



**DRAFT** Shape of ACT Senior Secondary  
Curriculum for  
Beginning Modern Languages A/T/M

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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The *Shape of ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum: Beginning Modern Languages* will guide the writing of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) *Beginning Modern Languages A/T/M* course.
- 1.2 This paper has been prepared following consultation with Associate Professor Angela Scarino, a specialist in Applied Linguistics at Adelaide University and the deliberations of the *Beginning Modern Languages* course writers.
- 1.3 The paper should be read in conjunction with *The Shape of the ACT Senior Secondary Curriculum* located at: [http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/curriculum/bsss\\_course\\_development\\_consultation](http://www.bsss.act.edu.au/curriculum/bsss_course_development_consultation)

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The *Beginning Modern Languages A/T/M* course will be the basis of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in ACT senior secondary schools.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies is reviewing the existing Beginning Modern Languages course in the ten-year course development cycle of improvement and renewal. The requirements of the Languages Framework approved by the Board in 2026 will also feature in this redevelopment.
- 3.2 All courses under development are required to meet Board design specifications and to align with Board requirements for senior secondary curriculum. These specifications align with ACARA course design specifications and provide teachers with guidance and flexibility to plan, teach and assess according to the needs and interests of their students.

The BSSS *Beginning Modern Languages A/T/M* course is to be developed under the *Languages Framework*, reflecting the nature of the discipline. The *Languages Framework* is located [here](#):

The rationale for this framework describes Languages as:

In learning a language, students learn how to interact with others across languages and cultures to share meaning and learn about themselves, others and the world. It is a complex undertaking that engages students interpersonally, interculturally, creatively and intellectually. Students interpret, respond to and create and exchange language for a wide variety of purposes in a range of contexts. They reflect upon ideas, concepts, decisions, and choices and their impact. In learning about self and others in a diverse world they become multilingual communicators and meaning makers who engage socially and interculturally with others.

Language learning is a continual, cumulative and contextual process that inspires curiosity. Students aim to engage in meaningful communications using a repertoire of cultural and conceptual insights, vocabulary and grammar, and develop intercultural capability. They become flexible and creative users of complex systems of meaning and interaction. Students select from personal repertoires with attention to audience, purpose, context and textual features and enjoy the complex and creative act of self-expression and mediating meaning across languages and cultures. They use language respectfully, appropriately and creatively to pursue their goals.

Language learning is also a reflective process of self-discovery, personal transformation and identity formation. Students take time to reorganise thoughts, perceptions and ways of thinking to accommodate new world views inherent to the language. In opening their minds to diverse ways of thinking, being and living, students reflect on their understanding of themselves, their world and their own repertoire of languages and cultures. They re-examine closely held beliefs and preconceptions about being in the world and develop an evolving and reflexive sense of self in relation to others.

Students develop the learning skills, attitudes and dispositions to acquire a language and expand their meaning making repertoires and as such becoming more sensitive to language and texts and more adept at learning and using additional languages. They develop the dispositions of empathy, compassion, and perseverance, resilience and confidence in the face of uncertainty.

With experience in interacting and communicating across languages and cultures, students will develop the capability to navigate a complex, dynamic, and diverse world and pursue further studies. They will develop skills such as appropriate risk-taking and situational adaptability which are critical to living in a rapidly changing world. These transferable skills will be highly sought after in a variety of occupations, community settings and integral to living a full, ethical and rich life as global and local citizens.

**3.3** All courses based on the Languages Framework should enable students to:

- Become confident communicators who can use the target language effectively in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes, developing interpersonal skills
- Build intercultural capability by exploring the connections between experiencing language and culture, reflecting on self and others in the world, and the ways of the world, to foster respect, empathy, and local and global awareness
- Apply increasingly complex linguistic concepts to both the target language and own language(s), developing accuracy, creativity, reflexivity<sup>1</sup>, and adaptability in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning
- Use the target and own language(s) to gain and [mediate](#) knowledge, debate ideas, and share meanings, to enable engagement with others, collaboration, and problem-solving across cultures
- Build the confidence to learn independently, experiment with the language, and reflect on experiences to develop the creativity, open-mindedness, reflective and reflexive practices, and resilience needed to be lifelong learners

**3.4** Concepts from the *Languages Framework* build on ACARA's F-10 Languages curriculum. Content in Languages is organised under 2 strands:

- Communicating meaning in [Language]
- Understanding language and culture

The 2 strands are interrelated and inform and support each other. The structure in Languages is presented in one or 2 sequences that offer alternative entry points into language learning, from Foundation to Year 10 and/or Year 7 to Year 10.

