VicTESOL
Professional Learning
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Tensions in the Adult ELT Curriculum

Session 1 Meeting Midway

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AMEP
Adult Migrant English Program

An Australian Government Initiative

75 years

empowering through language

These two sessions explore tensions within the adult ELT curriculum.

I'm using the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) as a case study. It's a unique program serving up to 60,00 participants a year. It's a national treasure.

We'll explore
- how the curriculum has changed over time,
- how the current compliance tensions emerged, and
- the likelihood of change in the future.

Although the focus is on the AMEP the issues are relevant across all ELT sectors.

Today we will look at how the AMEP has gone through three broad curriculum eras, moving from

- a focus on specific elements of language forms (structures), to

- a focus on elements of language use (proficiency), and then to

- the current focus on elements of language tasks (competencies).

We'll examine the tensions underlying the changes.

We'll focus on how compliance requirements have changed with each era.

Next time we'll look at

- how tensions between policy makers and educators led to the current onerous compliance demands on teachers in the competency environment.

- Current reforms

- Future prospects

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I've been a Teacher, Materials Writer, Professional Development Manager, Curriculum Manager, National Project Manager and Academic Consultant for the AMEP for 50 years.

At last year's conference I focused on AMEP curriculum **innovations**.
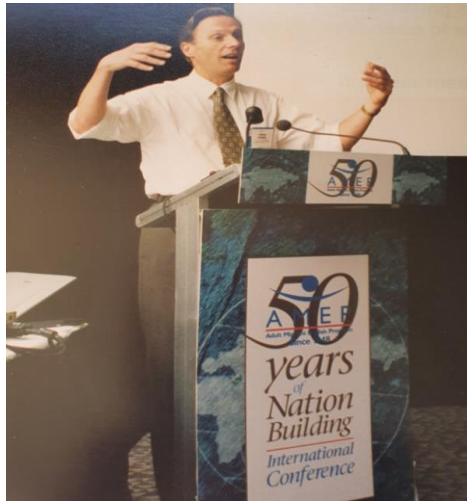
I was a speaker at the 50th anniversary conference (above) and the 75th anniversary conference last year.

In these two sessions I've *flipped* the focus onto the **tensions** underlying these innovations.

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My theme in this session is Meeting Midway.

My AMEP journey began here in 1974.

- Midway Migrant Hostel - one of dozens around Australia. Main AMEP providers

- Location – ordnance factory precincts, on the banks of the Maribyrnong River, where the languages of the Woi Wurrung and Bun Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation had been spoken for thousands of years.

- It was now a temporary home to speakers of languages from around the world.

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English was taught in a specialist Education Centre.

In my Beginners class there was a mix of

- Languages – Spanish, Turkish
- Ages – children, teenagers, adults
- Education – primary to tertiary
- Origins – rural Turkey to urban Chile
- Motivations – work, family, school
- Enrolment – daily, weekly changes

The class was a microcosm of the AMEP then and now.
There were tensions, but not related to the curriculum.

Recontextualisation

- the process of converting knowledge into texts that are amenable for use by managers, teachers, and learners. Such texts include policies, guidelines, frameworks, scales, textbooks and other resources.

Trust

- the belief that another person, or entity, known to us personally (primary trust) or as a stranger or institution (secondary trust) is reliable and capable. It is a social or cultural attribute at the core of all successful social groups and societies.

Compliance

- activities that demonstrate adherence to the requirements of an external monitoring or accountability framework of some kind

Different goals – language for settlement, employment, personal development.

Stakeholders place different values on these goals.

Different recontextualization expectations of

- those with political goals who control the curriculum through policy and funding (politicians, public servants)
- those with professional goals who are responsible for devising and delivering the curriculum (providers, teachers, academics).

Differences in trust - the extent to which the goals of these two groups are aligned affects the trust between them. This affects the content of the curriculum, and the types of compliance that is required.

These differences have been manifested in three broad eras. We'll focus on compliance in each era.


