

DRAFT POLICY

LITERACY FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENTS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Responsibility of: Curriculum, Teaching and Phases of Learning
Effective Date: TBC
Next Review Date: TBC
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DET File: 2008/2492
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VERSION NUMBER: 1

1. POLICY

This draft policy should be read in conjunction with the [Literacy Framework for Students with English as an Additional Language Guidelines, Procedures and Frequently Asked Questions](#) document and the [Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy Policy, A Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy](#).

The need to develop English Literacy

The ability to read and write in English and be numerate are critical if young people are to successfully complete their schooling, exercise choice about what they do in life beyond school, participate fully in the economic and social development of their communities, and become global citizens.

All students in Australia have the right to be able to communicate effectively in Standard Australian English (SAE) to understand how the English language works, to think and learn through English and to be given access to the cultural understandings it carries. The term English as an Additional Language (EAL) is used in relation to Northern Territory learners who speak languages other than Standard Australian English (SAE) at home.

The Northern Territory has a population that is rich in language and cultural backgrounds with over 40% of NT school students learning through EAL.

The Territory's population is particularly unique in the extent and proportions of speakers of Indigenous languages. More than 100 Aboriginal languages and dialects are spoken in the Territory. About 30% of NT school students are EAL learners with one or more Indigenous home languages.

In addition, about 13% of NT school students are EAL learners with non-Indigenous multilingual home languages.

With this diversity in language and cultural backgrounds in NT schools, it is critical that all school staff work together to develop teaching programs for EAL learners that recognise and value home language, knowledge, experience and culture with a view to maximising English language learning outcomes.

The balance – Not an either/or situation

Young people can be taught and learn through English while at the same time being supported to develop their culture and language.

Both outcomes are valued and recognised. Community leaders and parents will continue to be primary agents for teaching culture and language to their children. Schools and communities will work in partnership to perpetuate, grow and celebrate culture and language.

All very remote schools must run English as an Additional Language (EAL) approaches

All NT schools with students for whom English is an additional language must adopt and plan EAL approaches to their learning programs. The department supports an approach to teaching English literacy and numeracy that values the use of EAL strategies.

Teaching in the prime teaching time (the first four hours)

Within the prime teaching time (the first four hours), instruction will be predominantly in English. Home language may be used to support quality teaching, including introducing concepts, across all year levels, particularly in the early years.

Exposure to Australian Standard English

As many of the NT's EAL learners, particularly Indigenous learners in very remote communities, do not have regular exposure to English communication in their home environment, it is imperative from the Transition year onwards, to ensure that all programs include planned exposure to Standard Australian English in the prime teaching time.

Recruiting and developing appropriate educators and support staff

To run effective EAL approaches, schools, with the support of the department, are expected to recruit and develop staff with language and cultural backgrounds appropriate to the student cohort. The development of teaching teams where teachers work collaboratively with assistant teachers is critical to any effective EAL teaching and learning program.

Supporting communities who wish their children to read and write in home language

Some communities will identify a desire to have their children learn to read and write in their home language as well as read and write in English.

The Department of Education and Training values home language and culture and will support communities in this endeavour through the use of school facilities after hours for cultural and language activities.

Proposals for additional within-school opportunities to provide cultural and home language learning may be considered by the relevant Director School Performance.

2. BUSINESS NEED

English literacy and numeracy attainment by all students is a priority for all schools. For schools with EAL learners decisions about language of instruction in curriculum delivery for English literacy and numeracy acquisition are a critical consideration.

3. RELATED POLICIES

DET Policies:

Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy

Length of School Day

Requirements to provide instruction for the full school year

Physical Activity Requirements for Schools

Other NTG Policies:

(forthcoming) Aboriginal Language Policy

In development under auspices of the NT Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council; Office of Indigenous Policy, Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services.

4. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Silburn, SR, Nutton, GD, McKenzie JW and Landrigan, M (2010) *Early years English language acquisition and instructional approaches for Aboriginal students with home languages other than English: A systematic review of the Australian and international literature. Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin NT.*

DRAFT GUIDELINES, PROCEDURES and FAQs

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1. GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the [Literacy Framework for Students with English as an Additional Language Policy](#) and the [Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy Policy, A Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy](#) which outlines systemic accountabilities.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Schools will:

- Work with local communities to identify the intended literacy outcomes for English as an Additional Language (EAL) children in the school, ensuring alignment with the Department's *Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy Policy, A Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy*.
- Develop teaching and learning programs that cater for EAL learners. These should be inclusive of the students' language and culture and designed to deliver the intended English literacy outcomes.
- Ensure all school staff work together to develop teaching programs for EAL learners. These programs will recognise, value and use home language, knowledge, experience and culture as a key part of moving students from what they know to the intended learning, and have a strong focus on English language learning.
- Ensure that all appropriate staff are trained in English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Executive Directors Schools are responsible for the effective implementation and monitoring of this policy in regions, including ensuring regional resourcing is prioritised to enable all teachers and support staff to access EAL professional learning.

