Northern Territory Government

What Works

A discussion of languages policy for Northern Territory schools

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GPO Box 4821
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Fax: 08 8999 4363
Email: ntbos@nt.gov.au
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Northern Territory Board of Studies

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
ASLC	Alice Springs Language Centre
BALGS	Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools
CDU	Charles Darwin University
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
COGSO	NT Council of Government School Organisations
DEET	Northern Territory Department of Education. Employment and Training
DHS	Darwin High School
DoE	Northern Territory Department of Education
ESL	English as Second Language
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ILC	Northern Territory Curriculum Framework Indigenous Languages and Culture Component
LOTE	Languages Other Than English
LTANT	Language Teachers' Association Northern Territory
MCEETYA	The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NALSAS	National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools
NALSSP	National Asian Languages and Studies in School Programme
NAPLAN	National Assessment of Literacy and Numeracy
NT	Northern Territory
NTBoS	Northern Territory Board of Studies
NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
NTCF	Northern Territory Curriculum Framework
NTOEC	Northern Territory Open Education Centre
NTSoL	Northern Territory School of Languages
SACE	South Australia Certificate of Education

INTRODUCTION

The 2015 Languages Policy Planning Day is a significant moment in languages education for the Northern Territory (NT). This planning day will set in motion the future for languages teaching and learning at the classroom, at the school and at the system level. It will provide the Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBoS) with strategic intention for languages policy and it will frame the essential conditions that ensure every child has opportunity to experience an effective and meaningful languages education.

Setting the context

In 2009, the council of Commonwealth and state and territory education ministers approved the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*. It has guided the development of the Australian Curriculum and reflects the position ministers adopted in the 2008 *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Board approved *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 3*[1] in late 2012, which reflects the evolving processes used in developing the Australian Curriculum.

In 2013, the NTBoS provided schools with curriculum, assessment and reporting policy and guidelines for implementing the Australian Curriculum. The policy described an implementation timeline and requires all NT schools will teach the Transition to Year 9 Australian Curriculum: English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography and to use the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) until each learning area is replaced by the Australian Curriculum as directed by the NTBoS.

[1] http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/The_Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_V3.pdf#search=shape

The Australian Curriculum: Languages includes language-specific curricula for world languages and a *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*.

The learning area includes curricula for 11 languages in addition to the *Framework* and is designed to recognise that learners of languages in Australia comprise three major groups:

- second language learners
- background language learners
- first language learners.

The Australian Curriculum: Languages for Chinese, Italian, Indonesian and French is currently available for familiarisation activities, with Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese due for publication during 2015. It is expected that, pending endorsement by Education Council, NTBoS will approve those published languages for use in Northern Territory schools.

In 2013, the Northern Territory Board of Studies established a Language Stakeholder Reference Group to:

- advise the NT Board of Studies on implementing the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*
- review and respond to developed products and papers
- provide advice and feedback to support the development of policy, plans and advice allow all NT education stakeholders a voice in developing the implementation plan
- play an active role in representing and providing advice in relation to their areas of expertise and experience e.g. stage of schooling, geographical location and sector representation.

Simultaneously, given the significance of Aboriginal languages in the NT, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages sub-group was also established. This group includes stakeholder representation and is tasked with specifically with:

- advising NTBoS on the status of the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework: Indigenous Languages and Culture Component including recommendations for review processes and principles for Indigenous Language learning in the Northern Territory
- advising NTBoS via the Languages Stakeholder Reference Group on implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages - Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*.
- advising on the status of Northern Territory Curriculum Framework Indigenous Language and Culture component when the ACARA framework is endorsed
- allowing all NT school education stakeholders a voice in the development of the implementation plan.
- playing an active role in representing and providing advice in relation to their areas of expertise and experience e.g. stage of schooling, geographical location and sector representation.

The Language Stakeholder Reference Group's purpose included:

- providing advice relating to languages education in the Northern Territory
- contributing to the development of a Northern Territory implementation plan for *Australian Curriculum: Languages*, including identifying appropriate models to deliver the Languages curriculum.

This group comprises membership from:

Title	Member	Region/Unit
Director (Chair of the Reference Group)	Jill Hazeldine	Curriculum Assessment and Standards
Senior Manager Curriculum	Marisa Boscato	Curriculum Assessment and Standards
Consultant, Australian Curriculum Languages	Weifeng Mao	Curriculum Assessment and Standards
Acting Director Education Services	Rima Ismail-Jones	Education Partnerships
Regional Director	Bryan Hughes	Arnhem
Learning and Performance Network Leader	Sharni Wilson	Katherine
Consultant Indigenous Languages and Culture	Susan Moore	Schools South
School Principal	Sue Beynon	Gray Primary School
	Jodie Green	Dripstone Middle School
	Leonard Freeman	Baniyala School
	Belinda Pearson	Sadadeen Primary School
	Trevor Read	Darwin High School
	Michele Cody	Wagaman Primary School
Education Officer Languages and Literacy	Ginny Edwards	Catholic Education Office
Assistant Director	Cheryl Salter	Association of Independent Schools NT
Principal Language Centres	Dominique Castle	Alice Springs Languages Centre
	Jeannie Bennett	Darwin Languages Centre
Principal Consultant Languages	Stephen Pelizzo	Schools North
Representative	Matt Skoss 2014 Michelle Willsher 2015	NT Council of Government School Organisations (COGSO)
Representative NT Board of Studies	Professor Peter Kell	Charles Darwin University
Representative Languages Teacher Association Northern Territory	Marnie Foster	Darwin High School

The Languages Stakeholders Reference Group has met once per term and updated NTBoS on progress at quarterly meetings. During Semester One 2015, the group agreed to a methodology to guide the completion of the work as directed by NTBoS.

This methodology was informed by the knowledge that languages education in the Northern Territory had undergone numerous reviews and iterations in recent years, all of which identified obstacles and problems associated with languages education and none of which resulted in sustained improvement to languages education at classroom, school and system levels.

This methodology was based on the idea that through processes such as literature review, stakeholder interviews and observations, as well as careful analysis of existing language programs, language activities and the available data, patterns and trends in what actually works at the classroom, school and system levels could be used to frame recommendations to NTBoS.

It is intended that these recommendations will provide the Board with the advice it is seeking in relation to languages education in the Northern Territory and the development of implementation plans for *Australian Curriculum: Languages*, including appropriate models to deliver languages curriculum.

This discussion paper provides a summary of what was found from applying the methodology. It contains stepped chapters to reveal the key ideas in a logical sequence and includes reflective questions to unearth the key issues.

This paper will be used at the NT Board of Studies Policy Planning Day. The planning day will take place on 23 March 2015 and will include input of key stakeholders from across government and non-government sectors:

- the Language Stakeholder Reference Group
- Senior Executives from the Department of Education, Catholic, Independent Schools and Christian Sectors
- two eminent Australian consultants in the field of languages education.

The policy planning day is a milestone opportunity for the Northern Territory. It connects strongly with Goal 2: Every Child a Successful Learner in the NT Department of Education Strategic Plan 2013-2015. It is an opportunity for stakeholders to achieve common understandings and shared language for describing the recommendations that will inform languages policy and implementation plans in the Northern Territory.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Language programs have existed in the Northern Territory for many years, including in policy[1]; however, historically the provision of languages has struggled for consistency due to multiple factors at professional, school and system levels.

To understand the complexity of languages education and to ensure that the recommendations to the NTBoS are effective in responding to the current needs of schools and languages program providers, the group committed to a series of research tasks. This discussion paper presents the research findings from within and beyond the Territory. It will to be used as the evidence base from which languages policy and implementation plans will be framed.

Framing such an ambitious agenda will be achieved through the use of reflective questions. These questions invite the reader to engage in the discussion, consider the issues and challenges, formulate thoughts and most importantly define the objective, principles, initiatives and outcomes of a language policy for every Northern Territory school.

Reflective questions

1. What is the educational value of learning languages?
2. What aspects of languages education will the policy address?
3. What are the measures of high quality languages education?
4. How can measures be devised to promote success?
5. What systematic supports will ensure continuity in languages learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?
6. How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?
7. Should policy be developed in conjunction with implementation plans to activate sustainable improvements and growth?
8. How will the policy clearly frame the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*?
9. How will timeframes and resources generate coordinated and sustainable activity?
10. What is the rationale for proposing priority languages?
11. How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?
12. How will the policy frame Indigenous Languages to ensure the recommendations from the NTBoS Indigenous Languages Stakeholder sub-group are accommodated?

[1] Languages Other Than English Policy, Northern Territory Board of Studies, 1999

VALUE

Policy Position

- Language learning enhances a student's linguistic and cultural identity
- Language learning engages students with multicultural communities within the Northern Territory
- Language learning equips students with communicative skills and intercultural understandings

Reflective question

RQ1:

What is the educational value of learning languages?

Elaboration

All Australian students are entitled to learn a language as an integral part of their education. Languages education supports students to become global citizens and equips our young people to play a key role in the Northern Territory's future.

Languages learning supports them to develop greater awareness of how languages relates to:

- culture
- ways of understanding of the world
- people's sense of identity.

It provides a unique opportunity for students to know about, engage with and develop deep understandings of others from diverse linguistic and cultural background.

Through languages learning, students also develop a deeper understanding of self and how their own language and cultural background influences their sense of self and their positioning in society.

In addition to these intrinsic values, language learning also provides students with options beyond school, such as employment pathways and travel.

FOCUS

Policy Position

- Effective languages education aims for improved student engagement and performance.
- Gains in student engagement and performance require integration of four critical aspects:
  - quality of teaching and learning
  - continuity of languages pathways
  - sustainability of languages education resourcing
  - provision of language options.

Reflective question

RQ2:

What aspects of languages education will the policy address?

Elaboration

The introduction of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* learning area brings opportunity to refresh languages education with a contemporary view, communicate a substantive rationale for languages learning and to define what constitutes successful languages learning in schools.

This evolution in curriculum requires languages policy that grows capacity for active and engaging languages programs. This means programs that include opportunities for authentic language use and participation in meaningful analysis and reflection by the students on their role as communicators. It requires:

- foregrounding of students' linguistic repertoire, allowing them to draw on their own language resources
- connections between what students have already learned and what they will learn
- a developmental approach to enable the depth of languages learning to be cumulative and the purpose to be sustained.

The issue of teacher resources is further highlighted through the explicit description of standards within the curriculum. Achieving the standards will require students to demonstrate communicative skills and intercultural understandings. Although traditionally cultural programs have been accepted within the realm of languages education, in the current context these will not give students opportunity to learn what is expected.

MEASURES

Policy Position

- Quality languages learning is measured by student progress and achievement.
- Quality languages outcomes are maximised by a focus on:
  - the quality of teaching and learning
  - student access to continued learning
  - systemised commitment to targeted and relevant professional support and learning for teaching.

Reflective questions

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

Elaboration

The review of policy both in the Northern Territory and elsewhere clearly indicates that there have been multiple measures of languages education over time, predominantly focused on provision, increases or decreases in enrolment and Year 12 participation.

The limitation of such measures is their failure to support understanding of the underlying factors that influence them, including:

- languages teaching and learning that supports students to build proficiency in communicative skills and intercultural capability
- opportunity to engage in continuous learning of a language within and across the stages of schooling
- teacher retention and professional support.

In contemporary terms, measures are no longer considered adequate unless they provide sectors and systems with accurate and informative indicators of languages education across all aspects of quality, continuity, sustainability and provision and unless they directly address the actual performance of students against the criteria described within curriculum standards.

SUSTAINABILITY

Policy Position

- Sustainable languages education depends on pathways from primary through middle to senior schooling.
- Languages education is sustained when schools work collectively and strategically to:
  - mainstream languages
  - resource programs
  - identify pathways for language learning
  - support teacher professional learning and growth
  - monitor student outcomes.

Reflective questions

RQ5:
What systematic supports will ensure continuity in languages learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for

Elaboration

A look back through languages policy and strategy quickly reveals a tendency to focus support on senior secondary schooling. However, this position fails to acknowledge that languages learning is a cumulative process. To achieve success at senior secondary level, a student needs to experience continuity of teaching and learning at each stage of schooling, delivered through developmentally appropriate pedagogy to ensure ongoing engagement and progress in the subject.

It is important to recognise the challenges schools face in providing programs of a particular language when working as isolated sites. Consideration of what has worked in the Northern Territory reveals that language pathways are sustained when schools have worked as a cluster or hub to recruit and support full time language specialist teaching staff, enabling them to systematise and coordinate the use of resources to meet the interests of students, teachers and the community.

In short, sustainable and continuous languages learning is secured when schools work collectively and strategically to:

- integrate languages programs into the mainstream curriculum
- resource programs with quality teachers and appropriate time allocation
- identify language pathways
- support the professional learning and growth of language teachers
- monitor the impact of the programs on student engagement, enrolment and achievement.

IMPLEMENTATION

Policy Position

- The implementation of languages education policy is strengthened by clearly defined:
  - long term goal/s
  - measures aligned with:
    - quality of teaching and learning
    - continuity of language pathways
    - sustainability of languages education resourcing
    - provision of language options
  - short term and long term indicators to describe the what needs to be worked on
  - progress markers to allow differentiation relevant for each stage of schooling.
- *Australian Curriculum: Languages* will require system and sector consultations with schools to ensure that decisions are aligned with long term goals and measures.

Reflective questions

RQ7:
Should policy be developed in conjunction with implementation plans to activate sustainable improvement and growth?

RQ8:
How will the policy clearly frame the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*?

RQ9:
How will timeframes and resources generate coordinated and sustainable activity?

Elaboration

Over time, implementation plans have often accompanied languages policy, highlighting language priorities, teacher participation in professional development, training or exchange programs and student participation rates as areas for activity.

A review of this approach has shown that implementing languages education is not served well by a one size fits all approach. It has also demonstrated that such an approach can result in effort that fails to align with intended outcomes, leading to programs that deliver cultural learning for students but do not allow opportunity to build languages proficiency.

So the question of implementation plans is a vexed one for policy makers who work across sectors and require the authority and resources of sector leadership to build stakeholder accountability and commitment. It also brings to the fore the issue of resourcing, especially in relation to the interdependence between recruiting and retaining specialist language teachers and the capability for continuous and quality language pathways within and across stages of schooling. This can result in stalemate at the discourse level, as the capacity of each sector is not of the same value or consistency.

Elaboration

An alternative proposition is to provide strategically defined principles to inform implementation plans, with carefully crafted milestones to ensure that:

- progress towards languages education goal/s can be monitored at each stage of schooling
- plans can be adjusted to accommodate significant changes at the system and local levels.

One core implementation action involves the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*, which includes language-specific curricula for world languages and a *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*. The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is designed to recognise that learners of languages in schools comprise three major groups:

- second language learners
- background language learners
- first language learners.

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* – Chinese, Italian, Indonesian and French are currently available for familiarisation activities, with Arabic, German, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish and Vietnamese due for publication during 2015.

