

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.

Year 9 and 10 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 10, students exchange information, ideas and opinions on a broad range of social, environmental, educational and community issues. They summarise and justify points of view and use reflective language to respond to others' opinions and perspectives, for example, RIGHT-YEAH, PRO2 DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE NEVER THOUGHT. They initiate, sustain, support and extend discussion, using strategies such as paraphrasing, inviting opinions and elaborating responses, for example PRO2 CONFUSE PRO1 WIND-BACK. They select appropriate vocabulary and use supporting evidence when clarifying and justifying statements. They use respectful language to negotiate, problem-solve and to manage different perspectives when engaging in collaborative tasks, for example, PRO1 FEEL PRO2 RIGHT TALK OVER.... BECAUSE.... Students research, analyse and evaluate information from a range of sources and perspectives, and create sustained signed texts designed to entertain, inform, persuade or inspire different audiences. They use non-manual prosodic features to create emphasis or other effects. Students analyse different types of creative and performative texts, considering how specific techniques and modalities are used to different effect, for example, using repetition of handshapes and movement paths of signs to create rhyme, or the use of visual metaphors to convey meaning. They compare responses to texts that present particular values or points of view, for example, Deaf poetry. They create their own imaginative texts such as narratives or poems, combining and switching between types of language, for example, telling with lexical signs or showing with constructed action (CA) or depicting signs (DSs) and frames of spatial reference to indicate character or observer point of view. Students translate and interpret a range of signed texts, comparing their translations and explaining factors that may have influenced their interpretation. They identify the relationship that exists between language, culture and identity and explore how individual and community identity are conveyed through cultural expression and language use. They reflect on the experience of communicating in a visual world and on associated challenges and advantages experienced as deaf people in a hearing world.

Students identify and describe metaphorical iconicity, for example, love, avoid/resist, and compare this with the use of metaphors in English. They distinguish character or observer frame of reference in a text; between main and subordinate clauses; and demonstrate how the inclusion of CA and DSs impacts on clause structure. They analyse different types of text, such as expository texts, identifying characteristic language elements and features. They investigate variation in the use of Auslan, explaining influences such as geographical location, social groupings and history, educational experience, the age of learners, family background and degree of contact with Signed English or other languages. They make comparisons between the ecologies of Auslan and those of signed languages in other countries, taking into account issues such as language policies and language rights, advocacy, reform and language vitality. They identify factors that help to maintain and strengthen Auslan use, such as intergenerational contact and bilingual school programs. Students know that Auslan plays an important role in the expression and maintenance of Deaf culture and in assuring the rights of deaf people.

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.

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 Level Description

The nature of the learners

This stage of learning coincides with social, physical and cognitive changes associated with adolescence. Increased cognitive maturity enables learners to work more deductively with language and culture systems, to apply more intentional learning strategies and to reflect productively on their learning. Motivation and engagement with language learning and use are influenced by peer-group dynamics, personal interests and values, and issues related to self-concept. This is particularly the case for bilingual learners, especially for deaf students who also use spoken English, for whom the duality of living between languages and cultural frames impacts continually on the process of identity construction. The role of language is central to this process and is reflected in the degree to which learners define themselves as members of language communities, how they position themselves in relation to peer groups, and choices they make in relation to linguistic and social practices. These processes are fluid and context-responsive and impact on learners' engagement with both Auslan and English language learning. Learners at this level are increasingly aware of the world beyond their own and are engaging with youth, social and environmental issues. They are considering their future pathways and choices, including how Auslan could be part of these.

Auslan learning and use

This is a period of language exploration. Task characteristics and conditions at this level are more complex and challenging, involving collaborative as well as independent language planning and performance, and the development and strategic use of language and cultural resources. Elements of tasks involve interpreting, creating, evaluating and performing. Working with media resources, fictional and non-fictional texts, performances and research projects allows for the exploration of themes of personal and contemporary relevance, such as global and environmental issues, identity and relationship issues, questions of diversity and inclusivity.

