Intercultural language learning - the way forward?
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ABSTRACT

In Tasmanian primary school classrooms foreign language learning has embraced the intercultural language learning (IcLL) pedagogy. Curriculum developers have highlighted and integrated the pedagogy into guidelines and Language teachers are encouraged to incorporate IcLL principles into their practice, but to what extent is this happening? This paper investigates pre-service teachers and in-service teachers’ beliefs and understandings of languages teaching in light of this pedagogical stance and considers the extent to which the pedagogy is the foundation for primary school Languages programs in Tasmanian primary schools.

Pre-service teachers and in-service teachers’ understandings of languages teaching are identified and analysed using a range of formal, practice-orientated and experiential measures designed to ascertain pedagogical understandings, the role of Languages in a primary curriculum and the requirements for successful languages teaching. As the paper is situated within the Tasmanian context, it provides contextual information and recommendations that have the capacity to be translated into the local learning environment.

The research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The main data collection methods were questionnaire and interview. The pre-service participants for this study were first year and third year undergraduate pre-service teachers from the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Tasmania in Launceston. A total of 185 students were invited to participate in the study. The majority of students were from throughout Tasmania and fell within a wide age range, with the majority between the ages of 18-25. In-service participants were selected from primary schools from across the state where a Languages program is in place and where the teacher has been teaching Languages for a minimum of four years.

Primarily, this research seeks to find out more about how, where and why IcLL pedagogy articulates with both in-service and pre-service teachers’ beliefs and to explore the extent of their investment in teaching Languages utilising this pedagogy. The means by which the teachers’ investment in IcLL pedagogy is articulated through their beliefs about Languages and notions of teacher knowledge and teacher identity will also be discussed. Several matters of significance have emerged from the study.
that highlight the central role that knowledge plays in the construction of teacher identity and the significance of belief systems for supporting adaptive and pedagogically responsible teaching practice.

Languages teaching and learning has received significant attention from researchers, teachers, and the broader community at large. However, the rationale for teaching languages and the associated curriculum has varied considerably depending on the primary discourses which underpin the teaching of Languages and by reference to why such teaching is distinct from other learning area teaching approaches. Traditionally, Languages teaching was narrowly seen as a subject that promoted intellectual development in learners. However, as language, society and culture are now seen as deeply linked, the traditional view does not reflect this more recent intricate connection.

Language cannot be divorced from its cultural context. Learning a language is learning about culture and society. English has emerged as an international language, not because there are more people using it, but because it is widely used by people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds all over the world. That the rapid growth of English has spread widely as an inexorable force, filtering into big cities and small villages, is incommensurate with the teaching of a second language, other than English, which is progressing at a much slower rate, is noteworthy. This paper examines the destiny of Languages learning with its different discourses, with particular reference to Intercultural Language Learning (IcLL) pedagogy within the government school system of the Tasmanian Department of Education.

Location of Languages within the present Tasmanian curriculum

According to the Department of Education (2007), Languages is “recommended for its contribution to the overall development of children” (p.5) but the recent shift towards an emphasis on literacy and numeracy has impacted upon Languages to hold its place as a Key Learning Area (KLA) with its own unique and inherent capacity to contribute to student learning.

After initially being excluded from the new curriculum, Languages is now located under the English-literacy umbrella. On the positive side, this reflects and reinforces the strong link between languages learning and literacy learning, but on the negative side it takes away the capacity for languages to have its own unique ‘place’ as a key learning area.