It is expected that those published languages will be approved by NTBoS for use in Northern Territory schools, pending endorsement by Education Council. This means, like other approved subject areas, languages learning will be aligned with the Australian Curriculum. Curriculum implementation decisions (e.g. timeline, learner group differentiation) will have a direct impact on language programs in schools.

PRIORITIES

Policy Position

- The value of languages education is framed through the opportunity it affords the students as members of a community and humanity.
- Priority languages are defined through the capacity to ensure support for:
  - quality of teaching and learning
  - continuity of language pathways
  - sustainability of language resourcing
  - provision of language options.

Reflective questions

RQ10:
What is the rationale for proposing priority languages?

RQ11:
How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?

Elaboration

Most policies in Australia include the notion of priority languages, using criteria drawn from political, economic, geolocation, socio-cultural and community interests. In the Northern Territory:

- the Department of Education's Strategic Plan requires the identification of priority Asian languages to be delivered in NT government schools
- the International Education and Training Hub Strategy classifies Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese as the priority languages.

Leading languages education thinkers, however, challenge orientations within policy that ignore one interest over another; reminding policy makers that the critical importance of languages education actually derives from:

- the value of language learning to the students themselves
- the contribution language learning makes to supporting students to be productive members of their community and the world.

In the NT, the most common Asian and European language programs are:

- Japanese
- Indonesian
- Chinese
- Modern Greek.

Elaboration

However, within different communities, there is considerable support for other languages such as French, Italian and Spanish. The challenge for policy makers therefore lies not with prioritising individual languages in the sense of what should be taught but instead to prioritise those languages are able to be supported by:

- quality of teaching and learning
- continuity of language pathways
- sustainability of language resourcing
- provision of language options.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Policy Position

- Languages education policy recognises the need for a distinct and explicit presence for Indigenous languages in the Northern Territory.

Reflective questions

RQ12:
How will the policy frame Indigenous languages to ensure the recommendations from the NTBoS Indigenous Languages Stakeholder sub-group are accommodated?

Elaboration

It is without doubt that Indigenous languages are of significant value, contribution and importance to the past, present and future of the Northern Territory, as well as to the lives of individuals and their communities.

The NTBoS has established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages sub group to:

- provide advice regarding the status of the *NT Curriculum Framework: Indigenous Languages and Culture (ILC)* component, including recommendations for review processes and principles for Indigenous language learning in the Northern Territory
- provide advice regarding implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages - Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*
- provide advice regarding the status of *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework: ILC* component when the ACARA framework is endorsed
- act as a mechanism to allow all NT school education stakeholders a voice in the development of the implementation plan
- play an active role in representing and providing advice in relation to their area of expertise and/or experience.

The group was formed in 2013 and will continue to undertake this work, acknowledging that, until ACARA releases the draft framework, that work will focus on the *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework: ILC.*

CHAPTER ONE

USING QUALITY TO SET TARGETS AND MEASURES

PURPOSE

- To use the contemporary theoretical perspective of languages learning adopted by ACARA to frame effective measures and targets for languages policy
- To clearly articulate a rationale for defining success through measuring the quality of the program and its impact on the student's interculturality.

INTRODUCTION

Languages education in the Northern Territory is complex. There are a range of initiatives, strategies, activities and positions dedicated to supporting programs in schools[1], teacher professional learning and growth, and student participation.

The recommendations to the Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBoS) must be relevant and effective in responding to the current needs of sectors, schools and language centres if there is a desire to avoid further complication and clarify the structures, processes and practices that will support languages education to grow and improve systematically.

This paper presents the current status in languages education taken from within and beyond the Northern Territory and aims to provide stakeholders with an evidence base that is conclusive and informative and supports further work in the languages policy and plans arena.

While the publication of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is a strong factor leading to work on this discussion paper, it is noteworthy that this paper takes a broader view than just curriculum implementation. This would allow the NTBoS to communicate a vision for languages education in schools and offer principles to guide systematised support and implementation of language teaching and learning in every school.

LANGUAGES EDUCATION: SUCCESS AND ITS MEASURE

Historically, at the policy level, the most tangible evidence of improvement in language education has been the increase or decrease in the number of students enrolled in languages programs. This has meant that policy statements have traditionally set percentage increases in student participation as targets. An example of this is the NTBoS's *Languages Other Than English Policy*, 1999.

It is important to note that, to date, the goals set in the 1999 policy have not been achieved and the challenges that confronted languages education back then still exist today.

By the year 2006:

- All students from Years 4 to 10 will study a language other than English
- Sixty per cent of all students at Year 10 will study one of the NALSAS languages and forty percent will be studying other languages

(NT LOTE Policy, 1999)

[1] Chapter Six refers

Attempts at setting targets using numbers of students as a measure, and the impact of these targets, raise the following questions:

- How relevant is the use of student enrolment and participation rates in the 21st century?
- How should policy define and measure success?

The development of *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is an unprecedented effort resulting in 11 language specific curricula[2] , as well as a *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*. Therefore, for each jurisdiction including the NT, the approval for implementation provides an opportunity to refresh languages education with a contemporary view, communicate a substantive rationale for languages learning and define what constitutes successful languages learning in schools.

ACARA describes languages learning as an intercultural process, rather than a mechanical one. It clearly orientates the curriculum to be enacted not merely as a process that happens in the learner's mind internally but rather as a social, interactive and collaborative learning process.

Further to this, ACARA explains that the outcome of successful learning is not just correctly using language as a code system; more importantly, it includes a high level of interculturality and metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness, awareness that is developed through the actual experience of learning languages.

To draw from the messages ACARA brings to the forefront, it is therefore worthwhile to consider how indicators for successful languages learning may be reflected:

- confidence and ability to use the language to convey meaning appropriate to the social and cultural context
- awareness of the linguistic and cultural realm of other participants, as well as their own
- awareness of the inter-relationship between languages, cultures and learning.

To make this fundamental shift of focus from purely linguistic items and their use in communication in the target language towards an intercultural orientation of languages teaching and learning, active and engaging languages programs need to be in place. Programs need to include opportunities for authentic language use and opportunities for students to participate in

In learning to use the target language, learners learn to:

- exchange meanings reciprocally through interaction with people and/or texts
- 'move between' and come to understand the linguistic and cultural systems of the language they are learning, and at the same time referencing these to their own linguistic and cultural systems
- develop metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness of what it means to interpret and to act in the world, and to be interpreted reciprocally by others.

(Shape of Australian Curriculum: Languages, ACARA 2011, p.14)

The point is that quality leads to success.

Reflective questions

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality language education?

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

[2] More language specific curricula will be developed in 2015 by ACARA.

meaningful analysis and reflection on their role as a communicator. This shift to what constitutes successful languages learning poses a challenge for the 'number driven' model at the policy level.

As an alternative to number driven targets and measures that are based on enrolment, participation or completions, future policy work creates the opportunity to highlight the connection between quality and success. One option is to use the student growth and achievement data to track the impact of teaching and learning, language education resourcing and continuity within and across stages of schooling.

This means that ensuring high quality languages programs that promote learners' communicative skills, as well as intercultural understanding, is the ultimate challenge for languages policy and the measures selected to monitor progress.

The benefits of successful language learning reside in the quality of the language learning itself and the capacity of the educative system to offer cognitively enriching and interculturally relevant learning experiences.

CHAPTER TWO

LEARNING LESSONS THROUGH NATIONAL LANGUAGES POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

PURPOSE

- To map out the national context of languages education that is reflected in the language policies
- To provide an overview of key national policies since 1987
- To identify changes and trends in policy regarding language education at the national level
- To recognise connection between national initiatives and NT language education activities

INTRODUCTION

In order to set the context for any future languages education policy work, it is important for decision makers and stakeholders to consider the lessons learned from previous iterations. This chapter highlights key language policies and initiatives that were led at the national level and have impacted on curriculum and schooling in the Northern Territory.

- *National Policy on Languages*
  Joseph Lo Bianco, Australia Department of Education, 1987
- *Australian Language and Literacy Policy*
  Australian Government, Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991
- *The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS)*
  Australian Government, Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1994 – 2002
- *The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools*
  Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2005 – 2008
- *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*
  Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008
- *National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP)*
  Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations, 2009 – 2012
- *Australian Curriculum: Languages*
  Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011

Despite the specific contextual characteristics of jurisdictions across the country, the challenges for languages education have been similar. At the national level, there have been many attempts to address these challenges since the first language policy in 1987. These attempts include various approaches and tended to focus on different areas of interest.

It is clear from looking at what actually happened in schools and at system levels, that not

all of these attempts achieved the stated goals. While a closer look helps to understand the evolving national context for language policy; it is also an opportunity to learn something from the experience on the ground in order to ensure policy directions guarantee sustained improvement, guided by appropriate targets and measured by relevant and informative data.

National Policy on Languages

Joseph Lo Bianco

Australia Department of Education, 1987

Summary

The ***National Policy on Languages*** won bipartisan endorsement in the Australian parliament. It provided fully funded initiative in the areas of:

- deafness and sign language
- Indigenous languages
- community and Asian languages
- cross-cultural and intercultural training in professional staff working in related fields
- extension to translating and interpreting services
- resources in public libraries
- support for adult literacy
- English as Second Language (ESL).

It also provided funds for the co-ordination of research activity, including the creation of the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia and its constituent research centres across Australia.

Besides first language maintenance programs, languages of wider teaching are identified, including:

- Arabic
- Chinese
- French
- German
- Greek
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Japanese
- Spanish

Provision for Indigenous languages was separated from other languages in the *National Policy on Languages*. The focus of provision for Indigenous languages was on the learning of these languages by Indigenous people. In addition, the policy recommended the need to develop a wider awareness of Indigenous languages through education for non-Indigenous Australians.

Impacts and Outcomes

Through the *National Policy on Languages* the Australian Government provided funding through the following programs:

- The Australian Second Language Learning Programme
- The Asian Studies Programme
- The National Aboriginal Language Project.

Australian Language and Literacy Policy

Australian Government, Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991

Summary

This policy was positioned as building from the *National Policy on Languages*. While the goals of this policy were far beyond the school fence, it is significant to understand that it provided very clear statements about the place of language and literacy at the school level. The goals encompassed proficiency in spoken and written English for all Australians, the learning of languages other than English and the maintenance and where appropriate, recording of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. It addressed the needs of children and adults, of those in work, of those unemployed or not in the labour force and of Australians from different ethnic backgrounds.

Reflective questions

RQ10:
What is the rationale for proposing priority languages?

RQ11:
How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?

The policy addressed four areas:

1. English Literacy: all Australians should develop and maintain effective literacy in English to enable them to participate in Australian society
2. Languages Other than English: the learning of languages other than English must be substantially expanded and improved
3. Indigenous Languages: those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages which are still transmitted should be maintained and developed, and those that are not should be recorded where appropriate
4. Language Services: language services provided by interpreters and translators, the print and electronic media and libraries should be expanded and improved.

The policy included programs and strategies that were implemented from January 1992. The total Federal Government contribution to this national language and literacy effort amounted to more than $280 million in 1991-92 alone. The policy was intended to allow a better coordinated and integrated system of language and literacy provision.

Impacts and Outcomes

- This policy was very clear about the scope of languages other than English. It discussed the need for a concentration of effort, given that it was not desirable with limited teaching, curriculum and financial resources to expect that all languages can be taught.
- The policy resulted in Australian Government assistance for a core of eight languages nominated by each State and Territory Minister from a list of priority languages: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese.

The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS)

Australian Government, Department of Employment , Education and Training, 1994-2002

Summary

NALSAS was a cooperative initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. It was developed in response to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Working Group on Asian Languages and Cultures Report, which was endorsed by the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers at the COAG meeting in Hobart in 1994.

NALSAS targeted government and non-government schools. It aimed to:

- improve participation and proficiency levels in language learning in four Asian languages Japanese, Chinese, Indonesian and Korean
- support Studies of Asia across the curriculum.

The four languages were chosen on the basis of regional economic forecasts made by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

By the end of 2002, the Australian Government provided over $208 million to support NALSAS. It was specifically designed to not be ongoing, requiring that improvements in language program participation and proficiency would be self-sustaining by the end of 2002.

Reflective questions

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?

Impacts and Outcomes

- Increased enrolment in Japanese and Chinese languages was reported at the end of NALSAS funding period.
- The successes were often in programs of short duration and mostly dissipated after the strategy's abolition in 2002.
- By 2006, the total Australian enrolment in Asian languages and studies programs dropped back to 18%[1].

[1] Lo Bianco & Slaughter, *Second Language and Australian Schooling,* 2009, ACER

The National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2005-2008

Summary

The *National Statement For Languages Education* comprised two elements: a national statement for languages education and a national plan for languages education.

The national statement was described through three sections:

- the purpose and nature of languages education: commitment to a vision for quality languages education for all students, in all schools, in all parts of the country and articulation of the belief that students and the broader Australian community gain important benefits through learning languages
- national developments: enhancing quality through further integrating quality languages education into mainstream curriculum and into program delivery by all
- implications for jurisdictions and schools: recognising the need to take into account matters relating to quality and provision.

Reflective questions

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

RQ7:
Should policy be developed in conjunction with implementation plans to activate sustainable improvements and growth?

The national plan for languages education in Australian schools was initially for the four years 2005–2008 and reflected a commitment by all ministers of education to act together to address areas of common concern. It aimed to:

- establish long-term directions for languages education
- advance the implementation of high quality and sustainable programs
- maximise collaboration in the use of national, state and territory resources
- provide flexibility in implementation by individual jurisdictions.

