

Foreword

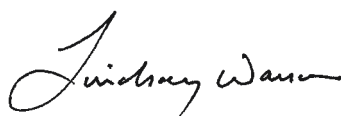
In 1981, 37 full-time equivalent (FTE) community language programs K-6 were established in New South Wales government schools. At that stage, fewer than 4,000 students were involved in the program. A further 206.8 (FTE) programs were established between 1982 and 1999, bringing the total number of programs to 243.8 (FTE). Currently, over 50,000 students are involved in the program.

Students in New South Wales government primary schools which offer community language programs have the opportunity of acquiring, maintaining and developing a community language in the course of the normal school day.

The focus in community language programs is communicative competence. Students are encouraged to communicate effectively through the development of skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in the community language.

Effective community language programs are characterised by the integration of the language into the curriculum activities of the school rather than the teaching of the language as a separate subject in isolation.

This document, which replaces *Organising Community Language Programs in NSW Primary Schools*, has been prepared by officers of the Languages Unit, Curriculum Support Directorate, in consultation with teachers of community languages K-6 and their supervisors and principals, to assist primary schools in organising and implementing their community language programs. It is designed also to assist schools considering applying for the establishment of community language programs K-6.



Lindsay Wasson

Director of Curriculum Support

October 2000

Contents



Applying for a program	3
Objectives of the program	3
Specialist community language teachers	4
The program supervisor	5
Guidelines for community language programs	6
Organisational considerations at school level	7
Constraints of school organisation and timetabling	9
School policy and curriculum guidelines	9
Group organisation	11
The community language classroom	14
Lesson content	14
Teacher development	15
Community involvement	15
Related policies and support documents	16

Applying for a program

Applications for the allocation of new community language programs are sought from primary and central schools throughout the state each year that funding is available. Schools with existing programs are also given the opportunity to vary their allocations.

New positions are allocated to schools based on the following criteria:

- that the community language is spoken by the local school community;
- that there is demonstrated staff support for the program;
- that there is demonstrated parental and community support for the program;
- that adequate accommodation in the form of a classroom is available.

New positions are allocated on the understanding:

- that the minimum community language teaching and learning time allocation is 2 hours per week per student group;
- that the community language class groups are of approximately normal class size; and
- that teachers appointed to these positions should be optimally engaged in teaching community language classes within the guidelines set down by this document.

All applications must be endorsed by the district superintendent prior to consideration by the Curriculum Support Directorate.

Objectives of the program

Because of its multicultural and multilingual nature and its geographic location, Australia needs people who possess an understanding of and an appreciation for languages and cultures other than their own, and a capacity to adopt fresh approaches to problems affecting a culturally diverse society. When combined with language skills, these understandings have the potential to:

- improve understanding within Australia's diverse society
- contribute to the development of a more harmonious society
- increase our international standing as a multicultural and multilingual nation, and
- provide sound reasons for developing our language background resources for the advantage of all Australians.

More specifically, as a result of their involvement in community language programs, students will develop skills in the following areas.

Communication

Students will acquire, maintain and/or develop communication skills in the target community language.

Sociocultural understanding

Students will develop a better understanding of their own cultures and/or the culture of the community language in the context of Australia's multicultural society.

Social cohesion

Students will develop an awareness of and an appreciation for the contribution of speakers of community languages to the making of our diverse society.

Self-esteem

The self-esteem of students with a background in the target language will be enhanced through the recognition of their language and culture within the school.

Language and cultural awareness

Students will develop an awareness of and appreciation for the role and nature of language and culture in everyday life.

General knowledge

Students will gain knowledge and understanding of a range of subject matter related to their needs, interests and aspirations, as well as to other areas of their learning.

Learning how to learn

Students will develop responsibility for and involvement in the learning process.

Economic

Students will develop an understanding of and appreciation for the economic potential of a multilingual society in the context of both the national and international trade and services environment.

Specialist community language teachers

Specialist teachers of community languages are appointed to schools additional to normal staffing establishment. Specialist community language teachers have the same status and working conditions as any other teacher. They are required to fulfil the same duties as other teaching personnel, i.e.

