in many parts of the Consultation document. Put simply, it involves the apparently random use of various terms in a way that could create confusion among readers.

interpretation, explanation, argument

For example, as touched on in a section above, varying terms are used when describing what students 'produce' as an outcome of their inquiries. In the Curriculum 'preliminaries' dealing with 'Skills' and 'Concepts', students are described variously as 'constructing arguments' (p.17), 'communicating a historical interpretation and argument' (p.18); producing a 'conclusion' (p.18). In Achievement standards for Years 7-8, students are expected to 'develop and communicate a historical explanation' but also 'develop' and 'communicate' a 'historical argument'. In Years 9-10, students 'construct' and 'develop' both 'arguments' and 'interpretations' and are, in one case, 'constructing a historical argument ... to support an interpretation' (p.67).

It's not clear what the differences are among 'argument', 'interpretation' and 'explanation'. The term 'communicating a historical interpretation and argument' (p.18) suggests they are different. But the definition of the concept 'interpretations' states that they are 'contestable explanations' (p.6).

Recommendation 22

QHTA recommends that the usage of the terms 'argument', 'interpretation' and 'explanation' - describing what students produce as an outcome of inquiry – be audited and, if appropriate, clarified to ensure the various uses of the terms are accurate, consistent and understandable by students.

explaining, examining, observing, identifying, describing and other verbs ...

In the Content descriptions and Elaborations, the Curriculum uses a number of terms to ‘tag’ what students do when studying historical phenomena.

These examples all focus on an aspect of ‘environment’:

- **exploring** land management practices developed by early First Nations Peoples of Australia such as fire stick farming (AC9HH7K07_E1) (p.23)
- **investigating** how early First Nations Peoples of Australia managed water in harsh environments such as islands and deserts (AC9HH7K07_E6) (p.23)
- **explaining** how the River Nile enabled the establishment of ancient Egyptian society ... (AC9HH7K15_E1) (p.26)
- **describing** methods used by the Romans to manage resources (for example, water supply through aqueducts and plumbing systems) (AC9HH7K15_E4) (p.27)
- **identifying** how the environment and harmonious relationships with the natural world was reflected in belief systems such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism (AC9HH7K15_E5) (p.27)
- **observing** the patterns of change that resulted from periods of warfare, such as the Pyrrhic War, Punic Wars, Macedonian Wars and/or Great Roman Civil War (AC9HH7K18_E3) (p.29)
- **analysing** impact of invasion, colonisation and dispossession of lands by Europeans on the First Nations Peoples of Australia ... (AC9HH9K02_E4) (p.53)

All the above invites students to ‘study’ some aspect of human use of the environment. But are the differences among the seven verbs significant and clear. Does ‘identifying’ mean something different from ‘observing’? How is ‘exploring’ different from ‘investigating’ and ‘analysing’? How is ‘explaining’ different from ‘describing’? Do these different terms imply quite different ways of ‘studying’ something? Is there a hierarchy implicit in the differences - for example, is ‘investigating’ deeper than ‘exploring’? Is it more sophisticated? Does it produce different knowledge?

For the teacher, do the different terms signal more or less ‘importance’ in the development of historical skills? Do they require different approaches to ‘teaching skills’ to students. Or are some of these terms treated as virtually identical in meaning and almost interchangeable in usage?

Recommendation 23

QHTA recommends that:

- the verbs used to describe students’ actions when studying historical phenomena be checked and if appropriate revised to ensure that the different terms do signal different expected actions;
- a glossary of all ‘cognitions/verbs’ be provided in or along with the Curriculum document, providing clear and sufficient guidance on their meaning and use.

16. The coupling of verbs and concepts in defining and using historical skills

QHTA offers two criticisms of the way the Curriculum's 'Historical skills' are introduced and applied.

'coupling'

Four of the Curriculum's seven 'historical skills' are listed in a way that 'couples' each skill with a key historical concept or element, as follows (pp.17—18):

- Asking historical questions
- Sequencing chronology
- Using historical sources as evidence
- Identifying continuity and change
- Analysing causes and effects
- Evaluating historical significance
- Communicating

QHTA can see a logic in coupling 'Asking historical questions', 'Sequencing chronology' and 'Using historical sources as evidence'. But QHTA cannot see the logic of the three other couplings, and sees them having a limiting effect on the teaching of history.

What, for example, is the value of telling students that, when they come to engage with 'continuity and change', they need to be thinking in particular about 'identifying'? Even the Curriculum itself casts the skills net wider, focusing on both 'identify' and 'explain' in the Content description and Elaborations for that Sub-strand.

The same point applies to the other the couplings of 'analysing' and 'causes and effects' and of 'evaluating' and 'historical significance'.

Surely the more valuable message to students is that each of the skills is a rich and valuable process, and that each of the historical concepts is a fascinating and valuable way of 'framing' the world ... and that the possible interactions of each skill and each concept are many and varied.

Instead, there is a narrowing of the skills.

For example, 'Analysing' is described as:

Analysing causes and effects – Identifying multiple long- and short-term intended and unintended causes and effects of events by sequencing events, ideas, people and developments and links between them (p.17)

Here, the rich skill of 'analysing' is reduced to 'sequencing events ... and links between them'.

In similar vein, 'evaluating' is reduced to 'assigning importance to an issue, event ...' (p.18).

