



Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum  
*Bridging Literacy - A/M*

September 2023

# ***Bridging Literacy***

## **1. Purpose**

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- 1.1** The *Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum: Bridging Literacy* will guide the development of the *Bridging Literacy A/M* course. This will replace the course *Contemporary English A/M*.
- 1.2** This paper has been prepared following consultation with academics and the deliberations of the *Bridging Literacy* Shape Paper writing panel.
- 1.3** The paper should be read in conjunction with *The Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum* located at:  
[http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/curriculum/bsss\\_course\\_development\\_consultation](http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/curriculum/bsss_course_development_consultation)

## **2. Introduction**

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- 2.1** The *Bridging Literacy* course will be the basis of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in ACT senior secondary schools. It will be useful for and useable by experienced and less experienced teachers.

## **3. Background**

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- 3.1** *Contemporary English A/M* was initially conceived as a course that was intended for a student group who needed further explicit teaching to reach the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) Level 3 in Literacy skills.
- 3.2** The Office of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies conducted a desktop review of the *Contemporary English* course. Findings of this review concluded that the course be redeveloped and specific Achievement Standards needed to be developed to align with the needs of senior secondary students who require targeted literacy support.
- 3.3** In November 2022, the Board approved the following:
  - 1. That the *Bridging Literacy A/M* and *Bridging Numeracy A/M* courses be developed including:
    - a) Achievement Standards specific to *Bridging Literacy A/M* and *Bridging Numeracy A/M* courses respectively.
    - b) Courses are informed by the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), research and consultations with experts in the field.
    - c) Eligibility requirements are established for the student group studying these courses.
  - 2. That English and Mathematics Integrated A courses be developed to make provision to draw units from *Bridging Literacy* or *Bridging Numeracy* and *Essential English* or *Essential Mathematics* respectively to form a course.
  - 3. That the *Contemporary English A/M* and *Contemporary Mathematics A/M* courses be phased out by December 2024.

**3.4** All courses under development are required to meet Board design specifications and to align with Board requirements for senior secondary curriculum. These course design specifications provide teachers with flexibility to plan, teach and assess according to the needs and interests of their students.

**3.5** The *Bridging Literacy* course is to be developed under the *English Framework* located at: [https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/act\\_senior\\_secondary\\_system/curriculum/frameworks](https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/act_senior_secondary_system/curriculum/frameworks)

The rationale for the study of English in the *English Framework* is:

*The study of English language, literacy and literature develops students' communication, analytical, creative, and critical thinking skills in all language modes. Students engage with texts from the past and present, from Australian and other cultures. They investigate different perspectives through a wide range of texts created in diverse social, historical, or political contexts, broadening their capacity for intercultural understanding and empathy. Through such engagement, students develop a growing sense of themselves, their world, and their place in it. English and English as an Additional Language (EAL) courses written under this framework are inclusive; valuing and affirming the diversity of interests, backgrounds, knowledge, and abilities of all students.*

*Students focus on developing their skills in responding to and creating texts for a range of purposes, audiences, and contexts, building their understanding and appreciation of different uses of language. Through writing, reading, viewing, speaking, and listening, students develop the ability to appreciate and evaluate the purpose, stylistic qualities, and conventions of literary and non-literary texts. They create their own imaginative, interpretive, and analytical responses. Students are encouraged to analyse, research, reconsider and refine meaning, and to reflect on their own processes of responding and composing.*

*The study of English facilitates the acquisition of skills for communication and learning in an English language context. It fosters skills to work both independently and collaboratively, equipping students for the dynamic world of the 21st Century, and the future demands of work and life.*

#### **4. Concepts and Knowledge**

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Concepts and knowledge include:

- the form, language, and content of texts
- different uses of language to engage and persuade audiences
- text structures and language features used for specific purposes and effects
- the relationship between context, purpose, and audience
- personal, social and or cultural perspectives, values and attitudes presented in text.

## 5. Skills

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Skills include:

- communicate ideas with clarity and fluency
- language and communication skills in listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing
- create texts for a range of purposes, audiences, and contexts
- compare texts in a variety of contexts, mediums, and modes
- present an argument using relevant evidence and examples
- respond to and create oral, written, and multimodal texts
- research widely and independently
- reflect on their learning.

**5.1** All courses based on the *English Framework* should enable students to:

- develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing
- understand and appreciate the use of language for effective communication
- critically analyse contexts, values, attitudes, and ideas in texts
- understand the interrelationship between language, audience, and purpose
- investigate and evaluate different interpretations, representations, and perspectives
- communicate creatively and critically in a range of modes for a variety of purposes
- reflect on own thinking and learning.

**5.2** Concepts, knowledge, and skills from the English Framework build on ACARA's F-10 English Curriculum. The development of this course acknowledges that students have not acquired the skills and knowledge expected during that F-10 period.

**5.3** All courses of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should enable students to develop essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners. The Australian Curriculum General Capabilities comprise of an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum. While developing all capabilities, in particular, the *Bridging Literacy* course will engage with the general capabilities of literacy.

