

# FORUM TO DISCUSS THE 2019 EVALUATION OF ASPECTS OF THE AMEP

*co-sponsored by*  
the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA)  
Sydney School of Education & Social Work (University of Sydney)  
*and*  
the School of Education at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

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# Item 2: Curriculum

**The AMEP Evaluation:** the appropriateness, effectiveness & practicality of --

- ▣ **targeted tuition streams** – placing clients into either the Social English & Pre-Employment streams
- ▣ **appropriate curricula** for English language tuition in both particular streams

**Related issues:**

- ▣ **the impact on curriculum** of both the ACSF and DET policy on “aligning” the AMEP with the SEE Program and to regulate the AMEP within the wider VET system.

# Targeted Tuition Streams: ACTA survey responses

**QUESTION (directed to managers only):** *What is the most important factor that governs the formation of individual classes in your Centre(s)?*

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Maximising the number of students per class	34.62%	27
Relatively homogeneous English language and literacy levels and learning needs	43.59%	34
Date of entry to the Program	2.56%	2
Students' ages	1.28%	1
Students' gender	0.00%	0
Creating separate AMEP and SEE Program classes	8.97%	7
Creating separate Pre-employment and Social English stream classes	3.85%	3
Other (please explain in the Comment box below)	5.13%	4
TOTAL		78

## Related ACTA survey question

*To your knowledge, what factors govern the size of the classes you teach/manage/volunteer in?*

	<b>MOST IMPORTANT</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT</b>	<b>NOT IMPORTANT</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Maximising the number of students in the one class	55.83% 182	31.60% 103	5.52% 18	7.06% 23	326
Achieving relatively homogeneous learning levels	24.23% 79	48.77% 159	10.12% 33	16.87% 55	326
Achieving a harmonious social mix	10.77% 35	30.46% 99	21.54% 70	37.23% 121	325
Giving learners with greatest needs maximum attention	19.69% 64	31.38% 102	20.62% 67	28.31% 92	325
Students' age range (e.g. youth classes, elderly learners, young adults, older adults)	13.19% 43	28.22% 92	21.47% 70	37.12% 121	326
Gender-related factors	4.29% 14	10.12% 33	21.17% 69	64.42% 210	326

## Explanatory Comments

- ▣ We have a **maximum of 20 in each class for each class with a single certificate level** - it's the rule.
- ▣ Classes can't start **without 20 students**.
- ▣ Their entry levels [govern class formation] and in some multilevel classes because of maximising the number of clients per class. Good revenues are considered more important than quality.
- ▣ Due to apparent 'budget restrictions' at TAFE - **regional teachers are required to teach at least 4 levels of competency in the same class** - at the moment - even including pre-CSWE students who have no literacy and are illiterate in own language.
- ▣ **Classroom size** is the key factor in determining the class size as the number of desks and chairs means that the class cannot exceed that size for WHS reasons.
- ▣ Our Faculty Management is quite adamant and vocal in maximising student numbers in class for '**viability**'.
- ▣ Maximizing the number of students - is not the most important - but there is a minimum number that is viable **to cover the cost of the teacher**.
- ▣ We need to keep **maximum number of students in class** as the first priority.

# A somewhat related survey question

*Since 1st July 2017, how many classes have you taught/volunteered in/managed with the following English language & literacy levels?*

	NO CLASSES	1 CLASS	2- 4 CLASSES	MORE THAN 4 CLASSES	TOTAL
Relatively homogeneous levels	43.84% 153	14.90% 52	21.20% 74	20.06% 70	349
Slightly mixed levels	22.64% 79	24.93% 87	30.66% 107	21.78% 76	349
Very mixed levels	36.96% 129	20.92% 73	20.34% 71	21.78% 76	349

## A slight but maybe revealing tangent

**SURVEY QUESTION:** *Since 1st July 2017, what has been the AMEP and/or SEE composition of classes that you have taught/volunteered in/managed?*