General Manager Curriculum Teaching and Phases of Learning is responsible for maintaining the operational policy, including quality assurance of EAL professional learning including formal training that articulates into qualifications.

Principals are responsible for:

- Working with local families and communities to identify the intended literacy outcomes for EAL children in the school, aligned with the Department's Literacy and Numeracy Policy.
- Ensuring that the whole school community understands the important role that staff, who are home language speakers, must play in the teaching and learning process throughout the school day.
- Ensuring all school staff work together to develop teaching programs for EAL learners that recognise and value home language, knowledge, experience and culture with a view to maximising English language learning outcomes.
- Ensuring all teachers access EAL training opportunities.
- Ensuring that the community has access to school resources for the purposes of outside of school hours language and culture programs.

Directors School Performance are responsible for:

- Providing advice to schools and school councils on the design of EAL programs.
- Brokering appropriate support (e.g. EAL and/or cross cultural effectiveness training) for teachers and classroom support staff.
- Formally approving arrangements in schools where communities want their children to not only speak, but to also read and write in their home language. Schools can work with communities to support this by ensuring:
 - committed support from the community for this instructional approach in the initial years of school education.
 - there is a sufficient number of instructionally and culturally competent staff to properly implement the approach.
 - the school leadership team is committed and able to take a proactive role in engaging community and family resources to support the approach.
 - the school's ethos and learning programs aim to promote positive and active representation of children's (and families') first language and cultural heritage.
 - suitably adaptable and culturally responsive curriculum, teaching and learning resource materials are available or could be produced at reasonable cost.
 - there is a commitment to professional support of the approach to the specific community/school.

3. COMMUNICATION

The final policy will be communicated to schools and will be available on the DET website.

4. REVIEW

Two years from finalisation of the draft policy.

5. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why the need for this revised Policy?

A: This revised policy incorporates the intent of the original policy within the broader context of improving English literacy outcomes for students learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). It also attempts to clarify some of the

misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the original policy. This revised policy is intended to more clearly state and practically apply the intent of the original policy – that is: an inclusive approach to ensuring students become competent in English literacy.

Q: Is learning in English important?

A: Yes. English is the language that provides a pathway to jobs and further education and training in Australia. It's the language in which success at schooling is measured and it's the language of our economy. All children need to be proficient in its use for learning beyond school; for day-to-day living, work, training and university.

Q: Is it important for students to learn in English from the beginning of their formal schooling?

A: Yes. Research indicates that students tend to have a greater capacity to acquire another language when they are younger. When learning any new language, it is important to expose students to this language as early as possible during prime learning time. Exposure to spoken English is particularly important.

Q: Does the *Literacy Framework for Students with English as an Additional Language Policy* mean that DET and its schools acknowledge and value home language and culture?

A: Absolutely. The development of knowledge and understanding of home language and culture is a key part of the school curriculum and is also essential for staff as they develop and deliver their work programs. DET is also keen to work with all school communities to determine how we might work together to further value home languages.

Q: Does the *Literacy Framework for Students with English as an Additional Language Policy* mean that local/home language can't be spoken in classrooms?

A: No, of course not. On the contrary, while most of the teaching will be in English, home languages can and should be used where appropriate to support the learning and acquisition of concepts. Additionally, there will be times, particularly in the Early Years, where it may be better to introduce concepts using first language. This is good teaching practice and is to be encouraged. This is the Department's approach to working with English as an Additional Language learners and one that is used across Australia and internationally.

Q: When can home languages be spoken and used in the teaching and learning process?

A: Throughout the school day - Home languages can and should be used where appropriate to support English language acquisition and the teaching of a broad range of subjects. Home language is of course necessary in the teaching of language and culture.

Q: Will children also be able to learn to read and write in their own

languages?

A: Our main aim is for all students to be able to speak, read and write proficiently in English.

In some of our schools where communities want their children to not only speak, but to also read and write in their home language, schools can and should work with the community to support this. Formal arrangements will need to be negotiated between the community, school and Director of School Performance.

Q: Will DET teachers in remote and very remote communities be supported so they can teach effectively and support students as they learn in English?

A: Yes. DET will make sure that all teachers can access professional development in teaching children with English as an Additional Language including formal training that articulates into qualifications.

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