Within this framework, the possibilities for a strong Languages program is certainly possible because, as Clyne (2006) suggests “by focussing on the structure of words and sentences, recognising sound patterns, making inferences and guessing the meaning of words from context” (p.2) will assist in the learning English as well as learning languages so therefore it is a “fallacy that English literacy can only be taught in English” (Clyne, 2006, p.2). If Literacy is the “flexible and sustainable mastery of a repertoire of practices with the texts of traditional and new communication technologies via spoken language, print, and multimedia (Luke, Freebody & Land 2000, cited in Murdoch University) then languages learning via a multi modal and multi textual approach will also be possible.
It could also be presumed that any literacy based teaching has, as a central tenet, the crucial aim of developing communicative ability in the language. Thus “practices associated with a literacy approach to language learning give learners an opportunity to work collaboratively, to interpret, to understand conventions, to be involved in problem solving, to use language and reflect on language use, and to develop cultural knowledge through language use” (Murdoch University, n.d.). Consequently communication is informed by a “metacommunicative awareness of how discourse is derived from relations between language use, contexts of interaction, and larger sociocultural contexts” (Kern, 2000 cited in Murdoch University).

By incorporating languages learning as an integral part of the school literacy approach, learners are able to compare structures and usage between the languages. Learners can “develop a heightened awareness of language and metalanguage. As a result, they could become more self-directed and confident in their language learning, both in the target language and in English” (Browett & Spencer, 2006, p.14). More specifically, learning a second language is claimed to enhance English literacy by:

- allowing learners to compare the features of their first language with those of another language. This gives learners the capacity to better understand the structure and workings of English
- further developing skills of decoding and making meaning from words
- developing a flexibility and competence in dealing with language
- providing an opportunity for success in languages learning for those who may struggle with English (adapted from Department of Education & Skills, 2002).

It must be recognised that incorporating languages within a literacy framework may not provide for the full range of learnings available to Languages learners. The skills of communication, as previously discussed, are being developed in second language acquisition; communication through reading, writing, viewing, listening and speaking and using authentic experiences to enhance and encourage language usage should be providing the basis from which experiences are developed. Understanding language as a system can also be systematically developed alongside the development of understandings in first language. It does not necessarily provide an opportunity to reflect upon the culture in which the language is spoken, nor does it allow for the learner to be aware of the intricate relationship that exists between learning the language and understanding the culture in which the language is spoken.

**Intercultural Language Learning**

Languages learning, within this framework, fails to recognise IcLL as a position for languages teaching. IcLL involves learners “understanding their own language and culture in relation to an additional language and culture. It is a dialogue that allows for reaching a common ground for negotiation to take place, and where variable points of view are recognised, mediated and accepted.” (Scarino & Lidddicoat, 2009, p.33). Through IcLL interactions, learners integrate their developing communicative competencies and their cultural awareness in a seamless, integrated and ongoing manner.

It is within such a variable socio-historical context and a framework as outlined above that the IcLL position has emerged as a means of supporting Languages learning in a
manner that integrates current perspectives in Languages education. This position will be considered as the major pedagogical stand through which Languages education is centred. IcLL as outlined by Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino and Kohler (2003) can be described as a way to develop in learners

... a reflective stance towards language and culture that leads them to an understanding of the variable ways that language and culture affect how we see the world, how we communicate about the world and how we reflect upon seeing and communicating (p.46).

IcLL allows learners to build upon their prior knowledge to develop their understandings and capacities in language use and to interpret “human communication and interaction in increasingly sophisticated ways as participants and observers who notice, describe, analyse and interpret ideas, experiences and feelings shared when communicating with others” (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009, p.34). It is therefore evident that an IcLL viewpoint relies heavily upon a sociocultural perspective as its underlying theoretical base.

**IcLL and the Tasmanian Curriculum**

The development of a Languages curriculum for the *Tasmanian Curriculum* incorporates the IcLL perspective whereby the strong link between Languages learning and developing cultural awareness is emphasised. This major pedagogical shift is underpinned by the belief that culture impacts greatly on the way language is structured, organised and used. This is characterised by:

- the fusing of language, culture and learning into a single educative approach. It begins with the idea that language, culture and learning are fundamentally interrelated and places this interrelationship at the centre of the learning process. This not only reformulates what it means to teach a language, but also provides newer and richer ways of linking Languages to other learning areas. The concepts of ‘culture’, ‘language’ and ‘learning’ are therefore central to the design of the Languages curriculum, and importantly, of the curriculum as a whole (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p.43).