As students study *Bridging Literacy*, they will become more literate as they develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

## 6. The Context of the ACT

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### 6.1 Courses of study for the *ACT Senior Secondary Certificate*:

- provide a variety of pathways, to meet different learning needs and encourage students to complete their secondary education
- enable students to develop the essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners
- empower students as active participants in their own learning
- engage students in contemporary issues relevant to their lives
- foster students' intellectual, social, and ethical development
- nurture students' wellbeing, and physical and spiritual development
- enable effective and respectful participation in a diverse society.

### 6.2 Each course of study:

- comprises an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum
- is based on a model of learning that integrates intended student outcomes, pedagogy, and assessment
- outlines teaching strategies which are grounded in learning principles and encompass quality teaching
- promotes intellectual quality, establishes a rich learning environment, and generates relevant connections between learning and life experiences
- provides formal assessment and certification of students' achievements.

### 6.3 In consideration of the ACT context, and in response to contemporary research the *Bridging Literacy* course should include:

- a student-centred pedagogical approach
- a grounding in current Literacy research and analytical methodologies
- the educational needs of young people with respect to Literacy
- the *English Framework* and Achievement Standards for Bridging Literacy
- the needs of different schools and sectors (government and non-government)
- diverse perspectives and texts, including their strengths and limitations
- skills to work individually, collaboratively, and reflectively
- skills with relevant IT packages and orthographic/handwritten texts

## 7. Aims of the *Bridging Literacy* Curriculum

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### 7.1 Bridging Literacy

A new course called *Bridging Literacy* will be developed, with its own Achievement Standards under the *English Framework*. This course will be approved to form part of the English requirement for the ACT Senior Secondary System. This is explicitly a literacy course; although under the English Framework, the focus of the course is the teaching of literacy and literacy events in practice.

*Bridging Literacy* intends to foreground the techniques embodied in a social practices view of Literacy into the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate, with the goal of increasing students' engagement in literacy tasks and their positioning of self-as-learner. This paradigm "positions literacy in relation to the context in which it is being performed and the purpose for which it is being used" (Cameron, 2016).

In combination with this approach, the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) offers a rubric of discrete skills expected in Literacy, Numeracy, and Learning Dispositions, alongside the potential practical application of these skills. There are social and economic benefits to improved literacy, and the ACT works within the national context, which includes ACSF as a measure (Productivity Commission, 2022). The ACSF will be used to inform the writing of the Achievement Standards for Bridging Literacy.

With use of the ACSF to support the assessment of student achievement in concert with the underlying social practices of literacy, the human capital and social practices views work together in constructing the assessment and understanding of Literacy as a pedagogical domain within the ACT Senior Secondary System. This is achievable as students come to ACT senior secondary schooling with prior experience of literacy; whether these experiences have 'stuck', they have spent 16-18 years experiencing literacy events in their own lives.

The *Bridging Literacy* course seeks to move past deficit models (e.g., "fixing" a student's decontextualised literacy "problems") and adopt academic literacy practices from Higher Education wherein the teachers of *Bridging Literacy* present literacy learning opportunities that are directly influenced by, and relevant to, those subjects in which students already have an identity as learners. It is expected throughout the course that students will be taught using high-quality, authentic texts specific to the disciplines in which they are studying.

Research in New Zealand has shown that students self-constructing identities as learners in their idealised vocation can find greater motivation to learn foundational skills (Strauss, 2016). Similarly, Wu notes in studying ESL learners that "imagined identity<sup>1</sup> [...] has been identified as a critical factor that could guide learners to make a learning investment that they believe would in turn reward them with the social capital for which they yearn..." (2017, p.101). These results are, perhaps, unsurprising to anyone who has taught senior students – the idea of linking motivation and investment in learning to the learner's perceived future is so apparent as to have become cliché ("When will I use this in the future?").

Not all principles of higher learning apply to college students in that college students are compelled both to attend college prior to age 17 and compelled to pass a minor in the *English* Framework area to attain a Senior Secondary Certificate. Thus, it cannot be assumed that students have an intrinsic motivation underlying their study of English. Similarly, students may be not yet fully literate due to a range of factors – opportunity, culture, wellbeing, identity. However, it should be noted that from its foundations the ACT Senior Secondary System has facilitated an academic literacy-style approach – the significant freedoms afforded to course writers and teachers has allowed for contextually-dependent and relevant teaching of essential skills.

*Bridging Literacy* links between the discipline-specific, self-mediated, informal, and social literacy practices that students undertake, and the measurable, controlled forms of literacy that allow teachers, the community, and students to place themselves relative to others.

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<sup>1</sup> The self-construction of a specific identity as a learner in a person's idealised vocation or way of being.

## 7.2 Students

This course is aimed at students who have not yet met ACSF Level 3 in Literacy. The purpose of the course, and of the discrete Achievement Standards given *Bridging Literacy*, is to enable students to fulfil the requirements of ACSF 3 in Literacy, and support moving beyond that level.

