Effective practice in early years (Prep-Year 2) language programs

A review identifying evidence of effective language education programs in the early years of schooling for the Queensland Department of Education and Training

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Introduction

The AFMLTA was engaged by the Queensland Department of Education and Training in June 2016 to conduct a scan of effective practice in languages programs in the early years of schooling (Prep-Year 2), and to provide recommendations for effective programs and planning processes for such programs. This process sits in a national context including focus on the recent roll-out of the Australian Curriculum: Languages (AC:L) for 16 languages, AFMLTA professional learning support for implementing the AC:L through its *Ready? Set?* suite of professional learning program for teachers of languages, as well as Federal Government support for apps designed to introduce languages in pre-schools and in the early years of schooling through the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program, and a commitment to increasing the percentage of students leaving school with languages capabilities. At a state level, Queensland state schools are strongly encouraged to provide a languages program from Prep to Year 12, and are required to do so in Yeas 5-8. Choice of languages offered, and year levels of provision are determined by principals, in consultation with the school community, attentive to current offerings, teacher availability, and community needs.

Languages teaching in the early years of schooling (Prep- Year 2, also referred to as Junior Primary or Elementary School in other jurisdictions and internationally) varies considerably around the world, within Australia, in jurisdictions, regions and even individual schools. The complexity of policy and practice presents many challenges in evaluating evidence of effectiveness from the academic and educational literature, as the field lacks systematic review of practice against common evaluation criteria; that is, programs are so varied, and contexts of teaching and learning are so different, that it is difficult to compare 'apples with apples', as potential evaluation criteria such as time on task (duration and frequency of lessons), program type, pedagogical approaches, language choice, learner background, teacher quality and preparation, continuity and progression, curriculum and assessment, community input, and school culture cannot be applied uniformly, nor reduced to a simple formula allowing easy evaluation. Instead, it is important to consider, in evaluating the literature and making recommendations, evidence relevant to the contextual features of places, cases, and conditions, and to present contemporary thinking arising from both theoretical framings and practice contexts that offer the best indication of what constitutes effective teaching in the early years of schooling.

Focus on a limited age range, a band of schooling, which also aligns with the AC: L Band F-2, as the first of five bands in the F-10 sequence, allows for some narrowing of the complexity of evaluation, as effective teaching in this age range is predicated on understanding the developmental and learning needs of children of this age group. In languages education this apparent uniformity presents further challenges, however, as we consider the diversity of learners, their language and cultural backgrounds, their oracy and literacy skills and understanding in one, two or more languages, support for additional languages learning among families and within the school culture, pre-school experiences, and local languages and cultural communities.

From this complexity it is possible, however, to consider the literature, practice and policy evidence cut in a number of ways, always with the caveat that context will impact on applicability of the evidence, and that generalisation possibilities will be limited. We present this report in a number of sections, to allow some teasing out of the complexity of evaluating effective practice of languages teaching in the early years of schooling.

Part 1 reviews the academic literature around key ideas, to consider current evidence on:

1. the benefits of learning an additional language and being plurilingual
2. the issue of 'the earlier the better' and most effective age to learn languages
3. policy and guidelines for languages education in the early years
4. the issue of time on task
5. evidence of effectiveness of early years programs.

From the literature, indications of what is being explored in academic research, and how this is informing practice can be extrapolated and can be useful to guide planning. Elements of the literature are then expanded in the following sections (Parts 2-3),

Part 2 explores the range of program types currently offered in schools in Australia and other English speaking countries at Prep to Year 2 level including 'Language as subject', Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) pedagogy, and Bilingual program types. In reviewing program types, it is hoped to provide evidence of what is being done and can be done in teaching languages in these years so that a range of models might be considered in planning forward.

Part 3 provides guidelines on necessary conditions for effective languages programs, based on the AFMLTA program standards, practice evidence and Australian and international guidelines. Such conditions frame planning in terms of resources required, mid-long term goals and considerations of sustainability.

PART 1

LITERATURE REVIEW: EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES IN THE EARLY YEARS OF SCHOOLING (PREP TO YEAR 2)

Literature on the effective teaching of languages in the early years of schooling (Prep- Year 2) is relatively scant. While there is a substantial literature on the benefits of learning additional languages, of bi- or plurilingualism, and of bilingual and immersion programs, and multiple guides to teaching, there is relatively little evidence in the literature of the *effectiveness* of *early years* languages programs, of *language as subject* programs, or of programs where there is a small weekly time allocation. Further research is urgently needed in this area, as more jurisdictions engage with plans to introduce languages learning programs in the early years, and look to build on the Federal Governments' introduction of the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) pre-school apps program, currently being extended in pre-schools around Australia (https://www.education.gov.au/early-learning-languages-australia).

This review briefly summarises the research evidence around key themes, beginning with an update on the benefits of learning an additional language and of being plurilingual, as a platform from which to consider program types, guidelines for effective early years languages programs, literature related to time on task (frequency and duration of lessons), and evidence of effectiveness from early years languages programs. Literature explored here is amplified in the subsequent sections of the review.

1.1   The benefits of learning an additional language and being plurilingual

There is ample, sustained and unambiguous evidence in the research literature of the benefits of learning an additional language, and of having bi- or plurilingual capabilities. The need to engage with global communities is widely acknowledged, from the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) to recent Australian policy (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009), curriculum (ACARA, 2011-2016), and international policy (e.g. European Commission, 2011, 2014). The capacity to engage with others in two or more languages is prioritised in most nations, and is a national and regional focus for governments worldwide. Growing up bi- or plurilingual is also identified as the norm, and as a right, by governments and education sectors worldwide, and hence Australian children are disadvantaged if at least the learning of an additional language at school is not available to them (ACARA, 2011; European Commission, 2011). A meta-review of the literature conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL- a US research centre affiliated with the US Modern Language Association, http://www.cal.org/) in Washington, in 1998 (Marcos, 1998), and subsequent analyses and commentaries, summarise findings that have consistently been reinforced in the subsequent literature about language learning benefits (e.g. Bialystok (2014-2016)).