ALL CLASSES HAVE BEEN AMEP CLIENTS ONLY	ALL CLASSES HAVE BEEN SEE CLIENTS ONLY	SOME CLASSES HAVE BEEN A MIX OF AMEP & SEE CLIENTS	ALL CLASSES HAVE BEEN A MIX OF AMEP & SEE CLIENTS	I'M NOT SURE	TOTAL
47.85% 167	14.61% 51	20.34% 71	11.75% 41	5.44% 19	349

## My Questions

*What, if anything, can be inferred from the following data in regard to **what determines the formation of classes**, and specifically **whether streaming is a consideration**?*

- ▣ **41% of responses** (n = 129/310) report more than 2 classes with **very mixed English & literacy levels**
- ▣ **32% of respondents** (n = 112/349) teach/manage classes that **mix AMEP & SEE students**, and a further 6% are not sure which types of students are in their classes



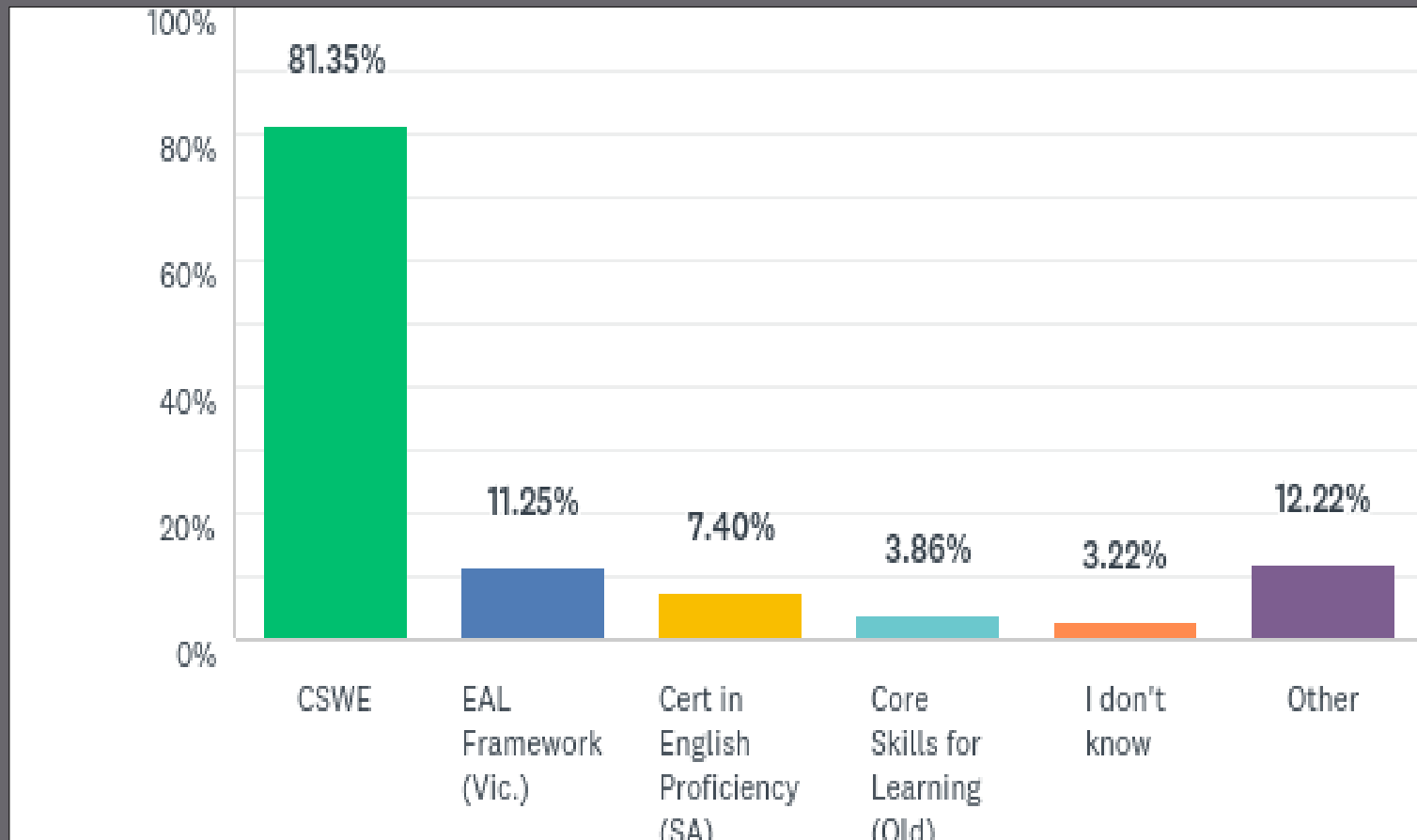
# Further Questions

- 1) How **prevalent** are Social Stream classes?
- 2) To what extent does the requirement to stream students **inhibit options for forming classes to target particular needs?**