The plan focused on six nationally agreed interdependent strategic areas:

- teaching and learning
- teacher supply and retention
- professional learning
- program development

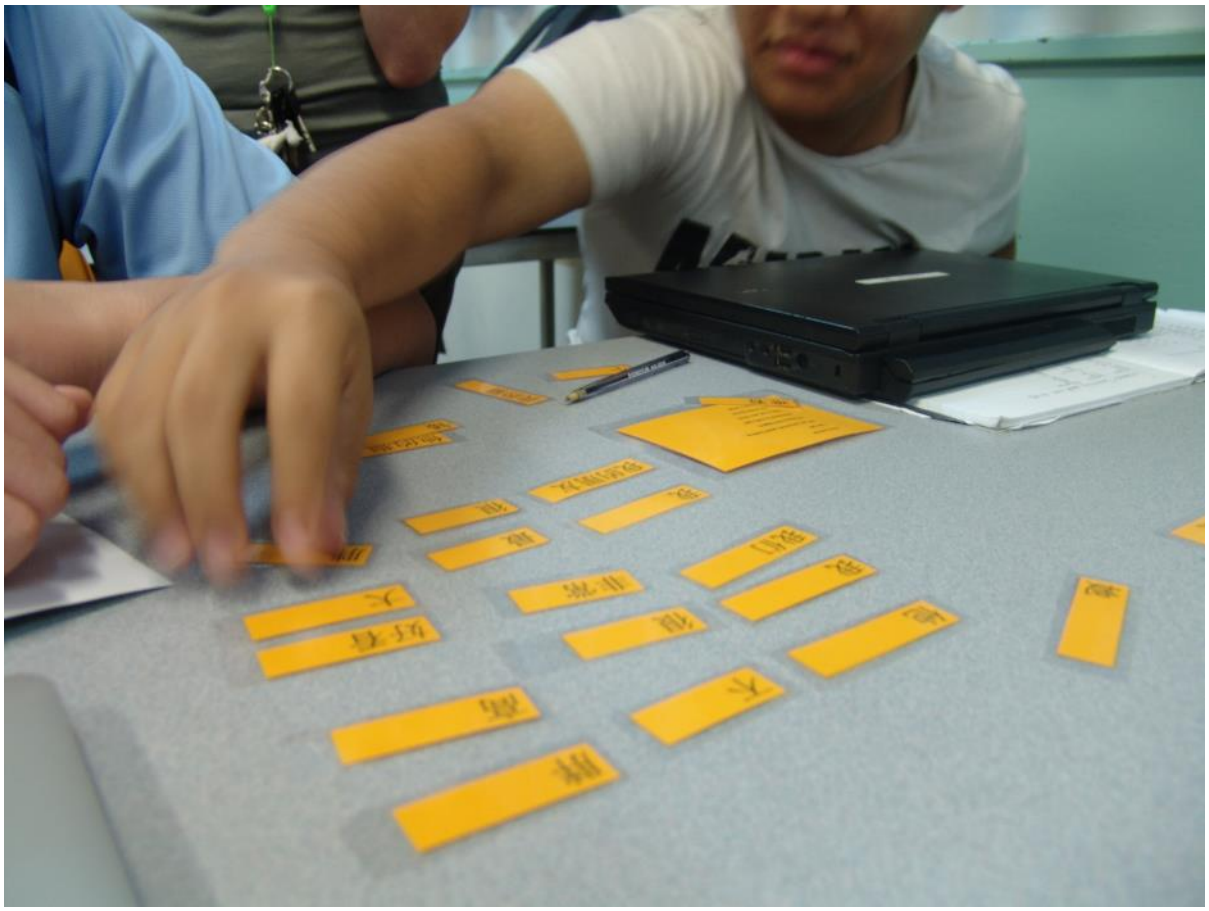
- quality assurance
- advocacy and promotion of languages learning.

The plan's effectiveness was measured through:

- collecting and analysing student participation data
- developing national sample assessment processes to determine the quality of student learning outcomes.

Impacts and Outcomes

- The importance of assuring quality of language programs is emphasised. A focus on 'quality requires the recognition of cumulative nature of languages learning and whole school commitment to languages education.
- In terms of choice of languages, the policy states that all languages are equally valid, and that learners gain similar social, cognitive, linguistic and cultural benefits, regardless of the language studied.



Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008

Summary

The Melbourne Declaration was designed by the Australian education ministers to facilitate collaboration across government, Catholic and independent school sectors, as well as across and between all levels of government.

Its purpose was to achieve new levels of engagement with all stakeholders to improve the educational outcomes for all young Australians, which was described as being central to the nation's social and economic prosperity and to the positioning of young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

The declaration included two goals:

1. Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.
2. All young Australians become:
   a. successful learners
   b. confident and creative individuals
   c. active and informed citizens.

The third part of the second goal explicitly referred to educating students to:

- be able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia
- understand and acknowledge the value of Indigenous cultures and possess the knowledge, skill and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Reflective questions

RQ1:
What is the educational value of learning languages?

RQ12:
How will the policy frame Indigenous Languages to ensure the recommendations from the NTBoS Indigenous Languages Stakeholder sub-group are accommodated?

RQ11:
How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?

Impacts and Outcomes

Within the section titled *Commitment to Action*, the declaration stated that all Australian governments committed to working together in eight inter-related areas, one of which is promoting world-class curriculum and assessment, which included languages, especially Asian languages.

- The Melbourne Declaration was supported by a series of action plans, commencing with the 2009–-2012 plan. The action plans outlined the strategies and initiatives that Australian governments were to take in collaboration with all school sectors, to support the achievement of the goals.

National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP)

Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations, 2009-2012

Summary

The Australian Government worked with key stakeholders, including state and territory government and non-government education authorities, embassies and the Asia Education Foundation, to develop the program and its implementation arrangements.

The program's aim was to increase opportunities for students to become familiar with the culture and languages of four of key regional neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.

The funding for the program included support for additional Asian languages classes in high schools, teacher training and support and the development of specialist curriculum for students displaying advanced abilities in Asian languages and studies programs.

The aspirational target for the program was that, by 2020, at least 12% of students would leave Year 12 with fluency in one of the target languages which would assist them to engage in trade and commerce in Asia or university study.

Becoming Asia Literate: Grants to Schools (BALGS), one of the program's grant schemes, was managed by the Asia Education Foundation and concluded in 2012. This four-year project funded 525 government, Catholic and independent primary and secondary schools to promote Studies of Asia and Asian languages.

Reflective question

RQ9:
How will timeframes and resources generate coordinated and sustainable activity?

Impacts and Outcomes

- The effectiveness of the grants to schools has been questioned due to the discrepancies between the funding targets and the actual impact on student participation in languages.
- The use of participation targets only has been considered insufficient, as participation rates are influenced not just by resourcing but also by a range of other factors.
- The design of the grant programs lacked high level strategic planning and co-ordination. Grants were open to Asian languages and studies providers across the country[2], resulting in successes being of short duration and mostly dissipating soon after the initiatives were finalised.

[2] Lo Bianco, *Language planning and student experiences: Intention, rhetoric and implementation*, Multilingual Matters, 2013

Australian Curriculum: Languages

Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011

Summary

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. The languages under development include Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Vietnamese, Turkish, Hindi, Auslan and classical languages, as well as a *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*.

The inclusion of languages as a learning area in the Australian Curriculum recognises Australia's distinctive and dynamic migration history. It also values the language communities in Australia and recognises the diverse economic, linguistic, social, cultural, and religious landscape.

The range of languages proposed for use reflects Australia's geographical position and geopolitical history, illustrating the country's need for engagement with the languages and cultures of the Asian region.

The Australian Curriculum describes that the learning of languages enables students to:

- communicate proficiently in a target language
- develop an intercultural capability
- develop an understanding of the role of language and culture in human communication
- have an opportunity to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of humanity
- have opportunity to reflect on their understanding of the human experience in all aspects of social life and on their own participation and ways of being in the world.

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is developed and published by ACARA. The curriculum is endorsed by Education Council and each jurisdiction is responsible for its implementation.

During the recent review of the Australian Curriculum during 2014, the languages learning area was not considered within scope as it was still being finalised.

Reflective questions

RQ8:
How will the policy clearly frame the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*?

RQ11:
How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?

Impacts and Outcomes

- The Australian Curriculum will eventually offer 16 languages, plus the *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*.
- Each language has:
  - 2 curricula, recognising different entry point for students (except for Chinese which has three curricula)
  - F-10 (for continuous learning)
  - 7-10 (for new learning).
- The range of curricular options recognises the differences among different groups of learners:
  - second language learners (who have no prior knowledge of the language)
  - background language learners (who have the language in the home environment)
  - first language learners (who completed primary schooling through the language as the instruction medium, for example, migrant learners).

Summary

With the constant changes in the political and sociocultural context, the ideology of education and languages education has changed since the 1980s. Inevitably, this is reflected in languages policies at the national level. Australian languages policy has shifted from a multiculturalism orientation to a strategic orientation that accounts for the economic, trade and political interests shaped by the country's place in the world. This is exemplified in the Melbourne Declaration of 2008 through the aspiration for all Australian students to become active and informed citizens, who appreciate Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia.

In the Northern Territory, the multicultural and multilingual orientation has always been recognised and reflected in policy. Languages education has been of such significance that local community groups have driven both in-school and out-of-school Indigenous, Asian and European languages programs, to ensure that young people's language capability continues. Equally the NT's geographic location and historically strong connection with the Asia region lends itself to the importance of strategic orientation within policy making.

> All languages are equally valid. Learners gain similar social, cognitive, linguistic and cultural benefits, regardless of the language studied. Decisions made by individual jurisdictions and schools regarding the languages to be offered and supported, need to take into account local contexts. Other important factors to consider are availability of teachers and resources, learner background, and continuity of languages learning, especially at transition points in schooling[3].

This opportunity to reflect on the national level allows lessons to be learned from previous policies in which language priorities have been aligned with strategic or multicultural considerations alone, given the contrast between the amount of funding and the achievement of long term aspiration goals.

Additionally a look at national policy and initiative allows the space to consider the importance of setting the right targets and measures at the short, medium and longer term; so that growth and improvement can be monitored and most importantly sustained.

Policy renewal brings opportunity to inspire champions, create momentum and coordinate strategies. However, if the goal of languages policy is to see languages education integrated into the mainstream curriculum of every school, then the links between appropriately qualified and trained teachers, continuity in languages learning within school, and from primary to secondary levels and beyond, adequate time allocations, supportive timetabling practices, resourcing and whole school commitment, all become critical to avoid

[3] *National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools: National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools,* MCEETYA, 2005-2008.

policy that creates lots of activity but never addresses the underlying factors of provision and quality.

Perhaps the clearest lesson to be learned goes back to the central question for languages policy. It is a question that requires consideration of the educational value of languages learning itself, the need for policy to describe the role languages learning provides for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of humanity, to reflect on their understanding of human experience in all aspects of social life, and on their own participation and ways of being in the world[4].

[4] *The Shape of Australian Curriculum: Languages*, ACARA, 2011

CHAPTER THREE

A ROUND UP OF LANGUAGES POLICIES AND INITIATIVES ACROSS AUSTRALIA

PURPOSE

- To understand key policies and initiatives in other jurisdictions

INTRODUCTION

As part of the research for this discussion paper, each jurisdiction's most recent languages policy was collected from websites and other sources and then summarised. It is intended that this analysis will help to further refine the vision, values and thinking that will underpin a languages policy for the Northern Territory.

Australian Capital Territory

Curriculum Requirements in ACT Schools (P-10) Policy
http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/52515/CurriculumRequirements_P-10_Policy_updated.pdf

Languages Pathway Plan
http://www.det.act.gov.au/search?query=languages+pathway+plan

ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013
http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/104689/Final_ACT_Multicultural_Strategy_2010_-2013_25_Nov.pdf

Many Voices 2012-2016
http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/multicultural/publications/amended-act-languages-policy

New South Wales

Learning through Languages: Review of Languages Education in NSW
http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/languagesreview/pdf_doc/reference-paper.pdf

Queensland

Languages in Queensland State Schools
http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/framework/p-12/index.html

Tasmania

Tasmanian Curriculum Information
http://www.education.tas.gov.au/Students/schools-colleges/curriculum/Pages/Tasmanian-Curriculum.aspx

South Australia

Guidelines for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in DECD schools: Reception-Year 10.
http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/GuidelinesfortheImplement.pdf

Languages FAQ 2013
http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/teachingandlearning/files/links/Tab_6_1_FAQ_Languages.pdf

Victoria

The Victorian Government's Vision for Languages Education, 2011
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/languageseducationvision.pdf

Languages – Expanding Your World, A Plan to implement The Victorian Government's Vision for Languages Education 2013–2025
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/languagesvisionplan.pdf

Western Australia

School Curriculum and Standards Authority
http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/

Curriculum Framework Curriculum Guide- LOTE
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/languagesvisionplan.pdf

To set the context for any future languages education policy work, it is important for decision makers and stakeholders to consider the lessons learned from previous iterations. This chapter highlights recent languages policies and initiatives led in other jurisdictions; it allows consideration of the various approaches seen and identification of strengths and opportunities that may apply in the Northern Territory context.

The following questions are used to summarise differences in policy across each jurisdiction.

- What is the scope of the policy?
- What is the stated aim of the policy?
- Are there action plans and strategies to support the policy?
- Does the policy refer to implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Languages and include a timeline for this to commence?
- Does the policy identify supported or priority languages?
- Does the policy include explicit reference to the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages?
- Does the policy prioritise the learning of Asian languages?
- Does the policy include resource allocation through funding for key projects or programs, professional practice or partnerships?
- Does the policy state mandatory time allocation for languages?
- Which proficiency / provision targets are set within the policy or strategy?
- Does the policy include accountability through implementation strategies, evaluation tools, responsible agencies or units and so forth?

	Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia
What is the scope of the policy?	Schools and beyond	Schools and beyond	Schools only	Schools only	Schools only (no language specific policy, integrated within curriculum policy at a holistic level)	Schools and beyond	Schools only
What is the stated aim of the policy?	Enhance and safeguard diverse array of languages	Provide a broader and more inclusive language education	Increase the percentage of Year 12 students studying a language	Fully implement Australian Curriculum	No clear languages policy, although there is an Asia Literacy strategy; however this does not include explicit aims concerning the learning of languages	Building demand, developing and expanding the workforce, strengthening delivery, resources and partnerships	Improved access to languages programs
Are there action plans and strategies to support the policy?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, action plans and strategies are included in the policy

	Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia
Does the policy refer to implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Languages and include a timeline for this to commence?	Yes, the ACT Languages Curriculum remains the required curriculum for schools pending endorsement of the Australian Curriculum.	The NSW Languages Curriculum remains the required curriculum for schools pending endorsement of the Australian Curriculum. The NSW Board of Studies develops syllabus for each learning area to include the Australian Curriculum and retain many of the features familiar to NSW teachers.	Yes, the Queensland Languages Curriculum remains the required curriculum for schools pending endorsement of the Australian Curriculum.	Yes, the South Australian Languages Curriculum remains the required curriculum for schools pending endorsement of the Australian Curriculum.	Yes, the Tasmanian Languages Curriculum remains the required curriculum for schools pending endorsement of the Australian Curriculum.	The Victorian Languages Curriculum remains the required curriculum for schools pending endorsement of the Australian Curriculum. Victorian schools use AusVELS which incorporates the Australian Curriculum within the Victorian curriculum framework to retain Victorian priorities and approaches to teaching and learning.	The Western Australian Curriculum Framework remains the required curriculum for schools for pending endorsement of the Australian Curriculum. It also highlights how the Western Australian Curriculum relates to the Australian Curriculum.
Does the policy identify supported or priority languages?	French Italian German Spanish Japanese Chinese Indonesian Korean	Arabic Chinese French German Indonesian Italian Japanese Korean Spanish Aboriginal languages and community languages	Japanese German Chinese (Mandarin) French Italian Indonesian	Supporting all languages	Asian languages	Supporting all languages	Aboriginal languages Chinese French German Indonesian Italian Japanese

	Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia
Does the policy include explicit reference to the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the policy prioritise the learning of Asian languages?	No	No	No	No	Yes Separate from curriculum policies Engaging with Asia Strategy 2013 – 2015 requires online learning of Asian languages and the primary language programs promoting a focus on Asian	No	No
Does the policy include resource allocation through funding for key projects or programs, professional practice or partnerships?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the policy state mandatory time allocation for languages?	Year 3–6: 60 minutes per week Year 7–8: 150 minutes per week	Year 7–8: 100 minutes per week	Years 5–8 from 2015	Foundation to Year 6: 80 minutes per week Year 7–10: 128 minutes per week		All schools are required to offer languages by 2025	Years 8–10

	Australian Capital Territory	New South Wales	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria	Western Australia
Which proficiency / provision targets are set within the policy or strategy?	Access to language learning Supply and retention of teachers	Aboriginal languages provision Senior years learning and raising profile	No specific targets	All Foundation to Year 8 students learning a language	No specific targets	Provision targets[1] Proficiency targets[2]	Increase levels of participation, engagement and achievement in languages programs from primary school to Year 12
Does the policy include accountability through implementation strategies, evaluation tools, responsible agencies or units and so	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Not clear	Yes	Not clear

[1] Victoria: Provision targets

By 2015, 100% of government schools providing foundation level languages program.

