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 use Auslan to build relationships and to initiate, sustain and extend interactions with teachers, peers and contacts in the wider community. They engage in debate and discuss aspirations and social issues, explaining and justifying positions and elaborating opinions using expressions such as NEVER THOUGHT YEAH-RIGHT. Students use strategies to support discussion, such as self-correction, rephrasing or elaborating if not understood. They use smooth and fluent fingerspelling. They use spontaneous language to participate in activities and learning experiences that involve collaborating, planning, organising, negotiating and taking action. They use modal verbs and non-manual features (NMFs) to express possibility, obligation and ability, such as PRO1 MAYBE SEE THAT MOVIE or PRETEND PRO2 DEAF…. Students use culturally appropriate norms, skills and protocols when engaging with and learning from Deaf people and the Deaf community, for example, waiting to be introduced to new people and knowing how to introduce themselves as second language Auslan learners. They analyse, synthesise and evaluate information from a range of signed sources, summarising key ideas and specified points of information. They predict the meaning of unfamiliar signs and expressions from context and their knowledge of depicting conventions. They compare responses to creative texts such as Deaf poetry, Deaf art and signed narratives. Students demonstrate understanding of Auslan and Deaf culture, for example by preparing and delivering presentations or signed narratives on social and cultural issues, community initiatives and lifestyles. They build cohesion and complexity in texts by using fully-lexical connectives such as IF, THEN and/or NMFs to link clauses. They use constructed action (CA) to show different points of view. Students demonstrate culturally appropriate and ethical behaviour when interpreting and translating texts and consider potential consequences of inaccurate interpreting. They describe how they feel and behave when communicating in a visual world, for example by discussing how the experience fits with their sense of self. They reflect on the role of Auslan in connecting and building Deaf identity.

Students recognise and explain different ways that signers represent signing space, such as character or observer space. They understand and use depicting signs and CA in complex ways to create composite utterances. 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 account of issues such as languages policy and rights, advocacy, language reform and language vitality. They identify factors that help to maintain and strengthen the use of Auslan, 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 every deaf person.

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 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. 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 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. They require guidance in their learning, but are increasingly autonomous and capable of independent reflection and analysis, including of their intercultural experience of learning Auslan.

Auslan learning and use

Learners engage with a range of texts in Auslan. They participate individually and in groups in tasks and learning experiences, such as explaining or justifying positions, elaborating opinions, and giving and receiving multistep instructions. They create signed narratives and summarise and critically examine viewed texts. They participate in presentations, conversations, narration and interviews, sometimes with preparation and sometimes spontaneously. Learners acquire skills in analysing and translating increasingly complex texts.

Contexts of interaction

Learners interact with teachers and peers and members of the Deaf community in real-life situations or via online technologies. They may also encounter Auslan in the wider community, such as in the media, at film festivals or community events, or via interactions with guest speakers.

Texts and resources

Learners use a wide range of texts designed for language learning, such as teacher-generated materials and online resources, and their learning is enriched by exposure to a range of authentic texts from the Deaf community, such as websites, films or stories.

Features of Auslan use

Learners extend their grammatical knowledge and metalanguage while beginning to explore more nuanced features of Auslan. They use strategies to initiate and sustain conversations, using more elaborate sentence structures such as embedding clauses. They can identify and describe some metaphorical iconicity. They can create more detailed narratives with appropriate use of non-manual features (NMFs) to express characters and perspectives, understanding and using both character and observer space. They consider connections between language and culture, and make comparisons with their own language and culture. They consider language variation, for example through exposure to other dialects in the BANZSL family.

Level of support

While learners are increasingly autonomous during communicative interactions, continued support such as provision of rich language input and modelled language is needed to consolidate and sustain language development. The teacher 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 developing autonomy. Learners are encouraged to self-monitor, for example, by keeping records of feedback, through peer support and self-review. They are increasingly aware of and responsible for their own learning, working independently to address their needs, for example by accessing technologies to memorise, learn and expand their language repertoire. They continue to access Signbank and use graphic organisers, modelled texts, dictionaries and teacher feedback to interpret and create texts. They keep records of their learning, for example through creating video journals or folios, using these to record and reflect on their language learning and intercultural experiences.