- submit a teaching program and daybook when required
- prepare a timetable
- participate in playground duty rosters
- participate in staff and grade meetings
- participate in assemblies and sport activities
- report on student learning outcomes.

Community language teachers, like other teachers, are entitled to weekly release from face-to-face teaching time. In the case of permanent part-time teachers, this entitlement is 22 minutes per day. A casual supply teacher, employed at two or more schools for a total of five (full) days, is entitled to release time.

The teacher appointed to these positions should be optimally engaged in teaching the community language classes within the organisational patterns appropriate to the school and as set down in this document.

Community language teachers seeking permanent status must be approved by the department and have successfully undertaken a language fluency test in the community language. These language fluency tests will be arranged by the School Staffing Unit, in conjunction with the University of New South Wales Institute of Languages (UNSWIL).

The program supervisor

It is important that the community language teacher be supervised by the executive for accountability and undertake professional development. The community language teacher's program should be written in English and supported by specific examples in the target language.

Since the community language teacher's program is a work register and a public document, it must be comprehensible to the supervisor and principal.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor of the community language program to become aware of the areas in which the community language teacher may need assistance and to advise on professional development needs.

As specialist community language teachers are also expected to fulfil requirements for a teaching certificate, they need to be aware that they may be expected to give demonstration lessons for the principal and supervisor from time to time. In this way, the principal and supervisor are aware of the areas in which the teacher may need assistance, e.g. ensuring that teaching methodology is consistent with current trends, that the subject matter being taught is consistent with the school's curriculum, that classroom management and discipline are consistent with the school's policy and that Departmental guidelines are being carried out.

It is also the responsibility of the supervisor of the community language program to ensure that the community language teacher:

- participates in staff meetings
- participates in school-based curriculum committees
- is invited to grade meetings
- is actively involved in extracurricular activities, such as sport carnivals, excursions, multicultural days, education and book weeks, speech nights
- reports on the progress of the community language program at staff meetings and in the school newsletter
- participates at assembly
- is rostered for playground duty
- is provided with appropriate weekly release from face-to-face teaching (RFF)
- is included in allocations for global budgeting.

Guidelines for community language programs

The guidelines for the implementation of permanent community language programs in primary schools specifically relate to time allocation, group structure and group size.

Time allocation

The **minimum** time allocation for community language programs staffed by teachers additional to establishment is **2 hours per week per student group**.

Schools will need to consider how to allocate time for community language classes to ensure this requirement is met.

TEACHER ALLOCATION	NO OF GROUPS	TEACHING TIME (HRS)	ASSEMBLY (HRS)	RELEASE (HRS)	SPORT (HRS)	TOTAL (HRS)
0.4	4	$4 \times 2 = 8$	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	–	$9 \frac{1}{2}$
0.5	5	$5 \times 2 = 10$	$\frac{3}{4}$	1	–	$11 \frac{3}{4}$
0.6	6	$6 \times 2 = 12$	$\frac{3}{4}$	$1 \frac{1}{4}$	–	$14 \frac{1}{4}$
1.0	10	$10 \times 2 = 20$	$\frac{3}{4}$	2	1	$23 \frac{3}{4}$

Group structure

Schools which have specialist community language teachers are able to form a **maximum of 10 classes** where each group will be involved in the program for at least 2 hours per week. This is for one full time teacher or equivalent.

Suggested group structure: Full-time programs

The number of groups formed in a community language program is dependent upon the number of students participating in the program.

A maximum of 10 classes allows schools to incorporate students into the program in a number of ways. For example

- background speaker group, K-2 or K-6 if numbers warrant it
- non-background speaker groups K-6
- mixed groups K-6
- whole-class groups.

Many combinations of groups are possible provided that the minimum time allocation is observed.

Suggested group structure: Part-time programs

It is unlikely that schools with part-time specialist community language teachers will be able to incorporate the maximum number of groups into their program. The possible grouping structure will depend upon teacher allocation.

Part-time programs may be able to target only specific groups, such as K-2 or K-6 background speakers, or cater for K-2 or K-6 only.