In the literature on benefits of learning languages, *personal*, *societal, academic* and *cognitive* benefits are identified, as per the groupings below. It should be understood that there is considerable overlap in the groupings (e.g. arguably all the benefits are personal, and personal

advantages benefit society, as do literacy gains), and researchers also often identify multiple benefits from their studies. Each set of studies has been included once, in the category with 'best fit'.

PERSONAL

Communicative and intercultural
- Increased communicative capacity, including alternate expression (Garcia, 2009; Villano, 1996)
- Greater depth of understanding human experience (Bialystok, 2014; Garcia, 2009; ACARA, 2011)
- Benefits in travel and desire and willingness to travel and engage with people of other cultures and nations (Pinter, 2010)
- Increased understanding of others' points of view (Fernandez & Glucksberg, 2012)

Vocational
- Competitive advantage in the workforce and enhanced job opportunities (Marcos, 1998)

SOCIETAL

Social and political capital
- Enhancement of a nation's economic competitiveness, diplomatic relations, trade negotiations, political and security interests, social harmony, health provisions, customer service, teaching, law enforcement (Baker, 2012; Garcia, 2009; Marcos, 1998)

Community cohesion
- Expanded access to peoples and resources of different languages and cultures (Pinter, 2012)

ACADEMIC

Literacy, and language use
- Increased reading range and literacy skills in first and additional languages (Garcia, 2009)
- Equivalent or better performance in standardised literacy and numeracy tests (Thomas, Collier & Abbott, 1993; ACARA, 2014)
- Enhanced understanding of symbolic representation of print (Bialystok, 1997, 2014)
- 'Language as subject' learners (not in immersion/bilingual programs) outperform those who do not learn languages, in language arts (literacy) tests (Rafferty, 1996)
- Positive relationship between additional language study and English language achievement in English speaking nations (Barik & Swain, 1975; Genesee, 1987; Swain, 1991)

General academic
- Likelihood of higher academic achievement throughout school (Thomas, Collier & Abbott, 1993)
- Increased US college entrance scores in verbal tests (College Entrance Examination Board, 1992; Cooper, 1987)
- Special needs learners (with either disability or giftedness) benefit from second language programs, and gifted learners achieve high proficiency levels (Baker, 1995; Brickman, 1988)
- Early exposure to additional language learning provides educators with the ability to identify giftedness and strong language aptitude (Allen, 1992)
- Higher achievement on standardised maths, reading, and vocabulary tests (Delistraty, 2014)

COGNITIVE

- Increased creativity and problem-solving skills (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991)
- Outperformance of monolingual people in verbal/nonverbal IQ testing, and increased intellectual flexibility (Bruck, Lambert & Tucker, 1974; Hakuta, 1976; Weatherford, 1986)
- Higher general intelligence (Bak, Nissan, Allerhand, & Deary, 2014)
- Protected cognitive function; delay of onset of dementia (Bak et al, 2014; Bialystok et al, 2016)
- Improved planning, prioritising, and decision making (Costa et al, 2015)
- More perceptive of their surroundings (Alban, 2016)
- More critical and analytical (Alban, 2016; Fernandez & Glucksberg, 2012)
- Better focus, concentration and attention (Siegfried, 2013)
- More likely to delay immediate gratification in the pursuit of long-term goals (Bialystok, 2014)
- Better memorisation skills, including better working memory (Morales, Calvo & Bialystok, 2013)
- Higher levels of mental flexibility and agility (Gold, Kim, Johnson, Kryscio & Smith, 2013)
- Have the ability to switch between tasks quickly (Bialystok et al, 2016)
- Exhibit superior music and other arts skills (Cardillo, 2014)
- Demonstrate attentive listening skills (Krizman, Marian, Shook, Skoe & Kraus, 2012)

1.2 The issue of 'the earlier the better' and the best age to learn languages

The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) (Lennenberg, 1967) was proposed as a neurological explanation of why language learning was easier for younger children (defined as those before adolescence- usually under 12) than adults, suggesting that the brain's early 'plasticity' allowed for additional languages acquisition with near native like competence during this time and not afterwards. This hypothesis dominated thinking about the 'best time' to learn a language for some decades. However, there have been very mixed results on studies since this hypothesis was proposed, not least of which indicate that brain 'plasticity' extends throughout life, and that neuroscience is investigating ways in which brain plasticity can be enhanced therapeutically (Freitas, Farzan & Pascual-Leone, 2013). We do know that the brain changes during the process of acquiring an additional language, and more studies in this area will gradually reveal more about how we learn languages (Osterhout et al ,2008; Li, Legault & Litcofsky, 2014; Bialystok et al, 2016).

> *...second language experience-induced brain changes, including increased gray matter (GM) density and white matter (WM) integrity, can be found in children, young adults, and the elderly; can occur rapidly with short-term language learning or training; and are sensitive to age, age of acquisition, proficiency or performance level, language-specific characteristics, and individual differences* (Li et al, 2014).

We know that grammar structures of the first language influence (this used to be called 'interference') learning the additional language, and that tendencies to use first language structures persist even after more than five years learning the additional language (Pinter, 2012). In the era of recognition of plurilingualism, including acceptance of variety within languages, influence from first languages is now considered less of an issue, as near native proficiency is no longer considered the goal of additional language learning; rather, communication of meaning is given more weight, and also languages are changing (as they always have) because of the influence of other languages, such that notions of 'correct' language use are more blurred and less emphasised than in, for example, the grammar

translation era of languages learning (1960s-1980s) (Ortega, 2014; Pennycook, 2012; Pinter, 2012).

Jia & Fuse (2007) report from longitudinal research that it is not the age of commencing language learning that is most important in progress, but the child's social environment. Those with more varied and richer opportunities to use the additional language invariably progress faster. Other research reveals that younger children (under 12) acquire grammar patterns in a different order from older children (14+), whose pattern of acquisition is similar to adults (Dimroth, 2008; Genesee, 1978; Swain & Lapkin, 1989), and older children analyse grammatical patterns more than younger children, who seem to assimilate input without much analysis (Dimroth, 2008). So-called 'innate' ability to acquire rules of language diminishes in adulthood (Curtiss, 1995; Johnson & Newport, 1989). Learning a language before adolescence is likely to lead to more native-like pronunciation (Harley, 1986; Patkowski, 1990), and native like competence (Johnson & Newport, 1989), but, as mentioned above, these are less of an aim currently. Indeed variation and individuality in language production is considered a measure of effective hybrid language use. In addition, highly motivated adults, who learn the additional language as adults, can also achieve near native like levels of competence (Moyer, 2004). MRI scans provide evidence of differences in processing between younger and older children (Kim et al, 1997; Pinter, 2012; Bialystok et al, 2016). Older learners have an advantage as they progress faster in all areas of learning, because of superior cognitive skills relative to age, but over time younger beginners often overtake their older counterparts (Munoz, 2006; Pinter, 2012). The motivation literature (e.g. Dornyei & Ushioda, 2013) indicates that motivation to learn a language (and hence engagement) is a critical factor in learner success, at all ages and levels of languages learning.