#### **Communicating meaning in [Language]**

This involves students learning to use language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning. There are 3 sub-strands:

- Interacting in [Language]
- Mediating meaning in and between languages
- Creating text in [Language]

#### **Understanding language and culture**

This involves students learning to analyse and understand language and culture as resources for interpreting and shaping meaning in intercultural exchange. There are 2 sub-strands:

- Understanding systems of language
- Understanding the interrelationship of language and culture

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix D.

### 3.5 In the ACT, we adopt and adapt the assessment criteria to be:

- Communicating Meaning in Language
- Understanding Language and Culture
- Reflection on Learning and Self in the World

3.6 All courses of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate should enable students to develop essential capabilities. The Australian Curriculum General Capabilities comprise an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum. While developing all capabilities, in particular, the *Beginning Modern Languages A/T/M* course will engage with the capabilities of Intercultural Understanding, Creative and Critical Thinking, Personal and Social capability and Digital Literacy.

#### **Intercultural Understanding**

The Intercultural Understanding capability is core to Languages. In learning a second or additional language, students develop an appreciation of languages, cultures and beliefs including their own. Students experience the strong interrelationships between languages and cultures and how these shape identity. They develop intercultural understanding to value and respect diverse ways of communicating, thinking and behaving. Students recognise how these are reflected in social and cultural practices, and language use in communication and the exchange of meaning. They develop connections with communities and cultures, become aware of similarities and differences, and cultivate reciprocity and mutual respect. The Intercultural Understanding capability provides for the experience of engaging with others and for students to navigate and reflect on language use, perspectives and behaviours.

More information on the General Capabilities may be found [here](#):

#### **Critical and Creative Thinking**

Languages develops students' ability to think logically, critically and creatively and the metacognitive skills and language to discuss it. It provides opportunities for students to inquire, generate, analyse and reflect on a range of concepts, ideas and perspectives in spoken and written texts. They learn how to analyse texts and interpret how the language of texts conveys meaning. They create new texts and appreciate aesthetic qualities in their own and others works. Students reflect on the thinking and processes used to mediate meaning between languages. They apply their knowledge of language as a system to new contexts and learn to revise and modify texts when considering context, purpose and audience.

More information on the General Capabilities may be found [here](#):

#### **Personal and Social capability**

Languages enhances students' personal and social capability. Through the *Communicating meaning in [Language]* strand, they develop a range of interpersonal skills essential to effective communication, such as empathy, resilience, decision-making, negotiation and collaboration. Content in both the *Communicating meaning in [Language]* and *Understanding language and culture* strands encourages students experience and to develop an appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives, and experience and recognise how these influence identity, including their own.

More information on the General Capabilities may be found [here](#):

#### **Digital Literacy**

Languages develops students' digital literacy capability as they use a range of digital tools to access and create information, ideas and perspectives in multimodal texts. Students develop understanding of how they can use digital tools to access diverse language-speaking communities and authentic texts and create their own. They evaluate and analyse information in digital formats and develop understanding of their intended context, purpose and audience.

More information on the General Capabilities may be found [here](#):

## 4. THE CONTEXT OF THE ACT

### 4.1 Courses of study for the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate:

- provide a variety of pathways, to meet different learning needs and encourage students to complete their secondary education
- enable students to develop the essential capabilities for twenty-first century learners
- empower students as active participants in their own learning
- engage students in contemporary issues relevant to their lives
- foster students' intellectual, social, and ethical development
- nurture students' well-being, and physical and spiritual development
- enable effective and respectful participation in a diverse society.

### 4.2 Each course of study:

- comprises an integrated and interconnected set of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that students develop and use in their learning across the curriculum
- is based on a model of learning that integrates intended student outcomes, pedagogy, and assessment
- outlines teaching strategies which are grounded in learning principles and encompass quality teaching
- promotes intellectual quality, establishes a rich learning environment, and generates relevant connections between learning and life experiences
- provides formal assessment and certification of students' achievements.

