

Learning a language gives students the edge



Learning a language is a curriculum requirement for R-8 students with the aim of students continuing up to year 12.

DECD Curriculum, Pedagogy, Assessment and Reporting Policy for R-10 and Implementation Guidelines

“Learning another language is about recognising one of the realities of life-94% of the world’s population (about 6.15 billion people) currently speak a language other than English. In Australia more than 200 different languages are spoken; 16% of our population speaks a language other than English at home. The world is a language-rich place. Consequently, monolingual young people will miss out on the benefits of participating in and appreciating this astonishingly diverse reality.”

*Languages Opens the Door to a Bigger World
School leaders Advocacy Statement, DEEWR, 2008*

Why are languages important?

The cold hard fact is that young people will be competing in a global job market and 94% of the world’s population already speaks a language other than English PLUS one or two additional languages. Learning another language offers young people many benefits including:

➤ **SCHOOL**

Learning another language improves a young person’s overall literacy and cognitive abilities. The skills they gain and use for studying another language are transferable across all learning areas.

➤ **WORK**

Knowing another language gives a young person a competitive edge in today’s global job market.

➤ **SOCIAL**

Learning another language helps young people to communicate more effectively and relate to others, self-manage and have the confidence to have a go without the fear of making mistakes.

➤ **WORLD VIEW**

Learning another language enables young people to view the world from a broader perspective as they understand and value their own culture and the cultures of other people in Australia (43% of Australian citizens have been born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas) and overseas.

In South Australia we also recognise the unique status of Aboriginal Languages as the original languages of this state and the cultural heritage and property of Aboriginal communities of South Australia. As the first languages of South Australia, they are part of the heritage of all South Australians.



When learning a language students achieve the best results when:

- they engage with quality, effective language programs that meets the needs of 21st Century learners
- language programs are an integral and connected part of a broad and balanced curriculum
- there are clearly identified pathways to study the language from B – 12
- leaders, educators, students, parents and the community all acknowledge that language learning is a requirement for all students B – 8 in government schools, with the aim of students continuing their languages education into year 12 and beyond
- there is intercultural capacity, respect for diversity and difference and an understanding of the role language plays in human communication.

How does DECD assist educators to maximise student achievement in languages?

The core work of the DECD Office for Education and Early Childhood, Learning Improvement Division, Languages Team is to:

- support the **development** of the Australian Curriculum: Languages and the **implementation** of the new curriculum.
- work with local, national and international partners to **rethink** ways of working within local partnerships to **improve** languages take-up and quality and maximise **support** for our schools.

DECD Office for Education and Early Childhood, Learning Improvement Division, Languages Team supports:

- a local partnership approach for the delivery of at least one consistent language to build teacher capacity and encourage the sharing of available resources
- the use of the latest digital technologies and blended models of languages provision, critical to addressing languages delivery challenges for hard to staff schools and to improve student engagement in languages education
- Intergovernmental and community partnerships together with complementary providers to significantly contribute to the level of support our schools receive for languages
- international links for initiatives such as languages sister school relationships
- principal leadership and advocacy, central to quality programs and shifting community perceptions on the value of learning a language
- individual language specific associations, working with educators to increase understanding of knowledge, pedagogy and practice.

“Monolingual English native speakers are already losing the advantage in their own language because English language skills are becoming a basic skill around the world. With English now part of the school curriculum in many countries from Europe to Asia, Australians are increasingly competing for jobs with people who are just as competent in English as they are in their own native language and possibly one or two more...”

Group of 8 Universities - Languages in Crisis: A Rescue Plan for Australia Report, 2007

Can teaching a language give you the edge?

Are you interested in becoming a language teacher or leading languages education in your school?

For more information contact:

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