(Nation & Macalister, 2009:3)

The AMEP Curriculum 50s, 60s, early to mid 70s	Structural Era Features
Content	Specific elements of language structure
Principles	Australian Situational Method
Monitoring and Assessment	Low focus
Format and Presentation	Fixed
Content and sequencing	Fixed
Environment	High/Low Trust
Needs	Necessities
Innovation	Situational English
Compliance focus	**The Method**

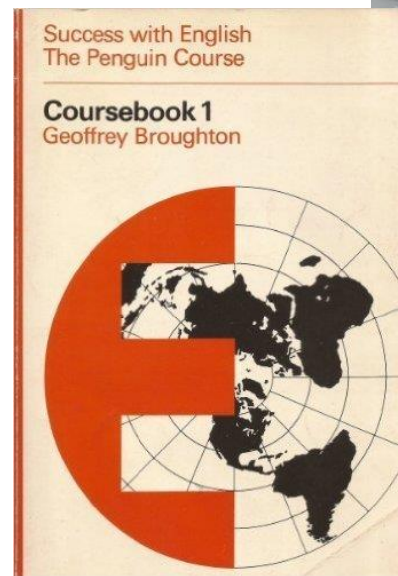SITUATIONAL ENGLISH Part 1 Students' Book

This book must not be sold
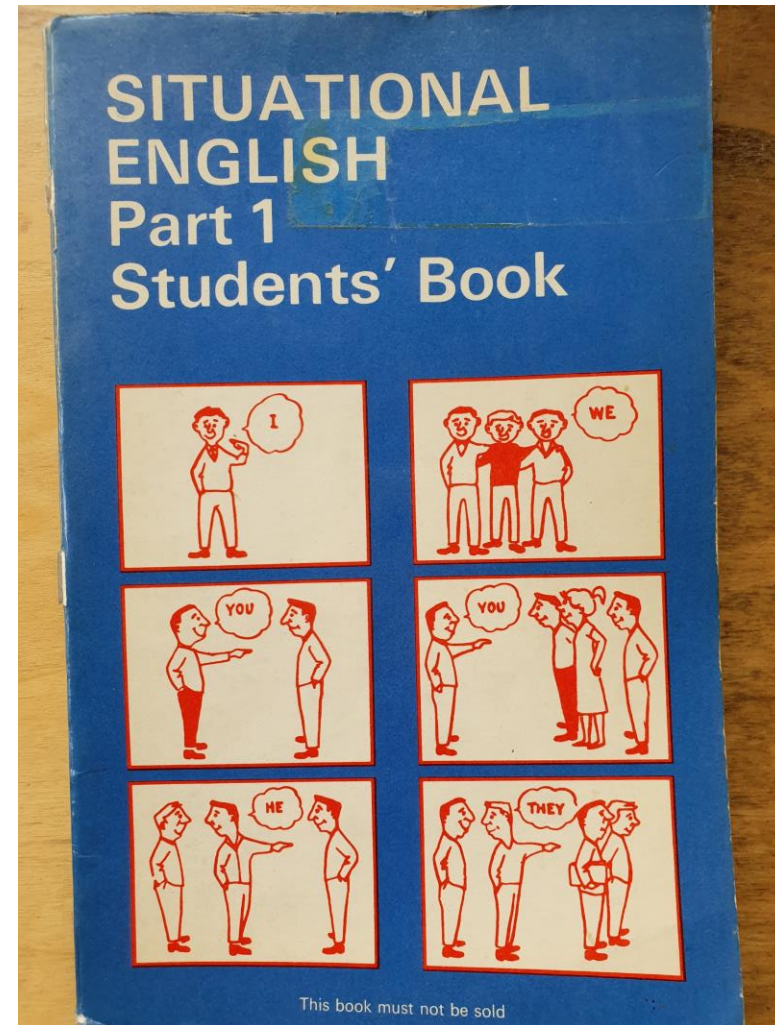
This is the British Council School in Seville in 1976.

