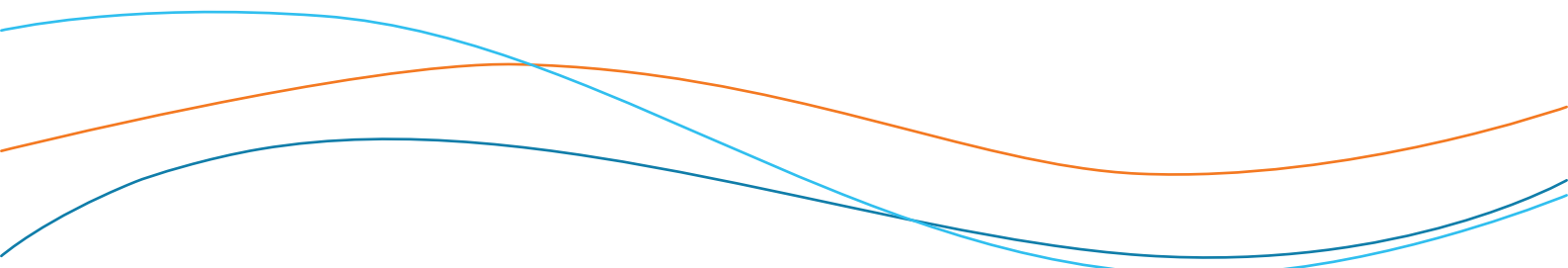


**Draft Shape of the
Australian Curriculum:
Languages**



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Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages

ACARA works collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders including teachers, principals, academics, government, state and territory education authorities, professional education associations, business/industry, community groups and the broader public to develop curriculum.

The ACARA curriculum development process involves four stages:

- curriculum shaping
- curriculum writing
- implementation
- curriculum evaluation and review.

The curriculum shaping stage involves the development of the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper. This draft shape paper is subject to consultation from 31 January 2011 to 7 April 2011. Feedback collected during the consultation period will inform the revision of the draft shape paper before it is published as the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages*.

This shape paper is intended to provide a broad conceptualisation of the languages learning area that will guide the writing of language-specific curriculum and the writing of the Framework for Australian Languages.

For more information about the consultation process go to www.acara.edu.au

Preamble

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for all Young Australians recognises languages learning as an integral part of the educational experience of all Australian students.

Success in developing students' bilingual capability through languages learning in schools depends on: policy settings; curriculum; and program conditions.

The Melbourne Declaration provides the policy framework for languages learning, ACARA takes responsibility for curriculum design. In developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages assumptions will necessarily be made about time allocation.

School authorities need to consider their responsibility in relation to program conditions (i.e. number of hours, regularity and continuity) to ensure quality and sustained languages program provision.

Contents

Introduction: history, challenge and an opportunity	3
Languages as a learning area in the Australian Curriculum	7
A rationale for learning languages	9
The distinctiveness of languages in the curriculum	11
Key concepts and understandings in learning languages	13
Language	13
Culture	15
The relationship between language and culture	15
Understanding language learning as an intercultural process	16
Understanding language learning and literacy development	17
Understanding the learning of Australian Languages	19
Summary	20
The learners, pathways and time on task in learning languages	21
The learners	21
Pathways	22
Time on task	23
Curriculum design for languages	24
The aims of learning languages	24
The organisation of learning in languages: strands	25
The nature of knowledge, skills and understanding in learning languages	26
General capabilities and languages	27
Cross-curriculum priorities	29
Key considerations for developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages	30
Key sources	36
References and bibliography	36
Sources - National	38
Sources – International	40
Sources – Australian Languages	40

Introduction: history, challenge and an opportunity

1. The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages provides an opportunity to ensure that all students benefit from learning languages. Australia has an established history of national collaboration in languages education. This curriculum development involves a network of contributors including teachers, parents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other language communities, jurisdictions, language professional associations, language teacher educators, linguists and researchers. Their expertise and experience is essential to meet the challenge of productive innovation that will strengthen curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment in languages education.
2. The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages necessarily builds on past experience – on the history of languages policy and developments in languages-in-education in this country. This history has included many voices and perspectives and some particular challenges. In a recent review of languages and Australian schooling, Lo Bianco (2009, p.25) comments on the diversity of interests that have shaped debates about languages policy and languages education. Language professionals have argued for enhanced learning of second languages and investment in research and public services around languages. Immigrant groups have sought support for the intergenerational maintenance of home languages as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) provision. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups have advocated for language recognition; survival; the rights of land claims based on language continuity; the documentation of languages; various language revival initiatives for languages at risk of extinction, and the value of bilingual programs. Diplomatic, business and trade circles have recognised the importance of a capability in languages in the interests of economics, diplomacy, trade, cultural exchange and national security.
3. The active engagement by these different groups reflects the broad range of interests in languages held by the Australian community and also the range of meanings that learning languages holds for particular individuals and groups. Languages education policy and languages planning have had to respond to these different interests and meanings. Meshed with these different interests and meanings are the particular interests of those who make policy for education in general. The principle of access to languages education for all students in Australian schools has been established in all three Declarations of the National Goals for School Education. Languages are included as one of the key learning areas in the Australian Curriculum, a core component of the educational experience of all Australian students.
4. Perspectives on the place languages should occupy in the curriculum vary. For some, the value of learning another language is self-evident. For others, languages have never been part of their personal or social experience and they may not see their relevance. There has thus been extensive debate about provision for learning languages. Key themes include

Introduction: history, challenge and an opportunity

which languages should be taught; language ownership; whether to limit or sustain the diversity of languages taught in schools; how to recognise the language learning experience of different groups of students such as first language, second language and so-called ‘heritage’ language learners; how to provide continuous, equitable, appropriately sequenced and educationally challenging pathways through the curriculum so students make worthwhile gains in language learning; how to manage transition and articulation between different phases of schooling; the rationale for learning languages in school; how to manage resource constraints and ensure provision of qualified teachers of languages as well as quality teaching and learning materials; how to provide appropriate time allocations for language learning at both primary and secondary levels within a “crowded curriculum”; how to work with universities to ensure appropriate transition in language learning, to support initial and ongoing teacher education, to collaborate on research and to promote and reward language learning; how to work productively with complementary providers; how to maximise the role of technology in enhancing provision, and how to encourage more students to study languages at senior secondary levels in order to increase Australia’s overall languages capability.

5. These ongoing discussions have been captured repeatedly in state and national review and research reports (for example de Kretser and Spence-Brown, 2010; Kohler and Mahnken, 2010; Lo Bianco, 2009; Liddicoat, et al. 2007; Orton, 2009; Seong-Chul Shin, 2010) and in a range of state and national initiatives. In recent years a substantial amount of research and development has been undertaken, primarily under the auspices of *The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008* (MCEETYA 2005) and with the implementation of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP). Yet in spite of this ongoing policy discussion and research and development work, provision of languages in schools in Australia and uptake by students remain fragile at all phases of schooling. For example, only 14.5 per cent of Year 12 students study a language. Initiatives to strengthen provision and participation have been generally unsuccessful. Experience to date shows that for languages programs to work well, certain conditions are necessary:

- recognition of the value of languages by the school and the wider community
- appropriately qualified teachers, supported by ongoing professional learning
- adequate curriculum and assessment guidance and support
- adequate resources
- appropriate time allocation: language learning requires significant time, regularity and continuity.

