

# Tapping into free global resources

Teachers can now access an Australian version of the online global educational resources platform TES Connect.

by **Margaret Jakovac**

### Briefly

- The AEU has entered into a partnership to establish an Australian online platform for high-quality teaching resources.
- Teachers can download or upload peer-reviewed resources for free and use the site in many other ways.
- Those who have used the resources say they save time and are inspirational.

**A** free online platform for high-quality teaching resources mapped to the Australian curriculum is being officially launched in June. Already more than 90,000 Australian teachers have signed up to the platform, TES Connect.

The AEU has partnered with the parent company of TES Connect, TSL Education, along with the Board of Studies NSW and the Centre for Professional Learning to offer the

platform. TSL is the world's largest supplier of educational teacher exchange resources.

TES Australia will be the tailor-made version of the successful UK-based TES Connect, which was set up about five years ago and which 2.5 million teachers from every country in the world now use. In the US, the platform is called Share my Lesson.

AEU federal president Angelo Gavrielatos says the union's partnership with TES Connect benefits the profession nationally.

"It has the potential and is already bringing together tens of thousands of Australian teachers to share their lessons and engage in their ongoing development of professional practice.

"It also locates our union as the lead organisation in the provision of professional support for teachers. Furthermore, the progressive refinement of shared resources by teachers will contribute significantly towards the improvement of educational outcomes for teachers."

At its official launch, TES Connect is expected to have half a million resources already mapped to the Australian curriculum. It's not just altruistic teachers who have uploaded their best road-tested lessons and programs onto the site to share with peers.

TES has teams of professional staff working with the Board of Studies NSW advisors to get up to speed with the curriculum across Australia and fine tune the resources to give the site an Australian "look and feel", says Bill Donoghue, TSL's chief operating officer.

"Once a teacher posts a resource on the platform, a TES lead adviser and teaching panel read and review it as

## The spinoffs

- **TES PRO lets teachers store resources using cloud computing.**
- **An online school term calendar for teachers.**
- **Live web chats.**
- **Q&A sessions.**
- **Specific channels for English or science.**
- **A Twitter account to post updates for teachers.**

**"The resources are for teachers and by teachers. It's really democratising education."**

part of the quality assurance process," he says.

"When you are searching for [TES] resources, the most popular come up first, but that doesn't mean the resources most downloaded. We've loaded algorithms into the system to take into account the quality ranking. It truly allows the best resources to be taught to every child."

## Democratising education

Donoghue says TES resources generally don't date. Rather, they tend to be used "over and over again" by different teachers who each put their personal stamp on the material when they present it to students. Teachers can also post feedback on the TES resources they've used, which adds another



## TES – it figures

- Five years ago, soon after TES was launched, 100,000 teachers had registered; now 2.5 million have registered globally and there are almost one million resources available.
- The site connects more than 47 million teachers and students globally.
- In January there were 10 million visits to the TES global websites.
- By March this year, 90,000 Australian teachers had registered with TES.
- When TES Connect is launched in June, it's expected to host half a million resources already mapped to the Australian curriculum.

element of peer review.

“Our policy is to keep resources, but our quality assurance process also means that about 150 resources a month are taken down because they aren't appropriate or aren't of great quality,” says Donoghue.

So what do teachers think about the resources? Over the past five years, feedback from teachers using TES globally – including 4000 Australian teachers – has said it saves them time, is inspirational and the resources are high quality, says Donoghue.

“The resources are for teachers and by teachers. It's really democratising education. They give real inspiration to teachers – especially new teachers – to make the lesson real and exciting.”

This juggernaut of online resources is timely. The introduction of the Australian curriculum is happening while departments of education across the nation “have retreated from providing adequate support for the teaching profession”, says Gavrielatos.

The Board of Studies NSW has gone digital in a big way with its e-Syllabus launched last October with a range of

new resources. Its role in the TES Connect partnership is giving the curriculum advice needed to provide relevant support to Australian teachers.

Board of Studies president Tom Alegounarias says his state recognises that TES is popular with Australian teachers and sees the main benefit of working with TSL as giving Australian teachers an Australian framework for accessing the site.

“The education sector in NSW is a major contributor to the national knowledge base for teachers and the board has established this partnership with TSL with a view to helping all teachers in Australia,” says Alegounarias. ●

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## Resources

- [www.tesconnect.com](http://www.tesconnect.com)
- [www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)
- [www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news\\_details/2374](http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2374) (Education International)