Rationale

Through learning languages, students acquire:

- communication skills in the language being learnt
- an intercultural capability, and an understanding of the role of language and culture in communication
- a capability for reflection on language use and language learning.

Language learning provides the opportunity for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world and its peoples, to reflect on their understanding of experience in various aspects of social life, and on their own participation and ways of being in the world.

Learning languages broadens students' horizons in relation to the personal, social, cultural and employment opportunities that an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world presents. The interdependence of countries and communities means people in all spheres of life are required to negotiate experiences and meanings across languages and cultures. Despite its status as a world language, a capability in English only is no longer sufficient. A bilingual or plurilingual capability is the norm in most parts of the world.

Learning languages:

- extends the capability to communicate and extends literacy repertoires
- strengthens understanding of the nature of language, of culture, and of the processes of communication
- develops intercultural capability
- develops understanding of and respect for diversity and difference, and an openness to different experiences and perspectives
- develops understanding of how culture shapes worldviews and extends learners' understanding of themselves, their own heritage, values, culture and identity
- strengthens intellectual, analytical and reflective capabilities, and enhances creative and critical thinking.

Learning languages also contributes to strengthening the community's social, economic and international development capabilities. Language capabilities represent linguistic and cultural resources through which the community can engage socially, culturally and economically, in domains which include business, trade, science, law, education, tourism, diplomacy, international relations, health and communications.

Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages meets the needs and rights of young people to learn their own languages and recognises their significance in the language ecology of Australia. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own languages is crucial to overall learning and achievements, to developing a sense of identity and recognition and understanding of language, culture, Country and Place. For all students, learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the country in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Year 3 and 4 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 4, students interact with teachers and peers in classroom routines, action-related talk and play. They use formulaic expressions when participating in classroom routines and collaborative activities, such as complimenting others (for example, El bolso de Susana es hermoso), requesting help (for example, Necesito ayuda con mi bicicleta) and seeking permission such as ¿Puedo ir al salón de informática?. They interpret visual, non-verbal and contextual cues such as intonation, gestures and facial expressions to help make meaning. They make statements using the present tense and the present + infinitive form (for example, quiero cantar, quiero salir) about aspects of their lives such as school, home and everyday routines (for example, Mi escuela está cerca de mi casa, Me gusta la clase de español). They approximate Spanish pronunciation and intonation in simple statements. Students gather information relating to own and others' lifestyles and present information at sentence level in simple texts. They make simple statements about characters such as La bruja es amable, themes and their own reactions such as El payaso está triste in response to imaginative texts. They use modelled sentence structures to compose short original texts using conjunctions such as y, o, porque and pero, and prepositions such as a, con, de and en. Students use vocabulary related to school, home and lifestyles (for example, divertido, alto, gordo, grande). They use possessive adjectives (for example, mi libro, nuestro coche), adjectives (for example, extraño, fantástico), singular and plural forms (for example, el árbol, la cafetería, las pelotas, los mensajes) and regular verbs (for example, cantar, correr, vivir) in simple constructions. When writing, they apply punctuation and capitalisation rules. They translate short texts, using word lists and dictionaries and create simple bilingual texts. They use simple phrases and expressions that reflect cultural practices, for example, diminutives such as Sarita, gatico.

Students differentiate between statements, commands, exclamations and questions according to intonation. They identify similarities and differences between some Spanish and English texts, recognising that familiar texts have characteristic features. They give examples of how language use varies according to the age, gender and relationship of participants, and of ways that languages change over time. They name some of the many languages that are spoken in Australia, and identify languages represented in the class and local community. They identify ways in which the cultures of Spanish speakers influence everyday interactions, involving greetings such as hugging or kissing on both cheeks and polite expressions such as ¿Me pasa el ipad por favor?

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Languages aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure students:

- communicate in the target language
- understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators.

These three aims are interrelated and provide the basis for the two organising strands: Communicating and Understanding. The three aims are common to all languages.

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 3 and 4 Level Description

The nature of the learners

At this level, children are developing awareness of their social worlds and of their memberships of various groups, including the Spanish class. They are further developing literacy capabilities in English, such as writing in the Roman alphabet, and this assists to some degree in learning Spanish. They benefit from varied, activity-based learning that builds on their interests and capabilities and makes connections with other areas of learning.

Spanish language learning and use

The development of oral proficiency at this stage continues to rely on rich language input in different modes, including examples of different accents and varieties of Spanish in the Spanish-speaking world. Children engage in a lot of listening and responding by actions, building active listening and comprehension skills. Language is authentic with some modification, involving familiar vocabulary and simple structures. Children are supported to expand their use of the language in familiar interactions and situations, such as exchanging simple ideas and information, negotiating predictable activities, and participating in shared tasks, performances and play. They continue to build vocabulary that can be adapted for different purposes, and to control simple grammatical forms with some accuracy. Attention is focused on grammar, vocabulary building, pronunciation, and non-verbal and cultural dimensions of language use through purposeful communicative activities and experiences.

Contexts of interaction

The contexts in which learners interact are primarily local: the classroom, school, home and community, with some access to wider communities of Spanish speakers and resources via digital technology.