Learners use Auslan to debate, clarify and interrogate ideas and concepts; to appraise and summarise opinions and to engage in elaborated discussions, developing and supporting arguments and sharing and evaluating opinions. They communicate in a wide range of contexts, such as a whole-school forum, present sustained signed explanations of abstract topics, and participate in imaginative and creative experiences.

Contexts of interaction

Learners interact with peers, teachers and other Auslan signers in immediate and local contexts, and with wider Deaf communities as well as cultural resources via virtual and online environments. They may participate in community events such as film or cultural festivals or intercultural forums.

Texts and resources

Learners use an extensive range of texts and materials designed for in-class learning of Auslan, as well as authentic texts produced in broader contexts. They are encouraged to source extra materials to support their learning and to pursue personal interests and explore various aspects of Auslan or Deafhood.

Features of Auslan use

Learners extend their grammatical knowledge to a range of forms and functions that give them control of more complex elements of text construction and sign formation. They have a greater degree of self-correction and repair. This greater control of language structures and systems increases confidence and interest in communicating in a wider range of contexts. Learners design, interpret and analyse a wider range of texts and experiences. Textual knowledge and capability are strengthened through maintaining a balance between activities that focus on language forms and structures and communicative tasks and performance.

Learners experiment with ways to refine a text, for example to strengthen it for entertainment, information or persuasion purposes. They understand that reordering clauses or parts of clauses can create subtle meaning differences. They use depicting signs to innovate where there are lexical gaps, and make richer use of the 'visual vernacular', producing complex narratives that combine and switch between methods of depiction (CA, DSs and lexical signs) and frames of spatial reference (character or observer). They demonstrate understanding of language variation and change, and of how intercultural experience, technology, media and globalisation influence language use and forms of communication. They investigate texts through more critical analysis, identifying how language choices reflect perspectives and shape meaning, and how they in turn are shaped by context and intention.

Learners at this level understand the relationship between language, culture and identity. They explore in more depth and detail the processes involved in learning and using different languages, recognising them as cognitive, cultural and personal as well as linguistic resources. They identify how meaning-making and representation in different languages involve interpretation and personal response as well as literal translation and factual reporting. They explore the reciprocal nature of intercultural communication: how moving between different languages and cultural systems impacts on their ways of thinking and behaving; and how successful communication requires flexibility, awareness and openness to alternative ways. They develop a capacity to 'decentre' from normative ways of thinking and communicating, to consider their own cultural ways through the eyes of others, and to communicate in intercultural appropriate ways.

Level of support

While learners at this level are increasingly less reliant on the teaching team for support during communicative interactions, continued provision of rich language input and modelled language is needed to consolidate and sustain language development. The teaching team provides implicit and explicit modelling and scaffolding in relation to meaningful language use in a range of contexts, situations and learning experiences; and explicit instruction and explanation in relation to complex structures, grammatical functions and abstract concepts and vocabulary. Provision of opportunities to discuss, clarify, rehearse and apply their knowledge is critical in consolidating knowledge and skills and in developing autonomy. Learners are encouraged to self-monitor, for example by keeping records of feedback, through peer support and self-review or by creating and maintaining a video journal or folio which they use to reflect on their language learning and intercultural experiences. They are increasingly aware of and responsible for their own learning, working independently to address their needs, for example by accessing technologies and additional learning resources, such as Signbank, to assist their learning. They use graphic organisers, modelled texts, dictionaries and teacher feedback to interpret and create texts.

The role of English

Learners and the teaching team use Auslan as the primary medium of interaction in language-oriented and most content-oriented learning experiences. English is used for comparative analysis and for research when a source text in Auslan cannot be found. Learners are encouraged to reflect on the different roles English and Auslan play in their academic work and in their conceptual development.

Year 9 and 10 Content Descriptions

Communicating

Socialising

Use interactions within the school and wider community to build relationships and to discuss personal aspirations or social issues.

[Key concepts: register, debate, discussion; Key processes: debating, chatting, initiating, discussing]

Participate in actions and interactions involving advocacy and consideration of cultural diversity, perspective and experience.