### 4.3 In consideration of the ACT context, and in response to contemporary research and literature, a *Beginning Modern Languages* course should include:

- application of a student-centred pedagogical approach
- alignment to the Languages Framework and Achievement Standards
- applying communication, evaluation and reflection skills in *Continuing Modern Languages*
- developing understanding of the target language communities and people studied, and the experiences, thoughts and perspectives of canonical texts and creatives in those communities
- opportunities to enjoy studies of languages, cultures and societies
- recognising the connections and relationships of a globalised society
- developing an appreciation of language as a system and the rules and variations that govern a language
- developing an initial understanding of the interaction between target language and culture
- developing skills in mediating meaning and culture across and within languages
- developing research, interpersonal, communication, digital and critical literacy skills
- developing autonomous language acquisition knowledge, understanding, and skills

## 5. AIMS OF THE BEGINNING MODERN LANGUAGES CURRICULUM

The revised *Beginning Modern Languages* course aims to provide opportunities for students to develop the capability to interact across and within languages and cultures, coming to justifiable decisions about language choices based on a developing knowledge of cultural practices. Students will have the opportunity to engage in interactions where they express, exchange, interpret, mediate and negotiate concepts, ideas, perspectives, and experiences. They adapt to learning and using a new language in a context in which generative AI supports translations. Through these processes, students become active participants in understanding, constructing and mediating meaning in target language texts.

Learning a new language opens a door into the knowledge, values, beliefs, and worldviews of others, fostering understanding and empathy. When people appreciate these diverse perspectives, they become better equipped to build bridges instead of barriers. As author Nelson Mandela said, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.” In this way, language learning becomes a powerful tool for promoting peace—inviting us to connect, listen, and see our shared humanity.

The advent of increasingly sophisticated, accurate, naturalistic, and most of all, generally practical Generative AI platforms and AI translation systems has profound implications for how we think about the aims and practice of language learning. Professor Yong Zhao argues that: “Given that machine translation is already better at communicating than most people who have spent a few years studying foreign languages and the technology will continue to improve, it is important to rethink foreign language education.”<sup>2</sup> This suggests that with simple translation processes available at our fingertips, the language learning curriculum must expand beyond functional communication to increase its focus on the essential human factors that knowing a language can provide and that cannot be simulated by AI. As Elba Ramirez argues:

*while technology can translate messages, it misses an important component of human communication – the cultural nuances behind the words. So, while AI translation might bridge language barriers and promote communication because of its accessibility, it’s important to be clear about the benefits and challenges it presents. Merely relying on technology to translate between languages will ultimately lead to misunderstandings and a less rich human experience.*<sup>3</sup>

The proposed course outlined in this Shape Paper attempts to grapple with those implications in emphasising the mediation of meaning, reflexivity, metacognitive thinking about language and the intrinsic rewards of students’ developing understanding of the socio-cultural knowledge that contextualises and determines the use of language. As Angela Scarino et al. remind us, while emphasising the importance and practicality of assessing intercultural capability, that:

*Engagement in intercultural communication is always affected with and through a language, and participants are positioned in and through their affiliations with that language. Moreover, languages provide the resource through which the engagement occurs, and the conceptual and meaning-making resources for enacting the engagement, and thus give shape to the ways in which the engagement unfolds”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Yong Zhao, AI means a rethink of teaching foreign languages, Pursuit, 3 February 2023, <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/ai-means-a-rethink-of-teaching-foreign-languages>

<sup>3</sup> Elba Ramirez, With AI translation tools so powerful, what is the point of learning a language?, *The Conversation*, October 22 2024, <https://theconversation.com/with-ai-translation-tools-so-powerful-what-is-the-point-of-learning-a-language-238068>

<sup>4</sup> Angela Scarino, Michelle Kohler, Anthonyj. Liddicoat, “Chapter 13: Assessing Intercultural Capability”, in Victoria Russell, Kathryn Murphy-Judy, Francis John Troyan, Aleidine J. Moeller, Krishnauna Hines-Gaither (eds.) *The Handbook of Research in World Language Instruction*, Routledge, New York, 2025. [\(PDF\) Assessing Intercultural Capability](#)

Students will be called on to demonstrate their developing understanding of the target language and justify their communication choices through reflective and reflexive exercises. For as Maeryem Karlik argues: “Language is not just a set of words and grammar rules, but it is also a reflection of the culture of its speakers. When learning a new language, it is essential to understand the cultural context of that language in order to truly master it.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Salvador Ordorica notes that there are nuances that a human translator will see that an AI will not because of their deep awareness of the language and culture nexus, but that business is very aware of the cost savings that come with AI translation services, so language learners must be prepared to offer more.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Robert Godwin-Jones notes that elements like tone, pauses, irony and inference, sarcasm are also cultural practices that are beyond the AI.<sup>7</sup> These are elements of use that students can reflect on in analysing and responding to texts. They will be asked to develop language skills consciously and demonstrate through reflection their intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and cultural awareness in and across languages and cultures, and a developing understanding of the cultural practices of target language users. This will enable them to reflect on the social import and cultural significance of translations and render communication more appropriate. The reflective and reflexive practices in the proposed courses will support capacity in this area. These are things that generative AI cannot do for people and will continue to justify language learning into the future. Our beginning language graduates will begin in their understanding of that nuance.

