

Rationale

The formal study of Auslan contributes to the overall intellectual and social enrichment of both first language (L1) and second language (L2) learners by providing:

- opportunities for engagement with the Deaf community and insight into its rich cultural heritage
- opportunities to develop intercultural capabilities, understanding and respect for others, appreciation of diversity and openness to different perspectives and experiences.

This curriculum provides direction for an integrated, inclusive and meaningful approach to language education in Auslan for both first and second language learners.

Rationale for first language learners

This curriculum meets the need of young deaf people to formally learn their own language, and it recognises the significance of Auslan in the linguistic landscape of Australia. It provides deaf children, and potentially hearing children of deaf parents, with access to education in and about their first language, playing an important part in the development of a strong sense of self-esteem and identity and contributing in crucial ways to overall learning and achievements. It enables learners to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language, culture and identity, thus contributing to their psychological wellbeing as well as to their academic development.

Rationale for second language learners

Many deaf children today are educated in inclusive school settings, thus raising the profile of Auslan in the wider community. The presence of deaf students and interpreting practitioners in schools creates a need and offers opportunities for a wider range of peer-group communication partners, and not all interactions can or should be mediated by an interpreting practitioner. One of the key reasons for introducing Auslan in schools, therefore, is for humanistic purposes: to increase opportunities for interaction between deaf children and their hearing or hard of hearing peers, and to reduce barriers to communication. Through learning Auslan, L2 learners gain access to additional knowledge and understanding of the nature and purpose of human languages and of the use of a different language modality. In addition, from a vocational perspective, greater participation of deaf people in society in a diverse range of occupations and breadth of community spheres creates possibilities for future career options and personal fulfilment for L2 learners. In general educational terms, learning Auslan as a second language enables students to engage meaningfully with a different language and culture and to enhance understanding of their own language and culture. Such intercultural learning is essential in the increasingly diverse and changing contexts in which they live and will work.

For all learners

- broadens students' understanding that each language is an integrated, evolving system for the framing and communication of meaning; and encourages understanding of the role of language as an expression of cultural and personal identity and a shaper of perspectives
- contributes to the overall curriculum intent by providing distinctive real-life and intellectual opportunities for students to expand their engagement with the wider world and to reflect on the cultural and social assumptions that underpin their own world view and language use. Such awareness of different perspectives is an integral part of effective communication
- contributes to the development of critical thinking and the ability to adapt to change and equips students with learning strategies and study habits that are the foundation not only for lifelong learning but also for any subsequent language learning.

The opportunity to learn Auslan formally is becoming available in an increasing number of Australian schools, and the aim of this national curriculum is to make this learning opportunity accessible in a systematic manner to students around Australia. Language learning is life enhancing. This national curriculum offers all Australian students the opportunity to benefit from the social, cultural, intellectual and emotional development that will result from learning the unique and sophisticated visual-gestural language of the Australian Deaf community.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Languages – Auslan aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable students to:

- communicate in Auslan
- understand language, culture and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators
- develop a knowledge and an understanding of the diversity of Deaf experience and the nature of identity.

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

Key Ideas

Language and culture

The interrelationship of language, culture and learning provides the foundation for the Australian Curriculum: Languages.

In the languages learning area the focus is on both language and culture, as students learn to communicate meaningfully across linguistic and cultural systems, and different contexts. This process involves reflection and analysis, as students move between the new language being learnt and their own existing language(s). It is a reciprocal and dynamic process which develops language use within intercultural dimensions of learning experiences. It is not a 'one plus one' relationship between two languages and cultures, where each language and culture stay separate and self-contained. Comparison and referencing between (at least) two languages and cultures build understanding of how languages 'work', how they relate to each other and how language and culture shape and reflect experience; that is, the experience of language using and language learning. The experience of being in two worlds at once involves noticing, questioning and developing awareness of how language and culture shape identity.

Structure

Learner background and time-on-task are two major variables that influence language learning and they provide the basis for the structure of the Australian Curriculum: Languages. These variables are addressed through the specification of content and the description of achievement standards according to pathways and learning sequences respectively.

