

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 5 and 6 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 6, students discuss aspects of their daily lives, social activities and school experience and respond to each other's comments. They describe relationships and characteristics of people and objects and express feelings and preferences, for example, POSS1 FRIEND CHANGE OTHER SCHOOL PRO1 SAD. They negotiate with each other to plan, organise and complete learning tasks and activities, using statements such as PRO1 DON'T-WANT DRAW, PRO1 WANT TAKE-PHOTO, THANKYOU PRO2 EXPLAIN CLEAR, or THAT FIRST IMPORTANT THAT SECOND. They follow more complex instructions and directions involving several steps. They compare experiences, routines, interests and activities, using signs associated with time, sequence and location. They follow protocols when interacting with each other or with interpreters or visitors to the classroom, for example by interrupting conversations appropriately or providing context for a new participant joining a conversation. They paraphrase the content of selected signed texts, such as community announcements, and relay the information to others. They plan, rehearse and deliver short presentations, taking into account context, purpose and audience. They respond to creative and imaginative texts, for example by discussing ideas and characters, shadowing signed elements of theatrical or cinematographic texts that use handshapes, and by making connections with their own experiences. They create or reinterpret simple imaginative texts using elements of constructed action (CA), such as body shift, eye gaze and head orientation change. They modify non-manual features and lexical signs to indicate manner. They translate familiar texts from Auslan to English and vice versa, identifying which words or phrases require interpretation or explanation.

Students discriminate between body-anchored and non-body-anchored signs, and recognise how non-body-anchored signs can modify their locations meaningfully. They know that the function of CA is to represent the words, thoughts or actions of a protagonist in a text, either themselves or others, and that spatial relationships between objects are typically expressed with depicting signs in Auslan. They understand different ways that English words are borrowed into Auslan and identify connections between Auslan and other signed languages, for example, BSL, ISL and ASL. They recognise the diversity of Auslan users in the community, including people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing people such as CODAs or interpreters. Students recognise how Auslan has been transmitted across generations and describe different ways it has been documented and recorded, for example, by glossing and the use of technology such as ELAN. Students reflect on the ways culture is differently interpreted by others, for example by identifying how stereotypes about deaf and hearing people influence perceptions.

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).

Strands and sub-strands

A set of sub-strands has been identified within each strand, which reflects dimensions of language use and the related content to be taught and learned. The strands and sub-strands do not operate in isolation but are integrated in relation to language use for different purposes in different contexts. The relative contribution of each sub-strand differs for described languages, pathways and bands of learning. The sub-strands are further differentiated according to a set of 'threads' that support the internal organisation of content in each sub-strand. These 'threads' are designed to capture (1) range and variety in the scope of learning and (2) a means for expressing the progression of content across the learning sequences.

Year 5 and 6 Level Description

The nature of the learners

Learners at this level are expanding their social networks, experiences and communication repertoire in both their first language and Auslan. They continue to need guidance and participate in structured, collaborative tasks that both recycle and extend language. They are gaining greater independence and becoming more conscious of their peers and social context. They are gaining awareness of the world around them and of nature of the Deaf community in Australia. They notice similarities and differences between Auslan and Deaf culture and their own language(s) and culture(s).

Auslan learning and use

Learners use well-known phrases in Auslan to participate in classroom routines, presentations and structured conversations with the teacher and peers. They focus on aspects of their personal worlds and are introduced to content related to Auslan, the Deaf community and other learning areas. Learners develop their capability in Auslan through scaffolded tasks and texts such as descriptions and stories. They are learning to apply their knowledge of key signs and textual features to predict the meaning of unfamiliar language. They use modelled language to create texts such as narratives. They use Auslan to paraphrase; form questions to request information; interview others; plan, rehearse and deliver short presentations; and to compare interests and activities. They extend their language use by expressing ideas through expanding and connecting clauses.

Contexts of interaction

Learners use Auslan to interact with the teacher and their classmates, and may use technology to communicate with deaf peers in other contexts. Tasks are typically structured, collaborative and at times competitive, such as group performances, class displays or games. Language development and use are incorporated into collaborative and interactive learning experiences and activities. Learners may notice the use of Auslan in the community, such as in the media.

Texts and resources

Learners engage with a growing range of signers and videoed signed texts. They also engage with resources prepared by their teacher, including games, performances, presentations and language exercises. They may have additional access to Auslan and Deaf culture through resources created for the Australian Deaf community, such as children's television programs, websites or video clips. In addition, they make use of texts from other signed languages that make extensive use of the 'visual vernacular'.

Features of Auslan use

Learners are expanding their knowledge of vocabulary and sentence construction. With support, they use constructed action to show participants in a narrative, modify indicating verbs for non-present referents with increasing accuracy across a text, and use more complex entity depicting signs. Learners are developing a metalanguage for describing aspects of Auslan and how it is structured, such as how signers use different means to refer to things for cohesion in a text. They are increasingly aware of the connection between language and cultural practices and compare such connections to their own language and culture.