[Key concepts: diversity, perspective, inclusion, advocacy; Key processes: managing, promoting, advocating, collaborating]

Engage proactively in language learning experiences through discussion, justification of opinions and reflection on the experience of learning and using Auslan.

[Key concepts: language learning, argument, ideas, reflection; Key processes: clarifying, interrogating, reflecting, comparing]

Informing

Research and evaluate information from different sources and perspectives, summarising opinions and critically appraising relationships between texts and contexts.

Key concepts: debate, evidence, bias, critical analysis, context; Key processes: researching, evaluating, debating, providing feedback, summarising]

Prepare and present researched information on a range of issues, considering the context in which the information will be received.

[Key concepts: audience, context, source, evidence, bias, statistics; Key processes: presenting, explaining, interpreting data, evaluating]

Creating

Analyse different types of imaginative, creative and performative texts, considering how different techniques and modalities are employed to communicate with different audiences.

[Key concepts: meaning, mood, imagery, rhyme, metaphor; Key processes: analysing, interpreting, discussing, responding, reflecting]

Create imaginative texts designed to engage and/or reflect the interests of specific audiences and to stimulate discussion of cultural issues and experiences.

[Key concepts: mode, multimodality, visual imagery, metaphor, intercultural experience; Key processes: creating, adapting, experimenting, performing]

Translating

Translate Auslan and English texts composed for different audiences and contexts and consider the dynamic nature of translating and interpreting and the role of culture when transferring meaning from one language to another.

[Key concepts: equivalence, representation, meaning, interpretation, ethics, culture; Key processes: translating, interpreting, comparing, explaining, analysing]

Create resources such as videos, glossaries and classifications in English to interpret cultural aspects of Auslan texts.

[Key concepts: expression, bilingualism; Key processes: recording, creating, captioning]

Identity

Identify ways in which deaf people relate to and are perceived by society as 'people of the eye', how they demonstrate connections with culturally rich places and associations, and how their sense of identity, roles and responsibilities change over time.

[Key concepts: identity, relationship, Deafhood, reciprocity, guidance, place, space, rights, responsibility, social action; Deaf gain; Key processes: discussing, comparing, investigating, reflecting]

Reflecting

Reflect on the experience of learning and using Auslan formally in school, and considering how intercultural communication involves shared responsibility for making meaning.

[Key concepts: intercultural communication, perspective, insight, self-reflection, making meaning, discrimination; Key processes: comparing, analysing, explaining, reflecting]

Understanding

Systems of Language

Understand the perceptual and articulatory reasons for the structure of signs, and analyse how iconicity can be used to create metaphors in Auslan and critically evaluate video annotation software as a means of transcribing and analysing Auslan.

[Key concepts: iconicity, metaphor, transcription; Key processes: analysing, applying, categorising, demonstrating, describing, evaluating]

Analyse signed texts in terms of spatial frames of reference used, and explain how signers show periods of constructed action.

[Key concepts: character and observer space, constructed action; Key processes: contrasting, analysing]

Understand the difference between main and subordinate clauses and how the inclusion of constructed action and depicting signs has an impact on clause structure.

[Key concepts: auxiliary and main verbs, clause types, reference; Key processes: recognising, comparing, identifying]

Understand the interrelationship between text types, linguistic features, cohesive devices, audience, context and purpose.

[Key concepts: audience, choice, convention, cohesion; Key processes: analysing, identifying, discussing, applying]

Language variation and change

Investigate and analyse the nature of and community attitudes to variation in the use of Auslan.

[Key concepts: standardisation, contact, evolution, flexibility, variability; Key processes: recognising, investigating, researching, analysing, considering]

Language awareness

Investigate and compare the nature and status of Auslan and other signed languages, considering issues such as language and education policies, language rights, representation and processes of language preservation and language building.

[Key concepts: policy, rights, representation, status, recognition, documentation; Key processes: describing, researching, comparing, investigating, analysing, evaluating]

Role of language and culture

Understand that Auslan and Deaf culture are interrelated, that they shape and are shaped by each other and that their relationship changes over time and across contexts.

[Key concepts: knowledge, value, relationship, transmission; Key processes: reflecting, exploring, analysing, comparing]