By 2025, 100% of government schools providing a languages program and awarding the new Certificate of Language Proficiency at Year 10.

By 2025, 25% of all students in government and non-government schools include a language in addition to English in their senior secondary program of study.

[2] Victoria: Proficiency targets

By 2025, 60% of Year 6 students in government schools achieve a defined proficiency level in a language.

By 2025, 40% of Year 10 students in government schools achieve a defined proficiency level in a

To draw conclusions from the comparative information above, a deeper analysis is required to elaborate those points of interest for the Northern Territory.

Aspects

The Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria have a broad approach to languages policy. The policy statements go beyond curriculum requirements, and target areas including community, workforce, resources and partnerships with organisations, for example the Greek Consulate.

Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia's policies all focus on curriculum, specifying what curriculum and how the curriculum should be implemented at the school level.

Plans

All jurisdictions except Queensland include action plans as part of the policy. outlining strategies, actions and resources associated with the policy. Others such as Tasmania make connections to other departmental strategies, as a way to support their language policies.

Australian Curriculum

All states and territories have agreed to work collaboratively in order to deliver an Australian Curriculum. Across the country states and territories have approached this differently, with Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia all identifying they will implement the Australian Curriculum as published. New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia have committed to integrating the Australian Curriculum into their existing curriculum to include state based priorities, features and/or approaches to teaching and learning.

Priority Languages

All states support a wide range of languages, and none of the jurisdictions specifies Asian languages exclusively, except for Tasmania's *Engaging with Asia* strategy which includes supporting and expanding online learning of Asian languages and continued support for primary language programs promoting a focus on Asian languages.

The majority of jurisdictions list the most commonly taught languages as being supported languages. New South Wales has developed language specific syllabi for these languages.

Reflective questions

RQ2:
What aspects of languages education will the policy address?

RQ7:
Should policy be developed in conjunction with implementation plans to activate sustainable improvements and growth?

RQ8:
How will the policy clearly frame the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages*?

RQ10:
What is the rationale for proposing priority languages?

RQ11:
How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?

Time Allocation

All jurisdictions except Tasmania specify time requirements for mandating languages. These requirements usually increase as students move through the stages of schooling, the subject often becoming an elective during Years 9–12.

Targets and Measures

The targets described vary for each jurisdiction. Some focus on provision and proficiency and some focus on increased language profile or attitude. Targets concerned with provision usually focus on building the cumulative nature of language learning and ensuring establishment of language pathways in schools. Targets concerned with proficiency often focus on measuring students' proficiency at the point of transition into middle or senior secondary.

Sustainability

A majority of jurisdictions specify stakeholders who are accountable for the outcomes as a result of the policy. Some jurisdictions, such as the Australian Capital Territory, specify work units and list responsibilities during implementation; some jurisdictions, such as Victoria, specify the amount of funding allocated for various projects within each strategy and align these with the long term vision.

Reflective questions

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

RQ9:
How will timeframes and resources generate coordinated and sustainable activity?

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?

SUMMARY

Languages education is represented in different ways across the states and territories. Some jurisdictions have elected to develop specific policy and strategic plans to guide schools, while others have elected to use the curriculum as a tool for supporting schools to develop languages programs. The notion of priority languages is not universal across Australia, although most states and territories are explicit about the need to have a distinct statement on the place of Indigenous languages. Most policies give schools direction in terms of time allocation and have developed a vast array of support materials to help school offer their students rich language experiences. The smaller jurisdictions are early adopters of the Australian Curriculum, with the larger jurisdictions looking at how the national curriculum can be integrated with their existing frameworks, syllabi or outlines.

CHAPTER FOUR

A HISTORICAL VIEW OF LANGUAGES POLICIES IN THE NT

PURPOSE

- To provide an overview of key languages policies and initiatives
- To identify the impact of previous policy on languages education
- To reflect on those aspects of policy that have worked in schools from 1970s to the present
- To identify policy and strategy elements that apply today.

INTRODUCTION

Languages education, formerly known as Languages Other Than English (LOTE) has a unique space in the Northern Territory landscape, a uniqueness inherited from the nature of language itself. Language is integral to individual identity, community interests, social coherence and harmony, as well as to the economic and strategic development of the NT. As with other learning areas based on society and humanity, language is never a pure subject area that can be learned or understood without looking into the bigger social, cultural, political and economic contexts.

However, unlike other learning areas, languages education is prominent in the election commitments of political parties of all persuasions and is high on the agenda for community leaders from a diverse range of backgrounds. It continues to attract substantial interest, activity and funding, at local and national levels and be of interest to parents when selecting schools for their children.

So, while the value of learning a language at school is commonly accepted in the NT and a huge volume of interest and activity is apparent, there appears to be continued concern about the delivery, impact and quality of languages education in NT schools. There is ongoing discussion about whether languages have to be taught, how languages should be learned, which curriculum requirements are valid, which programs exemplify quality, how resources are aligned and so forth. There is anecdotal evidence of frustration from stakeholders working at the chalkface who claim the continual moving feast of languages policy, initiative, strategy and review is complex and often does not help to improve learning outcomes, overcome low participation rates or improve the status of languages.

To better understand this, the following discussion takes a journey through languages education in the NT from a local and a national perspective. It attempts to uncover some of the lessons learned along the way, as well as reveal opportunities that have been missed.

The Languages Story

According to the Dellit *Review of Languages Education in the NT* (2003)[1], languages education has never achieved the same status or foothold in the curriculum as other learning areas. This clearly identifies the need for languages policy to highlight issues unique to the learning area, as well as to offer ways to promote the learning of languages so it becomes part of mainstream curriculum.

Languages policy in the NT has taken various forms, from offering broad-based visionary statements to outlining specific curriculum requirements. The first languages specific policy, the *Northern Territory Policy on Languages other than English*[2], was released in 1988. The document endorsed NT Government policy at the time and gave priority to Indonesian, Malay, Japanese, Mandarin, Italian, Greek and traditional Aboriginal languages. It also provided clear guidelines for teachers about languages that were supported by approved curriculum materials, a likely supply of teachers, proven community support and established secondary programs. The policy prescribed:

- every primary school student – study at least one language for two years (80 hours per year with two hours instruction per week)
- every secondary school student – study at least one language for two years (100 hours per year with 2.5 hours per week).

[1] *Connecting Cultures: Report of the Review of Languages Learning in the Northern Territory*, Dellit, 2003

[2] *Northern Territory Policy on Languages other than English*, Northern Territory Department of Education, 1988

Stakeholders interviewed for this discussion paper recognise that the compulsory hours and targeted languages indicated in the 1988 policy were key factors contributing to high student participation rates at that time.

In the early 1990s, Australian Government initiatives such as the development of A Statement on *Languages Other Than English for Australian Schools*[3] saw the NT take a leading role in languages education, especially in Indonesian language. Correspondingly, rich resource development, active professional development and robust activities related to languages education were observed, such as teacher and student exchange programs. However, these activities were only associated with Indonesian language teaching and learning.

In 1999, NTBoS published a second languages policy: *Language other than English Policy and Guidelines for Implementation Transition to Year 10*. It aligned with the Australian Government's promotion of Asian languages education through its *National Asian Languages and Studies for Australian Schools* (NALSAS) initiative. The 1999 NT policy specified the responsibilities for key stakeholders, including NTBoS, Board Services Division, the Department of Education, schools, the NT School of Languages and the Alice Springs Language Centre. The policy specified the following goals:

- all students from Years 4–10 study a language (LOTE)
- 60% of all students at Year 10 will be studying one of the NALSAS languages and 40% will be studying other languages
- 25% of all Year 12 students will be studying another language, with 15% studying one of the NALSAS languages and 10% studying other languages.

These goals were never achieved nationally nor in the NT for many reasons. A pattern is observable at state and federal level concerning the gap between the policy goals and the actual participation of students.

The 1999 policy was also the last standalone policy to deal specifically with languages. Since then, languages policy has only been expressed in terms of curriculum requirements. In 2002 the *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework*[4] (NTCF) became the mandated curriculum for NT schools and a languages learning area was included. It is worth noting that the NTCF included an Indigenous Language and Culture component, which at this time was considered a leading example for mapping the Indigenous languages curriculum across the country.

The theoretical framework for the NTCF was drawn from research into outcome-based education. This meant that while the learning outcomes were mandated, schools were given the flexibility to contextualise the delivery of the curriculum to best meet the needs of students. Outside of literacy and numeracy policy requirements, therefore, the curriculum did not include specific time requirements for any learning areas.

[3] *A Statement on Languages Other than English for Australian Schools*, Curriculum Corporation, 1994
[4] *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework*, Northern Territory Government, 2002

In terms of languages education, the lack of time allocation guidelines has led to a perception that the policy stance was softened during this time. In addition, while the *NTCF: Languages* was developed through extensive consultation with language teachers and experts, there is concern that it no longer provides the level of specificity required to plan, teach, assess and report a languages program and that the developmental pathway, which is generic across all languages, has not maintained currency with standards-referenced reporting requirements.

In 2009, as a result of national and local focus on improving the levels of literacy and numeracy proficiency of students, the English and Mathematics learning areas were updated. This enabled demarcation of the skills required to achieve benchmark levels in the National Assessment of Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN); however, all other learning areas, including languages, were not given a similar opportunity for renewal.

In recent years it appears that attempts at updating languages policy were made later, with a draft LOTE Policy in 2011. The draft policy included the following requirements:

- 110 hours of learning time for Years 5–6 and 240 hours for Years 7–8
- choice of Japanese, Indonesian, Mandarin, Greek and Australian Indigenous languages.

The draft policy went beyond curriculum implementation and involved system change, including the introduction of a position for General Manager for Languages, responsible for both language centres (Darwin and Alice Springs) and an additional nine teacher positions introduced to Darwin Languages Centre to provide programs in primary schools in the Darwin, Northern Suburbs, Palmerston and Rural regions. As part of the draft policy, a plan for Languages Service Delivery 2010–2020 was also developed. The draft plan included funding such as $160 000 allocated for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) and $130 000 for the School Language Programs. The draft plan included the following:

Quality strategies and programs

- Curriculum and pathways ─ language pathways for Year 5–12 through virtual, distance, online and face to face delivery modes
- NALSSP ─ teaching Mandarin, Japanese and Indonesian
- Indigenous languages and culture ─ collaboratively develop and deliver programs
- National Curriculum ─ Asian, European and Indigenous Australian languages programs

Quality systems and support

- Whole of agency commitment – policy and strategic implementation plan
- Alignment and coherence – cluster language curriculum and pathways agreements
- Data-driven decision making – target setting, data collection and analysis, review and evaluation

Quality people and partnerships

- Getting the right people – teacher recruitment and retention strategy
- Developing people – targeted professional learning for teachers and leaders
- Partnerships– community partnerships, university partnerships

Some of the recommendations shared high level similarities with the Dellit Report[5]; a 2003 Territory wide review that languages education stakeholders claim continues to be relevant, despite its publication over a decade ago. The recommendations of Dellit Report include:

Recommendation 1

The NT Department of Education Employment and Training (DEET) affirms its support for languages learning by agreeing to enact this report as a way of reconceptualising and reconstructing aspects of the delivery of language learning to students in the Northern Territory.

Recommendation 2

The NT DEET monitors the outcomes of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) *Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce* in order to align languages learning policies and practices with nationally agreed objectives.

Recommendation 3

The NT School of Languages and the Alice Springs Language Centre as they are currently configured be reconstructed into a singly-managed NT Language Service comprising:

- a central planning, policy and implementation unit working across DEET divisions and branches, with a fixed tenure of 3+1 years, reporting to the Deputy Chief Executive
- a Darwin Languages Centre, managing in-school and after-school teaching programs currently conducted by the Northern Territory School of Languages
- an Alice Springs Language Centre (ASLC) providing the services currently conducted by the ASLC.

Recommendation 4

A Senior Manager NT Languages Services is appointed at an appropriately senior level for a period of three years with the possibility of an extension for a further year. During the third year of appointment the position is reviewed to determine whether it is required in the future. Over the three years, the senior manager is to fulfil the following tasks and operate with authority derived from the Deputy Chief Executive, across the divisions and branches of the NT DEET to:

[5] *Connecting Cultures: Report of the Review of Languages Learning in the Northern Territory*, Dellit, 2003

- Develop a languages position statement and a language plan that reflects whole of NT government aspirations, current realities and the outcomes of the national MCEETYA *Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce* report.
- Work with others in developing a conception of languages education for the NT that encompasses traditional LOTE, Indigenous languages, various courses with particular purpose, pedagogies and proficiencies.
- Extend and develop notions of electronic education in relation to languages education.
- Coordinate and amalgamate the work of all services providing languages learning support to schools, including the current NTSoL, the ASLC, the NT Open Education Centre (NTOEC) and Indigenous Language Centres.
- Work with others to coordinate and develop a strategy that brings the proposed languages position statement, curriculum planning and expectations, staff availability and retention, budgets and the in-school and in-community capacities into alignment in determining and consulting on an NT languages plan for 2004–2010.
- Manage the work of the proposed Darwin and Alice Springs languages centres.

Recommendation 5

The proposed Darwin and Alice Springs languages centres have an educational manager (at Executive Teacher level 3 or 4) reporting to the senior manager of the proposed NT Languages Service. The two centres are to offer similar services and operate using similar fees and cost recovery strategies. Both in-school and after-school programs are to continue but be reviewed to improve them by the proposed senior manager. Given their service role, neither centre should be located within the Schools Division.

Recommendation 6

The current staffing structure of the NTSoL and the funds used to support it is reconfigured to enable the following positions to be created:

- Senior Manager: NT Languages Service
- Project Manager (ET 2): to support the senior manager
- Educational Manager (ET 3): to manage the in-school and after-school development of teaching services
- Administrative Officer: to assist the principal and the deployment of resources to schools
- Ancillary Clerical Support: for the senior manager and the centre.