Introduction: history, challenge and an opportunity

6. To shape the conditions for the sustainable provision of languages, the Australian Curriculum: Languages must describe the nature and scope of quality learning and establish expectations in relation to student achievement. It will guide the development of programs that are coherent, challenging, rewarding and broadly educational, and enrich the communicative repertoire of individual students and the nation. There is agreement by all interested groups that the Australian Curriculum: Languages must provide the guidance necessary to improve the language learning experience of all students. At the same time, school authorities and schools will need to provide the conditions that ensure learning can occur.
7. This draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper provides direction for the curriculum development for all languages, including Australian Languages¹, world languages, as well as classical languages and Australian sign language (Auslan). At the same time, it recognises that students learn different languages. Each language has its own distinctive structures, systems, conventions for use; its own related culture(s); its own place in both the Australian and international communities, and its own history in Australian education. The Australian Curriculum: Languages will include the development of language-specific curricula and a Framework for Australian Languages. These will be developed in ways that recognise both the commonalities across languages (through common terms, key concepts, ways of elaborating curriculum content, ways of describing achievement standards) and the distinctiveness of particular languages (designated through language-specific curriculum content and achievement standards).
8. This paper presents a rationale for learning languages and describes key concepts and understandings which inform languages education. It describes learners of languages, the pathways for learning, and a structure for organising curriculum content and achievement standards. It includes a description of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities and a set of key considerations for developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages.
9. The Australian Curriculum: Languages is being developed on the assumption that all students will learn languages across primary and secondary schooling, and that the curriculum will provide for continued learning in different pathways through to the senior secondary years. This draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper proposes a flexible structure for organising the curriculum, based on the relationship between indicative hours of study, content and achievement standards, and as such recognises different forms of provision across Foundation to Year 12. It allows for flexible provision in the primary years, whereby systems and schools determine how best to organise the indicative hours of study into programs that maximise learning through the curriculum across Foundation to Year 6 and to allow for continuity in learning at secondary level.

¹ Australian languages' is the term used to designate the languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Introduction: history, challenge and an opportunity

10. Acknowledging and building on what has gone before, ACARA considers that the proposals discussed in this paper will make a difference to languages learning in Australia because:

- it recognises that languages learning is for all students in Australian schools who bring to their learning their individual linguistic and cultural background, whether this is English or the target language or various combinations of languages
- it articulates a clear commitment to and positioning of Australian Languages
- it proposes a structure and organisation of the curriculum that addresses the complexity of languages learning in relation to the two key variables: learner background in the target language and time on task (or hours of study)
- it expects a substantial time allocation
- it recognises that the curriculum needs to be language-specific
- it defines the curriculum in relation to language-specific achievement standards, which focus on the active and proficient use of the language being studied.

Languages as a learning area in the Australian Curriculum

... language is an integral part of our identity, and ... language is the expression of our unique relationship with the land and the cultural practices that have been handed on down the generations for thousands and thousands of years.

However, for many of us who have lived in situations where our language has deliberately been denied to us for many decades because government policies and practices have prevented it, this part of our identity has been withheld from us. ... in spite of all this, our languages have been passed on, and have never been forgotten by those groups who weren't taught to speak them in the full way. Many words from them are used within our English speech, and these words are markers of our identity and distinctiveness as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. (Jeanie Bell, community linguist in SSABSA, 1996, p.25)

11. Languages as a learning area in the Australian Curriculum includes and values the learning of all languages. The Australian Curriculum: Languages recognises the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages as the languages of the first peoples of Australia. This recognition includes and values the learning of these languages, as they are the languages of this country and the cultural heritage and property of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Australia. It is an acknowledged right of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to learn their own languages within the framework of the Australian Curriculum. (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by General Assembly Resolution 61/295 on 13 September 2007) As the languages are unique to Australia, they are also part of the heritage of all Australians. The opportunity to learn Australian Languages is important to all students in Australian schools because they represent a core element of the culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Through studying these languages, students also learn about the history, culture, land and environment of the country in which they live.

12. Making languages a key learning area in the Australian Curriculum recognises Australia's distinctive and dynamic migration history. A quarter of all Australians were born overseas. They have brought with them, and may continue to use, their own languages and cultural practices. These language communities are a valued part of Australia's diverse economic, socio-political, linguistic, social, cultural and religious landscape. Importantly, Australia's geographical position and geopolitical history has required and continues to require serious engagement with the languages and cultures of the Asian region.

13. The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages affords an important opportunity to affirm and draw upon the diversity at every level of present-day Australia and to work productively towards strengthening this country's role and relationships globally and in Asia in particular. Just as importantly, a national curriculum for languages contributes to the general education of all students.

Languages as a learning area in the Australian Curriculum

It operates from the fundamental principle that for all students, learning to communicate in two or more languages is a rich, challenging experience of engaging with the linguistic and cultural diversity of our interconnected world.

14. The development of the Australian Curriculum: Languages takes into account the range of languages currently taught in Australian government and non-government schools as well as in ethnic or community schools. It also recognises diverse program types in language learning including language-as-subject, content-based and different types of bilingual programs.

A rationale for learning languages

All students should experience well designed and supported language programs, taught by well trained and supported language teachers, in schools that actively support language teaching linked to universities that are fully committed to widespread and successful language study. It is worth re-iterating why this ambition is important. The principal reason is to do with the deepest purposes of education itself, to instil knowledge, to deepen understanding, to stimulate reflection and to foster skills. Languages are intimately linked to the essentially humanistic, cultural and intellectual reasons for making education compulsory. Bilingualism can foster more reflective and imaginative dispositions in citizens, and the principles of democratic discourse, participation and opportunity which Australia proclaims also find resonance with language study since the bulk of humanity lives in societies and continues traditions forged outside of English. (Lo Bianco, 2009, p. 64)

15. The major rationale for learning languages is that being able to communicate proficiently provides learners with essential communication skills in the target language, an intercultural capability, and an understanding of the role of language and culture in human communication. It provides the opportunity for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of humanity; to reflect on their understanding of human experience as varied in all aspects of social life, and their own participation and ways of being in the world.

16. This rationale for learning languages should be seen in the context of the contemporary world. Learning languages uniquely broadens students' horizons to include the personal, social and employment opportunities presented by an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. The interdependence of countries increasingly means that people in all spheres of life need to be able to negotiate experiences and meanings across languages and cultures. It has also brought the realisation that, despite its status as a world language, a capability in English only is insufficient and that a bilingual or plurilingual capability has become the norm in most parts of the world. Languages have a key role in this context: they mediate the interpretation, creation and exchange of meaning among people in daily interactions within and across cultures.