E.g.:

- high literacy/low English
- low literacy/minimal schooling/low English
- classes for women
- youth classes
- classes for the elderly

## ACTA Survey: Curricula used prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017



Total respondents: 311

# ACTA Survey:

## Changed Curricula since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No change for the foreseeable future	38.91%	121
Changing/changed to the Certificates in Spoken & Written English (CSWE)	14.15%	44
Changing/changed to Victorian English as an Additional Language (EAL) Framework	15.43%	48
Changing/changed to South Australian Certificate in English Proficiency (CEP)	1.93%	6
Changing/changed to Queensland Core Skills for Learning (CSL) Framework	18.65%	58
I don't know	5.79%	18
We are changing to another curriculum not listed above (please specify):	17.36%	54
Total Respondents: 311		

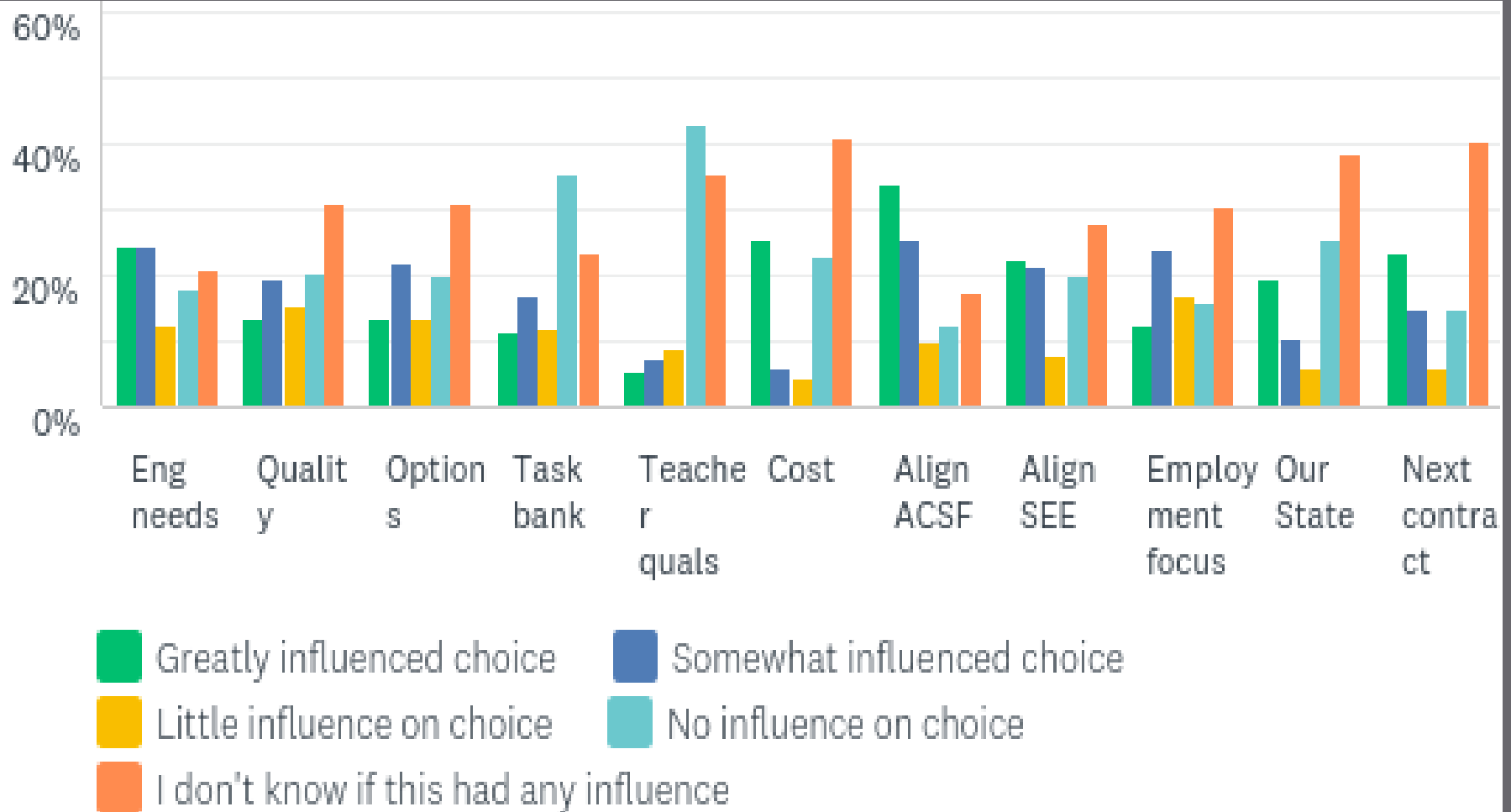
Other:

