



Languages in the national curriculum

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Nature of Language in the curriculum

Language is a creative, human capability that makes it possible to:

- communicate for a variety of purposes in a range of social and cultural contexts, with a range of diverse audiences, in order to interpret and express thought, feeling and experience, through a variety of types of spoken and written discourse which are personally and culturally significant
- think and learn
- form judgments and develop values
- reflect upon language and languages in use, the uses of language and language learning.

*(creativity/richness in communication,
creativity/richness in connections,
richness in deep understanding)*

→ provides access and power for the individual and as a member of society



The distinctiveness of Languages in the curriculum - 1

Languages as a **subject**

—practised by communities of speakers whose identity is defined by their language → more than a school “subject”/area of learning

(richness in lived experience)

—the only learning area that permits direct access to another culture(s) and world view(s)

(richness in diversity)

—language learning as bridging home and school languages and cultures or L1 and L2 → developing an intercultural capability (Scarino & Liddicoat 2009)

(richness in connections)

—the only learning area that develops in students the capability to acquire, develop and use an additional language through continuous referencing across their communicative repertoire

(richness in new learning)



The distinctiveness of Language/Languages in the curriculum - 2

Language/languages as **medium**

When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning - a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language Whatever the culture they are born into, in learning to speak children are learning a semiotic that has been evolving for at least ten thousand generations... Language is not a domain of human knowledge; language is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge. (Halliday 1993, pp.93-94)

(richness/creativity in learning)

→ “learning is learning to mean” (p.113)



Diversity of learners

- learners and their life-worlds
- from 'background' to learning and traits to constitutive of learning in the context of trajectories of engagement with particular valued cultural experiences – intracultural and intercultural development *(richness of diversity, creativity in learning)*
- language and culture have a mediating role; learning emerges through linguistically and culturally mediated, historically-developing practical activity (Gutiérrez, 2003)
- hybridity in learning environments involves "the intermingling, the interanimation of multiple languages, multiple role-playing.... as the fulcrum of creativity (Lee, 2008:275)
- development through continuous experiences, reframing of → developing self-understanding *(richness of experience)*
- increasing intercultural engagement *(creativity/richness of engagement with diversity)*



Language/Languages in/across the curriculum

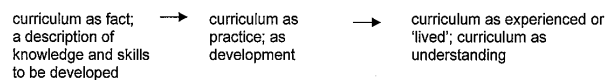
- linguisticity of learning and the need to have an integrated view of Language, English (as L1; ESL, EFL) literacy and languages to best develop sophisticated language and communication repertoires of students and success in learning *(coherence in learning and development)*
- a monolingual/monocultural or plurilingual/pluricultural view of Language/
Languages in the curriculum?



Framing the nation's curriculum

- a description of knowledge and skills or as lived by people?

View of curriculum



(Goodson, 1997; Pinar, 2003)

- richness, creativity, coherence as features of the curriculum, as principles of design or as experienced and developed by learners?



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