17. For individuals, learning languages:

- extends students' capability to communicate: proficiency in at least two languages expands their communicative repertoire, develops literacy and increases their engagement as citizens and participants within and across local, regional and global contexts
- strengthens students' understanding and knowledge of the nature of language, culture and of processes of communication
- develops an intercultural capability which includes an understanding of, and respect for, diversity and difference, and an openness to different perspectives and experiences that, in turn, develop world-mindedness and a sense of global citizenship

A rationale for learning languages

- strengthens the intellectual and analytical capability of students to engage with different ways of making meaning
- develops students' awareness of cultural assumptions and values that frame the world view shaped through their own first language(s) and culture(s)
- extends students' literacy repertoire
- strengthens cognitive and general learning capabilities such as creative and critical thinking: brain research shows that language learning uses and develops particular and unique conceptualisation skills and meta-cognition
- strengthen students' knowledge of concepts across the curriculum
- extends students' understanding of themselves, their own heritage and identities, and their sense of connectedness to others through reflection on their experiences and those of others
- enhances students' employment and career prospects.

18. In addition to benefits gained by individuals, learning languages strengthens the community's strategic, economic and international development capabilities. It contributes to the development of rich linguistic and cultural resources through which the community can engage socially, culturally and economically in all domains, including business, trade, science, law, education, tourism, diplomacy, international relations, health and the arts.

19. Learning Australian Languages meets the need and right of young people to learn their own languages and recognise their significance in the language ecology of Australia. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own language is integral to their overall learning and achievements. It enables them to reach a secure acceptance of their own identity and ensures a wider recognition and understanding of their culture, language, land and country. This contributes to their well-being. For all students, learning Australian Languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the country in which they live, including, for example, the land, environment and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contributes to reconciliation.

When I was growing up, I saw other kids speaking their language, like Italian or Greek. It made me crave for my own language. I always felt that part of my life was missing ... The language thing is a real positive thing for all of us. Not just for the children but for the grown-ups too. We need to know where we come from and where we are going. We go through life trying to fill that need. Language seems to give me that little bit of place, fulfilment and pleasure. (Nelson 'Snooky' Varcoe, a Nunga man from Point Pearce, SA, quoted in SSABSA 1996, p.32)

The distinctiveness of languages in the curriculum

...Languages are like only a few other learning areas... of formal education, in that they combine instruction and application, and become performance. In addition, since personal identity is negotiated and displayed in communication and must make use of the individual resources individual languages make available, a learner is required to take on the assumptions and cultural scripts the target language contains. There are special qualities that language learning contains, making them rare if not unique in the curricula of schools with respect to the extent that they potentially challenge and extend the sense of self of the student.
(Lo Bianco, 2009, p. 64)

20. Languages is the only learning area that invites students to learn to use languages to communicate with people in diverse contexts. For second language learners, this means learning to communicate in a language in addition to their own. For first language learners, this means learning to communicate in additional domains of language use. It is a learning area in which the explicit focus is on language and culture. It allows students to access and experience, in the most direct way, another linguistic and cultural system. It offers the opportunity to explore how different linguistic and cultural systems make meaning and how to communicate in diverse ways.

21. Another distinctive aspect of languages as a learning area is in the blending of school experience with 'real life'. A language can never be regarded simply as a school subject: all languages are practised by communities of users whose identity is largely defined by their particular language. For all language learners, the experience of learning language is part of the formation of their identity.

22. The experience of learning languages is distinctive and enriching because it involves the unique challenge of moving between different systems of meaning. This challenge is different for different learners. For second language learners encountering the new language for the first time, learning involves moving between their own language (English for many Australian learners) and the new language being learnt. For first language learners learning at school the language of their home or of their broader cultural background, involves moving between home and school-based, literate domains, contexts and uses of the language. For all learners, regardless of their previous experience, learning languages involves operating in at least two linguistic and cultural systems which connect in mutually-informing ways.

The distinctiveness of languages in the curriculum

23. Learning languages is an intersecting and dynamic process which involves moving between the first language and the new language or new domains of language use (Garcia 2009). It is not the case that the relationship between the two languages is 'one plus one', where each language stays separate and self-contained. The act of learning entails comparison and referencing between the two languages, leading to the development of reflective dimensions of language learning. Noticing how students' two languages behave draws attention to how languages work and to how language and culture shape experience. Being in two worlds at once allows for ongoing questioning, deeper awareness of who one is, a fuller understanding of the conditions shaping one's identity, and the role of language and culture in this process. This is a metalinguistic awareness which has benefits for all learners.

Key concepts and understandings in learning languages

When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many: rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning – a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language.... Whatever the culture they are born into, in learning to speak children are learning a semiotic that has been evolving for at least ten thousand generations. (Halliday 1993, p.94)

24. The key concepts which frame curriculum design in languages education are: language, culture, and understanding the relationship between the two. This relationship shapes language learning as an intercultural process, focused on interpreting and creating meaning.

Language

25. Language is the rich and complex human capability that makes it possible to:

- communicate: for a variety of purposes with diverse people in diverse social and cultural contexts; to build relationships; to interact and interpret ideas, opinions, thoughts, feelings and experiences; to interact and create texts and discourse in ways which are personally and culturally appropriate and meaningful; to create and exchange meanings across languages and cultures
- mediate action: to make connections between experiences, to make things happen
- represent ideas and experiences: to think, imagine, create, interpret, make sense of the world and learn
- analyse and evaluate: to interpret and discuss critically ideas, opinions, thoughts, feelings and experiences; to develop higher order thinking and communication skills
- shape and sustain values and attitudes: to form and share judgments and develop and act upon ethical dispositions
- enact identity: to express ourselves and understand who we and others are; to develop self-awareness in relation to others.

26. Language is systematic. It comprises complex systems of signs and rules which enable people to interpret and construct the meanings needed to communicate with each other. These systems (phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic) have to be internalised. They work alongside other conventions such as gestures, facial expressions, dress conventions and behaviour protocols. Communication through language relies on people having a shared understanding of the conventions for using these signs. Successful communication therefore requires an understanding of language and the rules for its use. It also requires an understanding of how language is used appropriately in different contexts.

Key concepts and understandings in learning languages

27. Language is a cognitive activity. It is a uniquely human capability to process information and experience. It lies at the core of learning and intellectual development. It is through language that meaning is interpreted and created.

28. Language is a social and cultural practice. It is the primary means by which people construct, share and maintain understanding and meaning as they interact. It is a resource to get things done individually and collectively. It is the means through which people make sense of experience. Understanding language includes an analytic and reflective dimension. Users may not necessarily always think critically or consciously about how language works (for example grammar, intentionality, word choice), but being a proficient language user requires the capacity to notice when communication works or does not work, and to know how to make adjustments when necessary.

29. Language as a social and cultural practice acknowledges the relationship between language and culture. Culture shapes the interpretation and making of meaning through language, just as language, in turn, shapes culture. All languages have different repertoires of meaning. Thinking about language as a social and cultural practice involves considering the reciprocal processes of interpreting and creating meaning and understanding the process of doing so. It also involves thinking about the relationships between languages, the processes of learning languages, the power of language (for example, to include or exclude, to persuade, to argue, to entertain, to praise, to criticise) and the relationship between language, culture and identity. Becoming a successful language learner and user involves using language mindfully, noticing, reflecting and analysing what is involved – for oneself and for others.

30. The description of language as a social and cultural practice highlights the variability in language use. Consciously or unconsciously, users make choices about their use of language. The use of language varies in different domains and contexts. People use different forms of language, styles, linguistic features and dialects in their communicative repertoires for different purposes, and they ascribe values to particular words and meanings and ways of using languages. People use specific languages to pass on knowledge appropriate to cultural practices and social domains.