A compelling argument for commencing learning of an additional language in the early years is that the child has more years in which to engage with the language and culture and intercultural understanding before adulthood, and before career and adult life choices are made. The more years devoted to learning a language and opportunities to use it in everyday situations are the greatest indicators of proficiency advancement (Curtain, 1997; Bialystok, 2016). Another compelling reason to begin early is that cultural and intercultural understanding is intrinsic to language learning (in ideal learning conditions, such as those advocated by all education jurisdictions in Australia, and through the AC:L) such that in circumstances where languages learning is part of *all* the years of schooling, development of understanding of place and identity, and empathy with others is enriched, with social, cognitive and personal advantages (Dodd, Farmer, Morgan & Scrimgeour, 2015; Scarino et al, 1988; Vale et al, 1991, Scarino et al,2008; European Commission (EC), 2011).

> *Opening (young) children's minds to multilingualism and different cultures is a valuable exercise in itself that enhances individual and social development and increases their capacity to empathise with others* (EC, 2011: 7).

Governments worldwide are recognising the advantages of an early start to learning additional languages, with policies to promote language learning as 'whole of life' activity (Pinter, 2012; EC, 2011, 2014; ACARA, 2011).
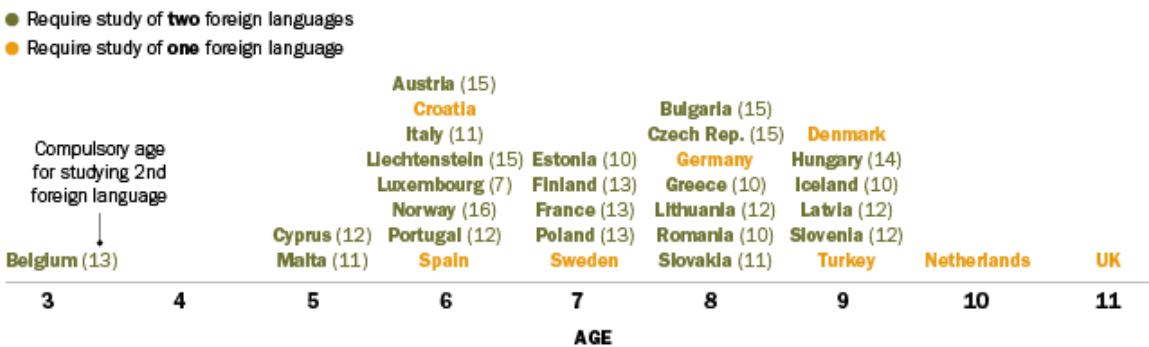
1.3   Policy and guidelines for languages education programs in the early years

1.3.1 Policy

Policies on additional language learning vary throughout the world. A scan of practice in English speaking nations is included in Part 2 of this report, and therefore not elaborated here. Elsewhere, such as in Europe, which has the most extensive and accessible data on languages learning policy and practice, there are extensive policy documents that support international commitment to increasing multilingualism. The European Union (EU) adopts a principle of 1 + 2, also known as the 'Barcelona objective', which requires 'mother tongue plus two' languages, commenced at an early age, as enactment of the policy of 'language education from a lifelong perspective' (EC, 2011, p.4). As can be seen from Table 1, and Figure 1, below, most students in Europe have *compulsorily* commenced a first additional language by age 9, including 11 countries commencing at ages 5-7 (noting that many European countries commence school at 6 or even 7 years of age). Most have commenced a second additional language by age 13-14. In Luxembourg, Iceland and Liechtenstein, students taking some educational pathways (generally the more academic pathways) must learn up to four additional languages (European Commission [EC], 2014).

Table 1: Foreign (additional) language study in Europe (EC, 2014)

Foreign Language Study Requirements in Europe

Students required to study ___ foreign language(s)

Note: Cyprus and Iceland, not shown, requires students to study two foreign languages; Turkey, not shown, requires one. England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales together form the United Kingdom.
Source: Eurostat

Figure 1: Foreign language study requirements in Europe (EC, 2014)

In addition to compulsory language learning in primary school, the EU has a policy on pre-school languages learning, promoting the introduction of programs as early as possible, as an EU priority, to extend both linguistic and intercultural competence for all EU citizens, and to connect pre-school introductions to languages to primary school languages programs. Most EU nations have adopted these optional programs (http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/language-policy/documents/early-language-learning-handbook_en.pdf). Examples of 'good practice' in pre-school programs can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/language-policy/documents/ellp-handbook_en.pdf, and 'country summaries' at http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/language-policy/documents/ellphb-summaries_en.pdf.

Country summaries include the following, as examples of indicative commitment to early years languages learning:

1. Germany: There has been a marked increase in interest by parents in Kindergartens offering an additional language since 2006. Most kindergartens offer some foreign language activity, and many have full bilingual programs, sometimes with expensive private providers of the languages program. While there is no official Early Language Learning (ELL) policy, there is widespread commitment to high-quality languages programs tailored to the particular needs of the children (EU, 2012, p. 34)
2. Finland: National guidelines state that children of cultural minorities are to be given the opportunity to grow up multilingual, as members of their own communities and the Finnish community. Day care and pre-school is a right of all children 0-6, and includes languages as part of the program, introduced in age appropriate learning across the six years. School starts for children when they are 7. Additional languages programs are offered to all 6 year olds, and sometimes for younger children, such as mother tongue and Finnish bilingual programs for 0-5 year olds (EU, 2012, p. 50).
3. The Netherlands: Children attend primary school, which includes Kindergarten, from ages 4-12. In 2010, over 500 primary schools taught English, German or French (as an additional language) to all students. At age 10, all students must study English.
4. Belgium (Flanders): The Flemish (German speaking) community offers 'foreign language initiation' in a non-formal approach from age two and a half. French must be the first additional language (in Dutch medium schools), and the pre-schools can choose their own second additional language, which is usually one of English, German, Turkish, Arabic or Russian (EU, 2012, p. 15).