Recommendation 7

In framing the proposed NT DEET positions statement on languages learning, the proposed senior manager will be mindful of the practical and pedagogical issues raised in the report, particularly:

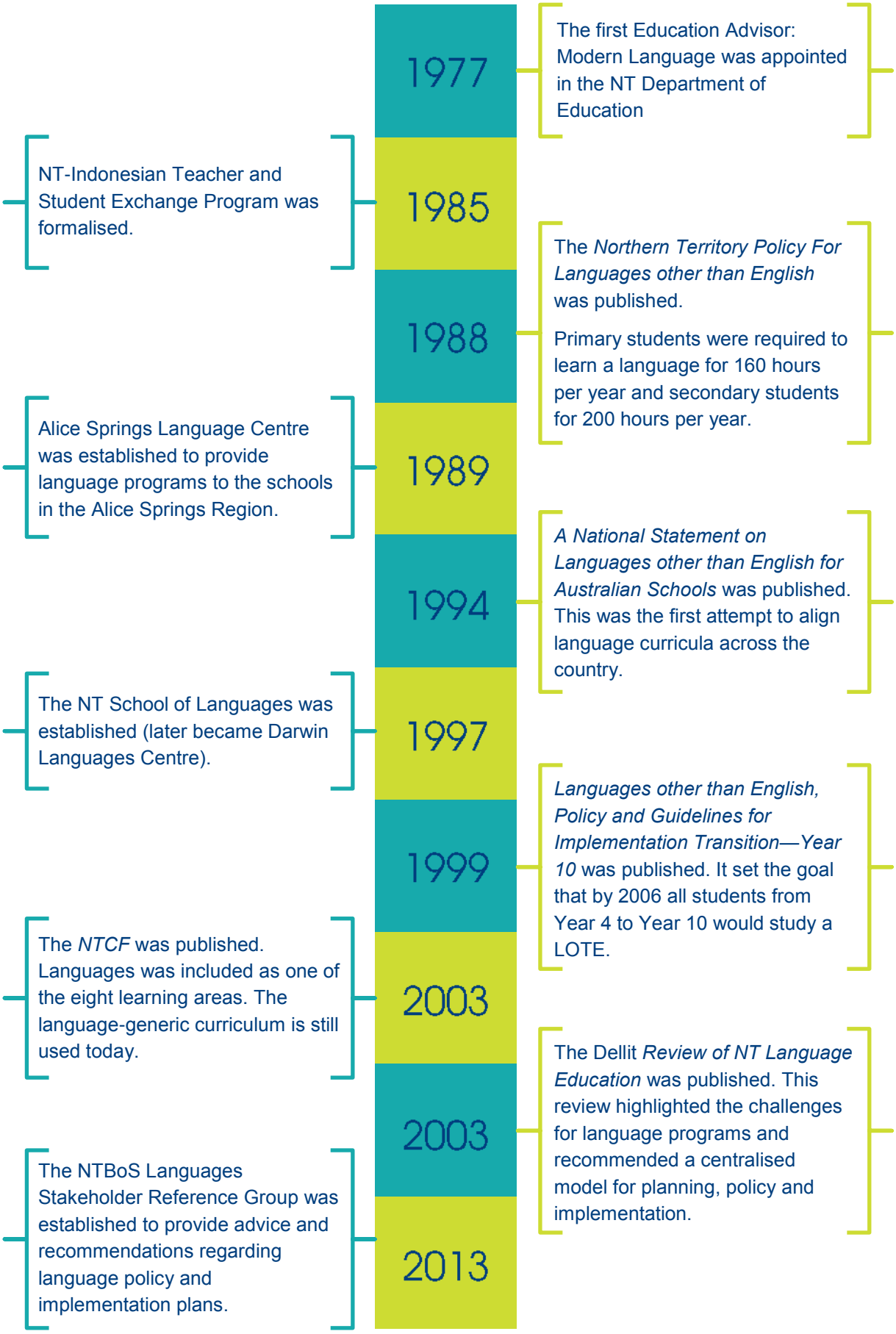
- at this point of time languages learning should not become a compulsory curriculum option though planning might lead to a position where this is advisable and achievable
- not all students need to study a language; specifically those students for whom English is a second language
- language provision should be enhanced with Information Communication Technology (ICT) based electronic education
- the after-school hours provision of languages learning should be monitored and closely managed to ensure it does not provide a rationale for a school not to offer languages learning, such classes are targeted to particular students, classes are reasonably and equitably accessible, and the two proposed centres have common fee structures
- cross-charging of schools for whom in-school or after-school hours classes are provided should be instigated and applied.

Given this history of languages education in the Northern Territory, it is clear that the time for a contemporary and explicit language policy has arrived. The need to provide schools with clear direction around time allocation, languages education provision and the support systems, services and structures required to guarantee quality, is an opportunity to build on the strengths arising from former policies, as well as to address elements pertinent to the contemporary classroom and curriculum context. It also allows opportunity to incorporate rigorous evaluation to monitor what is successful and being sustained at the classroom, school and system levels.

Reflective question

RQ2:
What aspects of languages education will the policy address?

KEY POINTS IN THE JOURNEY



The National Story

Given our small population base and demographic profile, Australian Government policy and initiatives often influence the Northern Territory far beyond the impact felt by southern counterparts. The opportunities presented through Canberra funded priorities, both before and after the Council for Australian Governments (COAG), have often had a direct impact on languages education in the NT, although there are questions concerning the sustainability of this impact.

The largest scale Australian Government funded initiatives aimed at promoting languages learning to date includes the:

- *National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools* (NALSAS), Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1994–2002
- *National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program* (NALSSP), Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations, 2009–2012)

Both funding schemes aimed at increasing Australian students' participation in learning Asian languages, as well as Asian Studies. While it is widely accepted greater awareness of the studies of Asia was achieved and that Asian languages did achieve a high profile, there are questions concerning the actual impact on participation in Asian language programs due to falling enrolments since this time.

In the NT, these questions centre on two areas:

1. Targets

The use of targets focused on participation rates in language and culture programs is now viewed as too narrow. This is because participation is influenced by a range of factors beyond resourcing and funding.

The learning from these strategies is primarily that programs aimed at achieving change need to incorporate a range of other targets including focus on the quality of teaching and learning, teacher retention and professional learning, as well as options for continuity of languages programs within schools and across the stages of schooling.

2. Design

Despite the fact that both schemes are national initiatives, the application for the funding was open for Asian Languages and Studies program providers without high level strategic planning and coordination. Languages policy experts[6] observe that successes as a result of the funding were often in programs of short duration and mostly dissipated after the strategy's conclusion.

Reflective questions

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

[6] Lo Bianco, *Language Planning and Student Experiences: Intention, Rhetoric and Implementation*, Multilingual Matters, 2013

The Northern Territory benefited from both schemes. According to data provided by the Darwin Languages Centre, a total of $369 000[7] was received from NALSSP to promote Asian languages and culture learning. This funding supported the following projects:

- Darwin Languages Centre In-School Program – centralised employment of part-time instructors to deliver language and culture programs to primary schools in the Darwin and Palmerston areas
- Graduate Diploma Language Scholarships – $5 000 scholarships for teachers to undertake language study.
- Syllabus Development – scope and sequence overviews developed for Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese language programs
- Online Learning Modules – Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese online course modules developed and uploaded to sharepoint
- Advertising – TV and radio campaign to promote the benefits of language learning
- Asian Gardens – grants to primary schools for the establishment of Asian gardens within school grounds
- Professional Learning Grants – funding to enable language teachers working in remote communities to attend professional development opportunities.

It is broadly accepted that the impact of these projects on language teaching and learning at the time was positive; however, the lasting impact on participation rates, quality and provision is less clear.

In framing future policy and implementation plans for the NT, discussion of the impact of these national initiatives raises the following:

- use of funding to creating momentum for improvement
- communication of clear guidelines to establish links between sustainability and resourcing and provision and quality
- known capability of projects to continue once external funding has concluded
- use of legacies from former initiatives to build on.

Reflective questions

RQ5:
What systemic supports will ensure continuity in languages learning for students and how are these supports activated?

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?

RQ11:
How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?

Echoing the Dellit Report on the low status of languages programs in school curriculum, the commitment to languages programs has been inconsistent across and within schools. Many of the existing programs in government schools are supported by partnerships with the languages centres in Darwin and Alice Springs, partnerships that have continued to

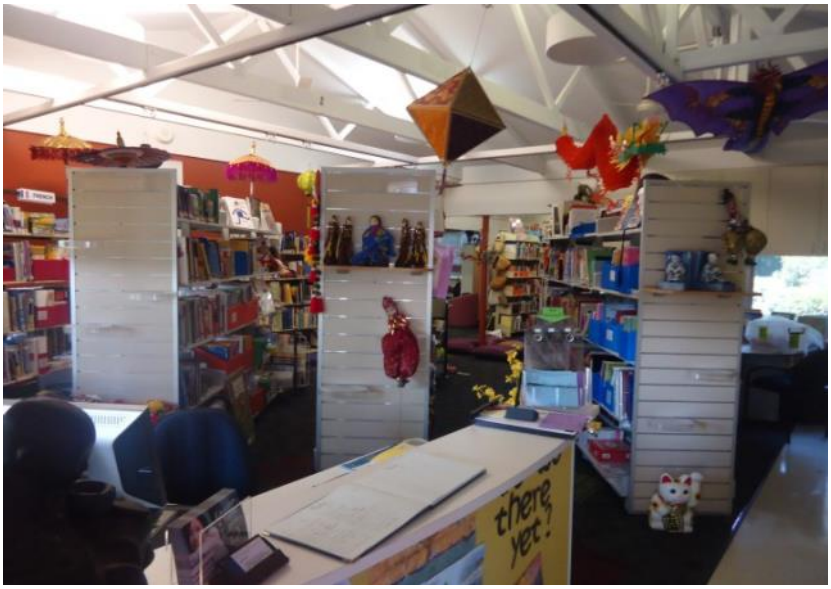
[7] Interview with Darwin Languages Centre Principal, 17 October 2014

evolve in an effort to improve the quality and provision of languages education. However, the partnerships are only possible if challenges of distance can be overcome through technological solutions or placing instructors or teachers on site – a practice that does not always alleviate the problem of languages education being isolated from the mainstream curriculum; even though it enables students to access language classes on a regular basis.

From the very early days of self-government in 1978 and the establishment of the Northern Territory Department of Education, system level support for languages education has struggled to maintain consistency. With each change of leadership at the departmental level and with changes to government priorities, languages education – as with some other learning areas – has received fluctuating support. At various periods, within business units concerned with curriculum services to schools, government and the NTBoS, languages education has been resourced to include consultants, advisors and managers. Their function has usually been to provide policy, curriculum support and materials, professional learning and reporting capability. However, over time resources allocated for this purpose have not been consistent with this, concerns about the system's capacity to sustain quality languages education have arisen.

The establishment of the Northern Territory School of Languages in 1997 (now known as the Darwin Languages Centre) was an attempt to overcome these difficulties. However, staff and resources have been considerably strained by the frequent change in line management, the relocation of the organisation and its evolving roles and responsibilities including expansion of in-school programs to meet growing demand through face-to-face and virtual delivery, inclusion of after-school provision, provision of professional development services, support for professional association activities, in addition to taking responsibility for liaising with national and jurisdictional counterparts, as well as system level policy, strategy and reporting functions.

Despite all the changes, the Darwin Languages Centre's contribution to policy development and implementation, provision and quality of programs has been and continues to be significant. The place for centres with the range of expertise and capacity to accommodate such wide ranging school needs is worth noting and offers opportunities for consideration of other innovative ideas.



[8] *Languages Teaching and Learning*, presentation to Department of Education Senior Management Team, May 2014, Principal Languages Consultant, NT

Workforce

One of the biggest challenges of languages education in the Territory involves providing a suitably qualified and proficient languages teaching workforce. Despite numerous efforts to build proficiencies in the existing workforce to levels that enable quality teaching and to attract suitably qualified teachers, the issue of workforce continues to permeate the languages education discussion.

The discussion includes the issue of available and qualified staff and also acknowledges the challenge of recruiting staff with high level proficiency in a language, deep knowledge of language systems and language acquisition, as well as the depth of pedagogical repertoire to that is essential when teaching students across an entire stage of schooling (in the case of primary schools) or across multiple cohorts and language curricula (secondary schools).

Currently, trained and registered language teachers overwhelmingly work in senior secondary schools in their field (the exception being the Alice Springs Language Centre). Registered teachers who have an additional language are more common, though only a limited number are teaching their target languages. Tutors or instructors, that is, non-teaching speakers of a language, are more common and a central component of how the Darwin Languages Centre operates.

Reflective questions

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?

RQ7:
Should policy be developed in conjunction with implementation plans to activate sustainable improvements and growth?

The most significant effort to address the challenges of workforce is concerned with up-skilling the existing teaching workforce. Over the years the NT has implemented a range of initiatives to address this issue, including scholarships, sister schools and exchange programs.

An example of this is the Northern Territory—Indonesian teacher and student exchange programs that have operated in various forms since the 1970s. In 1985 a formalised program was established with the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Indonesian Government, which included placement of NT teachers into schools from Indonesian provinces of West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara and Maluku and the placement of Indonesian teachers in two schools from the Darwin or Alice Springs areas for up to 12 months.

The purpose of the program was to provide personal, professional and educational development to participants, to assist language programs in Northern Territory and Indonesian schools, and to develop cultural understanding and friendship between the two countries.

language has seen the focus of similar projects on a similar

Reflective question

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

[8] Languages Teaching and Learning, presentation to Department of Education Senior Management Team, May 2014, Principal Languages Consultant, NT

This is significant as no other language has seen the focus of similar projects on a similar scale to date.

According to an evaluation written by the manager of the exchange program[9]:

- From January 1986 to December 1991, 36 NT exchange teachers were taken from schools (20 primary, 3 area and 13 secondary) while the Indonesian teachers were all from secondary schools (55 from secondary or technical schools).
- The program operated successfully despite a number of structural and administrative difficulties (for example, matching exchange placements, travel, accommodation expectations).
- The exchange gave participants the opportunity to acquire second language proficiency through acquiring language in real-life situations that value-added to formal language learning (17 NT participants had engaged in some level of formal study of Indonesian prior to their exchange, while all of the Indonesian participants had undertaken extended formal study of English, either as a compulsory part of their schooling or through tertiary study).
- A number of principals indicated that the presence of the Indonesian exchange teacher in their schools served as an important focus for the Indonesian program and provided on-staff teachers of Indonesian language with a valuable source of professional development.
- NT former exchange teachers indicated greater success in achieving personal objectives than in achieving extrinsic objectives.
- Indonesian exchange teachers assisted resident teachers of Indonesian language in the host NT schools and did not take classes on their own as the behaviour and expectations of Australian school children were quite different from that of Indonesian students.
- NT teachers assisted English language programs in Indonesia by teaching English to a number of secondary level classes. A number also became involved in other programs such as in-servicing English teachers and assisting at tertiary institutions.
- The majority of NT teachers were disillusioned on return when advantage was not taken of their skills and associated employment expectations were not met (26% did not teach Indonesian on return and 50% either resigned or had an extended disruption to duty after the exchange).
- Senior officers of the department expressed concern that the resources required to manage the program were excessive, due in particular to the additional salaries required to replace the NT teachers on exchange, plus

[9] Stephen Rodgers, *An Evaluation of the Northern Territory—Indonesia Teacher and Student Exchange Program from 1986-1991*

the living and travel allowance paid to the Indonesian teachers to supplement their Indonesian salaries.

