

POSITION STATEMENT

TITLE: AUSLAN, A NATIONAL CURRICULUM TAUGHT BY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

ISSUE:

Auslan as a LOTE subject in Australian schools needs to be encouraged more. The teachers' competency levels are sometimes not high enough and the support to enable Deaf people to become LOTE teachers is not in place.

A. Current achievements in Australia

1. Auslan accepted as a community language.
2. Recognised in the National Policy on Language
3. Available as LOTE in schools in most States
4. Have an Auslan dictionary
5. Have Deaf studies
6. Have Auslan courses at TAFEs
7. Have BA and postgraduate courses at universities

B. Auslan Teachers' Qualifications

There is a lack of quality Auslan teachers. Concerns:

1. The lecturers teaching Auslan courses must be qualified and trained
2. Auslan skills must be of a high level
3. The lecturers and teachers must have a linguistic background
4. Need curriculum planning
5. Need to teach methodology for teaching signing
6. Need some training in English as Second Language

C. Empirical Research

Need more empirical research in Auslan and linguistics, although some is being undertaken at a few educational institutions.

D. Standardisation

Need Auslan to be standardised.

E. National LOTE Curriculum

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority has a draft proposal for a National LOTE Curriculum. There is a need for an Auslan consultant in the Education department. The second document can be obtained from Anna Coveos (e-mail: coveos.anna@edumail.vic.gov.au). All States/Territories, except ACT and

Queensland can follow the framework for external exams in Auslan. A national curriculum Year 1 to Year 12 in Auslan should be developed.

F. Research Centre

There should be collaboration with the Australian Association of the Deaf regarding the establishment of an Auslan research centre.

There is a need to establish a task force, in collaboration with other organisations (e.g. Australian Association of the Deaf) to research the following areas:

1. The quality of LOTE (Auslan) teaching
2. A national curriculum (Years 1 to 12)
3. Research in Auslan linguistics
4. The training of LOTE (Auslan) Teachers
5. The content of Auslan in Teacher of the Deaf courses
6. Standards in LOTE (Auslan) – assessment, teaching and competency levels
7. The support needed for Deaf people to achieve the standards and skill levels (e.g. literacy)

POSITION:

Not yet determined. A Deafness Forum Board member is making some further inquiries, prior to the Forum seeking to convene a first meeting of a national task force to pursue the matter.

COSTS OF POSITION:

Cannot be assessed until policy determined.

RESEARCH BASIS:

Some research has been done by Trevor Johnston and others, but much more is needed – see Conclusions section above.

APPROVED: Board, 23 March 2002

REVIEWED: No review undertaken yet.

DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW: No review currently scheduled.