It is intended that students will be assessed for their inclusion in this course through either a standardised measure (e.g. NAPLAN, PAT testing) or through recommendation by the Principal and/or literacy specialists within the school. The course is not intended as a solution to problematic behaviour, a vehicle to deliver other curriculum, or a disability course. Students in this course may be literate in certain domains or may have well-established strategies to cover for literacy gaps. Many of the students who will access the *Bridging Literacy* course will have undertaken discrete programs and decontextualised literacy interventions in earlier schooling. Students arriving in Year 11 who are not yet fully literate demonstrate that, for these individuals, these programs and interventions have not worked over a period of years. This course does not intend to replicate approaches that have not worked previously.

The *Bridging Literacy* course aims to avoid deficit models and proportioning “fault” to the individual to offer what is, indeed, a foundational pedagogy of the ACT Senior Secondary System – teaching and treating students as individuals, young adults, and capable learners (Lane, 1980). This process dovetails with academic literacies (see Hynd-Shanahan, 2013; Moje, 2008; Strauss, 2016; Mortimore 2022) using content where students have established vocabulary and content understanding.

## 7.3 Alternatives

For literate students the alternative to *Bridging Literacy* is *Essential English A/M*. *Essential English* has the flexibility to allow for a variety of settings and pedagogies. M Courses will be available in both *Essential English* and *Bridging Literacy* for students who meet specific disability criteria.

## 8. Structure of the *Bridging Literacy* Curriculum

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### 8.1 Course Objectives

Objectives of the *Bridging Literacy* course include:

- providing students with a solid foundation in literacy, which includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills tailored to various subject areas such as Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and English.
- cultivating critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills through authentic tasks and experiences that mirror the challenges students will encounter in higher education and professional settings.
- developing students' confidence and self-efficacy in their literacy abilities, enabling them to effectively navigate the demands of diverse academic disciplines, real-world situations, and social, personal, and cultural texts.
- fostering an appreciation for the value of literacy skills in personal, academic, and professional contexts, encouraging lifelong learning and continuous skill development.

## 8.2 Rationale

*Bridging Literacy A/M* is designed to support senior secondary students in achieving the benchmark of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) Level 3. This course is grounded in disciplinary literacy and authentic experience, aiming to empower students to effectively engage with texts and tasks across diverse subjects and real-world contexts. Students develop fundamental skills in reading, writing, listening, and oral communication.

Students develop knowledge and understanding of English orthography and refine their reading and writing skills. Students relate their study of literacy to the other subjects in their academic packages, and to social, personal, and cultural texts. Students develop an understanding of the benefits of literacy as a social practice, and as a tool for continuing participation in society. Students interact with literacy events in technological and non-technological spheres; they develop skills to inform their understanding, ability to interact with others, and to solve problems, making use of appropriate communication and learning dispositions.

The need for a comprehensive literacy course arises from the increasing demands of academic and professional settings, where students are expected to demonstrate strong communication skills, critical thinking, and the ability to analyse and interpret complex texts. The development of these skills is essential for success in higher education, career advancement, and active participation in today's rapidly evolving society.

## 8.3 Units

The units have been drafted for discussion as follows.

### **Communicating with Purpose**

Students will develop their ability to communicate meaning through text and writing. Students learn how to navigate and use the written communication principles and practices that underlie subjects undertaken in their academic package and in social, personal, and cultural texts. They develop an understanding of the practices, ideas, conventions, and principles of writing in direct relationship to texts that are important to students' study, vocation, and life goals. Students construct polished texts using appropriate rhetorical, orthographic, and linguistic features.

### **Reading and Researching**

Students develop their ability to read increasingly complex, authentic texts for meaning. They learn how to navigate and use the texts that underlie subjects undertaken in their academic package. They read for meaning and use that reading to construct research supporting their work in these subjects. Students read texts of academic, vocational, social and/or cultural importance and explore the ways that grammar, vocabulary, and other authorial choices affect the reader's response to texts. Texts provided to students will be equivalent to those studied in their disciplinary subjects and appropriate in scope and reading level for young adult readers.

### **Reporting Research**

Students develop their ability to understand increasingly complex, authentic texts for meaning with increasing independence, and to support and represent their own points of view, including through oral communication. Students learn how to navigate and use the texts that underlie subjects undertaken in their academic package. They research in supported and scaffolded ways,



and evaluate, manipulate, and organise that research to construct and support their own point of view about issues and ideas in these subjects and issues of social, personal, or cultural importance using authentic texts appropriate in scope and reading level for young adult readers.

### **Transferring Literacy to Life**

Students develop their ability to transfer skills from their academic or vocational study to texts with social, cultural, or personal significance. Students establish and navigate the literacy events that they encounter both in their academic packages and day-to-day lives. The process of transferring skills is modelled for students. Students develop skills in judge and understand nuance. Students learn how meaning can be implied or inferred, and the hidden rules of workplace and social texts – e.g., letters from government or business authorities, approaches to job seeking, implication in sales language. Students may engage with personal or cultural texts, and practice articulating how literacy events are framed by cultures or subcultures that they identify with.