- ▣ Foundation Skills for Learning (FSK) 6
- ▣ Certs in General Ed for Adults (CGEA) 2
- ▣ Various comments re new CSWE

**ACTA Survey:**  
**Comments on Suitability of Specific Curricula**  
*(from question re curriculum choice)*

Curriculum	Positive	Negative
CSWE	2	
EAL Framework		2
CSL		12
CEP		1

# ACTA Survey: Reasons Understood for Curriculum Choice

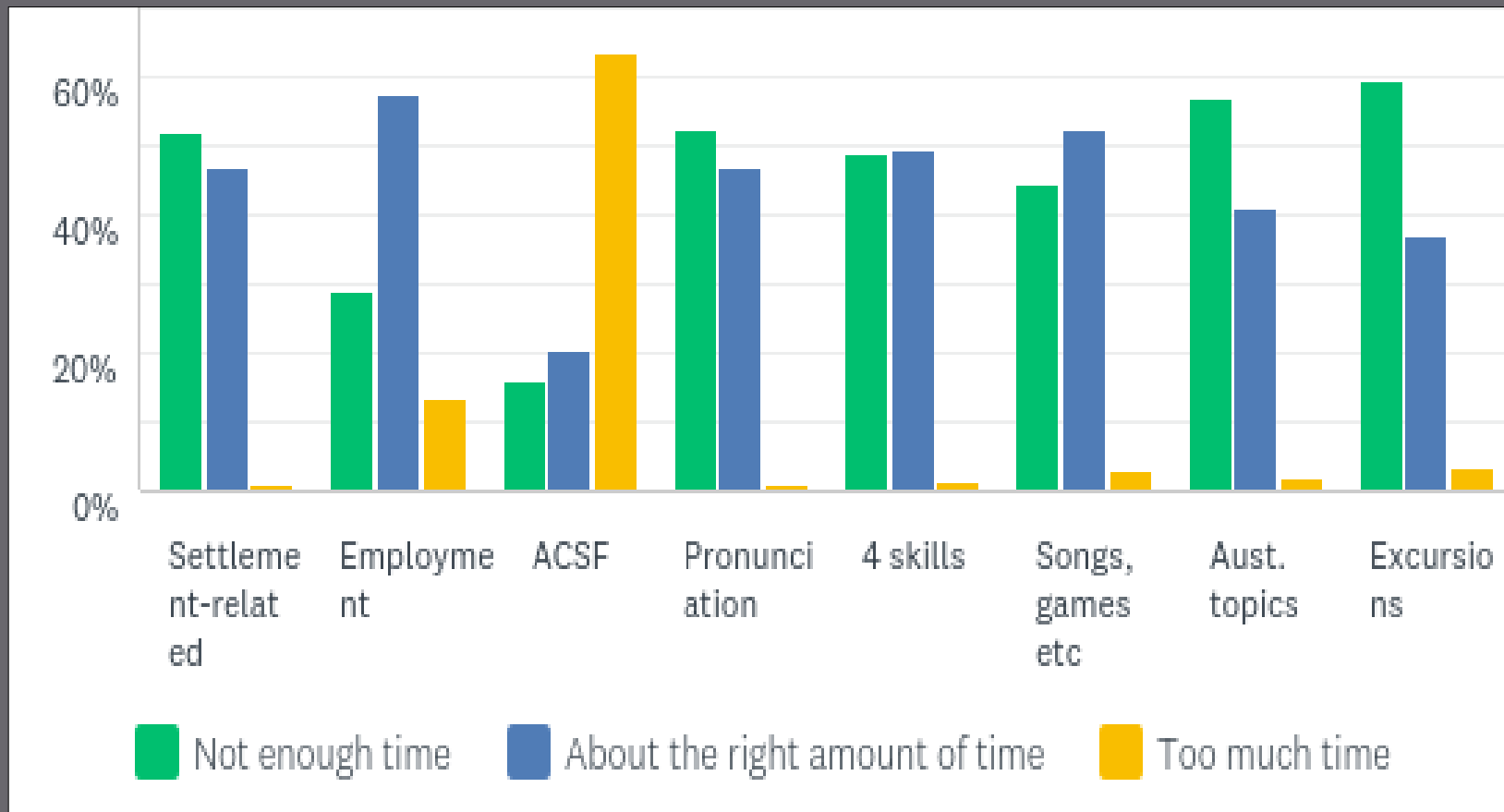


## Reasons – Table

	GREATLY INFLUENCED CHOICE	SOMEWHAT INFLUENCED CHOICE	LITTLE INFLUENCE ON CHOICE	NO INFLUENCE ON CHOICE	I DON'T KNOW IF THIS HAD ANY INFLUENCE	TOTAL
Eng needs	24.68% 76	24.35% 75	12.34% 38	17.86% 55	20.78% 64	308
Quality	13.64% 42	19.48% 60	15.26% 47	20.45% 63	31.17% 96	308
Options	13.64% 42	21.75% 67	13.31% 41	20.13% 62	31.17% 96	308
Task bank	11.69% 36	17.21% 53	12.01% 37	35.71% 110	23.38% 72	308
Teacher quals	5.52% 17	7.47% 23	8.77% 27	42.86% 132	35.39% 109	308
Cost	25.32% 78	5.84% 18	4.55% 14	23.05% 71	41.23% 127	308
Align ACSF	34.09% 105	25.65% 79	10.06% 31	12.66% 39	17.53% 54	308
Align SEE	22.40% 69	21.43% 66	8.12% 25	20.13% 62	27.92% 86	308
Employment focus	12.66% 39	24.03% 74	16.88% 52	15.91% 49	30.52% 94	308
Our State	19.48% 60	10.39% 32	6.17% 19	25.32% 78	38.64% 119	308
Next contract	23.38% 72	14.94% 46	6.17% 19	14.94% 46	40.58% 125	308

# ACTA Survey:

## Is time spent on these areas appropriate to AMEP students ?



No. respondents: 258

## ACTA Survey: Example Comments (62)

### Loss of focus on settlement-related topics:

- ▣ *The introduction of ACSF into AMEP classrooms **has superseded our settlement teaching**. ACSF and even term end curriculum assessment requirements are of limited usefulness for assisting settlement needs.*
- ▣ *The new contract took away **the requirement for a settlement-only class** and so settlement material had to be included in mainstream classes again. In 510 hours of tuition, there is never enough time to cover everything the students need so teachers try to incorporate as much information within their language learning as possible.*
- ▣ *Settlement issues have largely fallen by the wayside as we are driven to promote training and employment pathways. However: time will tell and the strongest students will of course do well as usual, they will take on the information as they have the cultural capital. **The others with settlement issues that we have not addressed and who have not acquired the intercultural soft skills we will have let down** .*
- ▣ *Students are pushed into work any type of work there is **no value placed on the importance of what the settlement program was prior to 2017**.*
- ▣ *The course content feels very narrow these days.*



