

Response to the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum: Draft Auslan Curriculum

8 July 2016

Introduction

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) submits this response on the draft Australian Curriculum: Auslan to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The QCEC response is based on very limited feedback from Catholic school authorities as Catholic schools do not offer Auslan language. Authorities were encouraged to provide comments on ways to improve the curriculum.

1. Overview Section – Introduction, Rationale, Aims, Learner Pathways, Structure

From the limited feedback received, there was agreement that the information provided in the Overview clearly described the place of Auslan in contemporary Australia and in Australian education.

Considerations for improvement:

- Consider if the term ‘signers’ as referring to people who use Auslan is the most appropriate term.
- The First Language Learner Pathway (L1) rationale does not mention the role of the Auslan language models. Language models are mentioned briefly in the section on the diversity of learners.
- Table 1: Relationship between strands and sub-strands (page 12): Is the title of the sub-strand 1.4 better identified as ‘interpreting’ rather than ‘translating’? The Communication strand identifies ‘interpreting’ as one of the communicative purposes for language.
- Table 2: Strands, sub-strands and threads for Auslan across learner pathways (page 13): As per the suggestion for Table 1 relating to sub-strand 1.4. Consider changes to the threads included for the sub-strand in this table for consistency.

2. First Language Learner Pathway and Second Language Learner Pathway

There was agreement that the First and Second Language Learner pathways overall were appropriate.

The following comments were noted:

a. *Context Statements*

- First Language Learner Pathway: The context statement reflects the diversity of the population using Auslan. It acknowledges that students will have a varied knowledge base and experience. The acknowledgement of varying family experiences is extremely important.
- Second Language Learner Pathway – There is no overall context statement in this pathway. Consider providing one.

b. Content Description and Content Elaborations:

The content descriptions were considered appropriate overall, however there was some concern expressed as to whether statements were clear enough.

The content elaborations were clear and appropriate and provided relevant examples. However the following points were provided for consideration:

- Consider consistency of terminology e. g. in connecting the terms between the Overview and the Language Learner Pathways should it be 'translating' or 'interpreting'?
- Consider providing a key for abbreviations information in the elaborations.

c. Achievement standards:

The explanation of the nature of the achievement standards in the Languages learning area is clear and appropriate.

d. Representation of the Language examples:

One respondent did agree that representation of language examples were relevant and easily understood, however the other respondent did not agree and provided the following points for consideration:

- Be open to other possibilities for representation of language examples as technology changes.
- Consider providing a key for the glossed examples as without it the glossed examples are not accessible.

3. Other general comments

The FAQ document provides a very good graphic explaining the context and sequence of the Auslan curriculum.

The concern, as always is the supply of teachers who can use and teach the Auslan language. It is also very important that the model of Auslan being taught in schools is representative of and has been developed in consultation with the local Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

The development of the Auslan curriculum provides an opportunity to broaden community awareness and inclusion of those who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

It was noted by Catholic School Authorities that there is very limited exposure to Auslan currently in schools. However, at least one authority has used Auslan to communicate with parents who have a hearing impairment during meetings to discuss their child's educational progress.

Conclusion

QCEC reinforces that this response is based on very limited feedback but hopes it is useful in supporting improvements to the Draft Australian Curriculum: Auslan Language.



Dr Lee-Anne Perry AM

Executive Director

Queensland Catholic Education Commission