

Rationale

The overall rationale for learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages in Australian schools is that they are the original languages of this country. Through learning them, all students gain access to knowledge and understanding of Australia that can only come from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander perspective. The languages by their nature embed this perspective. Learning to use these unique languages can play an important part in the development of a strong sense of identity, pride and self-esteem for all Australian students.

Each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language is unique to the Country/Place on which it arose. It gives voice to the landscapes, thoughts and ways of seeing and interpreting the world. When the language of the land is spoken, it brings together all of the elements of the landscape and its people. It encompasses the relationships of these people with one another and with the landscape, past, present and future. The learning of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language incorporates the realities of its people and facilitates students' deep engagement with knowledge, ways of being and ways of knowing. It develops in students an understanding of historical, current and ongoing connection to Country/Place and culture.

Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages are fundamental to the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and this is recognised throughout the Framework. It is also the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have access to education in and about their own languages, as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Education systems can play a vital role in facilitating access to language learning and supporting community language revival and maintenance and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages meets the needs and rights of young people to learn their own languages and recognises the significance of these languages in the language ecology of Australia. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own language is crucial to their overall learning and achievements. It enables them to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language, culture, Country and Place, land, water, sea and sky, and this contributes to their wellbeing. For all students, learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the Country/Place in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary revival, maintenance and development of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages are complex and diverse. Engaging with the study of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language will develop communication skills in the language studied and will also contribute to the intellectual enrichment of students. For non-Indigenous students, the study of an Aboriginal language or Torres Strait Islander language will provide intellectual challenge and development while also giving them insight into and understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures and knowledge. In some cases it will provide these students with the opportunity to communicate with Indigenous Australians in their own language. In other cases, in addition to communication skills, it will give insight into language change and language revival within its historical context.

The government report 'Our Land Our Languages: Language Learning in Indigenous Communities' (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia, September 2012), found that there is an ongoing and close relationship between the work of communities to maintain and revive their languages and that of schools as vehicles for language instruction. The study 'Indigenous Languages Programs in Australian Schools: A Way Forward' (Purdie et al., 2008,) found that over 16 000 Indigenous students and 13 000 non-Indigenous students located in 260 Australian schools were involved in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages programs.

The opportunity to learn an Aboriginal language and/or a Torres Strait Islander language is becoming available in an increasing number of Australian schools, and an aim of this Framework is to make that option available for all students. In this way, all students will have the opportunity to benefit from the social and intellectual development that results from this learning.

Foundation to Year 2 Achievement Standard

The achievement standards for the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages First Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of languages that may be learnt as an L1 in the school context. The achievement standards will need to be adapted for use for specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

By the end of Year 2, students interact with the teaching team, Elders, community members and each other to share information about family, friends, community activities and events. They use appropriate ways of talking, including terms of respect, forms of address and sign language. They participate in routine classroom exchanges and collaborative activities, such as pair, group and class discussions, asking and responding to questions and taking turns. They make relevant suggestions during class writing activities when the teacher is acting as a scribe. They identify key information about Country/Place under the guidance of Elders and community members and demonstrate this understanding by describing habitats, plants, animals and seasonal changes, by classifying plants, animals and natural objects into categories, and by naming and describing key social and cultural events. They respond to texts such as stories, songlines, dance and visual art through singing, dancing, drawing, action and movement, demonstrating understanding by identifying and describing characters, sequencing events, and retelling parts of the story. Students use familiar words and expressions to create and present shared stories, songs and performances, drawing on their own experiences and knowledge and providing details about characters or events. They make short presentations consisting of a few connected sentences on familiar and learned topics. They read aloud short shared texts with familiar vocabulary, high-frequency sight words and supportive images. They use knowledge of sounds and letters, high-frequency words, sentence boundary punctuation and directionality to help them make meaning when reading. Students use family terms and skin names for immediate family members as appropriate and demonstrate appropriate ways of interacting and behaving according to kinship structures and social groupings. They demonstrate understanding of connections between Country/Place and individuals and groups by identifying and naming features of Country/Place that belong to their own family and kinship groups. They identify their own links/cultural affiliations, for example, to stories, totems, dances and designs.