At secondary level, in Europe, over 60% of students in lower secondary education were learning two or more additional languages in 2010, up from 14% in 2005. Many schools offer students the opportunity to learn two languages using CLIL pedagogies, so that more minority language learning can be included in the curriculum, and there is more languages learning time overall. In Belgium, Luxembourg and Malta, all schools use a CLIL approach. There are increasingly requirements for teachers to be educated in working in a CLIL approach (EU, 2012). Latin and Greek continue to be offered in the upper secondary curriculum as additional subjects, in about half of all European countries (EC, 2014).

1.3.2 Early years languages learning guidelines

There is abundant literature, particularly online, on guidelines and considerations for teaching learners in the early years of schooling (Prep- Year 2). In the language learning literature, most guidance is offered more generally as approaches to learning languages, and not specifically at

this age group, with a few exceptions. Each state and territory in Australia offers its own guidelines, pedagogical models and advice. A few are outlined here, as examples of similar approaches throughout the nation. Part 2 of this report expand on approaches in different nations, and general program types in use in Australian schools.

Examples of guidelines include the following:

At a national level:

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* (www.australiancurriculum.edu.au), with its focus on communication, understanding language and language learning, and developing an intercultural capability, provides, de facto, guidelines for the teaching and learning of languages (ACARA, 2011; 2016). With its language-specific curricula, developed for bands of learners where learner attributes, capabilities and interests are identified and specifically targeted, through pathways for first, background and second language learners, the complexity and diversity of learners are acknowledged. Curriculum detail, based around a model of content and achievement, echoes guidelines and a philosophy of language learning focused on meaningful communication and understanding, interactive activities, and on developing reflective, intercultural understanding of self and others as users of languages in a plurilingual, interconnected world. The AFMLTA professional learning materials (http://afmlta.asn.au/2015/02/01/ready-set-go-australian-curriculum-languages/; http://afmlta.asn.au/ready-set-plan/), to support the AC: L, provide teachers with guidance on understanding the design, conceptualisation and orientation, content and achievement expected; as well as advice for principled planning. The 2017 materials provide a framework for developing assessment linked to long-term plans, and to the Achievement Standards, as well as examples of assessment activities and work samples.

The Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) project (https://www.education.gov.au/early-learning-languages-australia), implements the *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* (https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework) and contemporary thinking on play-based, intercultural language learning into its series of apps in five languages (Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian, French and Japanese) for pre-schools around Australia, including Queensland. The success of this program in providing language awareness opens the way for it to be considered as an adjunct to languages programs in pre-schools, and to extension of the use of apps in the early years of schooling (F-Year 2).

What follows is a summary of approaches to languages learning, with an emphasis on the early years of schooling, from the general literature. It provides insights into the many approaches in developing programs for early years of schooling learners, and to the section below on evidence of effectiveness of programs (Part 1.5)

Pedagogical approaches and practices	Summary of approach	Considerations for early years of schooling learners
Play-based learning (EYLF, 2013)	A focus of discovery and wonder through child-centred play and exploration	Considered appropriate in all literature for early learners, into primary years, for enhancing motivation, engagement, enjoyment and encouraging a sense of belonging
Inquiry learning (Cross,	Exploration and problem based	Generally more suited to

2014)	learning, stimulated by a question or idea, involves 'doing'	children aged 7 and above, but can be used with younger children. Used in IB programs at all levels
Task-based learning (Van den Branden, 2012)	Using the language for a functional purpose, to undertake a meaningful task. Premise that people learn a language not only to use the target language for a functional purpose, but by actually doing so.	Giving early learners tasks to achieve in the language can make the learning more meaningful. Apps can be included in this category, if there is a goal to a game, for example
Text-based teaching (Burns, 2012)	Beginning with a text, such as a story book or realia from the target language/culture, around which language learning is structured	Highly suitable for young learners, to engage with real texts
Content and Language Integrated Learning (Cross, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014)	Teaching of subjects through the target language, combining the subject matter (content) with target language learning	Extremely common in immersion/bilingual programs for early years learners. Increasing popularity in other programs to increase exposure to and engagement with languages through other content areas. E.g. Visual Arts taught in Spanish, Science taught in Japanese. Often combined with language as subject
Gesture-based learning - one version is called Accelerated Integrated Method (Cross, 2015) , another is ACTLAN http://www.actlan.com.au/	Focus on gestures for meaning making to fill gaps where language is not yet available, and a system of gestures to accompany speech as a mnemonic device. Often used in a policy of target language and gestures only	Used for young learners in particular. Opposition to this method is that it asks learners not to use their existing repertoire of (first) language(s), as meaning-making resources
Oracy first (Pinter, 2012)	Focus on speaking and listening, as in first language acquisition as it occurs for infants, 'naturally'	Especially popular in introduction to language programs, and so-called 'natural' language use or language initiation. Used in many EU pre-school programs
Literacy-based program (Kern, 2012)	Deliberate focus on written language, and reading	Not popular with early years learning as a specific focus. Typical for Classical languages programs in later