### **Independent Study**

The Independent Study unit is intended for students studying a 4<sup>th</sup> semester of Bridging Literacy who wishes to and has achieved sufficient skill to engage with concepts of other senior secondary English courses.

#### **Prerequisites**

Independent Study units are only available to individual students in Year 12. A student can only study a maximum of one Independent Study unit in each course. Students must have studied at least three standard 1.0 units from this course. An Independent Study unit requires the principal's written approval. Principal approval can also be sought by a student in Year 12 to enrol concurrently in an Independent Study unit and their third or fourth 1.0 unit in this course of study.

#### **Unit Description**

An Independent Study unit has an important place in senior secondary courses. It is a valuable pedagogical approach that empowers students to make decisions about their own learning. An Independent Study unit can be proposed by an individual student for their own independent study and negotiated with their teacher. The program of learning for an Independent Study unit must meet the unit goals and content descriptions as they appear in the course.

## **9. Considerations**

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### **9.1 What is literacy?**

The concept of literacy is multilayered and variable. It is probable that all educators, students, and other stakeholders have a notion of what 'literacy' means; equally, it is probable that assumptions made about what is an acceptable standard of literacy, and what skills are included, differ from person to person, and context to context (Barton, 2007).

Australia's national curriculum authority, ACARA, defines Literacy thus:

*“Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse, and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas, and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school. Success in any learning area depends on being able to use the significant, identifiable, and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area” (ACARA, n.d).*

BSSS courses are aligned with those written by ACARA; thus, this is the underpinning definition of literacy used for this new course, and new achievement standards.

The primary view of literacy underpinning this course is one of literacy events happening in context to leverage students' self-identity as a successful learner or user of literacy. To modernise an example from Barton (1994), a senior secondary student may encounter multiple literacy events enroute to their class every morning – from checking their phone for messages, typing out a few quick replies in the group chat, reading and successfully using the instructions for a new mobile game, getting their parents to sign a permission note in the right place, leaving a handwritten note for their sibling, reading the correct bus number, and finding some reliable instructions about how to do a new task on YouTube; all literacy tasks.

These informal tasks and the literacy events occurring in the classes that students enjoy, and have a strong learner identity in, will occur within the school's control. For example: reading a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for a glaze in ceramics or stain in woodworking; following a script in Drama; using a manual; writing an artist statement for their major work. The *Bridging Literacy* course aims to bridge between these literacy events that are part of the culture and context of the learner, and the literacy expectations offered in the ACSF and other frameworks.

## **9.2 Incorporating a futures orientation**

The need for a comprehensive literacy course arises from the increasing demands of academic and professional settings, where students are expected to demonstrate strong communication skills, critical thinking, and the ability to analyse and interpret complex texts. The development of these skills is essential for success in higher education, career advancement, and active participation in today's rapidly evolving society.

The imperative to create a futures-oriented curriculum is a major opportunity to lead improved teaching and learning. A futures orientation will include consideration that society will be increasingly complex, with Australians interacting in a global environment needing to know how to learn, adapt, create, communicate, and interpret and use information critically. (The Future of Education and Skills Education 2030, 2018)

## **9.3 English curriculum**

Although this course falls within the English Framework for certification purposes, it is explicitly a literacy course. As such, new Achievement Standards will be written.

## **9.4 Equity and opportunity**

*Bridging Literacy A/M* is inclusive of students' needs and interests. It provides flexibility and choice for teachers and students. The factors that influence these choices include school and community contexts, local community learning opportunities, contemporary and local issues, and available learning resources.

## **9.5 Connections to other learning areas**

*Bridging Literacy A/M* explicitly builds on knowledge, skills and understanding from students' previous and current studies of Australian Curriculum courses. The literacy skills learned in this course underpin successful participation in all other elements of a students' academic package.

It is anticipated that the *Bridging Literacy* course will require teachers in discipline courses and in the *Bridging Literacy* course to work together to ensure the work between the two is directly related. This is a significant departure from previous course styles, and it is informed by the work of Adoniou and Barton, in addition to others such as Black and Yasukawa, who demonstrate that literacy learning must be performed in context. Final implementation will be subject to the needs of the school and the students.

## **9.6 Role of digital technologies**

Students and teachers integrate a growing range of online information, tools, and applications. These include digitised online materials such as books, newspapers, journals, and images, as well as other online resources including databases, reference works and indexes to library holdings. Furthermore, use of new technological developments such as the use of augmented reality and virtual reality will also be considered.

## **9.7 Clarity of curriculum**

The curriculum is substantial and flexible. It is sufficiently rich and descriptive to guide teachers with limited experience but avoid excessive prescription that would hamper experienced teachers from exercising their skills. The curriculum document is expressed clearly in terms that are accessible to a new teacher, while allowing all teachers to enhance it with their interests and expertise.

## **9.8 Breadth and depth of study**

Content descriptions specify the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn and that teachers are expected to teach. Teachers are required to develop a program of learning that allows students to demonstrate all the content descriptions.

A program of learning is what a college provides to implement the course for a subject meeting students' needs and interests. It is at the discretion of the teacher to emphasise some content descriptions over others. The teacher may teach additional (not listed) content if it meets the specific unit goals providing that it does not duplicate content in other units.