Languages learning involves the learner in developing an understanding of their “own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to an additional language and culture. It is a dialogue that allows for reaching a common ground for negotiation to take place, and where variable points of views are recognised, mediated and accepted” (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p.46). For, as Kramsch (1993) claimed, every time we speak we perform a cultural act. Approaches to teaching culture within a Languages framework have helped inform the IcLL framework and enabled practitioners to firmly place cultural studies within a pedagogically sound framework.

**Static and Dynamic Culture**

Scarino & Liddicoat (2009) suggest two approaches to cultural representation – “dynamic and static approaches to culture” (p.20). A static approach is represented by factual information, artefacts and institutions that are initiated as a means of introducing learners to the features of a particular culture through putatively
“representative” cultural products. In this instance, a cultural lesson is “viewed as teaching pieces of information about the culture that are often separated from the other material being taught in the language. As such, the cultural component is self-contained and is very often remote from the language itself” (Liddicoat, 2002, p.6). Learners need not interact nor be involved with the experience – there is a distinct affective divide between learner and activity and as such the activity could be performed outside of the languages class. There is no clearly “articulated link between cultural knowledge and language use, nor of the way the information taught will affect the learner as a user of the language” (Liddicoat, 2002, p.6).

A dynamic approach, however, uses the artefacts, facts and institutions to actively engage learners in cultural learning through active participation. It involves “seeing culture as a set of practices in which people engage in order to live their lives” (Liddicoat, 2002, p.7). These practices enable participants within the culture to understand their world, to function and communicate within it. Culture is not about “information and things rather it is about actions and understandings. In order to learn about culture it is necessary to engage with the linguistic and non-linguistic practices of the culture and to gain insights about the way of living in a particular cultural context” (Liddicoat, 2002, p.7). Liddicoat is suggesting that knowing culture is not knowing information but rather knowing how to engage with the culture. This can be achieved successfully within the language classroom as there is such an intricate link with language use in context and cultural practices.

The study

It is within this context, that this paper is framed. The researcher was keen to investigate how and where pre-service teachers saw Languages learning within the primary school context. The paper investigates the beliefs about languages and languages teaching and learning from a group of undergraduate pre-service teachers undertaking a generalist primary degree.

This cohort was selected as they are all generalist primary pre-service teachers and will have the opportunity to integrate Languages into the curriculum. It is a time when beliefs about teaching and about themselves as professionals are being questioned, formulated and perhaps altered.

Kagan (1992) argues that pre-service teachers enter programs of teacher education with “personal beliefs about teaching, images of good teachers, images of self as teacher and memories of themselves as pupils in the classroom” (p.142). These personal images and beliefs generally remain unchanged by a pre-service program and follow candidates into the classroom. For professional growth to occur Kagan suggested, “prior beliefs and images must be modified and reconstructed” (p.142). It can be concluded therefore that part of the researcher’s role in working with pre-service teachers was to listen to their stories surrounding their Languages learning. This will help to inform and perhaps guide in the construction of tasks and learning sequences that will assist in developing and reshaping beliefs because, as clearly articulated by Bryan (2003) “prospective and novice teachers’ beliefs may be amenable to change as a result of instruction and experience” (p.836).
Pajares (1992) indicates that the earlier a belief is integrated into a structure the more difficult it is to alter. Newly acquired beliefs are most open to change. Thus with pre-service teachers their beliefs regarding Languages learning stem from their experiences as Languages learners, mainly from school. They have listened and observed their teachers and through this ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie, as cited in Buchmann, n.d., p.152) have internalised a belief system around the teaching of languages as well as beliefs about teaching. This system can strongly influence perceptions, behaviour and the pre-service teacher’s capacity to make adjustments to their beliefs. Continuing research in this vein, Bailey (1996, cited in Borg, 2003) suggested that the teacher factor in general was more important to learners than were the materials or methodology used.

