



Learning Area Statement

What is learning languages about?

Learning a new language provides a means of communicating with people from another culture and exploring one's own personal world.

Languages are inseparably linked to the social and cultural contexts in which they are used. Languages and cultures play a key role in developing our personal, group, national, and human identities. Every language has its own ways of expressing meanings; each has intrinsic value and special significance for its users.

This learning area provides the framework for the teaching and learning of languages that are additional to the language of instruction. Level 1 of the curriculum is the entry level for students with no prior knowledge of the language being learned, regardless of their school year.

Why study a language?

Languages link people locally and globally. They are spoken in the community, used internationally, and play a role in shaping the world. Oral, written, and visual forms of language link us to the past and give us access to new and different streams of thought and to beliefs and cultural practices.

Te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) are official languages of New Zealand. Because of New Zealand's close relationships with the peoples of the Pacific, Pasifika languages also have a special place.

By learning an additional language and its related culture(s), students come to appreciate that languages and cultures are systems that are organised and used in particular ways to achieve meaning. Learning a new language extends students' linguistic and cultural understanding and their ability to interact appropriately with other speakers. Interaction in a new language, whether face to face or technologically facilitated, introduces them to new ways of thinking about, questioning, and interpreting the world and their place in it. Through such interaction, students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that equip them for living in a world of diverse peoples, languages, and cultures. As they move between, and respond to, different languages and different cultural practices, they are challenged to consider their own identities and assumptions.

As they learn a language, students develop their understanding of the power of language. They discover new ways of learning, new ways of knowing, and more about their own capabilities. Learning a language provides students with the cognitive tools and strategies to learn further languages and to increase their understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s).

How is the learning area structured?

This learning area puts students' ability to communicate at the centre by making Communication the core strand. This strand is supported by two further strands, which are directed specifically at developing the linguistic and cultural awareness needed for communicative competence.

In the core **Communication** strand, students learn to use the language to make meaning. As their linguistic and cultural knowledge increases, they become more effective communicators, developing the receptive skills of listening, reading, and viewing and the productive skills of speaking, writing, and presenting or performing.

In the supporting **Language Knowledge** strand, students study the language in order to understand how it works. They learn about the relationships between different words and different structures, how speakers adjust their language when negotiating meaning in different contexts and for different purposes, and how different types of text are organised. This strand helps students to develop explicit knowledge of the language, which will, over time, contribute to greater accuracy of use.

In the supporting **Cultural Knowledge** strand, students learn about culture and the interrelationship between culture and language. They grow in confidence as they learn to recognise different elements of the belief systems of speakers of the target language. They become increasingly aware of the ways in which these systems are expressed through language and cultural practices. As they compare and contrast different beliefs and cultural practices, including their own, they understand more about themselves and become more understanding of others.

The content of the learning area is specified in terms of a general proficiency statement for each progressive pair of levels, together with achievement objectives for the core strand and the two supporting strands. The achievement objectives in the Communication strand provide the basis for assessment. The two supporting strands are only assessed indirectly through their contribution to the Communication strand.

The achievement objectives are generic in order to encompass all languages that may be offered for learning in schools. Language-specific guidelines provide further information.

Learning Languages

He taonga ngā reo katoa
All languages are to be treasured



Scarino, 2000

Learning languages in a school setting involves developing learners' capabilities for both using language and learning language. Learners need to learn how to learn and how to learn a language. Even more important is that they develop higher order thinking skills and that they perceive the important relationship between thought, language and knowledge.

Kramsch, 1993

In a dynamic view of culture, cultural competence is seen, therefore, as intercultural behaviour. It is the ability to negotiate meaning across cultural boundaries and to establish one's own identity as a user of another language.

Byram, 1995

An intercultural speaker is someone who can operate their linguistic competence and their sociolinguistic awareness of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, in order to manage interaction across cultural boundaries, to anticipate misunderstandings caused by difference in values, meanings and beliefs, and thirdly, to cope with the affective as well as cognitive demands and engagement with others.

Foundation Messages

- Where students have no prior knowledge of the target language, curriculum level 1 is the entry level for learning languages, regardless of school year.
- The achievement objectives in the Communication strand provide the basis for assessment. The two supporting strands are only assessed indirectly through their contribution to the Communication strand.
- The achievement objectives are generic to encompass all languages that may be offered for learning in schools. Language-specific guidelines provide further information for designing effective teaching and learning programmes.

10 Principles

Second language (L2) acquisition research by Ellis (2005) identifies general principles for designing effective language programmes. The principles are to be viewed as provisional specifications best operationalised and tried out by teachers in their own teaching contexts (Ellis, 2005).