As advocates of language learning, we also emphasise the pleasures to be gained from language learning, the delight gained from exchanging, and decoding and seeing beneath the text. As Giovanelli demonstrates “Engaging with a new language taps into the fundamental human experience of joy and purpose.” He further notes that:

*Language learning also triggers pleasure on a neurological level. Brain imaging studies show that learning the meaning of new words can activate areas in the reward processing centre of the brain. This means that our brains may treat learning a new language similarly to other enjoyable rewards like eating a good meal or scoring a goal in the big game.*<sup>8</sup>

From the simple, enriching act of interacting with others and sharing conversations to the sense of accomplishment that comes from succeeding in the intellectual exercise of completing a successful translation, there is much to be gained. This supports lifelong learning and an engagement with learning that can be enjoyed for life. This course then builds on this notion by providing for reflection and reflexivity and metacognitive thinking that builds capacity as an independent language learner able to continue the joyful project of language acquisition well into the future.

Developing capabilities in a new language is a challenging and exciting process of discovery. Decoding the linguistic and cultural forms and practices of a new way of organising and being in the world is a challenge that brings rewards in of itself, but also in the development of resilient, flexible, and persistent habits of mind that are transferable to a wide range of areas.

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<sup>5</sup> Meryem Karlik, “Exploring The Impact of Culture on Language Learning: How Understanding Cultural Context and Values Can Deepen Language Acquisition”, *International Journal of Language, Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, Vol. 02, No. 05; 2023

<sup>6</sup> Salvador Ordorica “Comparing And Contrasting AI And Human Translation”, *Forbes*, Jun 05, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/06/05/comparing-and-contrasting-ai-and-human-translation/>

<sup>7</sup> Godwin-Jones, R. (2019). “In a World of SMART Technology, Why Learn Another Language?” *Educational Technology and Society*, 22 (2), 4-13.

<sup>8</sup> Giovanni Giovanelli (ed), “Beyond Translation; The Unmatched value of learning a language in the AI era”, *Pearson Insights*, Pearson, 2024, [learning-a-language-in-the-ai-era--gio-giovanelli.pdf](#), p. 5

Research by Giovanelli et al. in 2024 shows that language acquisition correlates with increased levels of confidence in learning and interacting in the world.<sup>9</sup> Other research by Thomas Bak et al. showed that adult language learning correlated with increased levels of concentration and attention spans.<sup>10</sup> Taking risks in communicating, overcoming the adversity of mistakes, reforming engrained habits of expression are all challenging endeavours, and as Nietzsche argues, because of that hardship, success is all the sweeter.<sup>11</sup> In climbing the mountain of beginning language, students become stronger in mind and spirit.

The Beginning Language course is also rich with content. Students engage with a wide range of texts about the world and the cultures, communities and places of the target language. In engaging with all learning areas and disciplines in the target language and in English, students survey a wide range of knowledge in the process of engaging with the target language.<sup>12</sup> As well as learning language, they receive a humanistic education about the world around them.

Beyond developing capabilities in the target language, the course cultivates intercultural capability and analytical, creative, and critical thinking skills. As suggested by Yoo and Scribner, while there is potential to use AI as a tool in language learning, “When incorporating AI, we must be clear about the humanistic ends of learning, which are not merely knowledge or skills-based, but must preserve (even accentuate) elements of embodied experience, social connection, and self-consciousness.”<sup>13</sup> In beginning language classes, students learn to decode and create basic texts for a range of contexts, purposes, and audiences, applying stylistic conventions with increasing confidence. They develop intellectual flexibility and problem-solving abilities, taking creative risks to mediate ideas and experiences, and synthesising linguistic knowledge to interact with accuracy. The essence of creativity is the capacity to take basic building blocks and create something new and expressive. Further, language learning helps students reconcile their understanding of themselves in the world. As Yoo and Scribner argue about activities which are key to the study of languages in a cultural informed and reflexive way:

*Actions like making sense of a complex social issue or deciding how to respond to a peer’s opinion in a collaborative activity involve not just “what to do” but why—and that requires practical wisdom. Such deeper learning emerges through students’ lived experiences as they question their purpose and intentions, consider the moral implications of their beliefs, and make sense of their actions in real, relational settings with peers and teachers.*<sup>14</sup>

Engaging with text and responding both in form and content are critical and creative acts that build a wide range of transferable skills and general capabilities.