31. Language is dynamic. Languages adapt and change across time, space and social and cultural contact. They are influenced by interaction among groups across different historical, political, social and economic times and contexts. Languages have been significantly impacted, for example, by increased contact with media and digital communications. Technologies have changed and continue to change language and literacy practices and languages themselves.

Key concepts and understandings in learning languages

Language is open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal. It has no fixed boundaries, but is rather made of hybrids and endless varieties resulting from language being creative, expressive, interactive, contact-and-dialogue-based, debated, mediated, negotiated.
(Shohamy, 2006)

Culture

32. Culture is a complex system of concepts, values, norms, beliefs and practices that are shared, created and contested by people who make up a cultural group and are passed on from generation to generation. Cultural systems include variable ways of seeing, interpreting and understanding the world. They are constructed and transmitted by members of the group through the processes of socialisation and representation. Language has a major role in these processes. Knowledge of, and engagement with, the systems of culture associated with language provides a basis for understanding the ways in which users of the language establish shared meanings, how they communicate shared ideas and values, and how they understand the world. This knowledge and engagement are fundamental to successful communication.

33. Like language, culture is dynamic. It changes because people's contexts change, for example, as a result of migration which brings one culture in contact with another. In communicating across cultures, people have to move between their own culture and the cultural world of others.

The relationship between language and culture

34. Language is closely connected to culture and culture is closely connected to language. This is seen, for example, in elaborate systems of kinship terms in Australian Languages. It is important to understand the intimate relationship between language and culture because it provides the lens through which people reciprocally interpret and create meaning and express their individual and collective identity.

Key concepts and understandings in learning languages

Understanding language learning as an intercultural process

Aoki, a Japanese/Canadian educator explains:

Bilingualism ... is indeed a mode of being-and-becoming-in the world. For me personally, learning a second language has been an entering into the strange world of unfamiliarity. Gradually, the new language sheds its unfamiliarity as I see more deeply into another perspective of the world and see with my new eyes an already familiar world. Two perspectives dance before me and press forward upon me, and when I find difficulty with one perspective, the other lends a willing hand.

Being bilingual ... is to meet the unfamiliar second language at the margin of the horizon of the mother language. It is to belong to two worlds at once and yet not belong to either completely. It offers an opportunity to fall back on the only person I must depend on, myself. Being bilingual asks of me that I live while probing life and life experiences. Because I live in tension at the margin, questioning becomes central to my way of life.

(Aoki 1987/1991/2005, p. 243)

35. Students come to the language learning process with preconceptions, assumptions and orientations that are culturally shaped by their existing language. Learning a language challenges these positions.

36. For all students, learning a language (whether as a second language or as the students' home or heritage language) involves working with, and moving between, at least two languages and cultures: the new and the existing. This intercultural movement between different languages and cultures is integral to language learning and using language to communicate across cultures.

37. Learning languages always involves comparison and reflection. Through the process of learning and using an additional language or learning their first language in additional domains and contexts, students come to learn more about their own repertoire of languages. Through comparison, things previously taken for granted are noticed. In learning languages, students are encouraged to explore and recognise their own linguistic, social and cultural practices and identities. Through this process of interactive reflection they begin to see the complexity, variability and sometimes the contradictions in using language. For second language learners, learning and using the new language does not involve the learner forsaking his/her first language. Rather, it is a process whereby the learner's whole communicative repertoire expands with additional resources from which to draw when making meaning.

Key concepts and understandings in learning languages

Intercultural language learning involves developing with learners an understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to an additional language and culture. It is a dialogue that allows for reaching a common ground for negotiation to take place, and where variable points of view are recognised, mediated and accepted.

Learners engaged in intercultural language learning develop a reflective stance towards language and culture, both specifically as instances of first, second, and additional languages and cultures, and generally as understandings of the variable ways in which language and culture exist in the world. (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003)

38. Through experience in communicating, learners come to realise that each person brings to an interaction personal knowledge, understanding and values, developed through experience over time and articulated through their distinctive language(s) and culture(s). They realise that their success in communication with others is not only determined by what they themselves do, but is also achieved by what members of the other culture - whose understandings are culturally different from their own - understand them to do. As such, they engage with interpreting and understanding human interaction and communication, and engage actively in interpreting self (intraculturality) and other (interculturality) and developing their own self-understanding.

Understanding language learning and literacy development

39. Learning languages develops overall literacy. It is in this sense 'value added', strengthening literacy-related capabilities that are transferable across languages (for example, the language being learnt and the learner's first language), across domains of use (for example, the academic domain and the domains of home language use), and across learning areas.

40. Literacy development involves conscious attention and focused learning. It involves skills and knowledge which need guidance, time and support to develop. These skills include the ability to decode and encode from sound to written systems; the mastering of grammatical, orthographic and textual conventions, and the development of semantic, pragmatic and critical literacy skills.

41. Literacy development in a second language is cognitively demanding; it involves these same elements but often without the powerful support of a surrounding oral culture and context. However, the learner has some advantages. First, there is the issue of distance. It is sometimes easier to 'see' things from the outside than from the inside. The unfamiliarity of the new code makes it stand out sharply and the learner requires significant cognitive effort to make sense of it. Second, the strangeness of the additional language requires scaffolding. In the language classroom, analysis is prioritised alongside experience. Explicit, explanatory and exploratory talk around language and literacy is a core element.

Key concepts and understandings in learning languages

Learners are supported to develop their own meta-awareness, to be able to think and talk about how the language works and about how they learn to use it. Typically, learners talk more confidently about some aspects of language and literacy in their additional language than they do about similar aspects of their first language. The dual process of making sense of the 'foreign', combined with the focusing power of comparative analysis and explicit description, are consolidating factors in developing literacy. Similarly, for first language learners, literacy development that extends to additional domains and contexts of use requires comparative analysis that extends literacy development in their first language and English.

42. Interpreting and creating texts in the target language constitutes valuable 'language-knowledge work'. This work involves thinking and talking about script conventions, sound-word relationships, grammatical rules and regularities, modalities and literacy practices. It requires higher-order skills associated with substantive learning: paying attention, noticing, decoding and encoding; analysing, systematising, comparing and hypothesising; thinking about the processes involved in discovering patterns, and finding ways around challenges. Research demonstrates the benefits of language learning in terms of increased cognitive flexibility and overall success in learning; tolerance of ambiguity, and the ability to manipulate and move between more than one linguistic and conceptual code. Being able to move between (at least) two language systems leads to deeper awareness and more flexible thinking.

43. The experience of learning languages relates to literacy in its broadest and most inclusive sense: that of intercultural literacy. The ability to accept the validity of different perspectives; to understand the nature of culture and of cultural identity; to see connections between language, culture, communication, experience and perspectives; to be interested in different experiences and ways of thinking and being in the world, and to develop awareness in relation to the self as well as to the 'other': these are key elements of the disposition and 'stance' which characterises intercultural understanding as a capability in education in general.

44. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities recognise the importance of literacy to their children. They support literacy education programs that are founded on establishing literacy in their children's first languages - that is, the Australian Languages used by their community. Literacy in English is regarded as concomitant on first establishing students' literacy in their first languages. Although most bilingual programs in Australian Languages are designed to help students transition into learning in English, their fundamental value is in the development of bilingual literacy. Bilingual programs in Australian Languages have been successful in maintaining the use of these languages in schools and in creating generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are literate in their languages. Strengthening bilingual literacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is essential to improving overall academic achievement and success.

Understanding the learning of Australian Languages

The recently developed policy: 'Indigenous languages – A national approach' sets the context for the learning of Australian Languages. Its objectives are as follows:

- a. National Attention: To bring national attention to Indigenous languages – the oldest surviving languages in the world; and the pressures they face.*
- b. Critically Endangered Languages: Reinforce use of critically endangered Indigenous languages that are being only partly spoken to help prevent decline in use and to maintain or extend their common, everyday use as much as possible.*
- c. Working with Languages to Close the Gap: In areas where Indigenous languages are being spoken fully and passed on, making sure that government recognises and works with these languages in its agenda to Close the Gap.*
- d. Strengthening Pride in Identity and Culture: To restore the use of rarely spoken or unspoken Indigenous languages to the extent that the current language environment allows.*
- e. Supporting Indigenous Language Programs in Schools: To support and maintain the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages in Australian schools.*

(Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2009)

45. The objectives of this policy for Australian Languages capture the interconnection among language, culture, identity and Country, and the vital role they play in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community life. This connection also needs to be understood by non-Indigenous students as part of the reconciliation process.

46. The present ecology of Australian Languages is the product of a diverse and complex set of circumstances, including colonisation by people from other language traditions. The inclusion of Australian Languages in the curriculum has a wider purpose beyond learning particular languages. These languages have a fractured history and to study them requires students to develop the skills both of language learning and of undertaking linguistic work. Learning Australian Languages requires a knowledge of language maintenance and development and, in many cases, language reclamation. By providing students with an opportunity to develop the skills of doing linguistic work (for example collecting, describing and recording language) while learning Australian Languages will also enhance their understanding of the nature of all languages.

47. Within the rich diversity of Australian Languages, the learning of each particular language will differ depending on the view of its community, as owners or custodians of the language, about who is permitted to learn it and teach it, in what kinds of programs and under what conditions. Schools need to work closely with communities to ensure engagement in decision-making. Protocols developed to support decision making about the teaching and learning of Australian Languages need to be followed.

Key concepts and understandings in learning languages

48. Australian Languages have always been, and continue to be, maintained through oral communication. School programs have assisted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop Western style literacy in their languages but, in the process, have committed them to a range of changes that writing systems impose on languages. This kind of literacy may ignore the range of visual literacy and arts performance practices that have supported Australian Languages. Schools generally place Australian dance, visual art, environmental studies, music and general cultural studies in other areas of the curriculum such as Indigenous Studies, Studies of Society, Arts, Music and Environmental Studies. These studies naturally support Australian Language programs, integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of learning, using visual and audial support in communicating.

Aboriginal language[s]... [are] a treasure trove of Australia's cultural knowledge waiting to be discovered and recorded. The development of language materials through using the latest technology was a real favourite with my language students. Creating their own stories that relate to their lifestyles opened up students to a new world of communication. Students never before had shown such an interest in learning and line ups at the scanner were common; the use of the school camera and video camera also became very popular; developing stories and animation on PowerPoint proved to be a successful tool in building up confidence to use these technologies in their other subject areas. Students also found that the English language became a lot easier to work with.

(Aretha Briggs, a Yorta Yorta woman and an Australian Languages educator, personal communication, 2010)

Summary

49. The key concepts and understandings in learning languages, as discussed, provide the foundation for developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages. The discussion signals that there have been changes in how these concepts are understood. Rather than replacing earlier understandings, however, these changes are best seen as extending earlier conceptualisations of the key concepts and understandings.

The learners, pathways and time on task in learning languages

....what learners – with their minds and bodies, home and peer cultures and languages, previous learning experiences, interests and values – bring to their learning environments and how that shapes their interactions with those learning environments. ... all of the questions about meaning, experience, language, culture, positioning, and so on, need to be asked about the interactions between particular learners and their learning environments as they evolve over time. (Haertel, Moss, Pullin & Gee, 2008, p. 8)

The learners

50. Understanding the biographies of learners, both as language learners and as young people, is important as a basis for developing their languages learning.

51. An increasingly diverse range of students is learning languages in Australia in contemporary times. The changing pattern of migration to Australia is extending the range of languages that students bring and for which the education system seeks to provide in some way. This means that in languages classrooms there are students with varying degrees of experience of the target language and with proficiency in an ever wider range of languages, as well as diverse linguistic and cultural affiliations.

52. While all students are entitled to study all language curriculum offerings, in the case of Australian Languages it is important that the ownership of those languages is recognised and respected and that their learning by all students is negotiated with appropriate community consultation. To this end, schools must consult their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and, in particular, the Elders in making decisions about which languages to study and ways to involve the community.

53. Learners bring to their learning their experiences of their contemporary world. For example, the opportunities for interaction afforded by communications technologies have changed the way young people learn, communicate and operate in the world around them. These technologies extend the context of learning from the classroom to inter-community and international interaction, for example, through tele-collaboration in international class-to-class partnerships, or collaborative writing through wikis and blogs (Thorne, 2008). This alters the expectations, motivations and aspirations of students.

54. In this context, learners come to learning languages with diverse linguistic, cultural and personal life-worlds. They come with distinctive biographies: their individual histories, their geographies, their previous experiences of the target language, and their particular motivations, expectations and aspirations. All of these influence how, what, when and why they learn, and, at least to some extent, their success in learning. As unique, social and cultural beings, students interpret the world and make sense of their experiences through their own social and cultural traditions, understanding and values. Learning emerges through linguistically and culturally-mediated activity.

The learners, pathways and time on task in learning languages

Learners develop understanding through the processes of experiencing, communicating and re-framing these experiences.

55. Decisions about groupings of any learners are complex. For the purposes of developing a curriculum that is sensitive to diverse needs, learners of languages in Australia can be identified in three major groupings:

- Learners who are introduced to learning the target language at school (second language learners)
- Learners who use the target language at home (not necessarily exclusively) and have knowledge of the target language to varying degrees (for example, vocabulary, phonological accuracy, fluency and readiness to use the language) and have a base ready for literacy development in that language (home user learners)
- Learners who are first language users of the target language who have undertaken at least primary schooling in the target language; they have had their primary socialisation as well as initial literacy development in that language (first language learners).

Within all these groups there are differences in proficiency in using the target language. Learning a first language from birth to preschool age anywhere is a powerful mind-influencing and world view-shaping experience. In addition, the level of expression and comprehension universally achieved by five-year olds in grammar, vocabulary and phonology is extensive. For these reasons, it must be recognised that second language learners will always remain on a different learning pathway from first language learners with respect to learning the target language.

Pathways

56. Learners' background with respect to the target language is a major variable that shapes the content of, and achievements in, learning languages. The groupings of students described above are not equally present in all languages. In developing the Australian Curriculum: Language, diverse pathways of learning for different groups of learners will be recognised. Pathways for:

- second language learners
- home user learners,
- first language learners.

will be developed to cater for, as appropriate, the composition of the groups of students learning each specific language. The recognition of pathways in the development of the curriculum does not necessarily represent or determine the administrative organisation of language programs in schools.