Students link most sounds of the language to written symbols and conventions. They use knowledge of sound–symbol relationships to read and recognise high-frequency words and use simple metalanguage to describe basic elements of language forms and structures. They recognise that messages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages can be communicated in a number of ways, such as Elders' storytelling or through song, dance, visual design and signing. Students know that different words and language forms are used to address and communicate with people according to relationship and situation. They recognise that there are many different languages spoken in their class, community and region. They describe how the language has been passed down from one generation to the next, and recognise that language use reflects where and how they live and what is important to them.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to ensure that students:

- communicate in the language
- understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators
- understand the process of language building as a means to extend the potential of the language (in vocabulary, expression and discourse) and to develop knowledge of linguistic techniques (such as, collecting, describing and recording language), including processes of language revival.

These four aims are interrelated and provide the basis for the two organising strands: Communicating and Understanding.

Structure

Pathways

To cater for differences between the ecologies of languages and the communities who are owners and custodians of those languages, and to cater for students who come from a variety of learner backgrounds, the Framework has three pathways:

- First Language Learner Pathway (L1)
- Second Language Learner Pathway (L2)
- Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR).

This approach recognises that the two key variables are 'the learner' and 'the nature of the language'.

The Framework is designed to be flexible in use for developing language-specific curricula and programs. Aspects of the content and achievement standards from the various learner pathways can be selected, adapted and modified in ways that best suit a particular language, to ensure that the curriculum and subsequent programs are appropriately pitched and to recognise the nature of the language, the nature of the learners and the context of learning.

First Language Learner Pathway (L1)

Languages studied in the First Language Learner Pathway (L1) are typically used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

Typically, but not exclusively, L1 programs will occur on Country/Place and will have constant involvement from a variety of speakers from the community. A key expectation in the L1 pathway is that of students having opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

Learners are typically Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children who have learnt the language from their families as a first language and continue to use it naturally at home and play. Students may have varying skills in other languages, including varieties of English.

The First Language Learner Pathway provides students with an opportunity to study a first language at school. For these students, having the opportunity to learn their own language at school supports their cognitive development and signals recognition of the value and status of their language and ways of using and understanding language. Learning and using one's own language at school also meets a widely held community aim to strengthen students' identity and their connection between their families, community and Country/Place.

Students develop language skills to expand the domains of use in the language. This includes developing skills in registers and genres not normally encountered in their family and home community; in effect, this may involve the students in the creative development of new registers/genres, vocabulary and expressions in the language. As well as continuing to develop, extend and strengthen oracy, a key feature of the First Language Learner pathway is the development of written literacy.

The curriculum content and achievement standards in the First Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that may be learnt as a first language. The curriculum content and achievement standards will need to be adapted when developing language-specific curricula, and will need to be modified if the program occurs off-Country.

Second Language Learner Pathway (L2)

Languages studied in the Second Language Learner Pathway (L2) are typically languages used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

The second language learner pathway has been written on the assumption that learning will occur off-Country, involving students who are typically not from the language community and having little or no experience of the language and culture. They are introduced to learning the language at school as an additional, new language.

The language chosen for curriculum development should have a sizeable set of resources in a variety of media, such as local documentaries, bilingual narrative and descriptive texts, and educational materials in print and digital form. Learning is enriched and authenticated by interaction with visiting Elders and community speakers, and where possible visits to Country/Place. Information and communications technologies provide additional resources to support a range of language and culture experiences.

The Second Language Learning Pathway provides students with an opportunity to study a language that is structurally very different from English and one from a culture quite distant from the English-speaking mainstream. This develops a deeper appreciation of the nature and diversity of languages and cultures, and supports the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to learn and understand an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language and its cultural context.

