

Bilingual education – guidelines

Curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification: early childhood to year 12 policy statement

The Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS) approved policy sets out the legislative foundation for the provision of school education in the Northern Territory (NT) relating to curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification.

The Department of Education's (the department) Curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification: early childhood to year 12 policy informs department staff, that is school, regional, and corporate staff about the actions they must undertake to be compliant with legislation, the NTBOS policy and the department's strategic direction.

These guidelines provide information on action and processes for bilingual education (BE) in the bilingual school context.

Policy

BE uses two languages to deliver curriculum, an Australian Aboriginal language spoken by learners as their first language and English. An Australian Aboriginal language may include a traditional language, creoles or Kriol and related varieties, or Aboriginal English. BE allows Aboriginal learners who do not speak English at home to use the language they bring to school to learn curriculum content while they are learning English. Thirty to 50% of the curriculum is taught in the learner's first language (L1) in addition to English leading to improved outcomes in English language, curriculum learning and the maintenance and enrichment of first languages.

In a bilingual school, the Australian Curriculum is delivered through a formal bilingual program using the NT Indigenous Languages and Cultures Curriculum (NTILC) with the agreement and support of families and the local community.

Roles and responsibilities

Teaching and Learning Services as the policy owner is responsible for:

- communicating and reviewing these guidelines through schools' Annual School Improvement Plans
- assisting schools to develop whole school curriculum and assessment plans
- allocating targeted funding and assisting schools to implement localised curriculum, assessment, and reporting plans.

The school principal as the instructional leader of the school is responsible for:

- implementing these guidelines
- building and maintaining meaningful, consultative partnerships regarding implementation
- developing language use and bilingual education model procedures and guidelines and targeted strategic plans to deliver a bilingual program and communicating these to the school community
- providing support and professional learning opportunities for bilingual teaching teams.

School representative bodies are responsible for:

- contributing to a strong direction and a clear vision by providing cultural advice to school leadership
- providing information to the broader community and encouraging strong partnerships between the community and school
- supporting the allocation of resources in the school's global budget including the commitment to employ local language workers and teaching staff.

Teacher linguists are responsible for:

- working collaboratively with language workers, educators and community experts in the development and implementation of bilingual teaching and learning programs and L1 resources
- coaching bilingual teaching teams in working cross-culturally.

Teachers are responsible for:

- assessing, evaluating and catering for the learning needs of learners across all areas of the curriculum
- developing teaching and learning programs and classroom resources in English using effective English as an alternative dialect/language pedagogy and L1, in collaboration with language workers, assistant teachers and community experts
- participating in Planning Together, Learning Together sessions and other learning opportunities and leading where appropriate
- preparing learner achievement records and reporting learner progress to parents.

Assistant teachers are responsible for:

- co-delivering BE as a member of a teaching team, focusing on the use and resourcing of L1 in teaching and learning
- collaborating with teachers to assess and record learner achievement and report progress to parents
- participating in Planning Together, Learning Together sessions and other learning opportunities and leading where appropriate.

Guidelines

Implementation of BE involves three phases. Each phase is not an end in itself but is a prerequisite for the next phase. The timelines for working through phases will vary across schools depending on whether the school is establishing a program for the first time, re-establishing a program that previously existed or aligning a program to the curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements of the NTBOS-approved NTILC.

Phase 1 – Initiating

Establish the foundations of the bilingual program in consultation and engagement with the school community and develop an implementation plan and timeline in the school strategic plan.

Phase 2 – Embedding

Develop a whole school curriculum, assessment and reporting plan based on an evidence-based model for using both the Australian Aboriginal language and English aligned with the approved Australian Curriculum and NTBOS-approved NTILC. Identify points for monitoring learning across the year levels and at key transition points.

Phase 3 – Reviewing

Measure progress through both qualitative and quantitative school review data against the goals and performance targets identified for the program. The school review process should involve the participation and engagement of the school community, parents and teachers, language owners and custodians.

Acronyms	Full form
BE	Bilingual Education
L1	First Language
NT	Northern Territory
NTBOS	Northern Territory Board of Studies
NTILC	NT Indigenous Languages and Cultures Curriculum

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