Situational English had been used here.
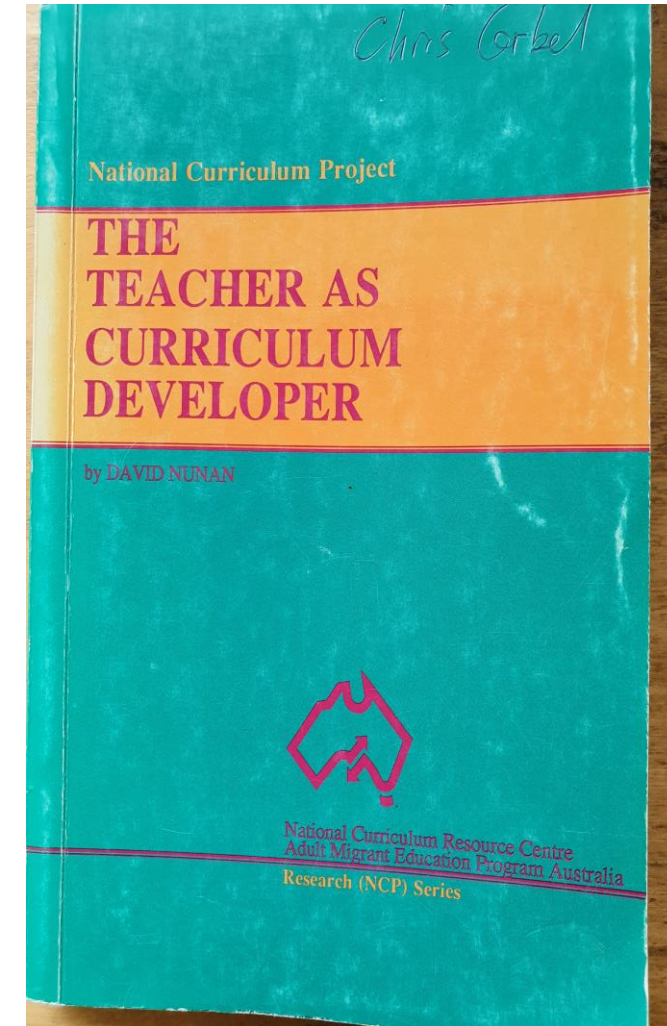
It had been replaced by Success with English.

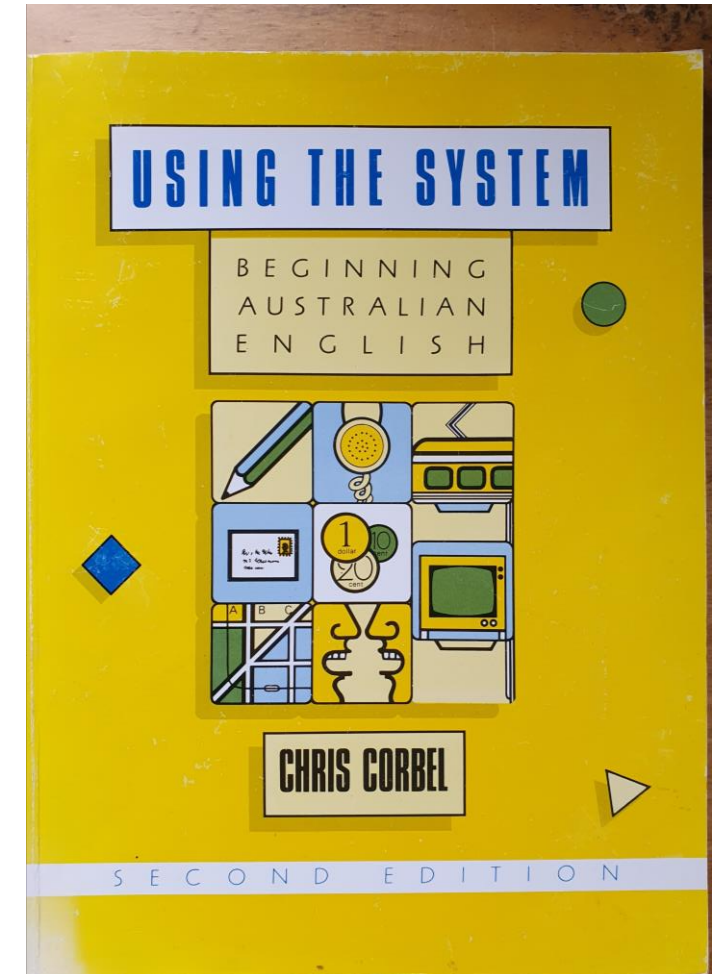Success with English
The Penguin Course

Coursebook 1
Geoffrey Broughton

The AMEP Curriculum Late 70s, 80s to early 90s	Proficiency Era Features
Content	General levels of language use
Principles	The Communicative Approach
Monitoring and Assessment	Moderate focus
Format and Presentation	Flexible
Content and sequencing	Unfixed
Environment	High Trust
Needs	Wants
Innovations	ASLPR, ILCC, TCD
Compliance focus	**The Approach**