Texts and resources

Children develop literacy skills and textual knowledge through supported interaction with a range of spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts. Imaginative and interactive texts (for example, picture books, stories, puppet plays, songs and games) develop the expressive and cultural dimensions of language. Texts such as negotiated classroom rules, lists of planned activities, and family or class profiles show how language is used to 'get things done'. Learners may have access to resources developed for children in Spanish-speaking countries, such as children's television programs, storybooks or web pages, as a way of developing cultural knowledge.

Features of Spanish language use

Learners recognise and use intonation patterns to express different meanings. They apply their knowledge of sound–letter associations to spell new words. They recognise and use elements of grammar such as gender and singular/plural forms, simple verb forms, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns and prepositions to understand and to create simple spoken and written texts. Learning Spanish contributes to learners' general literacy development and to the process of making sense of their worlds that characterises this stage of their development. As they encounter varieties of Spanish language and cultures represented in the Spanish-speaking world, they make comparisons with their own language(s) and culture(s) and consider their own ways of communicating. This leads to exploring concepts of identity, commonality and difference, and to thinking about cultural and linguistic diversity and about what it means to speak more than one language in the contemporary world.

Level of support

This stage of learning involves extensive support. Learners are given a variety of opportunities to apply their Spanish language knowledge in meaningful activities in order to 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 the task; make time for experimentation, drafting and redrafting; and provide support for self-monitoring and reflection.

The role of English

Learners are supported to use Spanish as much as possible for classroom routines, social interaction, structured learning tasks and language experimentation and practice. English is used for discussion, explanation and reflection, enabling learners to develop a language (a *metalanguage*) for sharing ideas about linguistic and cultural systems and experience. Using both Spanish and English in the classroom develops awareness of what it means to be bilingual.

Year 3 and 4 Content Descriptions

Communicating

Socialising

Interact with teacher and peers to exchange information about aspects of their personal world such as school, home, everyday routines and favourite pastimes.
[Key concepts: routine, home; Key processes: questioning, responding, describing]

Participate in collaborative tasks and experiences such as creating and presenting a display or performance and following procedures and instructions.
[Key concept: collaboration; Key processes: contributing, exchanging]

Participate in everyday classroom exchanges such as responding to simple questions, asking permission, requesting help, asking how to say or write something, asking for repetition and complimenting others.
[Key concepts: cooperation, school life; Key processes: questioning, requesting, suggesting]

Informing

Gather and share information from peers and from texts relating to the Spanish-speaking world and to areas such as home, school, routines, responsibilities and interests.
[Key concepts: routine, events; Key processes: identifying, recording, questioning]

Present information about personal or shared interests or experiences, using simple descriptive language and supporting resources such as tables, lists and images.
[Key concepts: experience, representation, culture; Key processes: describing, presenting]

Creating

Read, view and listen to stories, children's television programs and songs and make simple statements about characters, themes and reactions.
[Key concepts: character, plot; Key processes: comparing, responding, experimenting]

Create short imaginative texts such as dialogues and stories using modelled language.
[Key concept: imagination; Key processes: experimenting, performing, creating]

Translating

Compare and explain simple texts or expressions in both Spanish and English, such as street signs, advertisements, sayings and greetings.
[Key concepts: gist, meaning; Key processes: matching, translating, comparing]

Create bilingual texts such as action games, songs, stories or photo captions, and identify and discuss aspects of culture represented in the texts.
[Key concepts: similarities, differences; Key processes: comparing, explaining]

Reflecting

Interact in Spanish using simple phrases and expressions, recognising how language reflects cultural practices.
[Key concepts: communication, difference, respect; Key processes: noticing, comparing, reflecting]

Explore own sense of identity, for example, by discussing membership of groups such as a club, a country or a language-speaking community, and how these elements of identity are reflected in language use.
[Key concepts: belonging, membership; Key processes: describing, representing]

Understanding

Systems of Language

Experiment with Spanish pronunciation, intonation and spelling rules, including patterns associated with questions and statements.
[Key concepts: intonation, spelling, accent; Key processes: discriminating sounds, recognising words]

Notice and apply elements of Spanish grammar such as gender, singular/plural forms, adjectives, adverbs, verb forms, pronouns and prepositions in simple spoken, written and digital texts.
[Key concepts: grammatical rules, patterns of language, gender; Key processes: recognising, applying]

Recognise that texts such as stories, emails and dialogues have particular characteristic features, and notice similarities and differences between some Spanish and English versions.
[Key concepts: language features, structure; Key processes: observing, comparing]

Language variation and change

Understand that language use varies according to the age and relationship of participants.
[Key concepts: register, status; Key processes: observing, explaining]

Recognise that languages change with use over time and according to context.
[Key concepts: influence, change, exchange; Key processes: identifying, classifying, comparing]

Identify the variety of languages represented in the school, local community and general Australian population.
[Key concepts: community, diversity; Key processes: mapping, grouping]

Role of language and culture

Discuss examples of ways in which the cultures of Spanish speakers influence everyday interactions such as expressions of respect and affection.
[Key concepts: culture as process and practice, values; Key processes: noticing, comparing, connecting]