- Clarity and consensus of opinion regarding the purpose of the exchange program was difficult to ascertain with participants from both Indonesia and the NT.

While the information above is a summary of a small number of the findings from the evaluation, it is clear that exchange programs can offer value to the participants at a personal level and to individual schools where a personal connection between participants and their hosts is successful. However, the evaluation also reveals that the value of exchange programs to the quality and provision of teaching and learning and participation in languages programs at a system level is not clear. Perhaps this contributed to the conclusion of the program in 2002. Currently the Department of Education continues to facilitate Indonesian teacher visits to Northern Territory.

In addition, teachers in the NT can take advantage of the Australian Government funded Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowship program. This program provides opportunities for practising language teachers, re-training teachers and pre-service language teachers to take part in short-term overseas study programs to improve their language and cultural skills, which in turn will assist them to become better teachers. For the past three years, NT teachers have been successful in applying for this fellowship.

Provision

In addition to the work by the languages centres to service school need for language proficient teachers and instructors, innovative delivery models for language programs have been an area of strong interest in the NT. Given the Territory's vast geographical size and the isolated locations of many schools, the use of technology to improve provision has been trialled and implemented in a range of sites.

In 2009, the Territory trialled the Virtual School project which saw various subject areas delivered to schools through distance learning. The project involved nine teachers and 165 students. From the preparation stage to the end of this project in 2012, Japanese and Indonesian Beginner Stage 1 and Stage 2 language courses were developed. The project used video conferencing and an online learning management system to deliver to students at senior secondary level. The trial concluded in 2012, with the following suggestions as considerations for any future virtual delivery projects:

- planned opportunities for teacher collaboration across schools and regions
- planned time for professional learning, allowing teachers to plan and prepare for a different style of teaching, through video-conferencing and adapting their pedagogical practice to suit the needs of students in eLearning contexts.

Some participants of the project claimed that the operational model was not sustainable because the level of staffing required made it too expensive to run. In addition, some teachers were challenged in their pedagogy and felt left alone in their own teaching environment, which also led to decreased interest from the teachers and the schools, which eventually brought an end to this project.

Summary

Languages education in the NT has enjoyed periods of high and low activity. It has attracted significant political and community interest, as well as substantial system level attention. The vast range of programs, initiatives and effort is a testament to the commitment of policy makers, leaders and educators.

However, this chapter also reveals that sustained and measureable improvement in student participation and achievement in languages generally continues to elude policy makers and educational stakeholders. Importantly it also highlights the relevance of clearly communicated intentions, success measures and systematised supports to ensure that action remains connected with language education values and goals.

The following are offered as key learnings for future policy considerations:

- Explicit, mandated curriculum requirements with a strong stance on the status of language as a subject area and a clear expectation for teaching hours across the stages of schools directly contributes to higher participation rates.
- Responsibility for the growth of languages education into the mainstream curriculum of every school is critical at all levels: the profession, the school and the system.
- Strategically defined targets to shift focus from delivery alone, to include the quality and sustainability of language programs, offers greater prospects to grow success.
- Evaluation of teacher development programs (such as exchange programs and scholarships) with built in processes to quickly identify any aspects not going to plan, managed by specialists with languages education expertise, as well as research skills, delivers better languages education outcomes.
- Australian Government initiatives can offer opportunity to grow innovation and to improve on what is working when the targets and measures are aligned with the local context.
- Innovative models of delivery succeed when there is collaboration between teachers and professional learning to support engagement and mastery of the technological and pedagogical elements.
- Language centres play a significant and critical role in the sustainable provision of language programs to schools.
- Recognising the strengths of existing language centre functions presents opportunities to grow provision and to strengthen the quality of partnerships and programs in schools.
- Sustained school leadership of and commitment to language programs supports quality and participation.
- Professional learning for teachers and instructors delivers improved programs when

Reflective questions

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

RQ5:
What systematic supports will ensure continuity in languages learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?

activities are targeted, directly related to classroom teaching and measured with the outcomes of student progress and participation.

- Rigorous evaluation processes and relevant data collection facilitates effective monitoring of program quality, sustainability, scalability and economy.
- Background language speakers in the community are a rich linguistic and cultural resource when supported by strong mentoring partnerships and qualification pathways.

Further to understanding the success that can be found through a historical perspective, it is also valuable to recognise that change in educational and political contexts has also occurred in recent times, the most prominent of these being:

1. The likelihood of large scale Australian Government funding initiatives and strategies to invest in languages education is diminishing.
2. The move towards increasingly more autonomy through the commencement of global budget processes in government schools will directly impact on the provision of programs and teachers.
3. The implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* will highlight the importance of high quality teaching and learning and reshape current practice in schools.

Reflective questions

RQ1:
What is the educational value of learning languages?

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?

This poses new challenges as well as opportunities in future policy work. The capacity to guarantee quality and to promote success while enabling the flexibility to recognise and seize new opportunities will be a critical success marker for policy impact in the classroom, across the system and within the profession.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDIES FROM NORTHERN TERRITORY SCHOOLS

PURPOSE

- To consider successful languages teaching and learning programs
- To examine the factors that promote successful languages learning
- To identify the strategies that extend success.

INTRODUCTION

At the policy and system levels two indicators are frequently used to indicate successful languages education:

1. student participation
2. program continuity.

However, at the school level, communities frequently make their own judgements of success based on additional factors, drawing from personal experience and the collective anecdotes about the impact of language programs on learning and on teaching.

To help understand a Northern Territory view of what works at the school level, three programs have been considered as case studies. It is important to recognise that these case studies are not intended to represent the only examples of what works in NT schools; rather, they are examples from what works. The programs were nominated by members of the Northern Territory Board of Studies Languages Stakeholder Reference Group in 2014:

- Darwin High School
- Kormilda College
- Alice Springs Language Centre.

Their nomination was based on a general consensus of success, involving one or more of the following criteria:

- quality of teaching and learners' engagement
- range of languages on offer to students
- school management support
- community value.

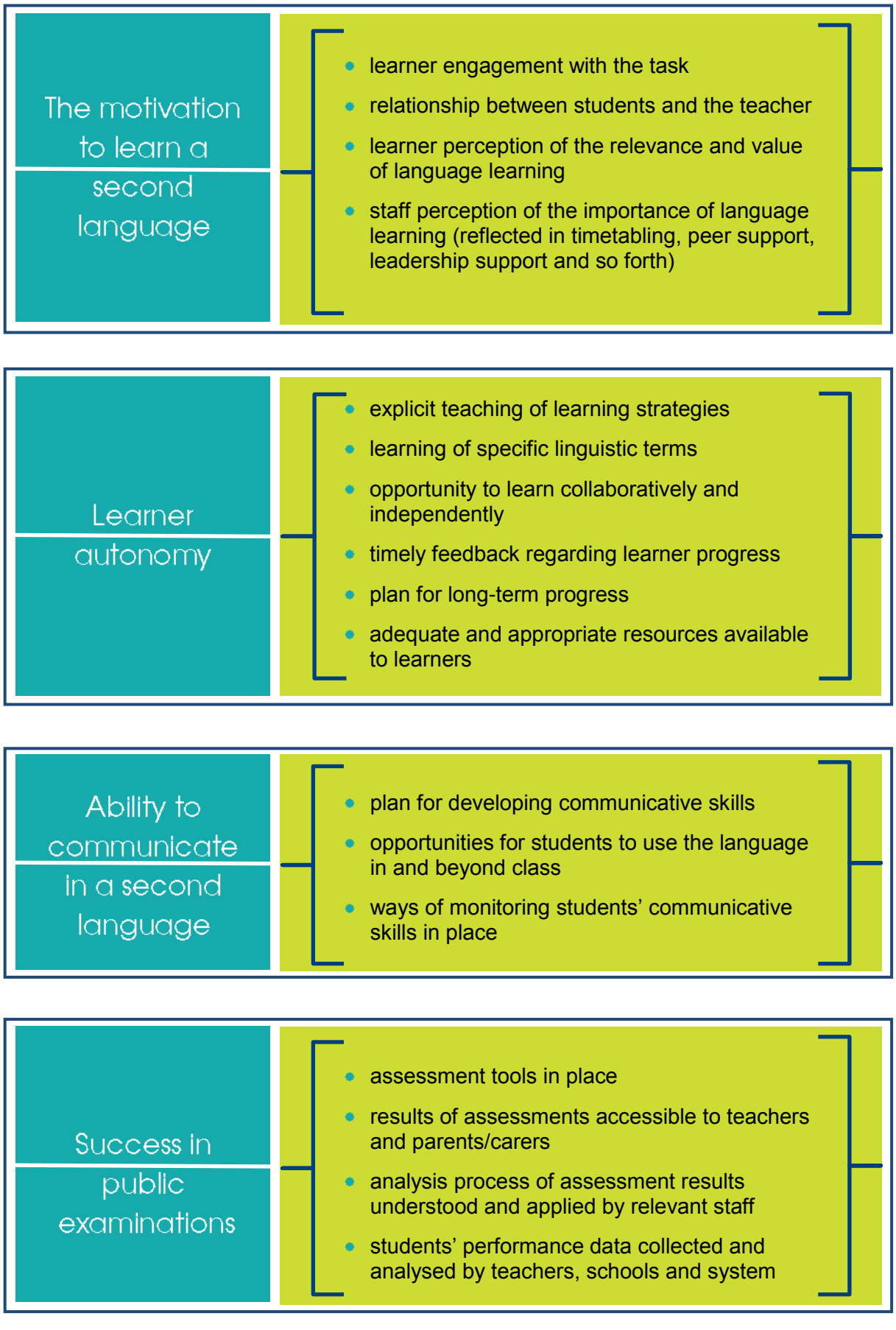
Reflective question

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

To assist in capturing and describing what is working in each program, the Ellis[1] Four-way Model has been used. This model holds currency in the languages education community because it identifies the essential elements and contributing factors visible in successful language programs:

1. the motivation to learn a second language
2. learner autonomy
3. ability to communicate in a second language
4. success in public examinations.

[1] Ellis, R. *What Makes for Successful Second Language Learning?* 2009,The New Zealand Language Teacher, 35, 34-39.


The motivation to learn a second language
learner engagement with the task
relationship between students and the teacher
learner perception of the relevance and value of language learning
staff perception of the importance of language learning (reflected in timetabling, peer support, leadership support and so forth)
Learner autonomy
explicit teaching of learning strategies
learning of specific linguistic terms
opportunity to learn collaboratively and independently
timely feedback regarding learner progress
plan for long-term progress
adequate and appropriate resources available to learners
Ability to communicate in a second language
plan for developing communicative skills
opportunities for students to use the language in and beyond class
ways of monitoring students' communicative skills in place
Success in public examinations
assessment tools in place
results of assessments accessible to teachers and parents/carers
analysis process of assessment results understood and applied by relevant staff
students' performance data collected and analysed by teachers, schools and system

The stories that follow present what has been learned about each program using the four-way model to describe the significant characteristics of each. Visits to the schools were also conducted to capture the local perspective of what is working. During the visits the following processes were used:

- lesson observations, including a range of year levels and languages where possible
- interviews with staff and leadership team members
- staff recounts of an incident they believe reflects their success.

DARWIN HIGH SCHOOL

The case study of Darwin High School (DHS) was conducted from April 2014 to February 2015.

At DHS, students have the option to learn Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Modern Greek, Italian or Spanish. Currently, six teachers are employed to teach these languages; however, not all of them have a full languages teaching load. The following table shows the number of students learning a language at Stage 2 level.

Stage 2 Students in 2014	
Chinese	Beginner 11 Continuer 3 Background 10
Indonesian	Beginner 12 Continuer 20
Italian	Beginner 8
Japanese	Beginner 6 Continuer 16
Modern Greek	Continuer 3
Spanish	Beginners 23

The middle schools feeding students into DHS include Nightcliff Middle School and Darwin Middle School, although DHS does accept student enrolments from beyond these zones. In the middle schools Japanese, Indonesian and Modern Greek are available, which makes it possible for students to extend what they have learned into their senior years of study.

The following table summarises the findings at DHS.

Four-way model	Success factors
The motivation to learn a second language Indicated by: learner engagement with the task relationship between students and the teacher learner perception of the relevance and value of language learning staff perception of the importance of language learning (reflected in timetabling, peer support, leadership support and so forth).	School policy The number of students undertaking language learning at DHS is considerably large when compared to the general trend across the country. Italian and Spanish beginner courses attracted more than 20 students in each class. Student retention rates at Stage 2 in Chinese and Japanese is very high as a result of strong motivation among students. Many staff attributed this to school policy which allows Year 10 students to enrol in Stage 1 courses and in Stage 2 courses in Year 11. This means students have flexibility in their chosen areas of study over a three-year period (Year 10-12) and therefore are supported to choose languages as an area of study. School leadership The representation of language teaching staff in the senior leadership team is considered as a significant channel for school support of the languages faculty. The school has worked carefully to minimise timetable clashes between languages and other subjects. During transition processes with feeder middle schools staff and students, the leadership team includes the promotion of languages as a key discussion item. All language teachers worked in one faculty which allows the formation of close bonds and professional collaboration when setting and working towards common goals. Planned learning Teachers plan and implement a range of tasks to cater for different learning styles and the four modes of language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Both individual and group activities are used and opportunities for learning through digital devices and media feature during lesson activities.
Learner autonomy Indicated by: explicit teaching of learning strategies learning of specific linguistic terms opportunity to learn collaboratively and	Pedagogy The relationship between the teachers and students is well established and teachers appear to have understanding of the background and aspirations of each student. Clear classroom routines are established, and teacher expectations are clearly communicated. In one multi-level class the teacher works with four different levels of language curriculum, using tailor-made learning tasks to ensure differentiation and to enable students to work independently.

Independently

timely feedback regarding learner progress

plan for long-term progress

adequate and appropriate resources available to learners

Resources

Teachers and students have access to a range of resources, including multi-modal media and electronic applications on hand-held devices to individualise each student's learning. Some teachers raise concerns with the reliability of electronic devices; however, they also acknowledge the opportunities these devices bring for their teaching. The availability of an experienced bilingual assistant supports teachers to differentiate learning in multi-level classes by enabling individualised instruction and oral language practice.