National Curriculum Project

IMPLEMENTING THE LEARNER-CENTRED CURRICULUM

edited by JILL BURTON

National Curriculum Resource Centre
Adult Migrant Education Program Australia

Research (NCP) Series

National Curriculum Project

THE TEACHER AS CURRICULUM DEVELOPER

by DAVID NUNAN

National Curriculum Resource Centre
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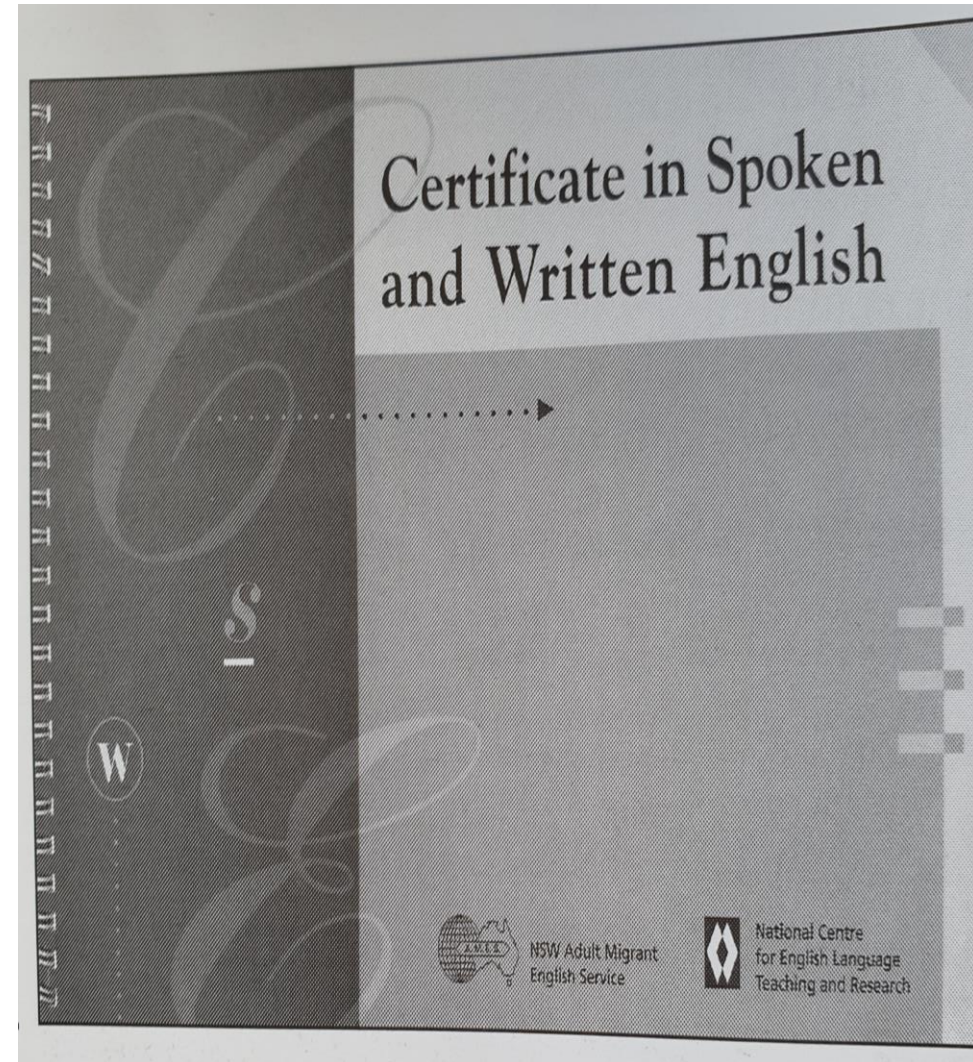
- The result of the NCP was a collection of resources called the Frameworks, which were optional, and which had mixed results

- Unofficial policy "*Let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend*"

- By the end of the 80's compliance only related to the routine use of the A(I)SLPR and did not affect day to day classroom teaching.