Pathways

In the Australian Curriculum: Languages, pathways for second language learners, background language learners and first language learners have been developed as appropriate to cater for the dominant group(s) of students learning each specific language within the current Australian context. For the majority of languages, one curriculum pathway has been developed for Years F–10, catering for the dominant cohort of learners for that language in the current Australian context. For Chinese, pathways have been developed for three learner groups: first language learners, background language learners and second language learners.

The Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages includes three learner pathways:
 •first language learner pathway
 •revival language learner pathway
 •second language learner pathway.

Sequences of learning

The design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages takes account of different entry points into language learning across Foundation – Year 10, which reflects current practice in languages.

For the second language learner pathway and the background language learner pathway, there are two learning sequences:
 •Foundation–Year 10 sequence
 •Years 7–10 (Year 7 Entry) sequence.

For the first language learner pathway, there is one learning sequence:
 •Years 7–10 (Year 7 Entry) sequence.

Content and achievement standards are described initially in a three-year band for Foundation–Year 2 followed by two-year bands of learning: Years 3–4; Years 5–6, Years 7–8 and Years 9–10.

The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages is written in the bands Foundation – Year 2, Years 3–6 and Years 7–10. In the absence of pedagogical evidence across the country for all these languages, the broader band distinctions provide maximum local flexibility in curriculum development.

Year 9 and 10 (Year 7 Entry) Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 10, students use Auslan to share information, experiences, interests, thoughts and feelings in relation to their personal and immediate worlds. They describe the appearance of people, objects and places using SASS depicting signs and spatial location, for example, HAVE DS: round-oval DS: located HERE NEXT-TO HAVE BUILDING BIG. THERE. There's an oval there and next to it is a big building. It's there. They participate in shared learning activities and experiences that involve planning, transacting and problem-solving, using simple signed statements and asking for repetition and clarification when required. They follow protocols when interacting with each other, with interpreters or Deaf visitors to the classroom, for example, waiting for eye contact or pauses to walk in-between signers engaged in conversation without interrupting them. Students increasingly use conventional Auslan signs or classifier handshapes in depictions and rely less on their idiosyncratic systems. They modify some indicating verbs for non-present referents and use constructed action to represent others in recounts. They make explicit which referent is associated with location, for example, BROTHER THERE HAVE OWN IPAD. They recall and retell specific points of information from texts such as class messages, directions, procedures, introductions and 'visual vernacular' descriptions. They create textual cohesion through the use of connectives such as lexical signs NEXT or G:WELL, or non-manual features (NMFs) and pausing. They create bilingual texts such as notices or digital displays and resources for the classroom. They reflect on how their own ways of communicating may be interpreted when interacting with hearing people, and on how they adapt their ways of communicating and behaving when interacting with them. They reflect on the experience of communicating in a visual world and on the challenges and advantages experienced by deaf people in a hearing world.

Students describe how constructed action (CA) can be shown in different ways, including eye gaze, head orientation change or body shift. They identify where and how a signer establishes location in space, and they distinguish between real and abstract space. They build metalanguage to talk about aspects of Auslan, for example, using terms such as SASS, NMFs, CA, depicting signs; and they make connections with terms they use in learning English, such as verb, adjective, noun. They know that different languages and cultures influence and borrow from each other and identify connections between Auslan and other signed languages, for example, BSL, ISL and ASL. They make comparisons between Auslan and signed languages in other countries. Students know that Auslan plays an important role in the expression and maintenance of Deaf culture and in assuring the rights of every deaf person.

Content structure

The content of the Australian Curriculum: Languages is organised through two interrelated strands which realise the three aims. The two strands are:

- Communicating: using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning
- Understanding: analysing language and culture as a resource for interpreting and creating meaning.

The strands reflect three important aspects of language learning:

- 1) communication
- 2) analysis of aspects of language and culture
- 3) reflection that involves
 - reflection on the experience of communicating
 - reflection on comparative dimensions of the languages available in students' repertoires (for example, the first language in relation to second language and self in relation to others).