Ability to communicate in a second language

Indicated by:

plan for developing communicative skills

opportunities for students to use the language in and beyond class

ways of monitoring students' communicative skills in place

Planned learning

Teachers work with students to develop communication skills to be ready for the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) examination. Students explore a range of authentic texts, including television shows, movies and articles from paper-based media to understand the features of the language and the communication conventions appropriate within a particular social and cultural context. Teachers scaffold students' learning, building from vocabulary learning to more complex tasks of text comprehension and analysis. All teachers collaborate to develop and follow a yearly teaching and assessment plan, which is informed and guided by the requirements of the NTCET.

Some teachers use real-life opportunities for students to use language, including encouraging personal recollections and asking students to introduce themselves to the visitor in the language.

Success in public examinations

Indicated by:

assessment tools in place

results of assessments accessible to teachers and parents/carers

analysis process of assessment results understood and applied by relevant staff

students' performance data collected and analysed by teachers, schools and system

National and International competitions

DHS students have opportunity to participate in numerous language competitions at national and international level to support the development of language proficiency and validate their progress. A recent example includes the *China Bridge Secondary Students Speaking Competition* held in China, at which a DHS student won the championship for Oceania.

Assessment of DHS students enrolled in Stage 2 courses includes external examinations and moderation of assessment pieces through an agreement between the NT Department of Education and the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board.

In summarising what works at DHS, it is clear that school policy and leadership support are essential to the success of language programs. The practice of actively promoting language programs to prospective students from feeder middle schools and enabling the options for NTCET courses at Year 10 assures language learning can be continuous and aligned with the individual student's choice or need. Deliberately managing timetables to avoid where possible major clashes with other learning areas, as well as specifically allocating teaching resources to improve differentiation in multi-level classes, enables success.

The work of the leadership team in turn supports the high level of collegiality among language teachers, which leads to the sharing of teaching pedagogy and sustaining highly effective faculty culture. It is interesting to note that staff in the languages faculty openly discuss that the leadership team's active efforts to manage teaching loads, makes the school an attractive option for those language teachers seeking employment, in addition to the school's high standing reputation in the community.

KORMILDA COLLEGE

The case study of Kormilda College was conducted from December 2014 to February 2015. From 2015 Kormilda will become a comprehensive school (Transition–Year 12) with the addition of primary classes at the beginning of the school year.

Students enrolled in the primary schools from Years T–5 study Chinese for two lessons a week. At Year 6, students study Chinese for 4 lessons per week. From Year 7 to Year 9, students are required to choose a language to study and have four lessons per week. As Kormilda is an accredited International Baccalaureate (IB) school, students who choose to enter the IB stream are required to study languages as one of the compulsory subject areas.

Reflective question

RQ5:
What systematic supports will ensure continuity in languages learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?

The following table summarises the findings at Kormilda College.

Four-way model	Success factors
The motivation to learn a second language Indicated by: learner engagement with the task relationship between students and the teacher learner perception of the relevance and value of language learning staff perception of the importance of language learning (reflected in timetabling, peer support, leadership support and so forth).	Curriculum requirement Students enrolled in the primary and middle school follow the IB programs, which have languages as a compulsory subject. This requirement contributes to a school culture that mainstreams languages within the whole school curriculum. Language teachers talk of their perceptions that the subject is valued and that this helps to motivate students to do better in language classes. The explicit use of inquiry-based learning processes required by the IB programs, provides opportunities for teachers to examine their practice and find opportunities to shift instruction to student-centred ways of teaching. This is discussed as being a driver for high quality learning and helping to increase students' motivation. Student-teacher relationship Most language teachers share that they have been working at the college for many years. They talk about being part of the school community and enjoying well-established relationships with their students. Teachers also talk about feeling respected by their students and again this is perceived as contributing to students'
Learner autonomy Indicated by: explicit teaching of learning strategies learning of specific linguistic terms opportunity to learn collaboratively and independently timely feedback regarding learner progress plan for long-term progress adequate and appropriate resources available to learners	Pedagogy Lessons are highly structured with explicit statements concerning the intended outcomes and the sequence of learning activities. Teachers design lessons to accommodate the developmental needs of students at different year levels. In primary classes activities included shared reading and singing songs in the target language. Kinaesthetic learning strategies are an important part of each lesson. In senior classes lessons are designed to allow students to be reflective learners. There are also opportunities to use digital media to communicate with a tutor based overseas to allow students to practise the language. Teachers are strongly supported to access further professional learning related to what they are teaching and what their students need to learn. This includes opportunities at local and national levels.

Ability to communicate in a second language

Indicated by:

Independently

timely feedback regarding learner progress

plan for long-term progress

adequate and appropriate resources available to learners

Pedagogy

During lessons teachers used real-life opportunities to encourage students to use language, such as introductions to a visitor. Class discussions were held to build understanding of the importance of spontaneity in authentic communication and strategies for achieving this were modelled.

Learning time

Staff express strong support for the time allocation of languages, stating it shows the school's value of languages and more importantly provides an essential condition for successful language learning. At primary level students have two 45 minutes lessons per week and in middle school students have four 50 minute lessons per week.

School projects

Kormilda College established a sister school relationship through the national BRIDGE[2] project with a school in Indonesia. During 2014 an exchange with the sister school was arranged, including hosting Indonesian students and teachers at the school to provide students and teachers with opportunities for authentic language interaction. The college is currently negotiating sister school relationships with schools in China. Every year Kormilda organises a school-wide language event where students at each year level showcase their language learning.

Success in public examinations

Indicated by:

assessment tools in place

results of assessments accessible to teachers and parents/carers

analysis process of assessment results understood and applied by relevant staff

students' performance data collected and analysed by teachers, schools and system

Assessment tools

Some teachers conduct tests fortnightly to track students' progress and other formative methods of monitoring progress are also used. At senior secondary level, students take part in either IB or NTCET examinations, the results of which are also recorded and analysed each year.

[2] Australia-Asia BRIDGE School Partnerships, Asia Education Foundation

To summarise, at Kormilda College, which identifies itself as a 'world school' with pride, languages education is seen as an integral part of the whole school curriculum that adds value to the overall learning for students. Time allocated for language classes is considered sufficient and teachers felt languages was valued equally with other subjects. The school culture of valuing languages is seen as directly contributing to teacher descriptions of their work as being a rewarding experience and their choice to work at the college for a long time. The numerous language based projects implemented at the college increase opportunities for students to engage with native language speakers around the world. Importantly the college's clear articulation of pedagogical expectations as part of curriculum requirements also leads to reshaping teachers' practice and improving student engagement with the subject. Language teachers openly engage in professional conversations with colleagues about these requirements and the value of opportunity to continue their professional learning locally and nationally.

Reflective questions

RQ1:
What is the educational value of learning languages?

RQ11:
How are languages prioritised and supported within the policy?

ALICE SPRINGS LANGUAGE CENTRE

The case study of Alice Springs Language Centre (ASLC) was conducted in October 2014. The ASLC was established in 1989 to deliver face-to-face and virtual language programs to schools in the region. At the time the centre employed one principal, one assistant principal, five full time qualified language teachers, two full time language officers and one administrative officer.

Being the primary provider of language courses in the region, ASLC is highly regarded by many stakeholders, including principals, teachers, parents and students. In the primary years the centre provides Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Arrernte languages in rotation to each Alice Springs town school, meaning students learn one of the four languages for a year and learn another for the next year. In the middle years the study of a language is compulsory from Year 7 to Year 9 and the centre provides Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Arrernte as choices for students. In senior secondary years, beginner courses for French and Spanish are provided in addition to beginner and continuer courses for Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese. This model means that pathways for Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian are possible from primary to senior secondary.

The following table summarises the findings from the ASLC.

Four-way model	Success factors
The motivation to learn a second language Indicated by: learner engagement with the task relationship between students and the teacher learner perception of the relevance and value of language learning staff perception of the importance of language learning (reflected in timetabling, peer support, leadership support and so forth).	Pedagogy All teaching staff emphasise student engagement as one of the criteria for effective teaching. During lessons teachers incorporate multiple activities related to different aspects of language to engage students. In one lesson at a primary school, students were engaged in shared reading, singing, craft activities and quizzes. Relationship Being external staff to the schools, some teaching staff state that it is challenging to establish and maintain an ongoing relationships with students, especially at the primary level where a year-long rotation model is used. However, evidence of close relationships between teachers and their students is visible and this is attributed to the stability of teaching staff at the centre, where most of the teachers have been long-term employees, some having worked at the centre for longer than a decade. The relationship between ASLC and schools in the region is also very strong. Discussion with principals attests to this, as well as the strong cooperation that enables school timetables to accommodate the pressures of centre staff working across multiple school sites. Support from classroom teachers for language teachers and programs is actively promoted by principals and centre staff. This factor, along with effective communication processes between the centre and the schools, helps to address any issues quickly and enables valuable feedback loops between the language teachers and classroom teachers. In addition the Principal of ASLC regularly plans observations of the language classes, supporting quality assurance of the centre's programs.
Learner autonomy Indicated by: explicit teaching of learning strategies learning of specific linguistic terms opportunity to learn collaboratively and independently timely feedback regarding learner progress	Pedagogy In the Central Australian directorate, Visible Learning is a key strategy for improving student outcomes. The Centre's participation in the professional learning program that accompanies this strategy means that language teachers are given opportunity to use practices consistent with those used by the schools themselves, for example the use of learning intentions and success criteria to set the scene for each lesson. Opportunities for Centre staff to work with classroom teachers to ensure consistent teaching and learning strategies help language teachers to use practices that work for each group of students also exists. During lessons, feedback is used, especially when the teacher is working with students one-on-one.

plan for long-term progress

adequate and appropriate resources available to learners

Curriculum

Collectively planned curriculum is in place for all languages and is used by centre staff. The Centre uses team meeting time for co-planning to build common understanding of what to teach and how to teach. Teachers say this planning process is useful and reduces the time and energy they need to plan individually. The Centre holds a collection of resources, both commercial and locally developed, to support the curriculum, an example being the big book collection that is used for shared reading in language during classes.

Ability to communicate in a second language

Indicated by:

plan for developing communicative skills

opportunities for students to use the language in and beyond class

ways of monitoring students' communicative skills on place

Language use

Language teachers with students enrolled in senior secondary programs commit to speaking with every student on the phone after school hours to give students the opportunity to practise speaking in language. This practice maximises the language instruction for students and increases their oral language proficiency.

In-country tips

In-country trips are organised for students to further language development through authentic language use. In past years, trips to China, Japan, Malaysia and New Zealand have been organised and some students have received scholarships from the centre to enable them to participate.

Success in public examinations

Indicated by:

assessment tools in place

results of assessments accessible to teachers and parents/carers

analysis process of assessment results understood and applied by relevant staff

students' performance data collected and analysed by teachers, schools and system

Assessment tools

Formative assessments are used by language teachers and instructors, including observations of students' language proficiency in class and assessments of book work.

At senior secondary levels various assessment tasks are in place to fulfil requirements of the NTCET.

To summarise, Alice Springs Language Centre is successful in providing language programs to schools in the area. This success is the result of long term commitment and dedication on behalf of the centre's staff and the schools they work with. The leadership role of the principal at the centre and the schools cannot be understated. The stable allocation of full time language teaching positions contributes to the success of the model as it enables the subject specific knowledge to be used to maximum advantage. This centralised model also works in Alice Springs, where travel across school sites is not a debilitating factor. A central model for language delivery also allows teaching staff to use the skills and qualifications they hold in their everyday work, which contributes to the stability of staff. This in turn means the centre has the capacity to focus on building relationships with schools, students and the rest of the community. The centre's high visibility and profile across the region, the close relationship it enjoys with all schools, the high level of collegiality of staff, as well as the quality of teaching, are all important factors in the success of this example.

SUMMARY

The opportunities these case studies highlight cannot be understated. Firstly they are important because they demonstrate the variety that is essential for language education to be successful, valued and a mainstream component of school curriculum choices. Secondly they demonstrate the innovative thinking that is possible when policy creates conditions for flexibility to accommodate the needs of the local context.

In all of these case studies some key factors emerge time and time again:

- active contribution of school leadership to establishing and sustaining languages education as part of the mainstream curriculum
- strategic actions at the organisational level to ensure that language programs are integrated into the school day in ways that are meaningful for students, teachers and the school
- formal and informal opportunities for language teachers to discuss their teaching and learning programs, to offer each other feedback around what is working and to monitor the impact of their teaching on student progress
- partnerships with organisations and initiatives that enable students and teachers to practise language with native speakers in authentic contexts
- high levels of staff satisfaction in their work and a sense that they are valued by students, parents, colleagues and the broader community.

Reflective questions

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

RQ5:
What systematic supports will ensure continuity in language learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?

CHAPTER SIX

THE CURRENT STATE

PURPOSE

- To summarise the existing resources and support for languages education.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education has clearly put the importance of languages education on the agenda. The Strategic Plan 2013–2015 Goal 2: Every Child a Successful Learner explicitly refers to language options for students through Key Action 5: identify priority Asian languages to be delivered in the Northern Territory. Goal 5: Building Productive Partnerships explicitly states the importance of partnerships with Asia in underpinning the economic and social development of the Northern Territory. This prominence is important in discussing languages education. It encourages policy makers to consider the place of languages not only in terms of educational value but also in economic, social and cultural terms.

Given the significant place of languages in the department's strategic directions, the current state of languages provision and quality is important. Yet the implementation of languages programs is both complex and inconsistent across the Northern Territory.

In 2013, a Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBoS) survey regarding school language programs indicated that 48% of schools provided opportunities for students to learn a language. Similarly research conducted in 2014 into existing programs and provision found that:

- Greater opportunities for continuity of language programs exist for students based in Darwin and Alice Springs.
- In Darwin and Alice Springs it is possible for students to have access to continuous language programs from primary to senior secondary in some zones.
- Languages options across the stages of schooling are not consistent, making the goal of continuous learning of languages improbable.
- A range of programs are classified as language programs. This includes programs focused on building cultural knowledge rather than languages acquisition through the explicit teaching and learning of communicative skills and intercultural understanding.
- The naming of cultural programs and languages programs causes tension at senior secondary level where beginners and continuers need to be differentiated to determine eligibility for Stage One options.

Reflective questions

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

RQ4:
How can measures be devised to promote success?

RQ5:
What systematic supports will ensure continuity of languages learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?

- Government schools in the Katherine region do not offer access to any Asian or European languages programs, although schools in remote communities usually offer Indigenous Languages and Culture programs.
- Languages programs in dedicated middle schools are not consistent. Some cannot offer the necessary language development due to issues such as capacity to employ or allocate specialist language teachers. This contrasts with the overall trend across the nation in which middle school tends to be the time when concentrated learning of languages occurs.
- Japanese and Indonesian are the most common programs, Chinese the third, followed by Modern Greek.

The importance of these findings is not that they are criticism of what is happening, more that they enable consideration of what is being done to systematise support for language learning and prepare schools and students for the strategic intentions of the department, the Australian Curriculum and the NTBoS.

Reflective question

RQ1:
What is the educational value of learning languages?

SYSTEM SUPPORTS

Currently there are six active agents working in the field of languages education, in different units and with different purposes. The nature and the extent to which their work impacts on language education varies; however, it is important to recognise their place and the opportunities their activities may bring to policy development and most importantly to the need for schools to experience systematised and targeted services.