		years
Intercultural language learning (ACARA, 2011, 2016; Scarino et at 2008)	Focus on working with two or more languages and cultures in understanding and reflecting on self and others as users of languages and as being culturally situated	Considered very effective for all aged learners. Perhaps the most popular orientation currently, with strong support in Australia, conceptual underpinning of AC:L
Whole language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)	Emphasis on reading and writing naturally with a focus on real communication and using language for pleasure and everyday activities	May be suitable for young learners, depending on how it is introduced in the class
Competency-based language learning (ECF, 2016; Richards & Rodgers, 2014)	Working with proficiency standards of achievement in levels	Basis of European Common Framework, for learning from elementary to highly proficient standards
Multiple intelligences approach (Gardner, 1993; Richards & Rodgers, 2014)	Learner based philosophy characterised by acknowledging the many intelligences diverse learners exhibit, and allowing choice of methods of learning, or ensuring a range of intelligences are catered for in programming. Intelligences include: linguistic, logical (mathematical), visual/spatial, bodily/kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existentialist	Considered suitable to cater for diverse learners, often incorporated with other approaches as a standard pedagogical consideration
Lexical approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)	Grammar focused, based on lexical units of languages learned systematically	Not generally used with early learners, but may be used in conjunction with other approaches, reminiscent of grammar translation approach, often used for classical language learning
Cooperative language learning	Promotes communicative interaction through pair and group activities with little emphasis on solo activity	Suitable for early learners facilitated by the teacher
Immersion (Baker, 2012; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009)	Bilingual language learning, across a range of subtractive and additive	Very popular in early learning programs worldwide; frequently linked

	models	with CLIL pedagogy
Translanguaging (Pennycook, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012; EC, 2014)	Deliberate and purposeful use of two languages in a classroom from specified tasks in each language; to more fluid use of languages, using elements of all semiotic resources (languages) for meaning-making, as 'naturally' occurs with multilinguals	Wales championed this approach to achieve Welsh/English bilingualism in the formal language assignment model; now encouraged as a classroom practice in the fluid form in many classrooms- and out of classrooms.
In-country experience	Learners visit a country where the target language is spoken, for anything from a short cultural exposure trip to an intensive immersion experience	Widely promoted in all school jurisdictions; rarely used with early learners, but can be a goal of primary programs, which young learners are aware of and look forward to

1.4   The issue of time on task

Time on task refers to the amount of learning time available. Where there are regular lessons, several times a week, and of around 45 minutes or more, learning outcomes are improved. Infrequent and short lessons, amounting to less than an hour a week, present teachers with problems in providing sustainable and meaningful learning, yet this is a common pattern in some Australian schools. There is currently very little literature available on time on task in the early years of learning. What we do know is that an early start is only beneficial when overall time on task is maintained across the years of the program; that is overall time on task is increased rather than the same amount of time spread over a larger number of years. (Spada, 2018).

Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2009) draw attention to this issue in their discussion about the fallacy of the notion of the 'crowded curriculum' in relation to languages learning, and of the value-adding languages learning provides for other subject areas, and especially for literacy advancement. They suggest that languages MUST be shifted into the domain of CORE learning, for all the benefits this would bring:

A dispassionate view of the evidence would conclude that of all the learning demands made on schools the one which should be under least pressure of ejection to the sidelines because of pressure on curriculum time is languages. Not only do languages have an in-built mechanism to overcome crowdedness (integrating content into the language teaching), literacy teaching is an essential component of second language teaching. Rather than depleting the time spent on literacy acquisition, learning a second language reinforces literacy acquisition and objectifies English literacy by providing a contrast with other literacies. Integrating subject content with second language teaching is a well-established, empirically researched methodology with potentially substantial benefits for learners' English literacy development… Many studies demonstrate that language learning can enhance several components of effective reading, such as meta-linguistic awareness, reading readiness and general cognitive developments.

The design of the curriculum, and specifically whether languages are an integral component of the 'core', is crucial to how this question is perceived in different societies. A 2007 study among OECD member states found that 92 per cent of instruction time for 9–11-year-olds is devoted to 'core curriculum' including second languages. By contrast, only 41 per cent of instruction time for 9 to 11-year-olds in Australia is devoted to a core curriculum, which includes second language learning; the remaining 59 per cent is devoted to 'compulsory flexible curriculum' (OECD, 2007). Despite numerous rhetorical affirmations to the contrary, languages have not really been admitted into the core enterprise of schooling and become subject to the claims of crowding out the core (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009, p. 46-47).

Rhodes (2014) reports a similar situation in the US, with teachers lamenting the inadequate time afforded additional language learning, with usually an hour or less a week, and all teachers interviewed in her study advocating for frequent lessons- frequency being valued more than overall time- as an essential requirement for effective languages learning.

Even parts of Europe, with its dedicated commitment to increased languages learning, and to compulsory programs in the primary curriculum, have issues with time allocation. The proportion of the total teaching time for languages does not generally exceed 10 % in the countries where the number of hours to be spent on particular subjects is determined at a national level. In many countries, this percentage is even lower, at less than 5 %. However, Belgium (in the German-speaking Community) (14.3 %), Luxembourg (40.5 %), Malta (15.2 %) and Croatia (11.1 %) are exceptions to this trend (European Commission, 2012).

In considering new policy for languages learning in the early years of schooling, while immersion programs that include substantial weekly time dedicated to the target language are not possible everywhere, attempts should be made to ensure that sufficient time is included, and that this is distributed in more than one lesson a week, for meaningful learning to occur. The AC: L, in providing advice to its writers, recommended 5% of teaching time or 350 hours in primary school (ACARA, 2012). Many consider this an inadequate time allowance, if languages are to be taught across all the primary years (e.g. see AFMLTA position statement on the Australian Curriculum, 2011, at www.afmlta.org.au).

1.5   Evidence of effectiveness: Practice examples and pedagogical principles and lessons

European Union Early Language Learning (ELL) (pre-school) evidence

While the following details pre-school practice, there is much in these examples relevant to Prep-Year 2 contexts. The EU publishes details of the programs of many dozens of effective programs in European pre-schools. Some interesting examples include:

1. Spain: A public school implementing foreign language learning, in a CLIL program, for 3-7 year olds. The approach used is to explore collaborative projects, on various topics negotiated with the students (e.g. the opera, dinosaurs, we're the same but different) (Won the European Label Prize for an evidenced quality program in 2005 and 2009)
2. Poland: Using photo books to teach 3 languages (English, Spanish, German), to students aged 3, 4 and 5. Hard copy books and toys were supplemented with digital tools (Won the European Label Prize in 2010)

3. Austria: Project to explore 'border regions' in German, Italian and Slovene, for 3-6 year olds (2005), and to extend the project into the primary school (achieved in 2009) (Won the European Language Label in 2007)
4. Sweden: A Swedish immersion program for Finnish speaking children aged 3-7 years as an early language learning project; and as a full languages program for students aged 7-16. (Won the European Language Label in 2005)
5. The Netherlands: Early English learning program for 4-12 year olds, using storytelling, singing, drama, Total Physical Response (gesture method)