Beginning to learn an additional language broadens students’ horizons, fostering personal, social, cultural, as well as employment opportunities, in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. As Giovanni Giovanelli argues: “it becomes increasingly clear that the drive to communicate in another language is often about human connection – connecting to friends and family, to romantic partners, and to distant cultures.”<sup>15</sup> Such connections can’t be dependent on AI translation. As such, it is proposed to design a course that uses reflective and reflective practices as well as communicative competence to promote meeting people and building relationships.

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<sup>9</sup> Giovanni Giovanelli, Lauren Gomez Casadiego, Leticia Li, “How English empowers your tomorrow; The life-changing impact of learning English on your career and beyond” *Pearson Insights*, Person, 2024, [gse-research-global-report-en.pdf](#)

<sup>10</sup> Bak, T. H., Long, M. R., Vega-Mendoza, M., & Sorace, A. (2016). “Novelty, challenge, and practice: The impact of intensive language learning on attentional functions”, *Public Library of Science/ PLOS One*, 11(4), 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Madan, “Nietzsche On Why Suffering is Necessary for Greatness”, [Nietzsche On Why Suffering is Necessary for Greatness | Philosophy Break](#)

<sup>12</sup> See for example: Erin M. Díaz, “Expanding the Spanish Classroom: The 'Art' in Liberal Arts”, *Hispania*, September 2016, Vol. 99, No. 3, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Jiseung Yoo and Campbell F. Scribner, “The limits of large language models and the necessity of human cognition in K-12 education”, *Theory Into Practice*, 2025, Vol. 64, No. 4, p. 496., p 494

<sup>14</sup> Jiseung Yoo and Campbell F. Scribner, “The limits of large language models and the necessity of human cognition in K-12 education”, *Theory Into Practice*, 2025, Vol. 64, No. 4, p. 496., p 499

<sup>15</sup> Giovanni Giovanelli (ed), “Beyond Translation; The Unmatched value of learning a language in the AI era”, *Person Insights*, Person, 2024, [learning-a-language-in-the-ai-era--gio-giovanelli.pdf](#)

The course design will then also emphasise intercultural understanding by enabling students to explore cultural diversity and similarities between their own language and others, while reflecting critically on the relationship between language, culture, and identity. Language acquisition occurs in social and cultural settings, requiring students to communicate in ways that are purposeful and contextually appropriate. As Stanely Wang notes: “Schools must still teach what machines cannot – the ability to think across cultures, build trust, and engage confidently within a complex international world.”<sup>16</sup> Or as Yoo and Scribner put it,

*Even if humans were to memorize lists of proverbs and idioms from various countries, it would not mean that they know the cultural contexts and nuances in which those phrases are used. As Wittgenstein observes, a “form of life” is not just an individual mode of activity, but a multitude of shared actions, patterns, and language uses that provide the foundation of meaning.*<sup>17</sup>

As such, activities and tasks are designed to connect with students’ life experiences, enabling them to personalise their learning by expressing ideas in dialogue with others. This approach strengthens engagement and deepens understanding of both self and others.

For some students in Beginning Modern Language provides an opportunity to develop familiarity in their family’s language and culture and to develop the linguistic, topical and social domains in which they can operate in the target language. Further, the cognitive, psychological and emotional benefits of bilingualism are well established in the literature.<sup>18</sup> Beginning Modern Languages then provides an opportunity for considerable personal and intellectual development and consolidation of significant factors in wellbeing and happiness. As they connect with extended family members and consolidate their sense of self, taking pride in their heritage and culture, students build the structure of happier and more assured adulthood.

The proposed courses will also provide a sequence of unit by unit language specific guidance on the expected linguistic content students will acquire in a semester of study. This will also support schools in reconciling the differences in the rate of language acquisition that is expected from English speakers encountering languages from different language families. Teachers will read the Achievement Standards in unison with these sequences to understand what can be expected of students. This addition is intended to support the setting of equitable task parameters across various languages and the moderation of student work.