NTBoS Languages Stakeholder Reference Group[1]	
Reports to	NT Board Studies
Stakeholders	NTBoS Principals (all regions) language teachers professional associations Council of Government Schools Organisation Catholic Education Office Independent Schools Association School Support Services and Schools North in the NT Department of Education (DoE)
Key activities or responsibilities	• Advice to NT BoS regarding implementing of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* • Review and respond to developed products and papers • Advice and feedback to support the development of policy, plans and/or advice • Act as a mechanism to allow all NT education stakeholders a voice in the development of an implementation plan

[1] Extracted from the NTBoS Languages Stakeholder Reference Group, Terms of Reference, 2014

Darwin Languages Centre[2]	
Reports to	Darwin Regional Director, Schools North
Stakeholders	Schools in the Darwin, Palmerston and Katherine regions, community groups
Key activities or responsibilities	• After-hours language classes in Darwin and Palmerston (French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Greek, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish and Tagalog) • In-school language and cultural programs (Japanese and Indonesian to 40 schools across Schools North) • Interactive distant language learning services to remote schools (e.g. Mataranka School in 2014) • Adult language classes • Collaboration with consulates and cultural groups • Cultural workshops for schools (e.g. calligraphy, origami, angiklung, cooking) • Promotes language learning by working with regions, schools and community stakeholders[3]

Alice Springs Languages Centre[2]	
Reports to	Alice Springs Regional Director, Schools South
Stakeholders	Schools in the Alice Springs and Central Australian region, community groups
Key activities or responsibilities	• In-schools programs (Japanese, Arrernte, Indonesian, Spanish, Chinese, French) • Interactive distant language learning services to remote schools (e.g. Auslan) • After-hour classes for adult learners • Promotes language learning by working with regions, schools and community stakeholders • Manages students exchange trips and teacher exchange programs for the region

[2] Extracted from the Darwin Languages Centre 2014 Strategic Plan
[3] Extracted from the Darwin Languages Centre presentation at the Northern Territory Asian Studies Forum, 2014

Schools North Principal Consultant, Languages[4]	
Reports to	Executive Director, Schools North
Stakeholders	Principals, Darwin Languages Centre, School Support Services (DoE)
Key activities or responsibilities	• Works with principals to advise on language learning methodologies and facilitate useful connections with a priority on targeted Asian languages • Works with School Support Services to provide effective leadership in implementing Department of Education and and NT government languages policies • Initiates and oversees Department of Education sponsored in-country leadership study tours • Encourages and assists in school-school, region–region international partnerships • Supports short term school based excursions • Coordinates assessment of qualifications, training and development of language teachers and instructors

Senior Teacher 2 Consultant Australian Curriculum: Languages[5]	
Reports to	Senior Manager Curriculum Transition—Year 9, Curriculum Assessment and Standards in School Support Services (DoE)
Stakeholders	NTBoS professional associations language teachers curriculum leaders in schools Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority Languages Consultants
Key activities or responsibilities	• Undertakes the work of the NTBoS and the Northern Territory Board of Studies: Languages Reference Group • Works with schools, teachers and the professional association (Languages Teachers of the Northern Territory) to provide support, advice and professional learning concerning: ◆ familiarisation with the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* Learning Area (yet to be endorsed by Education Council) ◆ implementation of the *Northern Territory Learning Area Achievement Standards: Languages* ◆ implementation of the *Northern Territory Curriculum Framework: Languages*.

[4] Extracted from Principal Consultant Languages NT Job Description
[5] Extracted from Min Brief MINL-39-124—Language Programs in Schools, February 2015

Senior Teacher 2 Consultant Senior Years (combined person)	
Reports to	Director Senior Years, Years 10–12, Participation Pathways and Engagement in School Support Services (DoE)
Stakeholders	NTBoS professional associations language teachers curriculum leaders in senior schools South Australian Certificate of Education Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority Languages Consultants
Key activities or responsibilities	• Undertakes the work of the NTBoS to provide advice in regards to *Australian Curriculum: Languages* (yet to be endorsed by Education Council) and *SACE Languages* related information • Oversees SACE Languages subjects and supports NT teachers in offering this curriculum area at senior secondary level.

SYSTEM STRATEGIES

1. School Autonomy

In the Department of Education Strategic Plan 2013-2015 Goal 4: Responsive Services and Systems Key Action 1 states that the department will implement and monitor greater school autonomy through a global schools funding model and independent public schools to provide greater local control in decisions.

This action is important to the language education discussion because in government schools, the use of the human, physical and financial resources is devolved to individual school principals and their school councils. Establishing the value of language learning to students, to schools and to the community will be critical if schools are to be encouraged to adequately prioritise the resources needed to deliver continuous languages learning pathways within and across the stages of schooling.

2. NT International Education and Training Strategy

In 2015, the Department of Education will launch the *Northern Territory International Education and Training Strategy* 2014–2024. This strategy is a key action for 2015 in the Department of Education's Strategic Plan[6] Goal 5: Building Productive Partnerships.

The *NT International Education and Training Strategy* provides a plan to strengthen the Territory's position as a gateway between Australia and Asia through education. It is the work of a government

Reflective question

RQ1:
What is the educational value of learning languages?

[6] NT Department of Education Strategic Plan, 2013-2015

taskforce established to develop a vision and clear goals to grow international education and training in the Northern Territory over 10 years[7]. The strategy has four action areas:

- establishing the NT International Education and Training Hub
- continuing to develop the high quality, world class NT education and training system
- building on the skills of the Territory workforce
- creating new investment and infrastructure opportunities.

There is explicit activity connected with building the skills of the Territory workforce, which will have a direct impact on schools and languages education.
This includes:

2015

- coordinating study tours with Charles Darwin University and schools to build relationships with a key Chinese province
- aligning the Asian languages taught in Territory schools with priority countries, ensuring pathways from Transition to Year 12 for Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian
- partnering with Asian associations to establish grants for international education exchanges for students, scholars, teachers, professionals, scientists and artists
- identifying gaps in teachers' ability to deliver Asian languages learning in schools, establish baseline data and fill gaps through professional development, innovative recruitment and teacher exchanges
- working towards partnering with Charles Darwin University for inclusion of Asian languages in pre-service teacher education

2017

- implementing a framework for sister school relationships, including connections through state of the art information and communications technology.

2019

- growing the number of schools with sister school relationships.

[7] Northern Territory Government, 2015

This strategy clearly brings an economic orientation to policy considerations. While the strategy should also bring opportunities to raise the profile of languages education in general, as well as marshal resources and expertise for a common purpose, it will be important to ensure that the educational value of learning a language for students themselves is not lost. It also raises the challenge of being clear about the place of other languages that are valued and supported in the community and how the policy will be framed to ensure that the Asian languages (Japanese, Indonesian and Chinese) priority does not lead to the loss of quality programs and language partnerships in other areas.

Reflective question

RQ1:

What is the educational value of learning languages?

PARTNERSHIPS

1. South Australian Certificate of Education Board of South Australia

The NT Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) is based on the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), which is administered by the SACE Board of South Australia. This partnership enables NT teachers and students to access the curriculum and assessment resources of the SACE Board in order to administer and achieve the NTCET.

Languages provision within the SACE is extensive, with over 50 curricular options available for beginners, continuers and background speakers (depending on the language). During 2014 eight languages were provided in NT schools, 507 students enrolled in language courses at stage one level and 178 students enrolled at stage two level.

The partnership brings many advantages to NT students as it broadens and enriches the options available at a scale that the NT could not meet in its own right. It allows students to access flexible learning arrangements that provide increased opportunities to develop the business, interpersonal and employment-related skills needed beyond schooling.

The key challenge for NT schools and students is a SACE requirement concerning languages. The requirements mandate that at Stage One and Two beginners' classes, students need to demonstrate that they have little or no previous knowledge and/or experience of the language (whether written or spoken) . This is a complication because often students transitioning from middle schools have studied a language as part of the elective program available at these schools. This experience, regardless of the proficiency levels students have achieved, automatically excludes them from being eligible for beginner courses. Faced with the option of only being able to enrol in continuer courses, students who may be interested in studying a language elect to not choose a language as part of their NTCET.

Reflective questions

RQ1:
What is the educational value of learning languages?

RQ5:
What systematic supports will ensure continuity in languages learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?

2. Charles Darwin University

In 2012, all programs at the School of Education at Charles Darwin University (CDU) were refreshed to align them with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards.

Currently, teacher education courses include[8]:

- Bachelor of Education Early Childhood Teaching, provided as undergraduate course
- Bachelor of Education (graduate entry), provided as a post-graduate course, through online delivery which allows fast track completion over 1.5 years. Students can choose between three streams: secondary teaching, primary teaching or early childhood teaching.

In terms of language courses, the School of Creative Arts and Humanities offers a Diploma of Languages. The course is designed for students who seek to improve their communication skills in the languages of Chinese, Indonesian and Greek. Education students who enrol in this course to secure a language teaching specialisation are also required to complete two units from *Teaching the Curriculum: Languages Other Than English* (LOTE). However, the Diploma of Languages itself is not a teaching qualification. To be qualified as a language teacher, students need to complete the Bachelor of Education, as well as the Diploma of Languages, which is then recognised as a teaching specialisation.

According to the Head of the School of Education, the university has found that local students and the majority of international students undertaking postgraduate study tend not to opt for languages courses. For students who are native speakers of a particular language the completion of languages courses can be easier to achieve; however, the requirements of the Teacher Registration Board can mean that even if students can satisfy the education qualification requirements, English language requirements can be challenging. In Australia the English language requirements are measured by examination results drawn from the International English Language Test System (IELTS). The anecdotal evidence seems to point towards this test being too demanding for international students and discourages them from seeking to take up teaching positions. It is worth pointing out that the Teacher Registration Board does grant authorisation to employ an unregistered persons as teachers in certain circumstances.

Reflective questions

RQ2:
What aspects of languages education will the policy address?

RQ6:
How can policy be framed to create opportunity for sustainable programs?

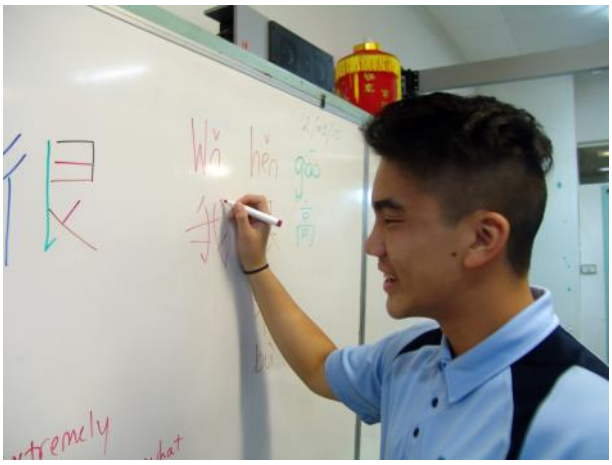
Given the vast community based languages expertise in the Northern Territory, it would seem that the opportunity to work with Charles Darwin University to ensure background language speakers have pathways into teacher education that support the development of languages specialisation and English language acquisition is worth further discussion.

[8] From CDU websites and course introduction booklet

3. Language Teachers' Association of the NT

The Language Teachers' Association of Northern Territory (LTANT) aims to connect languages teachers and support them through professional development, language events and networking opportunities. LTANT has a tradition of being very active in the languages space and in the past has enjoyed a strong membership, although current membership is not at these levels. In 2011, LTANT co-organised the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations Biennial Conference in Darwin. LTANT's current focus includes advocating for language learning in the NT through working with external partner organisations to support language teachers, providing professional development for teachers and other stakeholders and establishing networks of language specific teachers.

4. Chinese – Confucius Institute



The Confucius Institute is a non-profit institution affiliated with the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Its aim is to promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teaching and facilitate cultural exchanges.

The Confucius Institute at Charles Darwin University was established in 2012 and is based at the Casuarina campus. The institute delivers adult Chinese programs, tai chi lessons and organises cultural events such as Chinese New Year celebrations, which are open to public. In 2015, the institute started working with schools to provide Chinese language programs with coordination and teacher support from the Department of Education.

5. Japanese – Japan Foundation

The Japan Foundation is a Japanese public organisation established in 1972 in Tokyo. It is dedicated to promoting cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. The Japan Foundation in Australia was founded in 1978 in Canberra and then moved to Sydney in 1988. It operates a number of programs, focusing mainly on three areas:

- arts and cultural exchange
- Japanese language education and Japanese studies
- intellectual exchange.

The Japan Foundation has been working with LTANT, Darwin Languages Centre and the NT Department of Education through providing funds to support programs, professional development opportunities for teachers and instructors and providing information regarding their programs to support teachers of Japanese in the Territory.

6. Indonesian – Indonesian Consulate

The Indonesian Consulate has developed a strong relationship with Northern Territory schools and teachers. The Consulate is continually working to support many projects and activities within schools. This support includes assisting exchange visits of Indonesian teachers and students, sponsoring the Bahasa Indonesia Short Film Competition, visiting classes as guest speakers and conducting Indonesian cultural workshops. In 2015, the Consulate assisted communication between Kormilda College and a high school in Ambon to develop an exchange program under the umbrella of Ambon and Darwin Sister Cities Cooperation.

The Consulate believes that Northern Territory schools offering Indonesian language lessons will increase students' understandings of the major aspects of Indonesia, strengthen social and community links, and increase intercultural understandings between Australia and Indonesia.

The Indonesian Consulate looks forward to further enhancing its partnerships with Northern Territory schools to promote Indonesian language learning in the near future.

Reflective question

RQ5:
What systematic supports will ensure continuity in languages learning for students and how are these supports to be activated?

7. Modern Greek – Greek Consulate

The Greek Consulate has a long standing place in supporting the teaching and learning of Modern Greek in the Territory, including through funding a Greek teacher based in Darwin. The teacher has provided lessons to a number of primary and middle schools across the Darwin area (for example Nakara Primary School and Darwin Middle School) and is popular with parents seeking opportunities for their children to formalise their knowledge of Greek language and culture.

In 2014 the Greek Consul wrote to the NT Minister for Education proposing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of Greece and the Northern Territory. The Education Partnerships Unit within the Department of Education is working to finalise this agreement.

SUMMARY

While this chapter does not pretend to summarise all of the activities that are occurring in languages education across the NT, it does attempt to provide information relating to those that have a real and immediate impact on the provision of quality and continuous language programs to students. It also provides opportunity to consider where systematic resources are targeted and to identify how policy can be shaped to harness these in order to ensure that decisions remain focused on what that matters most, aligned to the needs of students and ultimately that policy meets the high expectations of schools, teachers, students and the community.

Reflective question

RQ3:
What are the measures of high quality languages education?

Northern Territory Board of Studies

(08) 8944 9204
ntbos@nt.gov.au
http://www.education.nt.gov.au/teachers-educators/ntbos