The EU also publishes what it declares are 'proven orientations' for improving policy in early years languages programs. These are:

1. The aims should be to foster intercultural and multilingual education focused on the child's personal potential. Where possible, the same language should be available over a number of years of schooling.
2. Align programs with principles and pedagogies application to early childhood education and care, encouraging multilingual activities as part of children's social, emotional and cognitive development, in everyday situations in an intercultural and integrated approach, moving away from 'traditional' approaches.
3. Foster equitable access by ensuring consistency of objectives, context, resources and outcomes.
4. Strike an appropriate balance between raising awareness of different languages and cultures and learning one particular language.
5. Ensure links between pre-school and primary school where possible, and attend to research for those with special needs.
6. Adapt activities to the age of learners and the learning context, in meaningful, authentic settings of use of the language, such that use is spontaneous if possible. (Take into account the advantages of immersion, using languages for real purposes).
7. Learning should be measurable. While children should not be formally tested, investigation and experimentation should be encouraged to design, test and validate processes used.
8. Pedagogical materials should be widely available and disseminated to all schools and centres, including online tools. Staff should be encouraged to develop learning tools.
9. Develop appropriate education programs to ensure staff possess: language abilities, early childhood pedagogy skills and knowledge as well as language monitoring skills, intercultural competence for raising awareness of multilingualism and cultural diversity, promotion of opportunities for cooperation with communities of language users.
10. Promote staff visiting the countries where the target language is used (adapted from EC, 2011, p. 13).

Examples from the US

Rhodes (2014), in reviewing the evidence of three decades of elementary school additional language teaching in the US, suggests the following principles for languages programs in elementary schools:

1. The program should be supported by a team rather than just one language teacher or administrator.
2. The program should be designed to continue after a start- up grant or initial funding ends.
3. The language of instruction should be selected for reasons that make sense to the community.
4. Sufficient instructional time needs to be allotted per week so that learners can reach the targeted goals.
5. The entire school community should feel that the language program is central, rather than peripheral, to the curriculum (Rhodes, 2014, p.117).

She elaborates on 'lessons learned', providing useful guidance to establish successful and effective early years languages programs:

Lesson 1: Focus on good teachers and high quality instruction
Lesson 2: Identify and clearly state intended outcomes from the beginning
Lesson 3: Plan for K-12 articulation from the start
Lesson 4: Develop and maintain ongoing communication among stakeholders
Lesson 5: Conduct ongoing advocacy efforts to garner and maintain public (community) support

Lesson 6: Advocate for district and state wide languages supervisors
Lesson 7: Dispel common misperceptions about languages learning
Lesson 8: Monitor language development through continual assessment
Lesson 9: Harness the power of immersion
Lesson 10: Remember that money matters (Rhodes, 2014, pp.117-125).

These ten lessons have resonance for Australian contexts also.

Examples from Australia

A scan of *Babel*, the languages education journal of the AFMLTA, from 2005-2015, reveals a range of articles on effective primary school teaching, some with an early learners focus, and others with a more general focus. A selection is listed here.

Babel issue	Article	Description
39:3 (2005)	Carr, J. More thoughts on the usefulness of tasks in the multi-level language classroom	Considers the issue of multi levels of ability in classrooms, for languages teaching at all school year levels
40:1 (2005)	Shield, M. Helping teachers to include children with special educational needs in the primary language classroom.	Considers adaptation of primary programs for students with special needs
41: 2 (2006)	Molyneux, P. The importance of a theory-informed understanding of additive bilingual education.	Reports on a bilingual immersion program and its success in a Melbourne primary school
41: 2 (2006)	Farmer, K. The Japanese bilingual program at Huntingdale Primary School, Melbourne.	Describes the successful Japanese immersion program at a Melbourne primary school
41:2 (2006)	Ferragina, A. M. and Mustica,	Elaborates a task for Years -4 learners in a PE

	G. Getting your teeth into it: describing a language task in an Italian bilingual unit of work.	focused language unit.
42:2 (2007)	Orton, J. Gesture in modern language teaching and learning.	Use of gesture as an effective learning style in primary classrooms
42: 3 (2008)	Moloney, R. You just want to be like that: teacher modelling and intercultural competence in young language learners.	Explores how teachers might model intercultural language learning to young learners.
43: 2 (2009)	Oscar, J. & Anderson, K. Bunuba-Walmajarri: Land, Language and Culture: a report of collaborative curriculum design and delivery for non-Indigenous primary school children in Australia about Indigenous Australia.	Describes an IB PYP program in WA, introducing an Indigenous language and culture to primary learners
43:2 (2009)	Scrimgeour, A. and Wilson, P. Review: International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education.	Scan of HANBAN Chinese program and its learning aims for both primary and secondary teaching in Australia.
45: 2/3 (2010)	Morgan, A. Me, myself, I: Exploring conceptions of self and others in Indonesian names and pronouns with early learners	Explores using an intercultural approach to grammar with Prep- Year 2 learners
45: 2/3 (2010)	Morgan, Anne-Marie and Mercurio, Nives. 'To market, to market...': Exploring the teaching-learning interface in developing intercultural interactions from textbook activities - crossing languages and cultures.	Explores languages teachers of different languages working together to develop intercultural interactions for primary learners
45: 2/3 (2010	Daly, N. Context, content, and teacher education: Six language teachers in a New Zealand primary school setting discuss their language teaching identity	Explores teacher identity for primary school languages teachers
46:1 (2011)	Fielding, R. 'I sort of feel like I'm a part of France as well': student perspectives of bilingual identity.	Exploration of identity in primary learners in a bilingual French program
46: 2/3 (2011)	Morgan, A. Language, literacy, literature: using storytelling in the languages	Use of storytelling as a device in primary and secondary languages learning classes