The AMEP Curriculum 90s,00s,10s,teens	Competency Era
Content	Specific elements of language tasks
Principles	Competency Based Training
Monitoring and Assessment	High focus
Format and Presentation	Semi-flexible
Content and sequencing	Semi-fixed
Environment	Mid to low trust
Needs	Lacks
Innovations	CSWE, CEAL
Compliance focus	Assessment
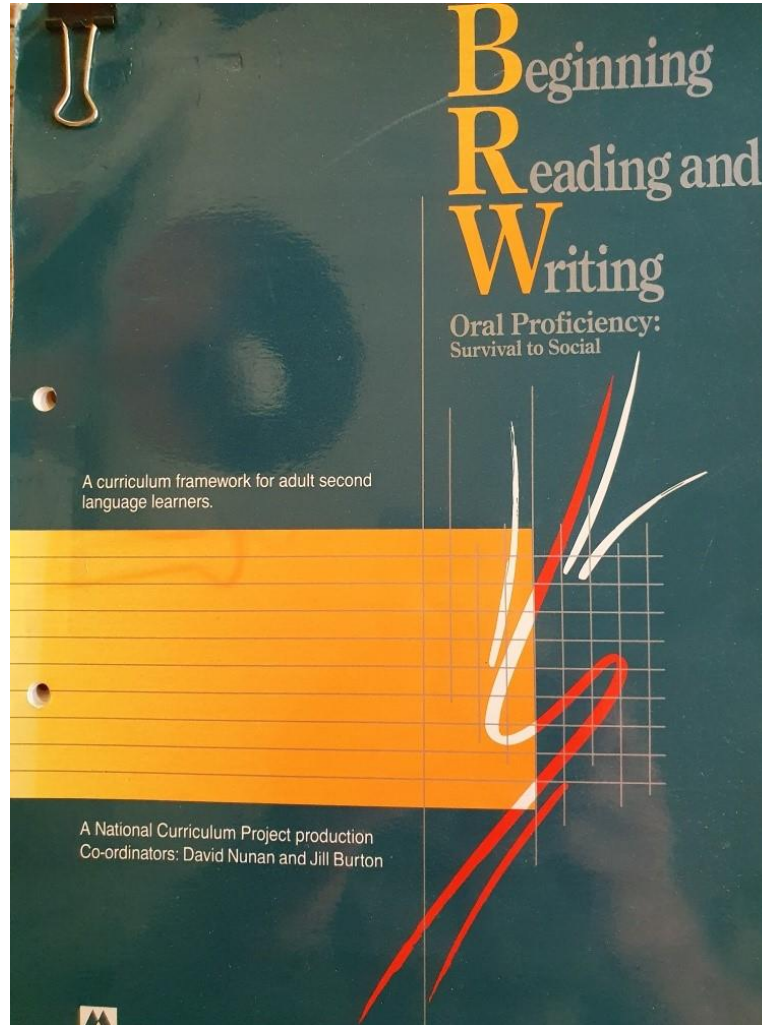
Certificate in Spoken and Written English

NSW Adult Migrant English Service

National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research

- There was considerable tension during the year (1993) however, as many teachers resisted the change(p 10)

- There has been a continual tension between the espousal of broad - based definitions at the policy level, and the narrow- focused competency descriptions that have emerged in industry-based documents. (17)

- Management and principals in particular were having to deal with the introduction of the DEET tendering process which meant there was a movement away from annual allocation -based funding to tender - based funding.

