

POLICY

COMPULSORY TEACHING IN ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST FOUR HOURS OF EACH SCHOOL DAY

Responsibility of: Schools Policy and Operations
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1 POLICY

Teaching and learning programs in Northern Territory (NT) schools are to be conducted in English for the first four hours of each school day, in order to improve literacy and numeracy results, particularly for Indigenous students.

The teaching and learning of Indigenous languages and culture may be scheduled during afternoon sessions.

Each school, in conjunction with its school council, will ensure that its school timetable addresses this requirement.

The requirement is subject to a common sense interpretation to allow for the timetabling of morning classes for Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in secondary schools and colleges.

2 BUSINESS NEED

In October 2008, the Minister for Education and Training directed that, as of 2009 all NT students are to undertake their teaching and learning programs in English for the first four hours of every school day. This decision was made in response to an identified need to make improvements in literacy and numeracy for all NT students, in particular the results being achieved by Indigenous students.

The ability to read and write and to be numerate is the foundation for all school learning. Good literacy and numeracy skills are critical if young people are to complete their schooling successfully. These skills are also required if they are to participate fully in the economic and social development of the NT and the nation.

Despite substantial investment by the NT and Australian governments in supporting the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills for students, and the genuine effort of Department of Education and Training (DET) staff over many years to improve results, there has been no significant improvement in NT students' literacy and numeracy outcomes.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Principals

Principals are responsible for:

- working together with school councils to ensure the school timetable complies with this policy
- ensuring teachers, Assistant Teachers and other support staff have access to appropriate training or professional development to enable them to operate effectively in 'English only' classrooms
- negotiating for permission to vary the school timetable from time to time to accommodate special circumstances, e.g. a cultural excursion,

Schools managers

Schools managers are responsible for

- providing advice to schools and school councils on the design of timetables that meet this requirement
- brokering of appropriate support (e.g. ESL and/or cross-cultural effectiveness training) for teachers and classroom support staff
- ratifying school timetables to ensure they meet the requirements of this policy.

General Manager Teaching Learning & Standards

The General Manager Teaching, Learning and Standards is responsible for:

- the development of suitable curriculum materials that assist schools in implementing this policy effectively
- responding to requests from schools managers to provide professional learning support for teachers and support staff, to assist in the effective implementation of this policy.

Executive Directors

The Executive Directors in Northern and Central Australia are responsible for the effective implementation and monitoring of this policy in their regions.

4 DEFINITION

This direction should *not* be interpreted to mean that the first four hours of each school day are to be spent solely on teaching the subject English. Teaching and learning programs are to be conducted *in* English for the first four hours of each school day, and may encompass instruction in a range of learning areas, e.g. science, mathematics, health education as well as English.

5 RELATED POLICIES

English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Length of School Day

Requirement to Provide Instruction for the Full School Year

Physical Activity Requirements for Schools