Group size

Specialist community language teachers are required to teach groups close in number to normal classes in the school. Language learning is maximised through the interaction that is possible in a group of reasonable size. Language teaching, like teaching in general, is more effective when a classroom with the appropriate furniture and facilities is available.

Organisational considerations at school level

The implementation of a community language program usually affects the entire organisation of the school. Some factors to be considered are:

- school size
- school organisation and timetabling constraints
- school policy and curriculum guidelines.

School size

Community language programs have been successfully implemented in primary schools where student enrolments range from one thousand students to forty students.

School size and teacher allocation will determine the possible dimensions of community language programs. Some factors which schools need to consider are:

- the total number of students enrolled at the school
- the number of community language teachers allocated to the school
- the number of students whose first language is the language of the community language program
- the number of students in the program
- the number of students participating in the program according to the prescribed guidelines
- the availability and location of classroom space for the program.

P1 and large P2 schools

The size of the staffing allocation for community languages may make it difficult or impossible to offer a community language program to the majority of students.

Consequently, decisions may need to be made as to which students will participate and how they will participate in the program. If schools wish to allow the participation of most of their students, they may need to arrange their staffing and accommodation in an innovative way.

Since large schools often experience difficulty in timetabling additional programs, grade re-grouping is often a preferred option for organising the community language programs.

At fixed times, each grade breaks, and students and teachers re-group for a specific activity which will include community language classes. For example, grade re-grouping in a four-stream school might result in a pattern like this:

Group 1 Language extension	Group 2 Community language*	Group 3 Language enrichment	Group 4 Language extension
--------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

**Background speakers only or
Background speakers and non-background speakers*

Consequently, the community language teacher may be able to teach a class, and ESL and classroom teachers may be able to devise and operate a language extension and enrichment program. The four mainstream class teachers could teach the new groups in rotation. Teachers released from their classes could have this time built into their relief-from-face-to-face allocation.

P2 schools

P2 schools often cannot incorporate the whole school into a single community language program with one teacher. It is also quite common to have composite classes in P2 schools which further complicates straight grade withdrawal or re-grouping. An option which works well in P2 schools is forming grade withdrawal groups of interested background and/or non-background speakers. If numbers are small, some grades may need to be combined.

It is usually not feasible to include the entire school using whole-class groups from across the school within the framework of the guidelines for community language programs. For example, a school with 15 classes K-6 cannot expect that each class will be able to participate in the program.

P2 schools together with P1 schools need to survey their communities to ascertain which students wish to participate. Usually large numbers of both background and non-background speaker students will wish to participate. If this is the case, and the staffing allocation does not allow all these students to be accepted, then the school must make a decision regarding which students will participate,

e.g. K-6 background only
K-2 background only
K-4 background only
K-4 background and non-background.

P3 schools

P3 schools with community language programs range in enrolments from 39 students to 164 students. Depending upon the staffing allocation, it is usually possible for the whole school to participate in the program.

P3 schools with full-time programs

P3 schools with full-time community language teachers are able to:

- form withdrawal groups of background speakers only
Given that P3 schools generally have composite classes, depending upon the number of native speakers, it may be preferable to form a K-2 group and a 3-6 group.
- teach existing class groups
The small number of classes in P3 schools usually enables the whole school to participate as existing class groups in the program.
- provide extra time to students because of the small number of classes.

P3 schools with part-time programs

In general, P3 schools have part-time programs for two or three days per week. Usually that means that the program may only incorporate background speakers and some non-background speakers, perhaps not the whole school.

Constraints of school organisation and timetabling

All schools have constraints and considerations which must be taken into account when organising and timetabling the various programs which operate in schools.

All schools have a variety of programs with additional personnel who must be accommodated in a busy timetable.

As guidelines have been established for implementing community language programs, consideration often must be given to timetabling language classes first.

School policy and curriculum guidelines

Schools have been required to develop school-based policy and guidelines for most curriculum areas and perspectives.

Just as these documents must be reflected in the organisation, structure and content of the community language program, the school needs to ensure that mainstream teachers collaborate with the community language teacher. Co-operative implementation of Departmental policies and school-based curriculum provides a firm foundation for the success of the community language program.