Year 9 and 10 (Year 7 Entry) Level Description

The nature of the learners

This stage of learning coincides with social, physical and cognitive changes associated with adolescence. Learners at this level are developing their cognitive and social capabilities and their communicative repertoire in the language, although it is likely they are still impacted by their late access to language and possibly by other challenges. As their language develops, so does their ability to conceptualise and reason, and their memory and focus improves. They are more independent and less egocentric, enjoying both competitive and cooperative activities. Learners at this level benefit from varied, activity-based learning that builds on their interests and capabilities and makes connections with other areas of learning. The curriculum ensures that learning experiences and activities are flexible enough to cater for learner variables, while being appropriate for learners' general cognitive and social levels.

Auslan learning and use

Learners in this band engage in a range of activities that involve watching and responding to a variety of signed texts. They build proficiency through the provision of rich language input from a range of sources where grammatical forms and language features are purposefully integrated. Learners build more elaborated conversational and interactional skills, including initiating and sustaining conversations, reflecting on and responding to others' contributions, making appropriate responses and adjustments, and engaging in debate and discussion. The language they see and sign is authentic with some modification.

They follow instructions, exchange simple information and express ideas and feelings related to their personal worlds. They negotiate interactions and activities and participate in shared tasks and games.

Shared learning activities develop social, cognitive and language skills and provide a context for purposeful language experience and experimentation. Individual and group presentation and performance skills are developed through researching and organising information, structuring and resourcing presentation of content, and selecting appropriate language to engage a particular audience. Learners use ICT to support their learning in increasingly independent and intentional ways, exchanging resources and information with each other and with young people of the same age in other signing communities. They access a variety of media resources, maintain vlogs and other web pages, and participate in social networks. They view and create texts on topics relevant to their interests and enjoyment and continue to build vocabulary that relates to a wider range of domains, such as areas of the curriculum that involve some specialised language use. The language used in routine activities is re-used and reinforced from lesson to lesson in different situations, making connections between what has been learnt and what is to be learnt.

Contexts of interaction

Learners interact in Auslan with each other, their teaching team, members of their families who can sign and members of the Deaf community. They have access to Deaf visitors and cultural resources in wider contexts and communities through the use of ICT and through the media. Language development and use are incorporated into collaborative and interactive learning experiences, games and activities.

Texts and resources

Learners work with a broad range of live and digital signed texts designed for learning Auslan in school and for wider authentic use in the Deaf community. They also engage with resources prepared by their teacher, including games, performances, presentations and language exercises. They may have additional access to BANZSL resources created for the Australian, New Zealand or British Deaf communities, such as children's television programs, websites, music or video clips. In addition, they work with texts from other signed languages that make extensive use of the 'visual vernacular'. Learners may also have access to community facilities and functions. The Deaf community is the most important resource for learning as it is the origin of most of the texts and communicative situations that learners engage with.

Features of Auslan use

Learners at this level increasingly use conventional Auslan: lexical signs or depicting signs with conventional classifier handshapes, and rely less on their idiosyncratic systems. They learn to modify some indicating verbs for non-present referents and use constructed action to represent themselves or others in recounts. They use a range of NMFs to distinguish questions from statements or negatives, and use more cohesion when signing texts. A balance between language knowledge and language use is established by integrating focused attention to grammar, vocabulary building, and non-verbal and cultural dimensions of language use with communicative and purposeful learning activity. Learners are increasingly aware that various signed languages are used in Deaf communities across the world. As they engage consciously with differences between languages and cultures, they make comparisons and consider differences and possibilities in ways of communicating in different languages. They build metalanguage to talk about aspects of language such as nouns, verbs and constructed action.