## **9.9 The nature of the learner**

The courses address the needs of diverse learners through (A) and (M) categories of study.

## **9.10 General capabilities**

The primary focus of *Bridging Literacy A/M* is literacy. While other general capabilities will be canvassed through the incorporation of authentic texts, the fundamental focus of this course should be literacy and literacy events in context.

## **9.11 Cross curriculum perspectives**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability perspectives are represented in the course in ways that are appropriate to the context of the students.

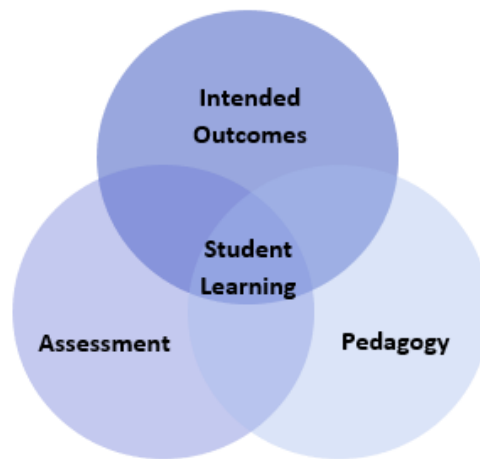
## **10. Pedagogy and Assessment**

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The underpinning beliefs and learning principles for the development of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary School curriculum as are follows:

### **10.1 Underpinning beliefs**

- All students are able to learn
- Learning is a partnership between students and teachers
- Teachers are responsible for advancing student learning.



## 10.2 Learning Principles

1. Learning builds on existing knowledge, understandings, and skills.  
*(Prior knowledge)*
2. When learning is organised around major concepts, principles, and significant real-world issues, within and across disciplines, it helps students make connections and build knowledge structures.  
*(Deep knowledge and connectedness)*
3. Learning is facilitated when students actively monitor their own learning and consciously develop ways of organising and applying knowledge within and across contexts.  
*(Metacognition)*
4. Learners' sense of self and motivation to learn affects learning.  
*(Self-concept)*
5. Learning needs to take place in a context of high expectations.  
*(High expectations)*
6. Learners learn in different ways and at different rates.  
*(Individual differences)*
7. Different cultural environments, including the use of language, shape learners' understandings and the way they learn.  
*(Socio-cultural effects)*
8. Learning is a social and collaborative function as well as an individual one.  
*(Collaborative learning)*
9. Learning is strengthened when learning outcomes and criteria for judging learning are made explicit and when students receive frequent feedback on their progress.  
*(Explicit expectations and feedback).*

### **10.3 Proposed assessment types**

Achievement Standards will be written for this course, aligned with ACSF 3.

This course is intended to be assessed in a way that maintains the integrity of both the *Bridging Literacy* course and students' other courses, whilst leveraging the interest and aptitude that students have in discipline subjects and the texts and literacy events that are found within. The significant change that these assessments would represent is the reason for their inclusion in the Shape Paper. It is a requirement that students will complete an assessment that ties closely to their disciplinary or vocational subjects at least once per semester.

Provisionally suggested assessments for this course to support the inclusion of disciplinary literacy in assessment task types are presented below (10.3.1 – 10.3.3). These are presented as additions to the suite of assessment already in use across the ACT.

#### **10.3.1 Portfolio of work**

A portfolio of student work that showcases their literacy within one or more of their academic disciplines. This may be accompanied by a written or verbal rationale reflecting on how their chosen portfolio items demonstrate the literacy learnings that the *Bridging Literacy* course has focussed on in that teaching period.

#### **10.3.2 Polished Draft**

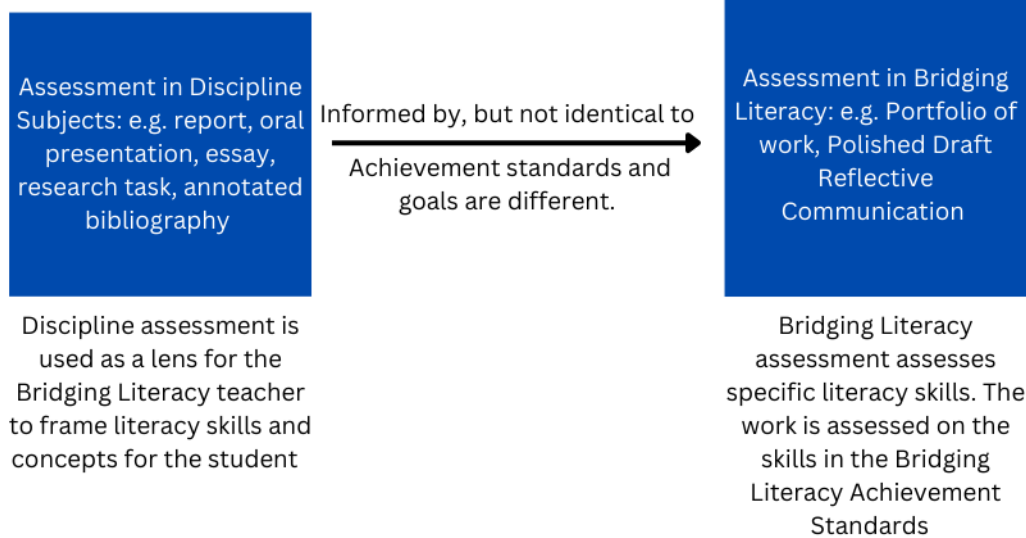
A polished draft may consist of one or more drafts of student work that showcases their literacy. The item for which it is a draft for will be a written assessment for one of the student's discipline subjects. This draft may be accompanied by a reflection. The item will be assessed for the student's demonstration of specific literacy outcomes sought in the *Bridging Literacy* course during that teaching period and may be submitted for the discipline course providing that the discipline teacher and literacy teacher have agreed prior to assessment which elements of the task will form part of the assessment for which course.