## Focus on employment:

- ▣ *We are told to focus on Employment, and the fact that they combine the AMEP and SEE students, so we have to try to focus on job-related topics and skills.*
- ▣ *The heavy focus on employment topics really limits our options for engaging and interesting learning. Language that can be used for employment can be gained through activities that are not themselves employment focused. We also find that students are doing the same topics over and over again, e.g. WHS, which is really boring for them. Pronunciation, although referenced in the ACSF and CSWE, is not given sufficient time and this really hinders the learners' job-seeking*
- ▣ *The constant focus on Employment is detracting from other very important settlement topics, such as Health, Education, Law etc. While Employment topics are important, they should only be a part of our teaching themes. If nothing else, they are boring for both teachers and students. How can teaching WHS every term be interesting?*

## LWA recommended Curricula (June 2018)

### *Recommendation 1:*

The following curricula/training packages are deemed suitable to use in the AMEP delivery due to **their flexibility to tailor to clients' needs, ability to address the goals of the AMEP and capacity for reporting against the ACSF:**

- Certificate in Spoken and Written English (CSWE)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) Framework
- Core Skills for Learning (CSL)
- Certificate in English Proficiency (CEP)

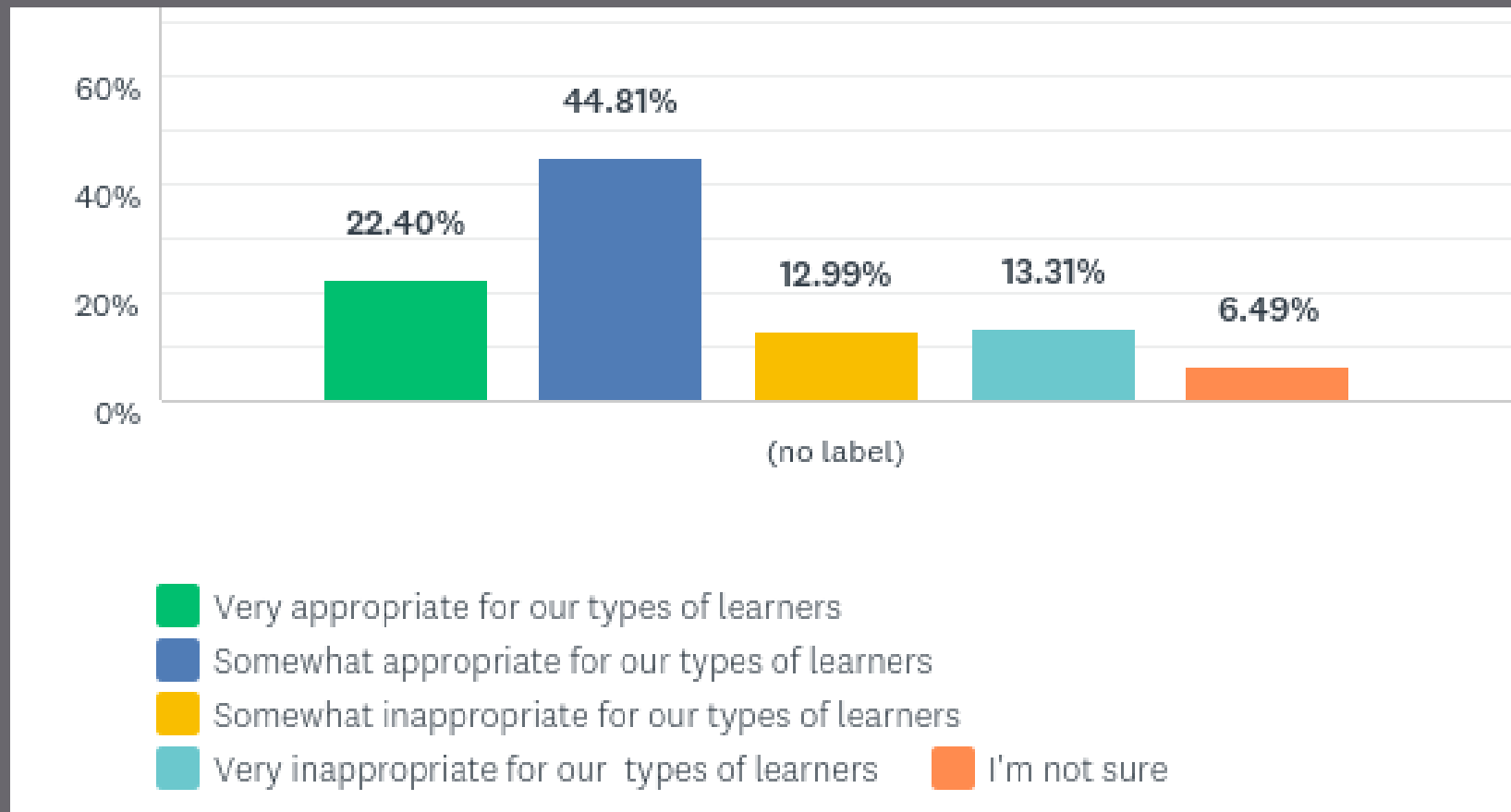
## LWA recommended Curricula (June 2018)

