

NSW Curriculum Review – A mixed bag

The Science Teachers Association of NSW welcomes the final report from the NSW Curriculum Review and its recommendations of reform that places students at the centre of teaching and supports deep learning.

Margaret Shepherd, President of the Science Teachers Association NSW says “For too long teachers have felt under time pressure to deliver the extensive ‘dot points’ that form part of our current syllabus - there is solid evidence for change”

“This reform will enable teachers to support students where they are at and spend the required time to ignite curiosity and nurture scientific thinking about the world around us”

We welcome the focus on Learning with Understanding and Building Skills in Applying Knowledge “This deep learning and application of knowledge and skills is at the core of scientific excellence and will support student learning for future challenges”

“However there is no point reforming curriculum, without reforming reporting and assessment. Insisting on retaining the HSC limits innovation and depth in teaching.” says Ms Shepherd.

We are disappointed that a strong statement was not made about the negative impacts of the ATAR on student learning and agree with Peter Shergold’s statement that the ATAR profoundly distorts learning.

The scope of this reform will require significant cultural and organisational change to be managed within schools across NSW, the school systems, tertiary institutions and at NESA in order to affect the intent of student-centred learning.

“A reform of this scale is an ambitious plan that requires thoughtful introduction and investment over a number of years. Geoff Masters originally recommended ten years, four years is too fast to support teacher preparedness and the professional learning required for such significant change” says Ms Shepherd

This raises the question of the Review of the Australian Curriculum “Not managed strategically these reform processes could become a debacle with both students and teachers stuck in the middle”

A significant discussion needs to be had between state and federal bodies on the negative impact on A to E reporting on student motivation, engagement and growth.

“The Science Teachers Association NSW are excited and look forward to the years ahead and being part of the scaffold that supports teachers and the education sector in this period of education evolution”

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