- At the broader level, a new State government had recently introduced sweeping changes to employment conditions that affected all workers In the state, but particularly teachers. Thus the external climate was one of tension and conflict. (p. 31)
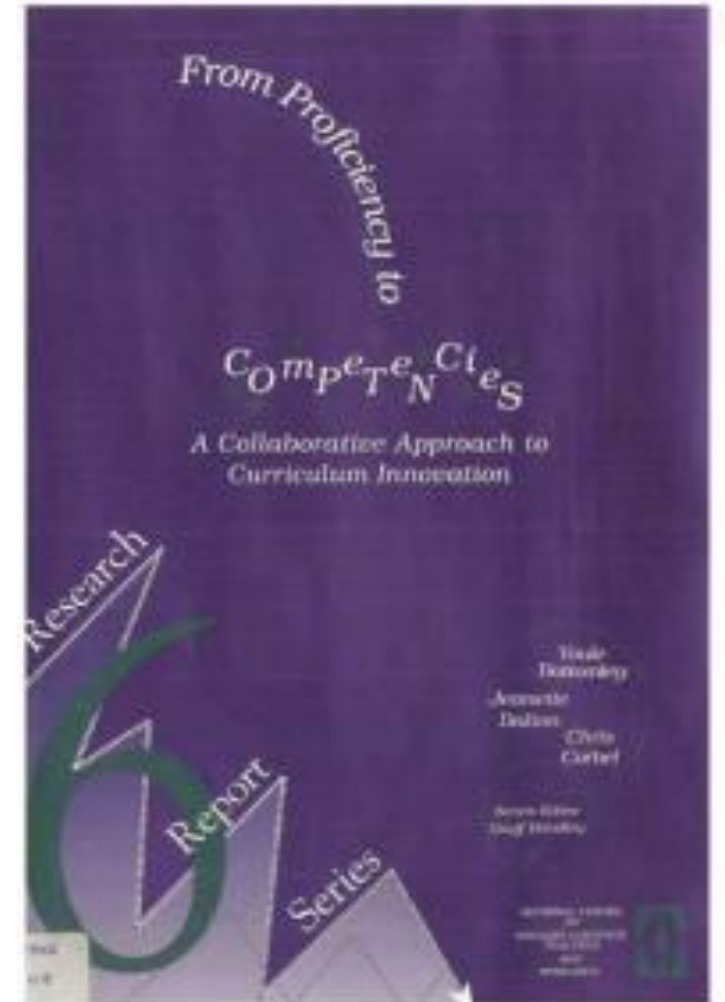
The AMEP Curriculum	1. Structural Era 50s, 60s, early to mid 70s	2. Proficiency Era Late 70s, 80s to early 90s	3. Competency Era (1) 90s,00s,10s (2) From 2017
Content	Specific elements of language structure	General levels of language use	Specific elements of language tasks
Principles of teaching and learning embedded in:	The Australian Situational Method	The Communicative Approach	Competency Based Training
Monitoring and Assessment	Low focus	Moderate focus	High focus
Format and Presentation	Fixed	Flexible	Semi-flexible
Content and Sequencing	Fixed	Unfixed	Semi-fixed
Environment	High/Low trust	High trust	Mid to low trust
Needs	Necessities	Wants	Lacks
Innovations	Situational English	ASLPR, ILCC, TCD	CSWE, CEAL
Compliance Focus	The Method	The Approach	Assessment

Introducing curriculum change creates tensions, as we saw with

1. Situational English
2. The National Curriculum Project
3. VET Certification

"There is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than the creation of a new system. … the initiator has the enmity of all who would profit by the preservation of the old system and merely lukewarm defenders in those who would gain from the new one."

(Nation & Macalister, 2009:xv)

Implementing the AMEP curriculum has involved
- a unique combination of local, state and national initiatives
- global influences in both directions
- the commitment of participants at all levels.

It has also required trust between the main stakeholder groups. This has weakened over time, as trends such as New Public Management have encountered increasing teacher professionalism.

Accountability is necessary but it needs to allow teachers time to do their professional work. This requires greater <u>trust,</u> not the imposition of a "burden compliance".

We'll return to this in Session 2.

Endeavour, Enterprise, and all the other hostels around Australia are now gone, except for one - Midway.