The role of English

Learners and teachers use Auslan as the primary medium of interaction in language-oriented and an increasing amount of content-oriented learning experiences. English provides a basis for linguistic and cultural comparison. English is also the medium used for expressing experiences, abstract ideas and personal views at a level beyond learners' Auslan capabilities, such as justifying a position on a social issue or exploring linguistic and cultural practices. English may be used with Auslan to conduct research projects, such as investigating social issues or cultural practices, when source materials in Auslan are unavailable. It is also used in translating, and in bilingual communication. Learners are supported 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		Understanding

Communicating

Socialising

Interact with peers at school and contacts in the wider community to build relationships, engage in debate and to discuss aspirations or social issues.
[Key concepts: discussion, relationship, aspiration, convention; Key processes: discussing, explaining, justifying, elaborating, contextualising]

Engage in activities that involve interactions, transactions, negotiations and management of different opinions and social/cultural behaviours.
[Key concepts: perspective, culture, diversity, identity, action, transaction; Key processes: making choices, negotiating, planning, promoting, transacting]

Interact with peers and others in and out of the classroom through reflection, discussion and participation in shared experiences.
[Key concepts: ideas, action, effect, discussion, culture; Key processes: making connections, reflecting, elaborating]

Informing

Investigate, synthesise and evaluate information from a range of perspectives and signed sources, identifying how culture and context affect how information is presented.
[Key concepts: perspective, culture, context, debate; Key processes: investigating, synthesising, evaluating, summarising]

Contribute to presentations, reports, reviews, discussions and debates that focus on selected social and cultural issues.
[Key concepts: social and cultural issues, influence; Key processes: creating, persuading, explaining, contributing]

Creating

Respond to different types of imaginative and creative texts that invite consideration of values, themes and ideas and involve different modes of expression.
[Key concepts: Deaf experience, expression, cultural values, effect, emotion; Key processes: analysing, evaluating, profiling]

Creating a variety of imaginative and expressive texts that draw from elements of their own life experience or of their experience as Auslan learners.
[Key concepts: improvisation, stimulus, performance, humour, tension, interpretation; Key processes: improvising, performing, role-playing, creating, interpreting]

Translating

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 glossaries and classifications in English to interpret cultural aspects of Auslan texts.
[Key concepts: bilingualism, interpretation; Key processes: recording, creating, captioning]

Identity

Recognise the complex and multifaceted nature of identity and how exploration of cultural identity in relation to a different language can provide insights and different perspectives to a first culture and language.
[Key concepts: identity, gender, culture, perspective, difference, representation; Key processes: analysing, reflecting, viewing, evaluating, comparing, describing, discussing, creating]

Reflecting

Reflect on the experience of learning and using Auslan, considering how intercultural communication involves shared responsibility for making meaning.
[Key concepts: intercultural communication, perspective, insight, self-reflection, making meaning, discrimination, audism; Key processes: comparing, analysing, explaining, reflecting]

Understanding

Systems of Language

Understand the perceptual and articulatory reasons for the structure of signs, consider limitations of glossing and explore how video annotation software can improve transcription.
[Key concepts: iconicity, metaphor, annotation; Key processes: noticing, recognising, distinguishing, glossing, transcribing, annotating, analysing]

Understand and use signing space, including making distinctions between character and observer space for constructing different types of texts.
[Key concepts: character and observer space, depicting signs, constructed action; Key processes: contrasting, analysing]

Understand and describe complex grammatical structures combining depicting signs, constructed action and various clauses for a range of language functions, such as interaction, narration or description.
[Key concepts: clause structure, clause conjunctions, reference; Key processes: applying, noticing]

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, choice, conventions, cohesion; Key process: analysing, identifying, explaining]

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, expansion; Key processes: researching, comparing, investigating, analysing, explaining]

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, transmission; Key processes: reflecting, exploring, analysing, comparing]