Discussion, reflection and explanation ensure the continued development of learners' knowledge base and metalinguistic and intercultural capabilities. Understanding of the relationship between language, culture and identity is developed through guided investigation of how language features and expressions carry specific cultural meaning; through critical analysis of cultural stereotypes, attitudes and perspectives; and through exploration of issues related to personal and community identities. Students reflect on the relationship between language, culture and identity and how these affect communication and intercultural experience through the lens of their own bicultural experiences.

Level of support

Support provided by the teacher at this level includes explicit instruction, description, and comparison of Auslan and English; modelled language use and examples of texts; and feedback on and review of student work. Learning experiences incorporate implicit and explicit form-focused language learning activities and examples of texts and tasks. Learners need practice and guidance in using dictionaries, especially Signbank, and access to word charts, vocabulary lists and examples when translating and creating texts.

The role of English

Auslan is used for classroom routines and language learning tasks and may be used as the language of instruction for learning the content of other learning areas. The language of response varies according to task demands, with Auslan used primarily for communicating in structured and supported tasks and English for open-ended, comparative tasks that develop learners' understanding of language and culture. English may also be used to research cultural issues where the source text is not available in Auslan.

Year 5 and 6 Content Descriptions

Communicating

Socialising
Share ideas and feelings about people they know, their daily lives, social activities and the school community.
[Key concepts: experience, interaction, interests, relationship; Key processes: describing, discussing, responding, comparing, expressing feelings]

Collaborate with peers to plan and conduct shared events or activities such as performances, presentations, demonstrations or transactions.
[Key concepts: performance, presentation, Deaf culture; Key processes: planning, negotiating, organising]

Communicate appropriately while involved in shared learning activities by asking and responding to questions, managing interactions, indicating understanding and monitoring learning.
[Key concepts: agreement, clarification, protocol, reflection; Key processes: responding, agreeing, monitoring]

Informing
Collect, classify and paraphrase information from a variety of Auslan texts used in school and community contexts.
[Key concept: information, findings, concepts; Key processes: identifying, collecting, classifying, paraphrasing, responding, explaining, requesting, interviewing]

Convey information in different formats to suit different audiences and contexts.
[Key concepts: context, purpose, audience; Key processes: presenting, creating]

Creating

Engage with a range of creative and imaginative texts, identifying and discussing ideas and characters and making connections with their own experiences.
[Key concepts: narrative, theatre performance, emotional response, humour; Key processes: sequencing, comparing, shadowing, reflecting]

Create or reinterpret simple imaginative texts that involve favourite characters or humorous situations, using a range of signs, gestures and supporting props to convey events, characters or settings.
[Key concepts: constructed action, perspective, choreography; Key processes: adapting, performing, retelling, dancing]

Translating

Translate familiar texts from Auslan to English and vice versa, noticing which words or phrases require interpretation or explanation.
[Key concepts: equivalence, meaning, interpretation; Key processes: identifying, translating, shadowing, creating, comparing]

Create their own bilingual texts and learning resources such as electronic displays, websites or digital newsletters.
[Key concepts: bilingualism, meaning; Key process: composing, creating]

Identity

Demonstrate understanding of the nature of identity in relation to themselves and to members of the Deaf community.
[Key concepts: identity, community, history; Key processes: documenting, creating, sharing, evaluating, comparing]

Reflecting

Reflect on how language and cultural background influence perceptions of other languages and communities, and on their experience of learning and communicating in Auslan.
[Key concepts: influence, perspective, perception, self-reflection; Key processes: comparing, sharing, monitoring, identifying, analysing, explaining, reflecting]

Understanding

Systems of Language

Identify and describe elements of sign production, including handshape and its orientation, movement, location and non-manual features, and explore the processes of annotating Auslan videos or reading and transcribing glossed texts.
[Key concepts: body anchored, iconicity; Key processes: identifying, recognising, annotating, glossing]

Understand that signs can include different information, including a gestural overlay, identify types of depicting signs and how signers establish spatial locations and show constructed action.
[Key concepts: gestural overlay, establishing a spatial location, function of constructed action; Key processes: recognising, distinguishing]

Develop understanding of the important role of non-manual features in adverbs and joining clauses, and know that spatial relationships in Auslan are typically expressed with depicting signs.
[Key concepts: manner, locatives, topicalisation; Key processes: recognising, distinguishing]

Identify and use language features of different types of Auslan texts and understand that texts are made cohesive through language choices.
[Key concepts: language features, cohesion, referent tracking; Key processes: identifying, analysing]

Language variation and change

Explore variation in terms of the impact of other languages on Auslan across contexts and over time.
[Key concepts: influence, language borrowing, style shifts; Key processes: noticing, recognising, explaining]

Language awareness

Explore the current status and profile of Auslan and of the Deaf community in contemporary Australian society, considering issues such as language transmission, usage and documentation.
[Key concepts: diversity, representation, language transmission, documentation; Key processes: recognising, describing, understanding, discussing, investigating]

Role of language and culture

Reflect on how communities' ways of using languages are shaped by, reflect and strengthen cultural values and beliefs and how these may be differently interpreted by users of other languages.
[Key concepts: cultural expression and transmission, values, beliefs; Key processes: observing, making connections, discussing, investigating]