By integrating communication, critical and creative thinking, knowledge of the world, and intercultural capability, the program prepares students for further academic study and careers in education, translation, diplomacy, international business, and cultural consultancy. Ultimately, acquiring an additional language equips students with essential and transferable skills, enriching their intellectual, personal, and social development and enabling successful participation in a local and global society.

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<sup>16</sup> Stanley Wang, “Why learning a language still matters in the age of AI”, *Haileybury.com.au*, <https://www.haileybury.com.au/news/why-learning-a-language-still-matters-in-the-age-of-ai>

<sup>17</sup> Jiseung Yoo and Campbell F. Scribner, “The limits of large language models and the necessity of human cognition in K-12 education”, *Theory Into Practice*, 2025, Vol. 64, No. 4, p. 496.

<sup>18</sup> See for example, Samaneh Tarighat, Mojgan Rashtchi and Roya Khoii, “The Bilingual Advantage in Thinking Critically: The Roles of Age of Onset and L2 Proficiency”, *The American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 132, No. 3 2019.

## 6. STRUCTURE OF THE BEGINNING MODERN LANGUAGES CURRICULUM

### RATIONALE

Learning a language is a joyful and rewarding process that enables students to build connections and relationships locally and internationally, widen their horizons, sharpen and broaden cognitive and emotional capability, and enrich cultural experience and intercultural capabilities. They strengthen their capacity to deal with uncertainty and overcoming difficulty and error. Ultimately, they will be developing skills as collaborators and interlocutors in all their languages.

A new language opens up new perspectives for learners, not only in relation to other cultures and languages, but also in terms of their own language and cultural practices. Students develop an understanding of the nature of the target and their own languages' linguistic and stylistic features, of inherent cultural experiences, and of the processes of communication and mediation. As they create original texts and communicate meaning, they reflect upon their choices, actions and interactions. They engage with a wide range of content as they learn language. Students strengthen their communication skills and creative and critical thinking capabilities.

Students develop understanding of how an interlocutor's values and culture shape their world view, and how that interaction can reshape or consolidate their own. Learning languages extends the learner's understanding of themselves, their heritage, values, culture, and identity. Students develop intracultural and intercultural capability; they develop understanding of, and respect for, diversity and difference, and openness to different perspectives and experiences. Their understanding of themselves and their world is enlarged to encompass new knowledge and new ways of communicating, seeing, and organising perceptions.

Learning languages contributes to strengthening the community's economic potential, social harmony and community inclusion. Students learn to reorganise their thinking to accommodate the structure of another language and in doing so accommodate diversity and difference. They develop cognitive flexibility, problem-solving ability and resilience, which can be applied when problems and solutions are not evident, as well as when critical thinking and creative approaches are required. They grow in confidence and resilience as they take on and overcome the difficulties inherent to engaging with a new language.

## UNITS

The proposed units are as follows:

<b>The Individual</b>
Students learn about language and individual identity. They conceptualise how relationships and personal experiences shape identity in a language community. They analyse how target language users express their identity and communicate their personal beliefs with each other. They develop a repertoire of target language skills and develop initial intercultural and cultural capabilities. Students reflect upon new linguistic practices, their own and others expression of identity, and relationships with others.
<b>Society and Community</b>
Students develop an understanding about living in a community. They engage with how target language communities use language to relate to each other and the wider world. They develop a repertoire of target language to participate in society and the community and use their developing cultural and intercultural capabilities. They reflect on diverse cultural and linguistic practices and consider these in relation to their own.
<b>The Changing World</b>
Students explore local and global change. They explore challenges and issues faced by target language communities. They consider how values and culture/s shape understanding and communication about issues that impact our world. Students develop a repertoire of target language and cultural capabilities to interact with others around the issues and build and share understanding. They reflect on diverse cultural and linguistic practices for addressing local and global and consider these in relation to their own beliefs and challenges in their own community.
<b>Diverse Perspectives</b>
Students learn about the array of contemporary perspectives in the language communities studied. They are introduced to how perspectives are expressed in the target language and its culture/s. They are introduced to how text type conventions and practices can be used to sustain and challenge traditions, thinking, behaviour and systems. Students examine and demonstrate an awareness of perspectives. Students apply a developing repertoire of target language, and cultural and intercultural capabilities to express views and perspectives. They reflect on their own beliefs and cultural practices and consider their own participation in community discussions.
<b>Independent Study</b>
An Independent study unit has an important place in senior secondary courses. It is a valuable pedagogical approach that empowers students to make decisions about their own learning. An Independent study unit must be proposed by an individual student for their own study and negotiated with their teacher. An independent study unit requires the principal's written approval. The program of learning for an independent study unit must meet all the content descriptions as appears in the course. Independent study units are only available to individual students in Year 12. Pre-requisites for an Independent study unit are that students have completed at least THREE standard 1.0 units from this course.