A 30 item questionnaire was administered to 156 pre-service teachers. As indicated, the questionnaire was administered to a cohort of first year and third year Bachelor of Education students from the University of Tasmania. The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete and was completed by all 156 pre-service teachers – 75 were in their first year of the four year undergraduate B.Ed course and 81 were in the third year of their undergraduate study.

The survey document was divided into three parts. Part 1 required demographic information, Part 2 was the questionnaire and Part 3 consisted of an open-ended statement to which participants were invited to respond.

Pre-service teachers were also invited to comment upon their past languages learning experiences. This invitation was extended in Part 3 by an open-ended statement to which pre-service teachers could respond. Pre-service teachers were under no obligation to respond to the statement but the responses enabled the researcher to gain some deeper understandings about languages learning and a glimpse into the variety of variables upon their languages learning. It gave pre-service teachers an opportunity to add any further comments that they were unable to do as part of the questionnaire process. Of the 156 respondents, 23 or 14.7% chose not to respond to this section. The remainder, 85.3%, responded to the request and provided data that have been included as small vignettes of pre-service teachers’ voices regarding their languages learning experiences.

**Themes**

There were five identified organising themes with statements related to each of the themes randomly located throughout the questionnaire. The five organising themes were:

- Languages as part of the primary school curriculum
- Core content of a Languages program
- Languages as a learning area
- Rationale for learning Languages
- Participant as a Languages learner.

Table 1.1 categorises the statements according to the five themes.
### Table 1.1 Organising themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages as part of the primary school curriculum</td>
<td>1, 6, 11, 12, 17, 21, 26, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core content of a Languages program</td>
<td>2, 7, 13, 18, 22, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages as a learning area</td>
<td>3, 8, 14, 19, 23, 24, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for learning Languages</td>
<td>4, 9, 15, 20, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant as a Languages learner</td>
<td>5, 10, 16, 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Analysis of Results

These theme areas formed the basis of analysis using SPSS to input and code data. This enabled the researcher to focus on descriptive statistics when looking at each of the themes – frequency, comparisons, and independent/dependent variables. This allowed the researcher to explore the particular theme through the responses to the statements.

Table 1.2 provides a general reference point for the results of the data from the questionnaire. This table provides a broad picture of the results as an overview of the 156 pre-service teacher responses to statements and will be referred to throughout this paper to remind, reinforce and question particular phenomena. The overview also enabled the researcher to gain some initial sense of the results that were interrogated by way of the five organising themes.

Results that were submitted as ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ have been aggregated under the single heading ‘agree’ and those submitted as ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ have been aggregated under the heading ‘disagree’ for ease of initial impressions. In the following discussion, however, these have been re-divided into the two headings to clearly examine responses. The neutral results in the table represent the same number as represented in the data. In some cases, no response was given to a statement; hence some slight discrepancies with the totals of percentages in some statements may occur.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1  LOTE is an important part of primary school children’s learning.</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2  Learning vocabulary is the most important part of learning a LOTE.</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3  Learning a LOTE is very difficult for primary aged children.</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4  Learning a LOTE offers many future opportunities for children.</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5  Given the opportunity, I would like to learn a LOTE.</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6  LOTE needs to be part of an integral part of the primary school curriculum.</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7  Learning grammar is an important part of learning a LOTE.</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8  To be good at LOTE students need to be academically very capable.</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S9  Learning a LOTE will enable children to learn about the culture of the country in which the LOTE is spoken.</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10 I would find it easy to learn a LOTE.</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11 In today’s world it is not important to have a LOTE.</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12 It is important to be able to communicate in another language.</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13 As children learn a LOTE, they use skills that they may also use in other learning areas.</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14 All primary school children should have access to learning a LOTE.</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S15 It is important for Tasmanian primary school children to be able to select a LOTE that they can study.</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S16 I would like to learn a LOTE so as I can teach it in the primary classroom.</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S17 It is important to be able to understand another language.</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S18 Learning about the culture in which the LOTE is spoken is an integral part of learning the language.</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S19 Teachers need to have a high level of competency in the LOTE before they can teach it.</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S20 Learning a LOTE enables children to better understand other peoples and languages.</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Core Content of a Languages Program

This theme was designed to explore what pre-service teachers believed to be a Languages program and how pedagogical beliefs have impacted on such programs. It also sought to determine if elements of IcLL were present in pre-service teacher’s thinking. In the state, recognition of the importance of Languages learning has varied from the discrete, localised learning with maybe the support of a local high school to a nationally recognised and resourced program providing pathways for learning for all students at all levels of schooling.