#### **10.3.3 Reflective Communication**

A substantial work of reflective communication may demonstrate a student's growing understanding of their own literacy practices in their discipline subjects, or of a specific literacy practice that relates to their learning across multiple subjects. This may be conducted as a seminar presentation, interview, written task, or in other modes as appropriate.

#### **10.3.4 Assessment Relationship**

The assessment relationship between the courses for a "disciplinary" assessment is represented below. A minimum of one assessment per semester will be explicitly connected to the students' discipline subjects (noting that "discipline" includes vocational education).



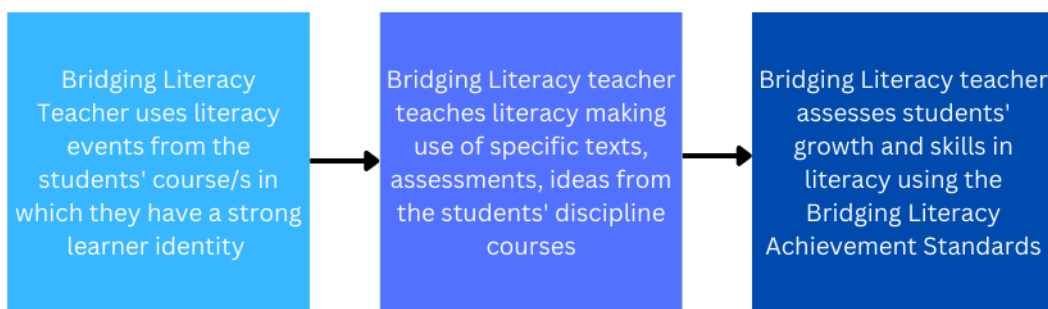
#### 10.4 Roles

Due to the unique position of discipline-specific content in the *Bridging Literacy* course, it is envisaged that *Bridging Literacy* and the students' discipline subjects would be connected for at least part of each semester. It is anticipated that this would lead to benefits for the selected discipline subject/s through the support of the students' literacy; enabling students to access discipline and course content through direct literacy education.

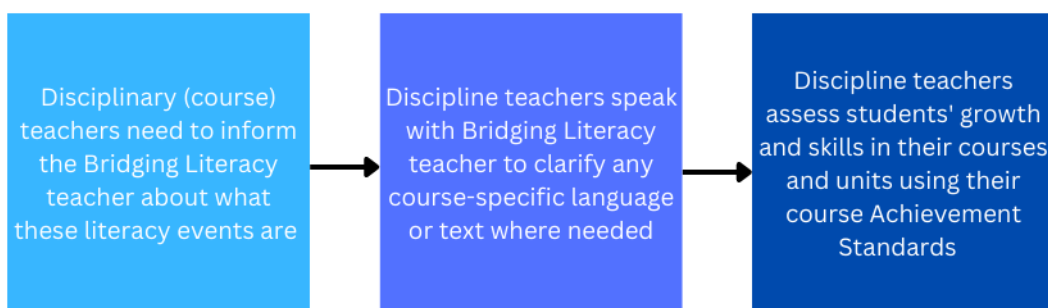
Regarding the relationship between literacy and discipline support, Mortimore (2022) notes that disciplinary concepts that can seem readily transparent to a specialist can be opaque to a novice in that area.

*Extended written tasks within each subject area will each have common characteristics that can be identified through a close examination of exemplar materials and examination reports. For example, what are the discourse markers which demonstrate that a student is providing a response which is 'evaluative' as opposed to one which 'explains'? Command words are often similar from one subject to another, but their meanings can be subtly different.*

Providing this understanding to students through the *Bridging Literacy* class is intended to enable them to use literacy skills in context. Schools will elect how this is achieved; however, potential models are outlined in the diagram below.



Achieved in a way amenable to the school and teachers: e.g. co-requisite subject/s, team teaching, discussion, team planning, provision of assessments and texts only.



