

RATIONALE FOR DRAFT STUDY DESIGN

1. English is the most important subject taught in schools, and thus needs to be evaluated in depth.
 - a. This means that **two papers** are preferable to one for final evaluation:
 - i. This has been the common practice in the past, and is still the practice in some states.
 - ii. This puts English on the same level of evaluation as other subjects, such as mathematics.
 - iii. It allows for a clear separation of language and literature matters, providing cultural stimulation without unduly cannibalizing Literature domains.
 - iv. It allows students more time to prepare for different exams.
 - v. It may also send a signal to students about the importance of the subjects.
2. The model is:
 - a. **Paper one**: four areas, four questions:
 - i. General writing knowledge (30%)
 - ii. Specific writing skills (30%)
 - iii. Logic and argument (20%)
 - iv. Speech (20%).
 - b. **Paper two**: five areas, four questions:
 - i. Novel (25%)
 - ii. Opinion (25%)
 - iii. Drama and Film/Television/radio (25%)
 - iv. Short Stories (25%)
 - v. Verse and Lyrics (25%) .
 - vi. Teachers will have the option of choosing which four to adopt.
 - vii. No specific provision is made for analysis of websites, posters and other materials, and for assessment of listening.
3. Various hypothetical concepts are used:
 - a. There is (as yet) no Australian Certificate of Education (although there may be in 2018)
 - b. There are no such anthologies as *Short Cuts*, *Unprose* or *Speaking Out*.
4. The approach of using a large number of texts is avoided.
 - a. Students would need to buy at least **four texts**, two of which would be anthologies.
 - i. Anthologies serve the purpose of students having professionally published resources and bringing together

disparate texts which would otherwise be difficult to obtain (especially in the non-fiction Opinion area).

- ii. Such anthologies were common in the past, and may help to reduce the financial burden on students.
 - iii. The anthologized material may provide more structured and meaningful teaching experiences, although it may exacerbate the short attention span of some students when compared to the challenge presented by a large array of mono texts.
 - iv. The anthologies may well be popular with the general public, thus helping focus community attention on the subject.
- b. There may be a niche for a text for the language area.

5. The design is meant to display some of the rigour of **past papers**, while bypassing the pedantry and ineffectiveness of those same past papers- the “good old days” produced hundreds of thousands of today’s adult illiterates. The design also uses some of the more interesting multi-literacy approaches of the more recent papers.

PAPER	SECTION	QUESTION	SOURCE OF PAPERS	LEVEL	YEAR
1	1	4	NSW	12	1973
1	1	6	Tasmania (adapted- <i>Tasmanian > Australian</i>)	12	1975
1	1	7	NSW	12	1968
1		9	NSW	12	1968
1	2	8	Victoria	10	1963
1	4	1	NSW	12	1973
2	5	9	Western Australia	12	1960

Material from other states/territories/countries will be incorporated into future versions of this design.

6. Priority is given to skills and knowledge in the **technical or expressive** areas of English.

- a. There is always a problem with conflating marks for mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage) on the one hand with marks for the analysis of ideas, and for creative expression, on the other hand. This design bypasses that conflation, although the way in which this is done may raise the hackles of some:
 - i. Students must pass section two, paper one, to get a pass- no matter how well they go on other sections of the two papers.
 - ii. Students can re-sit that section at a later date at the discretion of internal or external moderators.
 - iii. If this is seen as simply too pedantic or punitive, it may have to be dropped

- iv. It does, however, set a very clear bar or standard, which is highly desirable, and was taken for granted in the past.
 - v. That bar or standard would then be seen as one of the world's most unequivocal benchmarks of communicative excellence in English.
 - b. These are year 12 papers. It makes no sense to hit students with sophisticated technical distinctions at the end of the secondary hierarchy if they have not done such work since their primary years.
 - i. There has to therefore be curriculum created for years 7-11 in these areas, creating a platform for year 12 work.
 - ii. Governments need to fund such curriculum creation and also fund the staffing required to help teach the material and help students who experience difficulty with it- otherwise, the automatic promotion of the less able will continue, and the bad habits of the past, and damage caused by the funding black holes of the past, will also continue.
- 7. This approach thus attempts to steer a pragmatic middle course between the radical view of the subject area (English is a tool of critical literacy, which allows students to unpack and deconstruct dominant discourses of those holding hegemonic power in society) and the conservative view (English is a tool for transmitting the high culture memes of the canon, revealing literature to be a surrogate religion, a channelling of the past, a means of therapy, and a programming module for good citizenship).
- 8. There may need to be significant professional development for some teachers if they are to deliver such material.
- 9. While some teachers may view such an approach with apprehension or even disdain, they may find that in fact it is a professionally satisfying approach, and may even discover that some of their students prefer this approach to existing ones.
- 10. It may not be likely, and may not even be desirable, for such an approach to replace all existing ones at year 12. It may make more sense to set such a subject up as an alternative year 12 English. There are currently multiple year 12 English alternatives in some states, so this should not be an insuperable problem. It might be called Applied English, English Expression, English for Communication- anything you like, really, so long as it optimally satisfies the needs of students, teachers, tertiary education, employers, the community, and posterity, and helps to further consolidate English as a discrete discipline with its own systems, concepts, terminology, skills base and knowledge foundation, and with the status of being the one truly indispensable subject area.

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