

Statement on languages education:

Languages education has a place in every Australian school. Every student has the right to learn additional languages at school. Languages are learned best when taught through quality, articulated, cumulative, rigorous programs, by competent, accomplished, qualified language teachers, experienced in local context and curriculum. Our position is to support all languages and language learning and that languages should be learned by students throughout the compulsory years of schooling.

Position on the Australian Curriculum:

Languages learning should be mandated throughout the compulsory years of schooling. This mandate must include the provision of sufficient and substantial time allocations to achieve successful language learning outcomes, as determined by research evidence into which types of languages learning programs of significant duration lead to high quality learning outcomes and achievements.

In recognition of the variability of teaching and learning contexts, the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners, and the current and changing multilingual and multicultural diversity of Australian society, a flexible generic curriculum shape, adaptable to different languages, levels, backgrounds and contexts should be developed. This generic languages curriculum shape should be articulated in language specific curricula, in at least six to eight languages in the first instance, and through the ongoing development of further language specific curricula as an ongoing cumulative national project. Australian (Indigenous) languages must be included in the range of fully developed curricula.

Language selection for language specific curriculum development should be based on a range of criteria including, but not limited to, humanistic and personal (learner) interests; learning, literacy and linguistic benefits; social, cultural and population factors; (changing) migrant group needs; Australia's geographical location; historical precedents; resourcing and sustainability factors; Australia's perceived future needs; and trade and economic benefits.

Curriculum content, methodologies and pedagogical orientation should reflect and be appropriate and sensitive to the diversity of contexts of learning, learners and teachers; national education goals (e.g. the Melbourne Declaration and other guiding policy); and necessarily include intercultural and Indigenous perspectives.

Achievement standards need to be flexible and sensitive to context, to reflect and facilitate differentiated (language, level, background and other contexts) curricula and will require ongoing refinement and development in relation to changing circumstances and evidence of learning achievements. Differentiated achievement levels should be determined through the examination of research evidence of languages achievements under different learning conditions and contexts (e.g. for first, home, heritage, cognate and second language learners and in relation to time on task), principally in Australian, but also in relevant, comparable international contexts.

Languages programs must be resourced to provide appropriately trained, qualified languages teachers, in sufficient numbers, in work conditions where high quality achievements are possible, and where language teacher retention is prioritised and actively supported.

The AFMLTA should have representation on, and contribute to, all consultative and stakeholder groups or committees dedicated to or informing the development of the Australian Curriculum for Languages.