Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL)

General capabilities in languages

The general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum complement the habits of mind required for successful language study promoted through the CCAFL Framework (2021).

Below is an outline of how prior learning related to the general capabilities contributes to language learning at senior secondary level.

Literacy

Literacy at senior secondary level involves listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts. It also involves using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts. Literacy skills are both used and enhanced through language study at this level. Students apply literacy skills and knowledge in more than one language and by doing so, they are encouraged to reflect deeply on languages as systems. Students also actively reflect on communicating with others and the relationship between literacy and successful social interactions. Successful interactions require students to convey and understand meaning and achieve effective self-representation.

Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to:

* access, understand, analyse and evaluate information and cultural influences
* make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, and present ideas and opinions
* interact with others through the language
* participate in activities with language speakers and in language-speaking communities.

Through language learning and achievement of the objectives of the course, students decode and encode from sound to written systems and vis versa. They expand their understanding of grammatical, orthographic and textual conventions in the language studied and make comparisons with their own and other languages. They develop semantic, pragmatic, interpretative, critical and reflective literacy skills that are applied in more than one language and across languages in a range of contexts.

Language learning provides situations for students to practise and reflect on the effectiveness of their behaviours and dispositions in communicating with others in spoken and written forms. It enables students to enhance their appreciation of cultural and linguistic influences on successful communication and develops understanding of perspectives expressed in the language associated with culture.

Numeracy

Students recognise that mathematical knowledge is used by all peoples, in all languages and cultures and in all facets of their lives. Numeracy encompasses the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations, including in another language and cultural context. Being able to use mathematics purposefully includes applying knowledge of measurement; estimating and calculating; recognising and using patterns, relationships, fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios and rates; using spatial reasoning; and interpreting statistical information, where information may be presented in a variety of forms reflecting linguistic or cultural norms.

Students have opportunities to transfer their mathematical knowledge and skills to new situations and contexts through the study of language. They need to have sound mathematical understanding to do this. They may need to account for similarities and differences in numerical constructs, for example, in languages that have a specific word for the concept of 10,000; that historically use multiples of 10, 12 or another base for measurement and other applications; that use 12- or 24-hour clocks in aspects of daily life; or that use Arabic notation for written numbers but retain historical pronunciations.

By applying mathematical knowledge through the medium of another language, students are required to analyse their mathematical understanding and recognise the universal nature of the fundamental concepts that underpin numeracy.

Digital literacy

Knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) contributes to the CCAFL language curriculum and assessment program in practical, social and conceptual spheres. The use and management of ICT enables students to access, create and communicate information and ideas; solve problems; and work collaboratively with others in the language. The use of ICT provides opportunities for students to access live language environments and texts via digital media.

The rapid development and changes in ICT can be a topic of interest to students who may wish, for example, to examine the impact of technology on their lives and the lives of people from other language and cultural backgrounds, investigate emergent technologies, evaluate the role of technology in language and cultural sustainability, or compare community strategies for managing the risks and the social impacts of emergent technologies.

ICT also exerts influence on language use, for example, through new technologies for translating, and universal access to language information generated by people from all walks of life. Students are encouraged to evaluate the digital technologies available to them and recognise their advantages and limitations in communicating with others across languages and cultures. They are required to pay attention to the use of ICT with care and consideration, understanding its possibilities, limitations and impact on individuals, groups and communities.

Continued rapid development in technology, including ICT, are acknowledged in the CCAFL Framework (2021). It is expected that students will develop new ways of presenting, receiving and understanding language as new technologies become available and impact on culture, language and society.

Critical and creative thinking

Through the study of language students interact with people and ideas from diverse backgrounds and perspectives who are all responding to the challenges of the 21st century. Consequently, students are encouraged to be creative and adaptable in complex cultural and social contexts and to draw on creative thinking, critical thinking and learning skills to successfully engage with others and move between cultures. Through the act of making meaning in a language, students simultaneously employ the different features of critical and creative thinking to organising their thoughts and learning.