Specific considerations

Allocation of lesson time

In determining the number of lessons per week which should be allocated to students, it is necessary to consider the optimum frequency of exposure to the target language and optimum integration in the total school timetable for linguistic purposes, while minimising disturbance to the total school routine.

The models which follow are in order of suitability.

N.B. The figures quoted are for the absolute minimum of two (2) hours per week.

Model 1

Number of lessons per week: 3

Duration: 40 minutes

Comment: Length of lesson enables completion of a variety of activities. Sufficient frequency of exposure.

Model 2

Number of lessons per week: 2 + 1

Duration: 2 x 45 + 1 x 30 minutes

Comment: Sufficient frequency of exposure. 45-minute periods facilitate completion of tasks. 30-minute period is satisfactory only as follow-up.

Model 3

Number of lessons per week: 2

Duration: 60 minutes

Comment: Length of lessons facilitates programming of a variety of activities. (Essential if K-2 are involved). Insufficient frequency of exposure.

Model 4

Number of lessons per week: 4

Duration: 30 minutes

Comment: Length of lessons may be too short to complete a satisfactory lesson. Movement to and from classroom by students and teachers reduces actual teaching time to 20 minutes. Sufficient frequency of exposure. Perhaps too many interruptions to mainstream teachers' timetable.

Students

Students involved in community language programs are either:

- maintaining and developing further communicative competence in their community language (**L1 students**), or
- acquiring communicative competence in the community language (**L2 students**).

In ensuring that all students involved in the program benefit from the study of a community language, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of the student group when planning and programming. Students may:

- have had exposure to both the target language and the culture of the target language (**L1**)
- have had exposure only to the target language
- have some background in the target language
- have had exposure to the culture of the target language
- be familiar with more than one script
- be speakers of a dialect of the target language,
- have no background in either the target language or the culture of the target language (**L2**).

Group organisation

Size

Specialist community language teachers are required to teach groups close in number to normal classes in the school. Language is learned through interaction. Consequently effective language learning is most likely to occur in groups of at least 15 or more students. Groups smaller than this inhibit students from interacting with a variety of language models.

Organisation

A variety of organisational modes are currently being used by primary schools throughout the state:

- withdrawal
- whole-class groups
- team teaching.

In choosing the mode most suitable to the school, it is important to consider the following aims and issues, all of which distinguish community languages modes from those of English as a Second Language (ESL):

- maintenance and development of the existing language of L1 learners;
- language development of L2 learners from zero to proficiency; and
- frequency of exposure to the language (i.e. number of times per week the students will have community language lessons).

Withdrawal caters for the different levels of ability between L1 and L2 learners.

Whole-class groups can be taken by the community language teacher, provided that this is done in the community language room, where students can be immersed in an environment which reflects the target language and its nuances.

Table 1: Comparison of modes of organisation

Mode	Advantages	Caution needed
<p>Withdrawal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caters for differences in proficiency between L1 and L2 learners. • Students are grouped according to level of proficiency. • Proficiency groups can be organised within or across grades, e.g. L1 learners from 4K, 4B, 4M or L1 learners from Year 5 or Year 6. • More language productive since students are interacting with language peers (see Long and Porter, 1985). • Allows mainstream teachers to concentrate on small groups of students across the grade for those areas of the curriculum which require a better student-teacher ratio, e.g. process writing, maths, natural science experimentation, art and craft. • Facilitates integration of programming at the students' level of proficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires careful planning of the school's routine to ensure that CL is timetabled cooperatively with ESL, library, scripture, resource, sport, release and infants/primary assemblies. Optimum functioning is achieved by paralleling as many of these additional areas as possible, e.g. while the non-background speakers are having their CL lesson, L1 learners are involved in ESL or process writing with the ESL and mainstream teachers. When the L1 learners are having their CL lesson the situation is reversed for the L2 learners, who will work with the mainstream teacher (and ESL teacher, if required). In this way, withdrawal becomes extremely efficient.
<p>Whole mainstream class</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal disturbance is caused to school routine. • Subject matter of language lessons can be integrated with the mainstream lessons. • Mainstream teachers can participate in the CL teacher's lesson and involve themselves in the language learning program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L1 learners are generally disadvantaged because the CL teacher may target the lesson at the class majority (L2). • CL teacher needs to ensure that there are graded objectives in subject matter and language structure to ensure that both L1 and L2 students are catered for when integrating lesson content across the curriculum. • Disparity between L1 and L2 requires that the CL teacher operates group work catering for the substantial difference in language abilities between the groups. • Group work is difficult in lessons which are shorter than 40 minutes. • In effect, most mainstream teachers receive relief from face-to-face as they either stay in the classroom correcting books or leave the classroom to complete release; e.g. in a school where students receive two hours in community languages, and time off during scripture, library and RFF, the mainstream teacher can be receiving more than five hours of release per week.