### *Recommendation 2:*

The following curricula/training packages are deemed unsuitable to use in the AMEP delivery due to **lack of focus on the EAL target cohort language needs and AMEP client settlement needs as well as their inability to sufficiently report against the ACSF:**

- Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA)
- Certificate I in Gaining Access to Training and Employment (GATE)
- General Education Programmes suite of certificates
- Foundation Skills Training Package (FSK)

## ACTA Survey: Opinion of Current Curriculum (unspecified)



No. respondents: 308

# Comments on Specific Curricula

## The CSWE:

- ▣ Although the CSWE course work hasn't been updated for years, it still works (to a point) **so long as teachers can supplement the material with other resources and grammar.**
- ▣ CSWE 2018 has a much different approach to CSWE 2013. It has some advantages in that it has **a more training package style which fits in more with TAFE's structure. I don't feel that it is better for the students though.** The levels are so different (much higher) from the old CSWE and the way it is structured makes it **impossible for any student to complete a certificate within their 510 hours.** As a teacher, this is very hard to explain, let alone justify, to students.
- ▣ In the transition phase the CSWE 3 program will be disadvantaged, as the students who traditionally started in CSWE 2 and moved quickly into CSWE 3 will now be unlikely to move as their ISLPR level will not meet the entry requirement.
- ▣ Yes [it's appropriate] if they all use CSWE. I still don't understand why the Dept does not set ONLY 1 standard curriculum for the program for the whole country. We should have only 1 curriculum, 1 standard, 1 task bank, and everybody will contribute to all these. At the moment, everyone is doing the same task but at different place and time. We are reinventing the wheel.

## CSWE (cont.)

- ▣ CSWE **restricts the flexibility** of some very capable teachers and volunteers; the CSWE focus pigeon holes migrants to behavioural and speech patterns of lower socio-economic Australians and does not do enough to just foster good pronunciation and love of language and culture in English; CSWE **does not build on inter-lingual capacities of transnational students**. CSWE dictates learning and **leaves no room for learner choice or self directed learning by adult learners**.
- ▣ AMEP has been designed as a Settlement Program and **CSWE seems the best suited to the needs of AMEP learner**. However, as any prescribed curriculum, it needs supplementary resources with inbuilt flexibility in the programming for the expert teacher to address individual learners' needs. It would also benefit from a Blended Learning Platform and regular Orientation Sessions to it.
- ▣ **2018 CSWE expectations are often unrealistic for AMEP students and further reduce the chances of students obtaining a certificate.**

## CSWE (cont.)

- ▣ *I have used CGEA and EAL and am of the view that the **earlier versions of CSWE that stipulate language criteria in the assessment goals were excellent.** The 2018 CSWE is more of an ACSF influenced document and **language goals are nowhere near as clear.***
- ▣ *CSWE has always been used by TAFEXX AMEP and the previous curriculum versions were tailored to suit settlement needs. The new CSWE 2018 (which we were not permitted to view before we purchased - other than a very simplistic example) has had the ISLPR re-aligned - which is very confusing. **The increased reference to ACSF is also problematic.***
- ▣ *We're currently using CSWE. I like this curriculum; however, the changes in CSWE itself are posing a lot of challenges **while we're still reeling from the changes in the new contract.***
- ▣ *Bring back CSWE!!!*