For students who are from the language community but who did not grow up speaking the language, it is an opportunity to reaffirm their cultural identity through learning the language of their community.

The curriculum content and achievement standards in the Second Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that may be learnt as a second language. The content descriptions, content elaborations and achievement standards for the Second Language Learner Pathway will need to be adapted for use with the particular language being taught and will need to be modified if the program occurs on-Country or if the learners are from the language community.

Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR)

The Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR) provides opportunities for students to study Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that are being revived by their owners or custodians and are in various stages of revitalisation, renewal and reclamation.

LR covers a much broader range of language types and ecologies than either L1 or L2, and the vast majority of Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages are included in the LR category.

Schools teaching the Language Revival Learner Pathway (LR) will most likely be located broadly within the geographical region of the language and culture, sometimes in towns and cities and other times in rural and remote regions. Classes will likely include students who relate closely to the language and culture as well as students with varying degrees of affiliation with the language and culture, including some with no connections to the language and culture. A key expectation in the LR pathway is that students have opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

The Language Revival Learner Pathway draws on the Australian Indigenous Languages Framework (AILF) and takes into account key variables such as: how much is known about and documented for the language; the extent to which languages are used or remembered, ranging from languages no longer spoken (owners often use the term 'sleeping') to those spoken fluently by members of the older generations; and the extent to which languages have been reintroduced into the community of owners and custodians.

These variables give rise to the following broad categories of language revival:

- Language Revitalisation: where there are fluent L1 speakers (typically members of the older generation) but intergenerational transmission of the language has been interrupted. In this case, younger generations may understand some of the language and may use some words and phrases but they do not speak it as their first language. Examples of revitalisation languages include: Walmajarri in the Kimberley, Yindjibarndi in the Pilbara, Meriam in the Torres Strait, Dyirbal in north-eastern Queensland, Wubuy (Nunggubuyu) in Arnhem Land, and Adnyamathanha (Yura Ngawarla) in the Flinders Ranges. .
- Language Renewal: where there are a number of adult speakers who use the language to varying degrees in the community, but not 'right through', and where other language resources are drawn upon. Examples of languages being renewed include: Noongar in south-west Western Australia, Gumbaynggirr on the north coast of New South Wales, Ngarrindjeri on the Lower Murray Lakes in South Australia, Djabugay in the Atherton Tablelands in northern Queensland and Yugambah in southern Queensland. .
- Language Reclamation: where language revival by necessity relies primarily on historical documentation of the language in the absence of active community knowledge of it. Examples of reclamation languages include: Kaurna from Adelaide, Narungga from the Yorke Peninsula, Dharuk or Eora (Iyora) from Sydney, Yuwibara from central Queensland, Wemba-Wemba and Woiwurrung from Victoria, and Awabakal from the Newcastle area in New South Wales.

Foundation to Year 2 Level Description

The nature of the learner, the pathway and particular language

Languages studied in the First Language Learner Pathway (L1) are typically used in spoken form as the language of everyday communication by whole communities across all generations.

Typically, but not exclusively, L1 programs will occur on Country/Place and will have constant involvement from a variety of speakers from the community. A key expectation in the L1 pathway is that of students having opportunities to interact with Elders and particular places on Country/Place.

Learners are typically Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children who have learnt the language from their families as a first language and continue to use it naturally at home and play. Students may have varying skills in other languages, including varieties of English.

The curriculum content and achievement standards in the First Language Learner Pathway are generalised in order to cater for the range of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages that may be learnt as a first language. The curriculum content and achievement standards will need to be adapted when developing language-specific curricula, and will need to be modified for programs occurring off-Country.

Students enter the early years of schooling with well-established skills in spoken forms of the language along with a growing knowledge of local community and culture. In addition they may have varying skills in other languages, including varieties of English. School is often the first place these children encounter written language as a systematic means of communication.