Midway still has a few buildings in their original form. though these are now closed. Some have heritage orders (not the education centre). A Vietnamese Museum is planned nearby.

While *endeavour* and *enterprise* may be important, the more prosaic word *midway* captures something more significant.

Midway needs to live on, not as a place but as the idea captured in the phrase *meeting midway*.

What does the idea of meeting midway imply?

The meeting midway idea exists in curriculum concepts such as *plurilingualism* and in social concepts such as *multiculturalism.*

Meeting midway can be seen in some aspects of the engagement between stakeholders that has led to recent changes in the AMEP curriculum and business plan.

Meeting midway is an idea that's relevant not just in the AMEP, but in Australia more broadly, and in the world, now more than ever.

The AMEP and ELT in general encapsulate the powerful idea of *meeting midway*.

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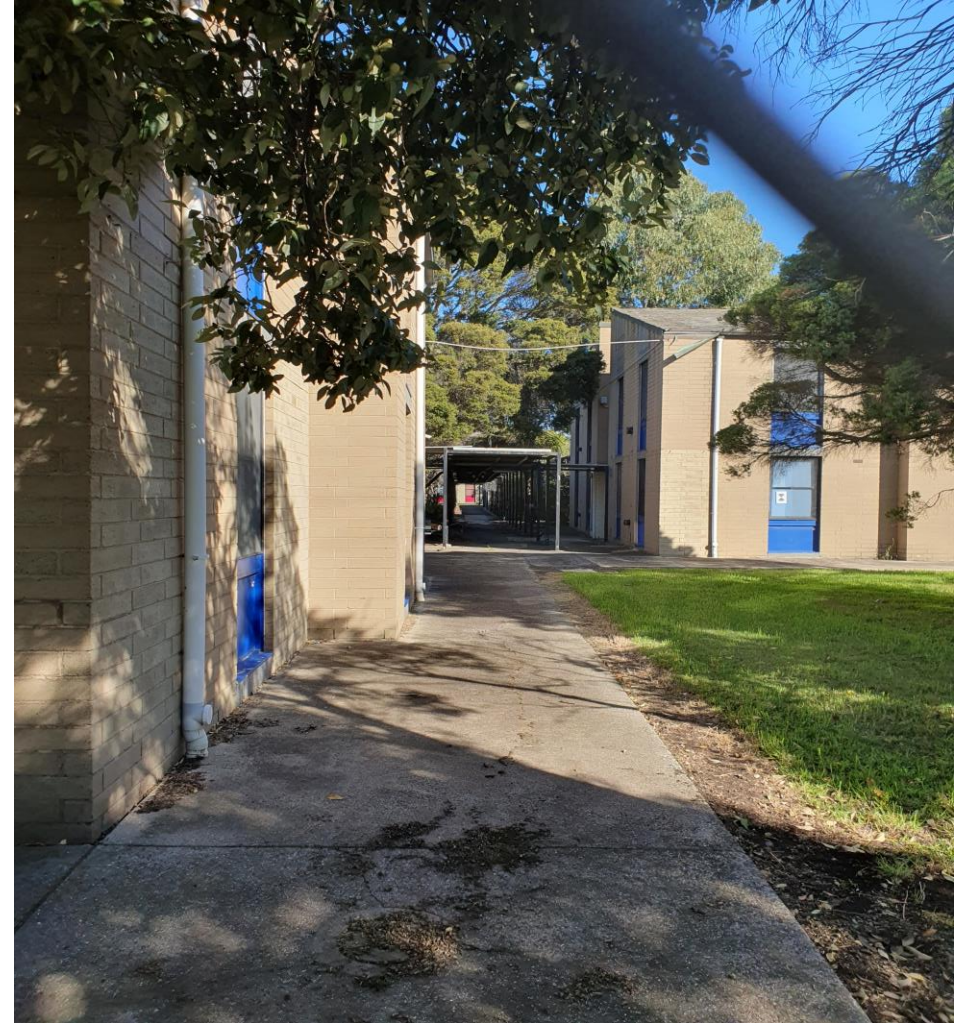
What happened in 2017 to make the burden of compliance unsustainable?

What has happened since to reduce the burden?