57. For Australian Languages, programs need to be implemented that do justice to the current state of each particular language and to encourage their revival and maintenance. For the teaching of these languages in schools there is a range of program types. Building on the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (SSABSA, 1996), these include:

- second language learning
- home user language maintenance and development
- language revival (including language revitalisation, language renewal and language reclamation)
- languages ecology (learning about the target language, learning about the languages in the region, and learning about Australian Languages).

These program-types will be elaborated further in the Framework for Australian Languages.

Time on task

58. Another key variable that shapes the content and achievements in learning languages is time on task. The Australian Curriculum: Languages is being developed on the assumption that all students will learn languages across the Foundation to Year 8 span and that the curriculum will provide for continuing learning through to the senior secondary years. The Australian Curriculum: Languages will describe learning content and achievement standards based on an indicative number of hours of study for primary, junior to middle and senior secondary phases of schooling. The following indicative allocation of hours will be used to inform the development of curriculum content and achievement standards:

- 300 – 400 hours of learning (undertaken across F-6)
- 130 – 160 hours of learning (undertaken across 7-8)
- a further 130 – 160 hours of learning (undertaken across 9-10)
- a further 200 – 240 hours of learning (undertaken across 11-12).

These allocations assume language-as-subject programs; a larger number of hours should be allocated by schools and jurisdictions in implementing content-based and bilingual programs.

Curriculum design for languages

The curriculum design for the Australian Curriculum: Languages draws upon the key concepts and understanding as discussed above. It is based on a set of aims, three interrelated strands and knowledge, skills and understanding that underpin the learning of languages.

The aims of learning languages

59. The interrelated aims of learning languages include:

a) *Communicating in the target language*

Learners communicate in the target language to:

- socialise; to exchange ideas, opinions, experiences, thoughts, feelings and plans in interaction with others, thereby extending their networks of interpersonal relations; to take action
- obtain, process, interpret, organise and convey information in a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts; to develop and apply knowledge, thus developing diverse forms of expression in the target language
- respond and give expression to real and imaginative experience
- mediate between languages and cultures
- construct and give expression to their own identity as individuals and as members of particular speech communities and cultures.

b) *Understanding language, culture and their relationship, and thereby developing an intercultural capability in communication*

In learning a language, learners develop an understanding of and make informed comparisons about:

- language and languages
- culture and cultures.

Through the experience of learning to communicate in the target language, learners develop an understanding of the relationship between language and culture in intercultural exchange. In this way learners understand different ways of perceiving experience. They develop respect for multiple perspectives on the social, cultural and linguistic construction of human action. They come to understand the diverse, rich and dynamic world around them and their own ethical engagement with this diversity.

Curriculum design for languages

c) *Self-awareness: understanding self as communicator*

By stepping outside the known space of their own language and culture and entering a new communicative space, which affords the opportunity for noticing and comparing, learners come to better understand their reciprocal role as performer and audience in communicating with others from another language and culture. They learn there are other ideas and practices that are also regarded as normal. They learn to question their own ideas and practices relative to those of others.

Learners learn to reflect upon their own experiences, to develop their self-awareness of themselves as communicators within and across languages, and to develop a sense of ethical responsibility as participants in communication across languages and cultures.

60. These three interrelated aims are realised through personal experiences of communication. The focus on experience and experiential learning in the curriculum is intended to capture the real-life process of action and reflection that is an integral part of human life and communication and contributes to the construction and articulation of an individual's linguistic and cultural identity.

61. In developing the curriculum, the emphases across these three broad aims may vary at different stages of learning and for different languages.

The organisation of learning in languages: strands

62. Learning in the Australian Curriculum: Languages is organised through a set of three interrelated strands. They are as follows:

a) **Communicating:** *using language for communicative purposes*

This strand focuses on the core of language learning: the active use of the target language to make and exchange meaning, the use of language to communicate for real-world purposes, in different contexts, situations and relationships. It involves (i) interacting and interpreting (reception) and (ii) interacting and creating (production). Both of these purposes account for the diverse ways that people communicate with each other and make and negotiate individual and collective meaning in interactions.

b) **Understanding:** *analysing language as a resource for making meaning*

This strand focuses on developing an understanding of and acting upon the understanding of concepts, contexts and processes involved in using language. It includes (i) learning about the target language system and culture, (ii) learning about languages and cultures in general, (iii) learning about intercultural exchange in communicating across languages and cultures, and (iv) learning about the contexts of languages and cultures, for example understanding languages of the region, understanding how technology shapes communication, understanding language reclamation and Australian Languages in general.

Curriculum design for languages

c) **Reciprocating:** *interpreting self in relation to others as language users*

This strand focuses on self-awareness in relation to the other. In the process of communicating, people continuously adjust their choice of language in the light of how they think others have understood them and they have understood others. This reciprocity involves mutual interpretation of meaning in mediating across languages and cultures. Each role taken by a participant casts a corresponding role for the other, and it is through the mutual processes of monitoring, interpreting and acting upon each others' contributions that any meaningful interaction can be sustained. In these processes participants are both performers and audiences in relation to each other. Learning how to use a language involves becoming aware of these reciprocal roles and interpretations in a way that transforms one's experience of oneself and others. As such, this strand also connects with the ethical responsibility of doing justice to the identities of self and others in communication.

In developing the curriculum, these three strands should not be seen as discrete, nor should they be given equal weighting. The relative contribution of each strand will differ for different stages of learning and for different languages.

The nature of knowledge, skills and understanding in the learning of languages

63. Knowledge in the languages learning area includes knowledge of the language itself and its use in communication; relevant cultural and intercultural knowledge; general knowledge, and knowledge connected to learning areas across the curriculum. In all these dimensions of knowledge in the languages area, knowledge and knowing is understood as conceptual (knowing that), procedural (knowing how to apply and use knowledge), representational (knowing how knowledge can be represented in various modes) and metacognitive and metalinguistic (knowing why).

Knowledge of the language includes:

- grammatical and systems knowledge (for example, phonology, graphology, vocabulary, morphology, syntax)
- textual knowledge (for example, cohesion and rhetorical organisation, text types)
- functional knowledge (for example, ideational functions, imaginative functions)
- sociolinguistic knowledge (for example, knowledge of varieties, registers, cultural references)
- cultural and intercultural knowledge (for example, knowledge of how identity is constructed in intracultural and intercultural encounters and interactions).

General knowledge includes concepts drawn from areas of interest to the learners as well as subject matter connected to learning areas across the curriculum, for example science, music, art, history, social studies and environmental studies.

Curriculum design for languages

64. **Skills** (knowing how) include:

- developing listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing skills in various combinations; developing a repertoire of literacy capabilities
- developing higher order thinking skills including perceiving, conceptualising, interpreting/re-interpreting, reasoning, analysing, evaluating, explaining, elaborating, relating, judging, comparing and contrasting, imagining, creating, generalising, concluding, justifying, translating, connecting – making connections between various symbolic systems (for example across languages, texts and modalities and their meanings), engaging with multiple perspectives and decentring from one's own perspective, and negotiating one's own and others' communicative strategies in interactions across cultures.