Language learning and use

As well as continuing to develop oracy, a key feature of the First Language Learner Pathway is the development of literacy and extending language use in additional domains, particularly relating to the school context. Children build a vocabulary for thinking and talking about school topics, routines and processes, and expand their knowledge and understanding by exploring Country/Place with Elders and community members and by engaging with stories and other texts in the language.

Children learn about the concepts of kin, social groupings and how these are connected to the natural environment. They learn about their own songs, stories, dances and designs and their own place in the kinship system.

From Foundation to Year 2 children are learning how to interact with people in new contexts, share with others, and participate in more structured routines and activities. They learn about school, teacher and community expectations in terms of 'right' behaviour and 'right' ways of talking.

The curriculum builds on children's interests and sense of enjoyment and curiosity, with an emphasis on active and experiential learning and confidence building. Creative play provides opportunities for using the language for purposeful interaction in some less familiar contexts. Imaginative activities, games, music and songs, movement and familiar routines provide essential scaffolding and relevant contexts for language development.

Students are supported to use the language for different language functions and in different domains, such as asking and responding to questions on a range of topics, expressing feelings, following instructions, working together for a common purpose, and taking turns in games and simple shared learning experiences. They learn to recognise how the sounds of the language and its intonation are encoded in writing. They begin to understand how the language works, comparing and contrasting it with other known languages and learning how it fits into the diversity of regional and national languages.

The transition from spoken to written language is scaffolded through shared exploration of simple texts and language features. Children progress from supported comprehension and use of a small number of high-frequency and personally significant sight words to more elaborated texts that take account of context, purpose and audience. They use grammatical, cultural and contextual cues to comprehend texts and engage in communicative interactions. They progress from writing by tracing and copying, to independently forming legible letters. Writing skills progress from the ability to label images and copy high-frequency words to co-construct simple texts using familiar vocabulary, language features and structures. Children begin to develop familiarity with different types of texts in different genres.

Contexts of interaction

Across Foundation to Year 2, learning occurs largely through interaction with peers and the teaching team, with access to Elders and other speakers living in the same community for additional enrichment and authentication of the learning experience. Interacting with Country/Place to explore the environment with Elders and other community members is essential to learning at all stages, but particularly in the early years, when learning is grounded in the familiar, and understanding of the role of language as lived experience is important.

Texts and resources

Country/Place and the community are the most important resources for learning and are the origin of most of the texts and communicative situations offered to learners.

Children engage with a variety of spoken, visual, written and digital texts. They listen and respond to teacher talk, share ideas, and join in with song, dance, story, rap, as well as with various forms of play, performance, conversational exchanges and activities mediated by language. Printed and digital texts include stories, shared Big Books, wall charts and teacher-generated materials such as games, flashcards and items from the community and local environment. They engage with visual texts such as designs on body, bark and sand, and etchings and carvings on wood and rock.

Level of support

Learning is supported through the provision of experiences that are challenging but achievable with appropriate scaffolding and support. This involves modelling, monitoring and moderating by the teacher; provision of multiple and varied sources of input; opportunities for revisiting, recycling and reviewing; and continuous cueing, feedback, response and encouragement. Use of recount, experiencing and retelling in oral and written formats assists in establishing early literacy.

The role of languages

The language of study is the principal medium of instruction in First Language Learner Pathway classrooms, while other known languages play a complementary role, such as for translating and creating bilingual/multilingual texts.

Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions

Communicating		Understanding
Socialising Interact with peers, the teaching team and visiting Elders/community members to share information, thoughts and feelings about family, friends, community, activities, events and experiences. [Key concepts: family, community, friendship, personal world, experience, responsibility, safety; Key processes: interacting, sharing, describing, recounting] Participate in shared tasks and activities that involve following instructions, making things and cooperating with peers. [Key concepts: family, cooperation, play; Key processes: participating, active listening, following instructions, making, turn-taking] Participate in conversations and interactions that involve behaviours such as active listening, showing interest, asking questions and contributing ideas, information. [Key concepts: routine, consideration, contribution, appropriateness; Key processes: active listening, participating, responding, following instructions] Informing Locate/ discover/identify key information about Country/Place and community by exploring Country/Place and listening to stories from Elders and community members. [Key concepts: Country/Place, natural environment, Indigenous knowledge, the past, community life, health and well-being; Key processes: listening, reading, mapping, reading Country/Place, exploring, observing, recording, describing, classifying] Give factual information about family, friends, Country/Place and community using simple statements and descriptions, captioned drawings and photos. [Key concepts: daily routines and activities, events, Country/Place, community life ; Key processes: labelling, captioning, describing, contributing, recounting]	Creating Participate in shared listening to, viewing and reading of texts, identifying and describing favourite elements, main characters and key events and responding through singing, dancing, drawing, movement and action. [Key concepts: storytelling, response; Key processes: responding, performing, sharing, expressing; Key text types: songs, raps, dances, traditional and contemporary stories, paintings and visual design, video clips (IndigiTUBE)] Create and present shared stories, songs and performances using familiar words and expressions that allow for exploration and enjoyment of language. [Key concepts: story, performance; Key processes: creating, narrating, retelling, singing, dancing, drawing, performing, shake-a-leg; Key text types: songs, raps, dances, stories, paintings and visual design, performance] Translating Translate words and expressions used in everyday contexts and situations, from the language into other known languages and vice versa. [Key concepts: similarity, difference, gesture, sign language; Key processes: noticing, translating, explaining] Create simple print, oral, digital bilingual/multilingual texts, such as songs, wall charts, labels for the classroom, class rules, timetables. [Key concepts: meaning, code, bilingualism; Key processes: creating, matching, captioning, sequencing] Identity Learn about and understand the concepts of kin, social groupings and relationships, and how these are connected to the natural environment . [Key concepts: identity, relationship, kinship, family terms; Key processes: identifying, categorising, representing, explaining, creating] Identify with Country/Place and understand connections between Country/Place and individuals and groups. [Key concepts: Country/Place, kinship, social groups, identity, connections; Key processes: identifying, naming] Identify their own songs, stories, dances and designs and their links to kinship systems. [Key concepts: identity, kinship, History, story; Key processes: identifying, describing, talking about]	Systems of Language Use and recognise the sounds, intonation and rhythms in the spoken language and learn how sounds and words relate to written language. [Key concepts: sound system, writing system, sound–symbol correspondence, conventions; Key processes: listening, recognising, reading aloud] Understand and use a developing vocabulary including topical and classificatory language, recognising the function of different word types in the language. [Key concepts: word function, word order, patterns, rules; Key processes: identifying, recognising, noticing patterns, observing] Recognise there are many ways of communicating messages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. [Key concepts: communication, narrative; Key processes: recognising, identifying, comparing] Language variation and change Recognise that different words and language forms are used to address and communicate with people according to relationship and situation. [Key concepts: kinship, context; Key processes: noticing, recognising, comparing] Recognise that languages borrow words from each other. [Key concepts: relatedness, word-borrowing; Key processes: identifying, recognising, comparing] Language Awareness Recognise that their language is part of broader regional and national language diversity. [Key concepts: linguistic diversity, language shift; Key processes: identifying, recognising] Understand that language belongs to communities, and that language learning requires respectful and appropriate behaviour. [Key concepts: ownership, belonging, respect; Key processes: demonstrating, applying] Role of language and culture Notice that people use language in ways that reflect their culture, such as where and how they live and what is important to them. [Key concepts: Country/Place, Language, Culture, symbol; Key processes: noticing, recognising, questioning, making connections] Role of language building Recognise how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are transmitted from generation to generation. [Key concepts: oral transmission, language maintenance and development; Key processes: noticing, recognising, considering, valuing]