## 7. CONSIDERATIONS

### 7.1 Incorporating a futures orientation

Teachers use the course document to guide the development of Programs of Learning in *Beginning Modern Languages*. The emphasis on problem solving, intellectual flexibility and critically evaluating research and ideas in *Beginning Modern Languages* empowers students to become lifelong learners and successful participants in local and global society.

The course meets objectives outlined in *The ACT Future of Education Strategy* to allow students agency in being “active participants in their learning” by developing students “interests, knowledge and skills”. In particular, they learn how to learn a language and communicate across and within cultures. *Beginning Modern Languages* provides opportunities for teachers and students to develop their interests in this area and through Programs of Learning. Further, students will develop inquiries into areas of particular interest and develop a “high standard of literacy and numeracy” in critically analysing, representing, and communicating their findings in the target and their own languages. (ACT Government, Future of Education Strategy Website, 2018).

The course also meets objectives outlined in the *Alice Springs Mparntwe Declaration* has as a goal “All young Australians become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.” (2019, p. 5). With a strong foundation in *Beginning Modern Languages*, students are prepared to make informed decisions, solve problems and value and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences and engage in the local and global community. The intellectually and culturally rich curriculum encourages curiosity, ethical thinking, and critical analysis, enabling students to adapt to the demands of a dynamic and evolving field.

### 7.2 Beginning Modern Languages curriculum

The *Beginning Modern Languages* curriculum plays a vital role in the ACT senior secondary curriculum, fostering higher-order thinking, personal and social capability, and communication skills. The ability to communicate in an additional language and within and across cultures is an important skill for life. Students develop knowledge, understanding and skills that enable successful participation in local and global society. Communication in an additional language expands students’ horizons and opportunities as local, national and global citizens.

### 7.3 Equity and opportunity

The *Beginning Modern Languages* course provides flexibility and choice for teachers and students. The factors that influence this choice include school and community contexts, local community learning opportunities, contemporary and local issues, and available learning resources. The provision of A, T, and M options and guidance supports access for a wide range of learners.

### 7.4 Connections to other learning areas

The *Beginning Modern Languages* course builds on knowledge, skills and understanding from students’ previous studies of Australian Curriculum courses. Students learn about fundamental principles and ideas about language learning area from P -10, even if in a different language. Languages provides opportunities to integrate and connect content to other learning areas; in particular, English, Humanities and Social Science and The Arts. Languages and English support students’ literacy development. Both learning areas share the focus for students to interact with others and create spoken, written and multimodal texts with an awareness of context, purpose and audience. Languages and English help students to understand the relationship between spoken and written language, and recognise how cultural context shapes meaning. They develop students’ understanding of, and ability to use, grammatical and language features. Languages and Humanities and Social Sciences subjects share learning contexts that progressively shape the students’ world. In both areas, students’ learning involves exploring perspectives on their personal worlds, such as personal and family histories and events, their local communities, and national and global contexts. In the process of understanding an expanding world view, both learning areas help students to learn to reflect on the relationship between cultures and identities. Languages and The Arts share a focus on the communication of stories, ideas, perspectives and cultures. Both learning areas help students to explore relationships among people, cultures and identities, and recognise how these are exemplified in and through creative linguistic and artistic practices and behaviours.

## **7.5 Role of digital technologies**

Students integrate an extensive range of online information and texts in the target language. They learn how to use alternate keyboards and typing in the target language. Students learn to find and use reliable online information sources in the target language and about target language cultures and places. Students learn the strengths and weaknesses of translation technologies such as AI and other online tools and how to use them to enhance rather than undermine their own learning.

## **7.6 Clarity of curriculum**

The curriculum is substantial and flexible. It is sufficiently rich and descriptive to guide teachers but avoids excessive prescription that would hamper teachers from exercising their skills or meeting the needs of their particular context. The curriculum document is expressed clearly in disciplinary terms that are accessible to a new teacher, who is well-educated in their discipline and in pedagogy, while allowing all teachers to enhance it with their interests and expertise. The course documents will contain a linguistic sequence to guide the pacing and extent of expected language specific grammar and social function in each unit.