# CSL

- ▣ I find the CSL curricula *inappropriate for learners from a non-English speaking background.*
- ▣ The curriculum was designed for native speakers and is totally inappropriate for AMEP and/or SEE students. Unrealistic assessment goals mean that we have *to drive students through assessment rather than deliver quality learning opportunities.* The course was *supposed to align to the ACSF but it does not.* CSWE Certificate IV students are left high and dry without a curriculum designed for their needs. Too many writing genres are lumped together to teach in the time allowed.
- ▣ I understand the CSL curricula was not originally designed for migrant/NESB students and it is very apparent if one starts to read it. It *seems to have been cobbled together from primary school English curriculum and native speaker literacy courses.* It is quite inappropriate to our students' needs.



## CSL (cont.)

- ▣ *I know no one who likes it (teachers). The CSL units/tasks **favour the native speaker who has cultural knowledge of the Australian environment**, and the units actually contain anomalies e.g. in level 3 reading unit. As well, the writing unit for this level is huge and would be **a challenge to finish in a 10-week term**. (We have given feedback on this.) As teachers we know that one size doesn't fit all. We need a national curriculum designed specifically for the L2 learner that includes the genres they will encounter in their daily/work/study lives, as well as assessment tasks for these. CSL passed registration. I question ASQA's ability to know what's best for ESL learners.*
- ▣ *The CSL is a curriculum that is, in my (and many of my colleagues') opinions is unworkable, that **appears to follow the long-discredited Audiolingual Approach** (10290NAT: SETRDG001 & 10288NAT: SLPRDG001) and that **has no workable assessment items** (assessment items developed by TELLS have to be modified in almost every instance to meet the curriculum - or simply, to be able to deliver them without confusing the students). It appears that **the cheapest curriculum may not always be the best to meet our students' needs**. Naturally, all the modifications of assessment items impact on teachers' working hours.*

## CSL (cont.)

- ▣ Educators across TQ have been vocal in saying the **CSL in its current form is not workable for our ESL students**. Requests have been made to TQB management for educators to be taken offline to create CSL and/or CSL and ACSF mapped assessment tasks – requests have been denied due to the lack of funding. Management's response was **'according to the EB it is the teachers' responsibility to create teaching material and assessment tasks'**. This is on top of their current excessive workloads. CSL is a literacy curriculum being adapted by ESL teachers to teach and assess ESL students. Exemplar tasks are **very assessor unfriendly** in terms of administration and marking. **Original exemplars are flawed** and don't provide the correct mapping documents or cover the key skills and elements in the tasks outlined. The product is not optimal. The CSL will change again as it is already being examined for changes. Mapping CSL and ACSF to create Assessment Tools. **Both are literacy based NOT ESL specific. They DO NOT map easily, need to create multiple tasks = 70+ hours per assessment task to cover the unit**

# EAL

- ▣ *Prior to July, 2017 I worked for another provider in the AMEP and used **CSWE**. This was far more suitable to the clients we teach, had excellent resources and task bank and focused on the student needs rather than purely on outcomes. The EAL is too complicated for AMEP students and the assessments are too complicated and time consuming.* Most of our time is spent assessing and the students are moving through levels without having attained the fundamentals of the previous level.
- ▣ *I don't have a problem with the curriculum but I have a problem with the modules I have had to teach this term!!! Also **the lack of the real prelim level has been the real pain**, but that will change next year. But that's the choice of our college - we all have to do the same modules!!!! Grrrrr!!!! What happened to student needs? So far I don't see EAL as better or worse than CSWE.. though I can see the options might be interesting in the future. **The change in levels between the two is something we don't really seem to have clarified - the idea that after EAL 3 the students are ready for mainstream... hmm.** And **assessment seems so subjective**. Sometimes I really wish we taught Cambridge English or something more measurable...(yes, grammar!!)*
- ▣ ***The EAL is skills based** whereas the CSWE is task based.*

*Over to you!*