	classroom.	
47:2 (2012)	de Courcy, M. & Smilevska, J. Writing strategies of children in a Macedonian-English bilingual program in Victoria.	Describes a bilingual program in Macedonian in a Melbourne junior primary classroom
48:1 (2013)	Daly, N. Learning to teach languages: An 18-month longitudinal study of two new language teachers in a New Zealand primary context.	Considers issues for new teachers of languages in primary programs in New Zealand, where there is very little primary level teaching
48: 2/3 (2013)	Scrimgeour, A; Foster, M. & Mao, W. Dealing with distinctiveness: development of Chinese in the Australian Curriculum: Languages.	Provides insights into the Chinese curriculum in the AC:L, for learners of all ages and pathways
48: 2/3 (2013)	Kohler, M. Indonesian in the Australian culture: developing language-specific curricula.	Provides insight into the Indonesian curriculum in the AC:L for learners of all ages
48: 2/3 (2013)	Skene, C. Investigating reciprocal meaning-making as an element of intercultural language learning in the languages classroom.	Describes a successful intercultural approach to French teaching in primary years
49: 1 (2014)	Ngo, T. Marginal words: sophisticated attitudinal meaning making resources in the Vietnamese language: Implications for the shaping of Vietnamese teaching in the Australian Curriculum: Languages (Vietnamese).	Examines attitudinal meaning making in the AC:L Vietnamese for learners of all year levels
49:2 (2014)	Fielding, R. & Harbon, L. Implementing a content and language integrated learning program in New South Wales primary schools: Teachers' perceptions of the challenges and opportunities.	Explores research on bilingual programs in a NSW junior primary school
49:3 (2014)	Scrimgeour, A. Responding to the diversity of Chinese language learners in Australian schools	An exploration of the diversity of Chinese learners in Australian schools, across year levels.
50.1 (2015)	Paolino, A. & Lummis, G. Orff-Schulwerk as a pedagogical tool for the effective teaching of Italian to upper primary students in Western Australia.	Examines a musical approach to languages learning of Italian in the primary school
50:2-3 (2015)	Smala, S. CLIL in Queensland:	Provides a history of CLIL approaches in

	The evolution of immersion	Queensland schools, including some details about current primary and early years programs.

In considering the scan of articles from *Babel*, it is apparent that there is an emphasis on successful intercultural orientations, and CLIL/bilingual/immersion programs, as well as some informational articles on the Australian Curriculum. There is a need for more focused research on primary, and especially the first few years of primary school languages education.

PART 2

PROGRAM TYPES CURRENTLY OFFERED IN SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA, PREP TO YEAR 2

The availability and nature of language programs offered at Primary Schools in Australia are influenced by a myriad of contextual factors, however it is increasingly common for students to have access to the study of a language from the beginning of primary school, as a worldwide trend, which is also evident in Australia (EU, 2011; ACARA, 2011; Rhodes, 2014).

This section of the report examines program types offered in schools in Australia and internationally at Prep-Year 2 level. Program types considered include 'language as subject' as the major focus, and also other types that are common and becoming increasingly popular in Australia, and which have longer traditions of use in other contexts, including CLIL pedagogies, used principally in bilingual/immersion programs.

PROGRAM TYPES

A diverse range of approaches is incorporated into Primary languages programs in Australia, all of which can provide opportunities for students to work towards the aims of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*. These aims are to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure students:

- communicate in the target language
- understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators.

Some of the key approaches implemented across Australia in the early years of schooling are briefly outlined below.

Languages taught as a separate subject

- Face-to-face

In the majority of programs, in all states and territories, languages are taught to students at all year levels by a specialist languages teacher(s) who plans and implements the Languages curriculum across the school, making connections with whole school priorities and designing learning appropriate for the needs of local students.

In the early years of schooling students typically have one lesson per week, ranging from 40 - 60 minutes. In some cases students may have shorter and more frequent sessions such as the school in this clip below, which focuses on oral language development in the first years of schooling including the use of gestures.

https://www.is.vic.edu.au/for-teachers/sharing-practice/innovation/

Another approach commonly used in the early years involves rotational Learning Centres. Further information including examples of this approach is available under the Rotations section on the following site: https://www.lls.edu.au/teacherspace/professionallearning/1607

- Distance
Students at small schools in rural and remote locations may engage in online language learning through Distance Learning programs, or via video-conferencing from teachers located at hub schools or through other similar distance arrangements. A resource which highlights key considerations to ensure the success of this approach is available via the following link:
Languages Education through Virtual Conferencing

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
The CLIL approach combines the teaching of content from a curriculum area (such as Science, Maths, Music etc) with explicit teaching of the target language. This approach is increasing in popularity and has been found to be effective in engaging children as well as having a positive effect on the learning of both the language and the other areas of the curriculum taught using this approach. It is considered a useful approach for increasing the time dedicated to the target language while also including other curriculum areas in the learning. International evidence suggests that meaningful engagement with the target language through curriculum study is motivating for students, who generally exhibit high levels of engagement, and appreciate the improved capability in the target language (Cross, 2014). Further information about CLIL is available from the following links:
http://www.lls.edu.au/teacherspace/professionallearning/2186
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/Pages/languageclil.aspx

Bilingual Programs
There is a small but expanding number of bilingual primary schools across Australia. There are at least 25 bilingual programs located in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia. Students in these schools engage in language learning for a significant amount of time each week (at least 7.5hours/week and up to half the learning time) and learn a number of areas of the curriculum (such as Maths, Science, Humanities) through another language, using CLIL pedagogical approaches. More information about these programs is available via the following links:
http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/languages/bilingual/
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/Pages/languagebilingual.aspx
https://www.lls.edu.au/teacherspace/professionallearning/38?sectionid=22

PART 3

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF SCHOOLING (PREP TO YEAR 2)

This section of the report is based on the grassroots-informed Professional Standards for the Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Cultures, in particular the program standards http://pspl.afmlta.asn.au/doclib/Professional-Standards-for-Accomplished-Teaching-of-Languages-and-Cultures.pdf (p. 7), and by a growing body of research-informed current practice in early years programs.

Effective languages programs are characterised by the following elements:

- They are demonstrably and consistently valued within the school culture by both explicit statements and implicit embedding in planning in terms of timetabling and resourcing.

- Schools clearly enunciate and foster connections between languages and other curriculum areas.

- A dedicated languages learning space is provided.

- Progression in the language within and across years is a clear focus, with prior learning both recognised and valued by both leadership and languages teachers.