Dispositions such as inquisitiveness, reasonableness, intellectual flexibility, open- and fair-mindedness, and a readiness to try new ways of doing things and to consider alternatives are fundamental to successful language practice and are actively encouraged. In particular, students must be prepared to experiment and modify their language, assumptions and behaviours in response to feedback from other speakers of the language.

Students regularly encounter unfamiliar information, new ideas and problems when using language to express themselves and to respond to information and people. They actively analyse arguments, use evidence to support an argument, draw reasoned conclusions and use information to solve problems. They generate and apply new ideas in specific contexts, seeing existing situations in new ways and making new links between ideas that may transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Students have opportunities to create meaning in the language by generating original products or texts that may require the combination of information and ideas by prioritising and refining possibilities. They compare, contrast and classify ideas, objects and events as a part of effective language use and content management. They use what they have learned or discovered in new contexts and in creative ways within acceptable language practices and understand linguistic or cultural influences that may limit these.

Personal and social capability

Language learning requires students to engage with the grammar and lexicon of the language and expand their language skills and knowledge. The effective learning of a language by the individual student is necessarily a personal matter. However, with a communicative emphasis the use of language is by definition a social activity, as there is always an audience and social purpose for the language produced. Students employ and benefit from all of the aspects of the personal and social capability through the study of language.

The CCAFL Framework requires students to have the capacity to understand themselves as learners and individuals and to understand the impact of language use on self-image. They are encouraged to develop learning strategies that are effective for their own language learning. They also reflect on changes to their own world view, gained through their expanding repertoire of cultural perspectives. They employ personally and culturally sensitive strategies for dealing with challenges when they occur in communication.

Students are aware that personal behaviours, values and identity are influenced by culture and language, and that cultural norms often reflect the expectations of social institutions, rather than the behaviour of all individuals in a society. They practise empathy and respect and promote positive relationships in their engagement with others on a personal level and as part of being responsible citizens.

Ethical understanding

An understanding of ethical behaviour is fundamental to effective communication with others in any language. Students are aware of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others and on creating meaning across cultural contexts. In this way, every interaction involves engagement with ethical judgements and behavioural choices on a personal and social level.

Students learn to develop ethical understanding as they explore issues and interactions with others, discuss ideas and learn to be accountable as members of a community. Students address ethical considerations when investigating complex concepts when using language through the topics studied. Responding to each topic requires students to exercise reason and consistency, seek meaning and cause, and support arguments with proof and evidence.

Students are able to access knowledge and views on personal, community and global concerns from local and distant communities like never before. Through the study of language there are opportunities to examine how language is a powerful tool for the inclusion or exclusion of individuals and groups and how this may be reflected in texts, communication and online activities. Students also learn to appreciate that the ethical use of ICT accounts for cultural considerations in evaluating risk and responsibility.

Intercultural understanding

Learning a language embodies intercultural understanding in a profoundly personal way. For the individual student, the study of language is a lived empirical experiment in understanding how people value cultures, languages and beliefs and how they form identity. Students adapt their own world view through the process of engaging with people from a range of communities and cultures, creating personal connections and cultivating mutual respect.

However, this expanded outlook is not limited to an understanding of the culture of the language they are learning. Through developing an intimate relationship with a culture other than their own, students develop skills, knowledge and dispositions that allow them to perceive and seek other perspectives and views, exponentially expanding the student’s personal world view and potential.

Language study provides direct insights into the changing nature of culture and how it influences language, behaviours, and personal, community and national identities. Language students are required to engage with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections and cultivate mutual respect.

For students of language, one of the challenges of using the language is being comfortable with the realisation that their capacity in the language and intercultural understanding is immediately and constantly visible. However, this is also an advantage because students receive real-time feedback when using the language. Language students become aware that successful intercultural communication is not only determined by what they do and say, but also by what members of other cultural groups understand from it.

Engagement with intercultural understanding can stimulate a student’s interest in the lives of others and cultivate empathy, respect, and responsibility for what they say and do. The real-time responsibility of communicating in language provides students with a unique appreciation of the risk-taking involved in intercultural communication and the need to make active effort to establish common ground for mutual understanding.