

Leading Languages Education Project

Feedback from WA (Perth) Forum Workshop Session 2007

Group 1 – Challenges & Issues

Identify the Challenges & Issues associated with establishing and maintaining Language programs in schools.

- Staffing – accessing qualified and quality staff in specific languages
- Improving/establishing the school community's perceptions of the importance of learning languages
- Creating an expectation in parents in the primary sector that their children will learn a language
- Overcoming secondary students' reluctance to learn another language – getting students to see that success with a language has relevance to their lives and futures
- How to ensure continuity of staff and languages from primary to secondary as well as to tertiary
- Language Teachers are excellent advocates for learning a language – they need to be more active in this regard as it is part of their role
- Equitable allocation of resources – budget, classes, space and teacher assistants etc.

Group 2 – School Leadership

As the School Leadership Team what would you do to establish and maintain a Language Program in your school.

- Prepare a 2 to 3 year plan to implement languages in our schools and change the 'old' mind set
- Principal to have a vision of the school and to articulate it often
- Run cross curricular/immersion programs regularly
- Involve students in planning and implementing
- Establish different programs catering to varying abilities (eg Language and Culture Class is different to a Culture and Language class in content)
- Establish a Languages focus in the early years of schooling
- Establish a Languages Room and Languages Resource Centre with student access during the day

Group 3 – System Leadership

As representatives of THE System (Departments etc) what would you do to establish Language Programs (which has been identified as a priority in your system) in schools

- Promote the importance of Languages Education
- Schools to take pre service teachers on a regular basis ('the teachers of the future')
- Establish and fund Principal Study Tours with a Languages focus
- Encourage cross-sectoral development of curriculum materials

"This initiative is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training under the School Languages Programme."

Group 4 – Advocacy & Promotion of Languages

As a group set up and funded to advocate for & promote the study of Languages in your state, outline your PLAN (What, Who, Where, When, Why)

(A)

- All Language teachers funded to spend one year in the country of their particular experience – a pre-service life learning experience
- Appoint Cluster Coordinators – based in a cell of schools to establish international relationships/exchange programs – across primary and secondary schools
- Appoint dedicated Language Consultants within districts across the state
- Run Languages Awareness programs (including media) to educate the wider community that Language learning is important and also improves literacy
- Scholarships available to encourage teachers to become Language teachers
- Fund Professional Associations to enable them to continue with providing professional development opportunities
- Adopt a politician and/or high profile community figure(s) to lobby for Languages
- Increase Cultural Awareness in schools and local communities using existing staff (allocate time and resources).

(B)

- Currently Language learning is not valued by the community. There is an urgent need to advertise state wide using the media to promote the value and purposes of Languages. Identify and gather stakeholders as a Consultative Group to develop a plan to promote the value of languages
- Conduct Market Research to identify purposes/area that Languages can be utilised: Trade; Diplomatic Relations; Humanitarian reasons; Travel; Cultural enrichment and consequent increased understanding; Communication
- Convince students to chose a Language even when it is not compulsory – get to a point where students want to learn a language
- Universities to promote the benefits of learning languages
- Encourage (fund?) stakeholders including principals and school leaders to travel to see the importance of learning a language
- Provide more Exchange Programs opportunities
- Pay Language teachers more and/or provide promotion opportunities
- Employ or access high profile community figures to promote the value of languages to all stakeholders
- Use the Media
- Establish a national Languages Website and promote Languages.

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