- Schools understand that learning needs to be sustained throughout schooling and timetable languages programs to provide sufficient time on task over time.

- Timetabling accommodates the need for frequent, regular language learning to ensure students have an opportunity to achieve success in a life-long process.

- Staffing models ensure both adequate curriculum time and appropriate class sizes.

- Class sizes accommodate the need for intensive practice and performance in languages acquisition.

- Schools have more than one languages teacher to provide collegial support, particularly in potentially isolating itinerant situations.

- School budgets ensure appropriate resourcing for languages teaching and learning viz. an array of materials - print, multi-media, games, reference books such as dictionaries, ICTs and library resources- geared to different learner levels and styles.

- Class composition considers learner background and prior language learning.

- Schools have strategies to facilitate transitions and enhance the learning of students who transfer from other systems or schools, recognising differing levels of knowledge of the language and its culture.

PART 4

CONCLUSIONS — EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN EARLY YEARS (PREP TO YEAR2) LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The evidence to support the introduction or expansion of languages programs in Years Prep-2 is strong, based on documented evidence of benefits; opportunities for more years of learning; and for the social, cognitive, academic, personal, cultural and intercultural advantages that language learning brings.

1. Ensure any policy for implementing languages programs in the early years is able to achieve its stated aims.
   a. The earlier the better
      i. A quality program in language learning in the early years will provide the best foundation for language and literacy development in the future.
      ii. Any language learning program should begin from the earliest stage of formal education so that languages as a learning area becomes a natural, integral part of a quality educational experience.
      iii. The longer learners are engaged in languages learning, the greater the linguistic and socio-cultural benefits, including intercultural understanding and reflective perspective development.
   b. Apply pedagogies suitable for early years learners
      i. Ensure language learning pedagogies are consistent with research and those applied in other learning areas in the early years, as per current national and state policies and guidelines.
      ii. Evaluate the literature on effective pedagogies for languages learning in the early years of schooling, including research on cognitive development and social learning environments, and the range of pedagogical approaches that might be suitable to the particular context of learning (e.g. see table of

pedagogies in Part 1 and consider local conditions, such as community language and cultural practices).

c. Provide sufficient time on task to achieve the desired outcomes of the early years language program

    i. AC:L indicative hours and IB PYP recommendations for 'time on task' will be useful indicators, as well as examples from Europe and the UK and US.

d. Select appropriate pedagogies for particular contexts

    i. Consider the evidence on approaches including immersion, bilingual programs, CLIL pedagogy, and other approaches identified in the table in Part 1.

2. Languages programs in the early years of schooling should be based on the following conditions:

a. SUPPORT

    i. There is support for the proposal at the department level, and at regional levels, and even at local school levels.

    ii. Whole school support needs to be promoted, with specific Professional Learning for school leadership teams to contextualise the wide-reaching benefits and need for additional language learning, and how sustainable programs might be initiated and maintained.

    iii. Explicit statements of support and implicit embedding in planning in terms of timetabling and resourcing are made consistently, to demonstrate and enact the value of the languages program within the school culture.

    iv. Connections between languages and other curriculum areas are clearly enunciated and fostered

        1. Connections may be enhanced by including CLIL approaches to increase time dedicated to both other LAs and languages.

    v. The entire school community should feel that the language program is central, rather than peripheral, to the curriculum.

    vi. The program should be designed to continue after a start- up grant or initial funding ends.

    vii. Ongoing communication among stakeholders is developed and maintained from the outset, and advocacy efforts to garner and maintain public (community) support are maintained.

    viii. Work with teacher professional associations to ensure professional 'buy-in',

and ongoing support for professional learning, as well as network enhancement.

    ix.   Access quality teachers of said language.

  b. RESOURCING

    i.   Schools ensure provision of a dedicated languages learning space.

    ii.   Schools ensure appropriate resourcing for languages teaching and learning viz. an array of materials - print, multi-media, games, reference books such as dictionaries, ICTs and library resources- geared to different learner levels and styles through providing an adequate and sustained budget for languages.

    iii.   Remember that money matters, and will make a difference to achievement in the long term.

  c. STAFFING

    i.   The focus is on good teachers and high quality instruction

        1.   Teachers need subject/content knowledge (knowledge of their language and its cultural contexts), pedagogical knowledge (how to teach); pedagogical content knowledge (how to teach languages); intercultural knowledge and understanding; curriculum knowledge.

    ii.   Schools have more than one languages teacher to provide collegial support, particularly in potentially isolating itinerant situations.

    iii.   The program should be supported by a team rather than just one language teacher or administrator.

  d. CLASS COMPOSITION

    i.   class sizes accommodate the need for intensive practice and performance in languages acquisition, and should be based on best research for Prep- Year2 learners.

    ii.   class composition considers learner background and prior language learning.

  e. TIME ON TASK

    i.   Sufficient instructional time needs to be allotted per week so that learners can reach the targeted goals- both duration and frequency need to be considered.

      ii.   Schools understand that learning needs to be sustained throughout schooling and timetable languages programs to provide sufficient time on task over time.

      iii.   Timetabling accommodates the need for frequent, regular language learning to ensure students have an opportunity to achieve success in a life-long process.

   f.   CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

      i.   Progression in the language within and across years is a clear focus, with prior learning both recognised and valued by both leadership and languages teachers

      ii.   Schools have strategies to facilitate transitions and enhance the learning of students who transfer from other systems or schools, recognising differing levels of knowledge of the language and its culture.

      iii.   Language development is monitored through continual assessment and evaluation of programs.

   g.   CURRICULUM GOALS AND CONTENT

      i.   Intended outcomes are Identified and clearly stated from planning stages onwards.

      ii.   A Prep-12 articulation is planned from the outset, with sub-set thinking appropriate to bands of learning.

      iii.   Work with ACARA and the AC:L, in implementing the new curriculum, sensitive to transition from previous curricula and learning approaches.

3.   ADVOCACY

   a.   Dispel common misperceptions about languages learning.

   b.   Work with communities to promote the benefits of early language learning.

   c.   Engage ambassadors to demonstrate successful programs, teaching, pedagogies.

   d.   Maintain networks and stakeholder connections.

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