Disappointingly, the key skill of 'evaluating historical sources' for their reliability and usefulness is omitted.

Recommendation 24

QHTA recommends that:

- the 'coupling' of the 'Historical skills' and 'Historical concepts' in the Curriculum be removed
- each Skill be explained comprehensively in its wide application in historical study
- the value of continual, varied integrating of skills and concepts as an essential aspect of historical learning be explained in the Curriculum.

17. Problems with Historical Skills: ‘interpreting’

The weakening of the two skills ‘analysing’ and ‘evaluating’ above is less serious than the total absence, in the 176-word description of the Historical Skills, of any mention of ‘interpreting’. As explained earlier, ‘interpreting’ is a major historical skill, perhaps history’s defining skill. Its absence from the listing and describing of the Curriculum’s historical skills is a serious weakness in the Curriculum.

Recommendation 25

QHTA recommends that:

- ‘interpret’ be added to the Curriculum’s list of historical skills – preferably as a separate skill in the suite of skills or, if not, integrated appropriately into the description of the existing skill ‘Using historical sources as evidence’, where its role is strongest
- the skill ‘interpret’ be explained in comprehensive detail, as stated in Recommendation 24.

18. Issues with the representation of Asia-related content

Year 7: combining, homogenising, distinguishing societies ...

India and China are combined in most elaborations, which homogenises these societies/historical contexts, whereas the others societies are mostly treated separately. This is further confused in some elaborations where the example refers only to India or China and not both (e.g. AC9HH7K18_E5 and AC9HH7K16_E8).

Further, only China includes an elaboration about ‘identifying how ancient religious beliefs and cultural practices are incorporated into modern Australian life’ (AC9HH7K21_E10). This inadvertently positions Chinese Australians as maintaining ‘ancient’ beliefs and practices. This does not acknowledge that these practices are dynamic and not simply ‘ancient’. It also does not acknowledge that groups of people other than Chinese Australians also maintain long-standing and dynamic traditions within Australian society.

Recommendation 26

QHTA recommends that the inconsistencies and omissions highlighted above be remedied, for example by consistently treating the various societies/historical contexts separately, by not singling out one society when equivalent phenomena feature in all or some others, and by avoiding inaccurate characterisations about, for example, ‘unchanging’ ancient beliefs and practices.

Year 8: the term ‘Asia-Pacific’ ...

The use of ‘Asia-Pacific’ is inaccurate and inconsistent. As a contemporary geo-political construction, it is not a useful label for the ‘medieval’ period. If it were to be used it could arguably include Polynesia and Mongolia. Suggest this category should not be used at all here.

Recommendation 27

QHTA recommends that the term ‘Asia-Pacific’ not be used in this Year 8 section of the curriculum.

Year 9: Privileging some countries/societies; ‘imperialised construction of Asia’ ...

In the Year 9 ‘Asia and the World’ sub-strand, most of elaborations focus on China, India and Japan, with only a few on Indonesia. This privileges those countries in the curriculum’s depiction of Asia, presenting students with a distorted and incomplete sense of this region of the world.

This topic also falls into the pattern of presenting an imperialised construction of Asia as it largely views Asia through the lens of Western imperialism and colonialism, reinforcing Eurocentric worldviews and implying a lack of agency in Asian societies. This has been an ongoing issue in the curricular representation of historical ‘Asia’. While it is important to look at the impact of colonialism in the region, the dominant focus on European powers across the elaborations sustains an unhelpful and distorted framing of the history of the countries of Asia.

The elaborations also tend to position the European colonisers as the innovators and change makers in the region, obscuring the historical dynamism of the Asian societies. This obscuring is seen also in the relative lack of examples of ‘cultural expression’ in the Elaborations of the Content descriptions.

Examples of the ‘imperialist/colonialist’ emphasis can be seen in the following curricular elements:

AC9HH9K15_E1) European powers

(AC9HH9K17_E1) foreign influences

(AC9HH9K18_E1) effect of European colonisation

(AC9HH9K19_E1) significance of Western colonial influence

(AC9HH9K20_E1) confrontation between an Asian country and Western powers

Recommendation 28

QHTA recommends that the Year 9 Sub-strand ‘Asia and the World’ be revised:

- to provide increased focus on countries/societies other than China, India and Japan;
- to frame the study of ‘Asia and the world’ in a less ‘imperialist/colonialist’ way, by situating the historical narrative in a way not dominated by imperialist aspirations, actions and impacts - and by imperialist perspectives on that narrative.
- to highlight and demonstrate the dynamism and agency of Asian countries, societies and individuals to a greater degree;
- to provide more content Elaborations focused on ‘cultural expression’ in Asian societies, to match the focus on this in the Content descriptions.

19. Issues with the Achievement standards

There is inconsistency between Achievement standards for each year level. For example, in Year 7 there is the requirement for students to ‘distinguish between fact and opinion’ which in Year 8 becomes ‘distinguish between fact, perspective, opinion and interpretation’. Not only is the Year 8 requirement a huge leap up from Year 7, it is also meaningless. What is the value for students distinguishing between a perspective and an interpretation?

Recommendation 29

QHTA recommends that ACARA:

- re-examine the progression of all skills from one year-level to the next to ensure that there is consistency and appropriate year level development
- ensure that the articulation of all skills is pedagogically meaningful.