- Principle 1**
Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.
- Principle 2**
Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning.
- Principle 3**
Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form.
- Principle 4**
Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge.
- Principle 5**
Instruction needs to take into account the learner's "built-in syllabus".
- Principle 6**
Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input.
- Principle 7**
Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output.
- Principle 8**
The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.
- Principle 9**
Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.
- Principle 10**
In assessing learners' L2 proficiency, it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.
- See also:**
Ministry of Education (2004). *Instructed Second Language Acquisition: Case Studies*, developed by R. Erlam and K. Sakui. Wellington: Learning Media.

References

Byram, M. (1995). *Intercultural Competence and Mobility in Multinational Contexts: A European View*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
Ellis, R. (2005). *Instructed Second Language Acquisition: A Literature Review*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. www.minedu.govt.nz
Kramsch, C. (1993). "Language Study as Border Study: Experiencing Difference". *European Journal of Education*, vol. 28 no. 3, pp. 349-358.
Scarino, A. (2000). "The Neglected Goals of Language Learning". *Babel*, vol. 34 no. 3 (Summer 1999-2000), pp. 4-11.

See also:

Ministry of Education (2002). *Learning Languages: A Guide for New Zealand Schools*. Wellington: Learning Media. www.tki.org.nz/e/language
www.educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz

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for English-medium teaching
and learning in years 1-13



Levels One and Two

Proficiency Descriptor

Students can understand and use familiar expressions and everyday vocabulary. Students can interact in a simple way in supported situations.

Achievement Objectives

Communication

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate	Managing self and relating to others	Participating and contributing in communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and produce information. <p>For example, students can understand and use familiar expressions and everyday vocabulary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and respond to questions and requests. <p>For example, students can ask and answer questions about personal details.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show social awareness when interacting with others. <p>For example, students can understand and show politeness in specified contexts.</p>

Language Knowledge

Students will:

- Recognise that the target language is organised in particular ways.
- Make connections with their own language(s).

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:

- Recognise that the target culture(s) is (are) organised in particular ways.
- Make connections with known culture(s).

Levels Three and Four

Proficiency Descriptor

Students can understand and construct simple texts using their knowledge of the target language. Students can describe aspects of their own background and immediate environment.

Achievement Objectives

Communication

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate	Managing self and relating to others	Participating and contributing in communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and produce information and ideas. <p>For example, students can understand and construct simple texts for a range of purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express and respond to personal needs and interests. <p>For example, students can express ideas about aspects of their own lives and the lives of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use cultural knowledge to communicate appropriately. <p>For example, students can understand and show respect in specified contexts.</p>

Language Knowledge

Students will:

- Recognise and describe ways in which the target language is organised.
- Compare and contrast languages.

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:

- Recognise and describe ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised.
- Compare and contrast cultural practices.

Levels Five and Six

Proficiency Descriptor

Students can understand and produce more complex language. They can communicate beyond the immediate context, for example, past and future events. Students can understand and produce a variety of text types.

Achievement Objectives

Communication

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate	Managing self and relating to others	Participating and contributing in communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate information, ideas, and opinions through different text types. <p>For example, students can understand and produce a variety of text types.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express and respond to personal ideas and opinions. <p>For example, students can communicate beyond the immediate context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate appropriately in different situations. <p>For example, students can interact effectively in a range of situations.</p>

Language Knowledge

Students will:

- Understand ways in which the target language is organised for different purposes.

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:

- Understand ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised for different purposes.

Levels Seven and Eight

Proficiency Descriptor

Students can use language variably and effectively to express and justify their own ideas and opinions, and support or challenge those of others. They are able to use and identify the linguistic and cultural forms that guide interpretation and enable them to respond critically to texts.

Achievement Objectives

Communication

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

Selecting and using language, symbols, and texts to communicate	Managing self and relating to others	Participating and contributing in communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate information, ideas, and opinions through increasingly complex and varied texts. <p>For example, students can use language variably and effectively for a range of purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the views of others, developing and sharing personal perspectives. <p>For example, students can share and justify their own ideas and opinions and can support or question those of others for critical reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in sustained interaction and produce extended text. <p>For example, students can identify and use the linguistic and cultural forms that guide interpretation and enable them to respond critically to texts.</p>

Language Knowledge

Students will:

- Analyse ways in which the target language is organised in different texts and for different purposes.
- Explore how linguistic meaning is conveyed across languages.

Cultural Knowledge

Students will:

- Analyse ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised for different purposes and for different audiences.
- Analyse how the use of the target language expresses cultural meanings.