65. **Understanding** (knowing that and knowing why) includes:

- understanding the negotiation of meaning through the use of language, questioning assumptions, noticing how interaction works and how meaning is exchanged interculturally
- understanding variability in language use
- understanding variability in cultures
- understanding the social, cultural and linguistic construction of experience and identity, understanding the way socialisation and culture affect how we see the world, interact and communicate
- understanding that knowledge is variably constructed and based on cultural, political and ethical values and beliefs
- understanding the relationship between language and culture and being able to explain this understanding
- understanding one's own perspectives and positioning in the reciprocal processes of interpreting and using language in interaction.

General capabilities and languages

66. **Literacy:** Learning languages makes accessible to students additional literacy experiences. It strengthens language awareness and helps to develop a metalanguage, a language for thinking and talking about how language works. (Refer to section *Understanding languages learning and literacy development*, page 17).

Curriculum design for languages

67. **Information and communication technology skills:** Learning languages is enhanced through the use of target language multi-media resources, digital environments and technologies that provide for both synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences. Accessing live target language environments and texts via digital media contributes to the development of information technology capabilities. Accessing diverse real time contexts extends the boundaries of the classroom. In accessing information on the internet, students need to learn to synthesise ideas and information critically, to interpret information and to consider the reliability of information. (Refer to section *The learners*, page 21).

68. **Critical and creative thinking:** Languages learning has well-established cognitive benefits. It fosters creative thinking, enhances critical thinking and encourages divergent and imaginative thinking. In learning a language, students broaden their thinking as they learn to interact with people from diverse backgrounds.

Through diverse experiences, students learn to explore and reflect critically, to imagine as well as observe different experiences and perspectives. Seeing things from different perspectives helps them to become divergent thinkers. By learning to notice, connect, compare and analyse aspects of the target language, students develop critical thinking skills as well as analytic and problem-solving skills.

Language itself is a resource for creativity. Through learning and using languages, students develop new ideas and understanding that emerge from working across at least two linguistic and cultural systems. They make new comparisons, find new connections, explore alternative perspectives and apply and use this new knowledge in novel ways.

(Refer to section *The nature of knowledge, skills and understandings in the learning of languages*, page 26).

69. **Ethical behaviour:** When learning to communicate, students are required to consider ethical dispositions. They are taught explicitly to acknowledge and value difference in their interactions with others and to develop respect for diverse ways of perceiving the world. Through working with a wide variety of texts, students are asked to interrogate generalisations and stereotypes. Learning a language will provide students with opportunities to reflect on and to adjust their own ethical dispositions. This may be a confronting process that students need to learn to manage. In learning Australian Languages, students need to consider ethical behaviour in engaging with the owners and custodians of the languages. Students also need to consider ethics in interpreting, translating, and when collecting and analysing primary data in research.

70. **Personal and social competence:** Interacting effectively in an additional language involves being able to negotiate and interpret meaning in a range of social and cultural situations. Being able to communicate successfully with people of diverse linguistic backgrounds requires the ability to understand and show empathy, both qualities of social competence. Being open minded and recognising that people view and experience the world in different ways are essential aspects of learning another language.

Curriculum design for languages

Learning to interact in a collaborative and respectful manner is a key element of personal and social competence. This interaction relies on team work. Students recognise the reciprocity of their interaction and exchange with others. They learn to acknowledge and value individual and group differences and identities. Understanding the multilingual and multicultural nature of their own and other societies enhances students' personal and social competence. (Refer to section *The organisation of learning in languages: strands, Reciprocating*, page 26).

71. Intercultural understanding: The development of intercultural understanding is a central aim of learning languages that emerges from and enhances communication in the target language. It is an integral part of developing global citizenship and is a lifelong endeavour. (Refer to section *Understanding language learning as an intercultural process*, page 16).

Cross-curriculum priorities

72. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures*

The most direct means for learning about and engaging with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is to learn their languages. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are an integral part of the learning of Australian Languages. There is an inseparable connection between Australian Languages and land/Country, environment, fauna and flora. These languages are a key to understanding the land and environment in which we all live.

In learning all languages there is scope for making interlinguistic and intercultural comparisons across languages to illustrate concepts related to language and culture in general.

73. *Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia*

The most direct means for learning about and engaging with the diverse countries and people within the Asian region is to learn their languages. Learning to communicate and to interact with intercultural sensitivity are fundamental to this engagement. These are the aims of the languages learning area.

In learning all languages there is scope for making interlinguistic and intercultural comparisons across languages to illustrate concepts related to language and culture in general.

74. *Sustainability*

Learning languages develops key concepts and capabilities that pertain to sustainability in social and cultural life and to global socio-economic endeavours for a sustainable environment that fosters biodiversity. This is crucial in the context of national and international concerns about climate change, food shortages, and alternative ways of caring

Curriculum design for languages

for land and agriculture. Through mutual understanding, reciprocity, respect, consciousness, interaction, reflection and the making and negotiating of meaning, sustainable patterns of living can be achieved. Teaching and learning Australian Languages contributes to the global effort to exchange knowledge among people with varied practices in caring for the land; to the reconciliation process in Australia and its goals for language revival, and to the processes necessary to effect positive change in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by interacting with other communities nationally and internationally.

Key considerations for developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages

75. The key considerations in developing the Australian Curriculum: Languages can be summarised as follows:

- i. That the Australian Curriculum: Languages is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English.
- ii. That the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper will provide a common conceptualisation of the languages area and common terminology that can be used as a frame of reference for all languages in Australian education.
- iii. That the Australian Curriculum: Languages will include the development of language-specific curricula and a Framework for Australian Languages.
- iv. That the Australian Curriculum: Languages is designed to enable students to achieve designated achievement standards in the active use of the target language.
- v. That the Australian Curriculum: Languages will recognise that in the Australian community there are students with diverse backgrounds in the target language; there are second language learners, a significant number of learners who are home users of the target language, and first language learners.
- vi. That the Australian Curriculum: Languages will describe achievement standards based on an indicative number of hours of study for primary, junior to middle and senior secondary phases of schooling. The achievement standards will depict what all students can achieve in the time frame. The description in relation to hours of study leaves to systems and schools the flexibility to organise as appropriate: (i) the sequence of learning across years of schooling (for example Foundation to Year 6 or Year 3/4 to Year 6 in the primary phase) and (ii) the groupings of students according to their background in the target language, and (iii) the program-type.