Mode	Advantages	Caution needed
Team teaching with mainstream teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the first few lessons only where Kindergarten students are involved, this mode assists students in socialising with more than one teacher figure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This method is not desirable on a regular basis, since two languages are being spoken concurrently, resulting in students translating rather than learning to think in the language and in one of the teachers becoming an aide.
Team teaching with other community language teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists in reducing disturbance to the mainstream class where more than one teacher of the same language background or where a number of CL teachers are appointed to the same school. It allows for L1 and L2 learners to be withdrawn at the same time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires careful supervision by principal and supervisor to ensure that the CL teachers differentiate between L1 and L2 through grouping. Essentially, both teachers need to be actively and concurrently involved in the programming, preparation, teaching and evaluation processes, not “turn-taking”.
Combination of whole class and separate groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since some schools are unable to timetable a complete system of separate groups for L1 and L2 learners, they opt to allocate some time to whole-class groups (e.g. 40 min.) and the majority of time (1hr 20 min.) to withdrawal groups. This enables the teacher to distinguish between L1 and L2 learners and then combine them for appropriate language learning activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care needs to be taken that the whole-class group (mixed L1 and L2) lessons are devoted to more cultural areas, such as dance, drama, art and craft, where less distinction between L1 and L2 is necessary and where L2 learners can be placed in a language situation that can be challenging but understandable through gestures and other paralinguistic features. It is important that the greater proportion of this time be allocated to the withdrawal groups.

Team teaching can occur:

- if more than one community language teacher of the same language is appointed to the school and they decide to work together occasionally,
- for a short period of time with a mainstream teacher as a method of getting Kindergarten students used to another teacher; and
- for additional time per week only if the students are already receiving their minimum of 2 hours per week in separate lessons with only the community language teacher.

Except for the above reasons, team teaching is not a desirable method for community language teaching, since two languages would be operating in the classroom at the same time. This usually means that the dominant language, English, takes precedence and consequently the status of the community language teacher is diminished to that of a translator or ethnic aide.

In a bilingual or biliteracy program, the bilingual teacher may be allocated a Kindergarten class, where initial teaching will occur in the students’ first language while English is gradually introduced.

The community language classroom

Teachers of community languages require their own teaching area. For effective language learning, they need to establish a functional environment which provides ready access to teaching and learning materials, a variety of three-dimensional resources, audiovisual equipment and computers (with appropriate fonts).

If the community language teacher is required to move from room to room, optimum access to these resources is severely reduced. As a result, community language lessons in mainstream classes tend to be influenced by the teacher's ability and endurance to carry and juggle minimal equipment around the school. In fact, this type of organisation disadvantages students, as they are deprived of the opportunity to become engaged in language learning in the particular environment which the community language teacher would create for language experience in his or her room.

If the community language teacher moves from room to room, the lessons which he or she is able to plan around easily portable equipment tend to lack variety, generally involving songs and worksheets. During the process of language learning, especially within the minimum exposure of two hours per week, students need to be immersed in an environment which reflects the target language and its nuances. When working in mainstream rooms, students have no access to this total learning environment, and the community language teacher has limited opportunity to display students' work and devise suitable furniture arrangements which foster communication.