Level of support

While learners work more independently at this level, ongoing support is incorporated into task activity and the process of learning is supported by systematic feedback and review. Form-focused activities build students' grammatical knowledge and support the development of accuracy and control in Auslan. Opportunities to use this knowledge in meaningful activities build communicative skills, confidence and fluency. Tasks are carefully scaffolded: teachers provide models and examples; introduce language, concepts and resources needed to manage and complete learning activities; make time for experimentation and for polishing rehearsed texts; and provide support for self-monitoring and reflection. Discussion supports learning and develops students' conceptual frame for talking about systems of language and culture. Learners are encouraged to engage more with resources such as websites, dictionaries, translating tools and other materials designed to enrich their receptive and productive language use.

The role of English

Auslan is the language of all classroom interactions, routines and activities. As these learners are in the unique position of not having acquired a first language until very late in life, time spent developing their Auslan must be maximised. While these learners are simultaneously developing English literacy skills, use of English is limited to the translating thread and to small amounts of research with source texts in simple English.

Year 9 and 10 (Year 7 Entry) Content Descriptions

Year 9 and 10 (Year 7 Entry) Content Descriptions	
Communicating	Understanding
<p>Socialising Describe activities and experiences and share and respond to ideas and feelings about people they know, their daily lives, social worlds and school community. [Key concepts: idea, feeling, description, experience; Key processes: recounting, describing, interacting, comparing]</p> <p>Participate in shared learning activities that involve planning, transacting and problem-solving, using simple signed statements, questions and directions. [Key concepts: planning, role, responsibility, support, information exchange; Key processes: negotiating, encouraging, describing, expressing preference]</p> <p>Communicate clearly in different classroom interactions and contexts, demonstrating appropriate protocols when communicating with each other, teachers and deaf people. [Key concepts: instruction, interaction, protocol; Key processes: responding, negotiating, indicating, initiating, interrupting]</p> <p>Informing Identify, paraphrase or compare information obtained from a variety of signed texts or from their own data collection and present the information in different forms. [Key concepts: information, likes/dislikes, interests, preferences; Key processes: retelling, recording, organising, identifying, surveying, categorising]</p> <p>Convey factual information and opinions in signed texts. [Key concepts: routine, event, hobby, procedure; Key processes: describing, reporting, explaining, presenting, instructing]</p>	<p>Systems of Language Explore various types of non-manual features, types of iconicity in signs and the use of software to transcribe signs. [Key concepts: transcription, iconicity; Key processes: identifying, noticing, understanding]</p> <p>Understand that signs can include different information, including a gestural overlay, and identify how signers establish spatial locations, types of depicting signs and ways of showing constructed action. [Key concepts: spatial location, grammatical use of space, constructed action, depicting signs; Key processes: noticing, identifying, recognising]</p> <p>Understand and control additional elements of Auslan grammar, such as the use of non-manual features for topicalisation, negation or question forms, and develop awareness of how signers use constructed action and depicting signs. [Key concepts: topicalisation, negation, composite utterances; Key processes: recognising, distinguishing, understanding]</p> <p>Explore the relationship between particular text types, audience, purpose and context and analyse language features used by signers to create cohesion and achieve the purpose of the text. [Key concepts: audience, purpose, convention, coherence; Key processes: noticing, identifying, analysing]</p> <p>Language variation and change Explore the concept of language flexibility, variation and change in relation to the use of Auslan across different contexts and times. [Key concepts: language variation, standardisation, change, language borrowing, adaptation; Key processes: researching, interviewing, comparing, identifying, analysing, discussing]</p> <p>Language awareness Understand the range of factors that influence the profile, diversity and distribution of Auslan use in the wider Australian society, and consider the concept of Auslan vitality in comparison with that of other languages. [Key concepts: influence, transmission, language documentation, language vitality; Key processes: recognising, identifying, describing, exploring]</p> <p>Role of language and culture Understand that Auslan and Deaf culture are interrelated, that they shape and are shaped by each other, that their relationship changes over time and across contexts, and that they may be differently interpreted by users of other languages. [Key concepts: knowledge, value, transmission, reciprocity, responsibility, stereotype; Key processes: reflecting, exploring, understanding, identifying, considering]</p>