Curriculum design for languages

viii. That the Australian Curriculum: Languages will be conceptualised as a Foundation to Year 12 development. In the first instance, priority will be given to development of Foundation to Year 10 curriculum content and achievement standards. Discussion will continue with the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) in relation to Years 11 and 12 in the context of the collaboration through the Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL). This framework, negotiated over the past 25 years, allows for collaborative syllabus/framework development and formal assessment of 28 languages at senior secondary level, thereby ensuring that students are able to present their particular language for formal study and assessment at Year 12 level. This will ensure that the diversity of languages offered at senior secondary level is maintained. Discussions will also continue with ACACA in relation to eligibility requirements for courses developed at senior secondary level. Incentives for students to undertake language studies at senior secondary levels in all pathways (that is, second language learners, heritage learners, first language learners) in order to increase Australia's languages capability will also be considered.

ix. That for reasons of manageability of the language-specific curriculum development process, the Australian Curriculum: Languages will be staged as follows:

- a) A set of common procedures and guidelines will be developed to guide teams working with the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages paper to develop curriculum content and achievement standards for specific languages in a consistent way.
- b) The procedures and guidelines will be used initially to develop curricula in two specific languages which will act as exemplars to inform subsequent language development. The two languages chosen to act as exemplars should represent languages that cater to the greatest range of learners in the Australian education context. Once the writing of curricula in these two languages is underway, the process of staged development for curricula in further languages will proceed. For each language, development will address only the student pathways that are necessary for learning that particular language in the Australian context.
- c) The development of a Framework for Australian Languages based on the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages paper will commence at the same time as the development of curricula in the two specific languages.

76. The scope of development is informed by two considerations:

- a) the relationship between indicative hours of study and achievement standards
- b) the staging of development in specific languages.

Curriculum design for languages

77. The relationship of indicative hours of study and achievement standards (and related curriculum content) is depicted in the three diagrams below, which recognise the diverse backgrounds of learners. The student cohort in each language may or may not include the range of learners depicted in the three diagrams. For example, the student cohort learning Chinese in Australia includes second language, home users and first language learners, whereas the student cohort learning French in Australia comprises primarily second language learners. Each diagram represents a distinct group of learners.

Diagram 1: Relationship between hours of study and achievement standards – second language learners

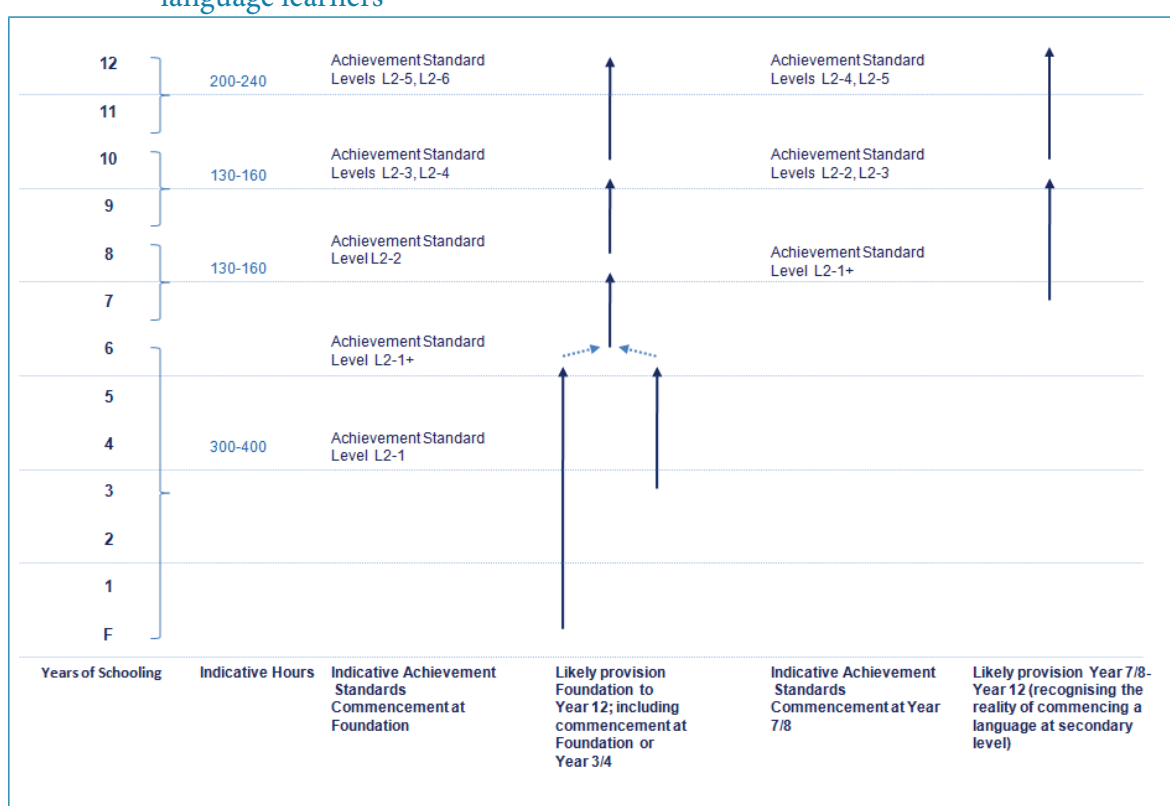


Diagram 1 depicts the relationship between indicative hours of study, achievement standards and the most likely forms of provision for second language learners. It allows for flexible provision in primary years whereby systems and schools determine how the indicative hours are spread across the Foundation to Year 6 span. It envisages that the 300-400 hours will most likely be spread over a Foundation to Year 6 or Years 3-6 sequence. Because students may have the opportunity to begin learning a different or additional second language at secondary level, a commencement point is provided at this level.

Curriculum design for languages

Diagram 2: Relationship between hours of study and achievement standards – home user language learners



Diagram 2 depicts the relationship between indicative hours of study, achievement standards and the most likely forms of provision for home user language learners. It allows for flexible provision in primary years whereby systems and schools determine how the indicative hours are spread across the Foundation to Year 6 span. It envisages that the 300-400 hours will most likely be spread over a Foundation to Year 6 or Years 3-6 sequence.

Curriculum design for languages

Diagram 3: Relationship between hours of study and achievement standards – first language learners



Diagram 3 depicts the relationship between indicative hours of study, achievement standards, and the most likely forms of provision for first language learners

78. The development of an Australian Languages Framework will be included in the first stage of development. It will elaborate on the diverse program types, content and achievement standards related to each, as well as the protocols that need to be followed in decision-making in learning Australian Languages. The staging of language-specific curricula within the Australian Curriculum: Languages will be based on the following criteria:

- coverage of the maximum number of students, the most widely currently studied languages in Australian schools and anticipated future trends
- Australian Government priorities (notably the current priority on four Asian languages)
- languages most widely spoken by particular communities in Australia
- community support
- languages of global importance
- immigration trends
- economic significance.

Curriculum design for languages

79. The proposed staging of development will overlap within a defined time period is as follows:

First Stage of Development:

- (i) Australian Languages Framework
- (ii) Chinese, Italian;
Chinese and Italian are chosen because they represent languages that cater for the greatest range of learners. Chinese is also a national priority, and Italian is learnt by the largest number of students in the primary years and the second largest number of student enrolments overall.

Second Stage of Development:

French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish

- French, German, Indonesian and Japanese are among the most commonly taught languages in Australian schools
- The development of Indonesian, Japanese and Korean are national priorities
- Spanish is a language of global importance.

Third Stage of Development:

Arabic, Modern Greek, Vietnamese

- Arabic, Modern Greek and Vietnamese are the most commonly spoken languages at home in Australia and are also supported by community schools
- Arabic is a language of global importance.

80. As with any other learning area, it is anticipated that language curricula that are not developed as part of the Australian Curriculum: Languages will continue to be offered under existing state and territory arrangements.

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