#### 10.4.1 Potential elements of the *Bridging Literacy* teacher's role when interacting with the disciplines:

- The *Bridging Literacy* teacher is recognised as an expert practitioner in the teaching of literacy
- Work with the discipline teacher/s to articulate the literacy requirements and events that underpin the discipline teacher's course and discipline. These may be ways of reading, ways of presenting information, ways of researching, or ways of representing one's own point of view and the points of view of others. It is not expected that the *Bridging Literacy* teacher will have knowledge of the discipline.
- Teach students literacy using the requirements and events that underpin subjects that the student is studying in their academic or vocational package. These may be ways of reading, ways of presenting information, ways of researching, or ways of representing one's own point of view and the points of view of others
- Draw on major texts studied in the discipline subjects to provide contextualised reading and responding events for students
- Explicitly teach concepts, vocabulary, and strategies for literacy through the lens of the discipline subject/s



#### 10.4.2 Some potential roles of teachers in the discipline subjects when interacting with Bridging Literacy:

- The teacher is recognised as an expert practitioner in their discipline or subject
- Work with the *Bridging Literacy* teacher/s to articulate the literacy requirements and events that underpin their course and discipline. These may be ways of reading, ways of presenting information, ways of researching, or ways of representing one's own point of view and the points of view of others
- Ensure the *Bridging Literacy* teacher has a copy of assignments. The *Bridging Literacy* teacher and discipline teacher would ideally discuss assignments re: literacy requirements and expectations; the discipline teacher as the subject expert, and the *Bridging Literacy* teacher as the literacy expert
- Ensure the *Bridging Literacy* teacher has access to any major texts studied in the class (e.g. handbooks, workbooks, critical articles, textbooks, instructional websites)

Examples:

- Articulating vocabulary words (e.g. "find" in Mathematics)
- Articulating the discipline expectations of text types (e.g. what is needed in a report, sales pitch, visual art diary, training plan, research essay, design project brief, recipe, oral presentation)
- Articulating what knowledge means in the discipline (e.g. what is counted as a valid source, how processes are recorded)

#### 10.5 Strategies

There is considerable debate in the literature about the validity of different teaching methods for initial reading instruction, and no single method other than a broad disciplinary approach is prescribed in this course. It is unlikely that teachers in the senior secondary system will need to engage with teaching students to read from first principles, due to the age and prior school/learning exposure of their students. Considerable information about the prior learning experiences and needs of a student should be available through the student's high school, or through their parents/carers – and indeed, through the student themselves.

This aside, the insistence on the use of authentic text and reading events in this Shape Paper should not be construed as supporting a "whole language" approach to reading. The context for students in senior secondary is different to that of primary school students learning to read. It is likely that students will need a combination of strategies to enable their literacy learning, and that where they may have had significant whole-language, phonemic, or balanced instruction (where "balanced instruction" is a specific school of pedagogy), it is likely to be more appropriate in senior secondary to be working with the morphemic awareness of language, and language in context.

It is anticipated that the *Bridging Literacy* course will be supported with material demonstrating to both Literacy and discipline teachers to understand ways in which literacy techniques can be taught and employed in the classroom.

### 10.5.1 Sample Strategies:

- Expand oral vocabulary before expecting students to spell/read words
- Phoneme blending and segmentation
- Understanding of regular spelling patterns and their relationship to speech sounds
- Whole-word text reading fluency
- Explicit teaching of grammatical structure
- Morphemic awareness strategies
- Etymological strategies
- Orthographic strategies
- Unpack well-constructed texts in the discipline: break down sentence, paragraph, and text structure, evaluate and articulate the efficacy of the structures in the text.

Christine Topfer's (2020) "[10 Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy](#)" may form a guide to teachers seeking more specific questions and ideas for lessons.

## 11 Conclusion

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The *Bridging Literacy* course will be developed with its own Achievement Standards under the English Framework. This course will be approved to form part of the English requirement for the ACT Senior Secondary System. The *Bridging Literacy* course is designed to support senior secondary students aged 16-18 in achieving the benchmark of the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) Level 3 and will have an entrance requirement of not yet achieving ACSF 3.

The unusual approach and structures of this course have led to a more detailed Shape Paper than is customary in the ACT Senior Secondary System, and practitioners are urged to engage with the ideas and provide feedback. Particular attention is drawn to the input of discipline subjects into successfully using disciplinary literacy practices, and to the construction of assessment that makes use of students' identities as learners in other subjects. The aim of this approach is to contextualise literacy learning for students.

It is intended that the *Bridging Literacy* course will prepare students for life. The need for a comprehensive literacy course arises from the increasing demands of academic and professional settings, where students are expected to demonstrate strong communication skills, critical thinking, and the ability to analyse and interpret complex texts. The development of these skills is essential for success in higher education, career advancement, and active participation in today's rapidly evolving society.

## 12 Curriculum Documents

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ACARA, "Literacy- General Capabilities", Australian Curriculum, ACARA.

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/>

ACARA, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 4.0*, ACARA, October 2012.

[https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/The\\_Shape\\_of\\_the\\_Australian\\_Curriculum\\_v4.pdf](https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/The_Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_v4.pdf),

ACARA, *English (Version 8.4)* <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/senior-secondary-curriculum/english/>

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies, *English Framework, 2021*.