If the community language teacher is teaching in his or her own room, all students K-6 will be working in the same space. To accommodate the range of students, a variety of school furniture will need to be placed in the room so that the students are comfortable.

It is also important that the community language teacher be given sufficient space to display students' work, as well as to create a cultural environment which can motivate students to learn about the culture of which the language is an expression.

It is also important that the community language program is outcome-based. The LOTE Generic Syllabus Framework of the NSW Board of Studies will assist community language teachers in developing outcomes-based programs.

Lesson content

It is recommended that community language teachers take an integrated approach to their program. For this reason, it is essential that the teacher be familiar with and have copies of the school-based curriculum and mainstream teachers' programs. Time should be allocated for cooperative planning with the classroom teacher.

Integrating the content of the community language program with other key learning areas ensures that the mandatory two hours per week spent on learning the target language relates to the students' total curriculum. Isolating content from the mainstream curriculum has the potential to restrict the community language to the status of a hobby.

The focus in a community language program is communicative competence, whereby students are encouraged to communicate effectively through the acquisition of skills in using the community language. Thus, program content which is based solely on a grammatical approach will not meet the requirements for successful community language learning.

Teacher development

Beginning community language teachers attend the Community Language Induction Program (CLIP) and all teachers are offered advice and support from the community language consultant.

Workshops are held by language-specific consultants and some districts hold network meetings for community language teachers.

Community involvement

Community languages are languages spoken by members of school communities. It is important that school community members who are speakers of the community language, be involved in the implementation of the community language program as much as possible.

These school community members can be of use to the community language teacher in:

- providing material resources, such as photographs, slides, maps or artefacts to show and display in the community language classroom and the school,
- talking to staff and students about different aspects of their cultures,
- demonstrating cooking, dancing, traditional sports and games, specific skills (e.g. calligraphy)
- assisting with reading and research groups.

Students learn a language from many models. Within the time limitations of community language programs, it is important that the students are exposed to as many models as possible, so that the language learned is varied and applicable to a variety of communicative situations. During lesson time, the dominant models are the teacher and students themselves.

However, it is important to involve the community in the programs, so that other models are presented to students. If the community language teacher feels comfortable about having a parent or community member in the classroom, the teacher may have a valuable resource who is prepared to work with small groups on oral language activities, e.g. reading, picture talks, language board games. This parent-role would be to participate in discussions, so that the students hear and imitate another background speaker model. In this way, the teacher would be free to work with other groups. In most cases it would be necessary to ease the parent or community member into this role, in order to build up confidence in dealing with students in a classroom situation. During this sensitising process, the new adult language model would become aware of the routines of the room which contribute towards discipline. As in mainstream situations where community involvement occurs, the community language teacher remains in control of the students.

Some parents and community members have talents in their language which they may be willing to share with the school and perhaps the wider cluster of teachers. In the past, some of these people have written short stories, produced art work, assisted with music and dance, provided background information for school excursions and lent photographs which have assisted in materials production.

There are also parents who are able to assist with the use of technology in the classroom, and many have also participated in school excursions.

Beyond the boundaries of school, shop owners and business people are usually very willing to have groups visit their shops or premises, if given adequate notice. Many successful language practice sessions eventuate in a delicatessen, auto-repair shop, the post office and small factories. Taping of these conversations can provide a useful, re-usable resource and can be integrated into HSIE units of work. Some parents and relatives are prepared to tape oral histories of their experiences of migration and early life in Australia. Other older people in senior citizens homes and hospitals are willing audiences for concert items which have been prepared from drama and music activities.

It is important that the school's organisation of the community language program permits it to be a vibrant, varied and important subject within the school curriculum. Language is learned through living the four skills, not just through reading and writing.

Related policies and support documents

- Learning in a culturally diverse society (Draft), 1999
- Anti-racism policy statement
- LOTE Strategic Plan, 1992
- Ethnic affairs priorities statement plan, 1999
- LOTE K-6 generic syllabus framework, Board of Studies NSW, 1996

All documents are available on the Department of Education and Training Web site:

<http://www.intranet.dse.nsw.edu.au/stand.cgi/dse/D1.0/policies.htm>