What are the prospects for the new national curriculum?

What changes are happening in the VET environment that will affect Adult ELT?

How are individual teachers managing the burden of compliance?

What are the prospects of meeting midway?

We'll answer these questions on 28th May.

22482VIC Course in Initial EAL

22483VIC Course in EAL

22484VIC Certificate I in EAL (Access)

22485VIC Certificate II in EAL (Access)

22486VIC Certificate III in EAL (Access)

22487VIC Certificate IV in EAL (Access)

22488VIC Certificate II in EAL (Employment)

22489VIC Certificate III in EAL (Employment)

22490VIC Certificate IV in EAL (Employment / Professional)

22491VIC Certificate III in EAL (Further Study)

22492VIC Certificate IV in EAL (Further Study)

Bottomley, Dalton and Corbel (1994). *From proficiency to competencies*. Sydney, New South Wales: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
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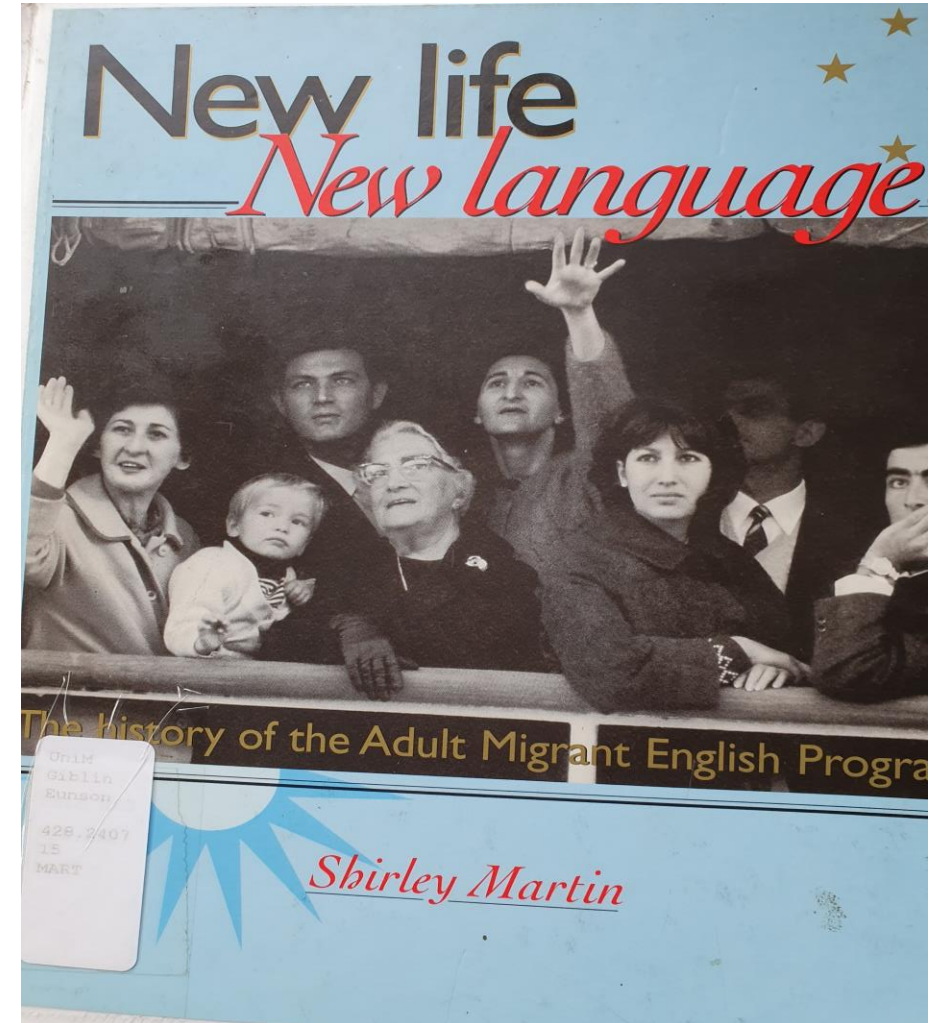
- Questions?

- Comments?

Please do the post session survey to help our planning for the next session.