## **7.7 Breadth and depth of study**

Content descriptions specify the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to learn and that teachers are expected to teach. Teachers are required to develop a program of learning that allows students to demonstrate all the content descriptions. The Content Descriptions will be developed in the draft course document after feedback is received on the proposed unit descriptions and concepts in this Shape Paper.

A Program of Learning is what a college provides to implement the course for a subject meeting students' needs and interests. It is at the discretion of the teacher to emphasis some content descriptions over others. The teacher may teach additional (not listed) content if it meets the specific unit goals providing that it does not duplicate content in other units.

## **7.8 The nature of the learner**

The course is designed to meet the needs of diverse learners, offering options at (T), (A), and (M) levels. This structure provides pathways for students pursuing a range of post-school goals, including tertiary education, vocational training, and a lifelong engagement with language.

## **7.9 General capabilities**

*Beginning Modern Languages A/T/M* develops critical and creative thinking when students explore problems, develop innovative ideas, generate solutions, and evaluate and refine their ideas. Language learning requires students to understand and create links between existing knowledge and new knowledge. Student's personal and social capability is strengthened through the perseverance and resilience developed by the study of languages. They develop an awareness of the role of languages and cultures in human interaction and identity and develop personal ways of responding to linguistic and cultural diversity by reflecting on their intercultural experiences.

Students also reflect on their own attitudes, beliefs, and values, and those of others. In doing so, they develop awareness and understanding of the ways in which their own language(s) and culture(s) shape their actions, personal behaviour, thoughts, attitudes, perspectives, and identity. Students develop intercultural understanding as they engage with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences. Students develop their own understanding of different ways of knowing, being, and doing, and of how cultural concepts and practices affect the ways in which people see the world. They have opportunities to see their own view of the world in the context of the linguistic and cultural environment in which they live.

## **7.10 Cross Curriculum Perspectives**

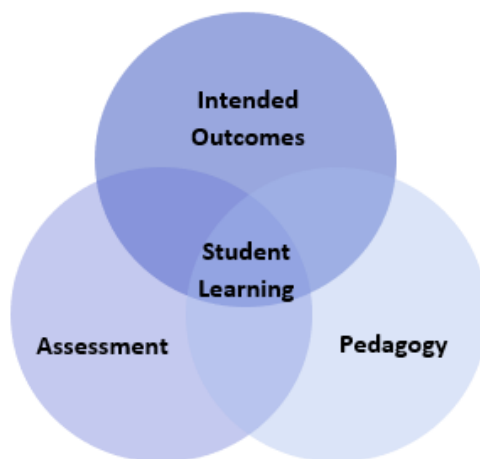
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and Sustainability perspectives are represented in the course in ways that are appropriate. Beginning Language is rich in a diversity of content. As students encounter a wide variety of texts on a wide variety of topics, teachers can include topics relevant to the cross curriculum priorities as vehicles for encountering language and culture.

## 8. PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT

The underpinning beliefs and learning principles for the development of ACT Board of Senior Secondary School curriculum as are follows:

### 8.1 Underpinning beliefs

- All students are able to learn
- Learning is a partnership between students and teachers
- Teachers are responsible for advancing student learning.



### 8.2 Learning Principles

1. Learning builds on existing knowledge, understandings, and skills.  
(*Prior knowledge*)
2. When learning is organised around major concepts, principles, and significant real-world issues, within and across disciplines, it helps students make connections and build knowledge structures.  
(*Deep knowledge and connectedness*)
3. Learning is facilitated when students actively monitor their own learning and consciously develop ways of organising and applying knowledge within and across contexts.  
(*Metacognition*)
4. Learners' sense of self and motivation to learn affects learning.  
(*Self-concept*)
5. Learning needs to take place in a context of high expectations.  
(*High expectations*)
6. Learners learn in different ways and at different rates.  
(*Individual differences*)
7. Different cultural environments, including the use of language, shape learners' understandings and the way they learn.  
(*Socio-cultural effects*)
8. Learning is a social and collaborative function as well as an individual one.  
(*Collaborative learning*)
9. Learning is strengthened when learning outcomes and criteria for judging learning are made explicit and when students receive frequent feedback on their progress.  
(*Explicit expectations and feedback*).

## 9. CONCLUSION

The study of *Beginning Modern Languages* is a joyful and engaging process that promotes critical and creative thinking, communication skills, intercultural capabilities and personal and social capability. This course equips young citizens to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world and its peoples, and to reflect on their experience in various aspects of life, including their own participation and ways of being in the world.

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