[https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/508784/BSSS\\_English\\_Framework\\_2021.pdf](https://www.bsss.act.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/508784/BSSS_English_Framework_2021.pdf)

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[http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, Commonwealth Department of Education Skills and Employment. <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>, 2019

## 13 Selected Reading List

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NB: items in bold are recommended.

### 13.1 Articles

Jeffrey S. Bowers & Peter N. Bowers (2017) Beyond Phonics: The Case for Teaching Children the Logic of the English Spelling System, *Educational Psychologist*, 52:2, 124-141, DOI: 10.1080/00461520.2017.1288571

Colenbrander, D., Parsons, L., Bowers, J.S., & Davis, C.J. (2022). Assessing the Effectiveness of Structured Word Inquiry for Students in Grades 3 and 5 With Reading and Spelling Difficulties: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Read Res Q*, 57(1), 307– 352. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.399>

Daylight, R., and O'Carroll, J. 2019. Teaching University Students to Read and Write. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies: An international journal in the education and training of adults*, 27:1, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.5130/Ins.v27i1.6959>

Goodman, K. 1967. Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game. From Singer, H., & Ruddell, R.B. (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (2nd ed., pp. 497–508). Copyright 1976 by the International Reading Association. Originally published in *Journal of the Reading Specialist*, 1967, 6, 126–135.

Hynd-Shanahan, C. (2013). What Does It Take? The Challenge of Disciplinary Literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(2), 93–98. doi: 10.1002/JAAL.226

Kohnen, S., Colenbrander, D., Krajenbrink, T., & Nickels, L. (2015). Assessment of lexical and non-lexical spelling in students in Grades 1–7. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 20(1), 15-38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2015.1023209> Author's pre-print version available at: <https://research-management.mq.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/62345813/Author+final+version.pdf>

Levesque, K. C., Breadmore, H. L., and Deacon, S. Hè. (2021) How morphology impacts reading and spelling: advancing the role of morphology in models of literacy development. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 44: 10– 26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12313>.

Moje, Birr. (2008). Foregrounding the Disciplines in Secondary Literacy Teaching and Learning: A Call for Change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 52. 96-107. 10.1598/JAAL.52.2.1.

Mortimore, K. 2022. Three ways to employ disciplinary literacy strategies in your classroom. <https://educationblog.oup.com/secondary/three-ways-to-employ-disciplinary-literacy-strategies-in-your-classroom>

Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content-area literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(1), 40–59. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.78.1.v62444321p602101>

### 13.2 Book Chapters

Ehri, L. 1998. Grapheme-Phoneme Knowledge is Essential for Learning to Read Words in English in Metsala, J and Ehri, L (eds) *Word Recognition in Beginning Literacy*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, NJ. Currently available online: [https://tl.appstate.edu/reading\\_resources/RE\\_6120\\_Readings\\_CHAPTERS/Ehri\\_Grapheme\\_Phone\\_Knowledge.pdfappstate.edu](https://tl.appstate.edu/reading_resources/RE_6120_Readings_CHAPTERS/Ehri_Grapheme_Phone_Knowledge.pdfappstate.edu)

Mccormack, Rob. (2016). The Four Literacies. 10.1007/978-94-6300-444-2\_12. Currently available online: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314630950\\_The\\_Four\\_Literacies](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314630950_The_Four_Literacies)

### 13.3 Popular Press Articles

Hanford, E. 2019. At a Loss for Words: How a flawed idea is teaching millions of kids to be poor readers <https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2019/08/22/whats-wrong-how-schools-teach-reading>

Kale, S. 2020. The battle over dyslexia. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2020/sep/17/battle-over-dyslexia-warwickshire-staffordshire>

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- Hilton, Alison and Saunders, Rebecca & Mansfield, Caroline. (2019). "In LANTITE, No One Can Hear You Scream!" Student Voices of High-Stakes Testing in Teacher Education.. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 45. 57-72. 10.14221/ajte.202v45n12.4.
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- Mortimore, K. 2022. Three ways to employ disciplinary literacy strategies in your classroom. <https://educationblog.oup.com/secondary/three-ways-to-employ-disciplinary-literacy-strategies-in-your-classroom>
- Productivity Commission 2022, 5-year Productivity Inquiry: From learning to growth, Interim Report, Canberra, September
- Scarr, L. 2018. Aussie kids are slipping in literacy. Here's how you can improve your child's reading before school starts. <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/parenting/school-life/aussie-kids-are-slipping-in-literacy-heres-how-you-can-improve-your-childs-reading-before-school-starts/news-story/fac4d007643cc0b45294656416634a43>
- Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content-area literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(1), 40–59. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.78.1.v62444321p602101>
- Strauss, P. (2016). I can see the rabbit! in Yasukawa, K., & In Black, S. R. (2016). Beyond economic interests: Critical perspectives on adult literacy and numeracy in a globalised world.
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- Wyatt-Smith & Jackson. 2020. Writing needs to be taught and practised. Australian schools are dropping the focus too early. <https://theconversation.com/writing-needs-to-be-taught-and-practised-australian-schools-are-dropping-the-focus-too-early-148104>