With the development of pedagogical understandings around this learning area, has come a greater awareness and knowledge about how children learn languages and what comprises ‘good’ Languages learning. Pre-service teachers may or may not have been exposed to a Languages program, thus their response to this theme will be somewhere on the continuum from direct experiences with Languages learning to no experience at all.

The following six statements were included for response from the pre-service teachers:

- learning vocabulary is the most important part of learning a LOTE
- learning grammar is an important part of learning a LOTE
- as children learn a LOTE, they use skills that they may also use in other learning areas
- learning about the culture in which the LOTE is spoken is an integral part of learning the language
- learning a LOTE is mainly about speaking the language
learning a LOTE is mainly about translating from the LOTE to English and vice versa.

The statements represent what Languages learning consists of, both from an historical perspective and from a more recent stance. Whilst Languages learners and teachers would not argue that the above are part of, and have always been part of learning a language, it is the delivery and organisation of learning experiences that has changed due to developments in understandings of Languages learning, the changing nature of our learners and the changing needs of the society.

The following two tables provide an overview of pre-service teacher’s beliefs regarding two of more recent pedagogical positions. Both sets of data indicate that pre-service teachers believe that Languages learning has greater and more far reaching benefits than acquiring the ability to speak another language. Historically, this perspective gained significance in the 1990s when discourse around Languages learning shifted from one focussing on multicultural awareness to strategies that supported economic development and a greater social awareness, hence a greater need to be able to apply Languages learning in a wider context. Available federal resources and a discourse that spoke of inclusion saw Languages learning as relevant to all learners from a much earlier age – a different perspective from previous decades where Languages was available to only the more academic secondary school learners.

Table 1.3 As children learn a LOTE, they use skills that they may also use in other learning areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at first year responses compared to third year responses, it became evident that the percentage of third year pre-service teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing is not significantly greater than first year pre-service teachers. 91% of third year participants as opposed to 77% of first year participants agree that Languages learning develops transferrable skills.

Another area, of more recent relevance in Languages learning is revealed in Table 1.4 – 90% of third year pre-service teachers and 84% of first year pre-service teachers see the cultural aspect as integral to Languages learning. This study did not provide an avenue for the researcher to determine the ‘shape’ of such learning, but the recognition of its relevance is of significance.
Table 1.4 Learning about the culture in which the LOTE is spoken is an integral part of learning the language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data collected from these 2 questions reflects that pre-service teachers recognise and support two very significant pedagogical beliefs of Languages learning. Firstly, the Intercultural Language Learning (IcLL) component of Languages learning and secondly, the capacity for Languages to be part of a curriculum enabling the acquisition of skills transferrable to other learning areas. This supports the discussion presented in the structure of the Tasmanian Curriculum.

Browett & Spencer (2008) take this into account in Teaching Languages in the Primary School: Examples from current practice whereby the text is designed to allow teachers to view Languages learning from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives with specific links to literacy learning and Information Technologies (IT). In particular, the text provides practitioners with practical examples of how to implement this stance.

Pre-service teachers’ comments further strengthen this idea:

- "...I never realised that learning a second language had the ability to add so much to children’s learning until I saw how my prac teacher this year integrated it into literacy and SOSE. By bringing the cultural aspect into the work, I could begin to see links between learning the language and understanding the country
  – when I was learning German at school, I used to get bored because I couldn’t see why I had to do it until about grade 6 when a new teacher who was also my regular teacher, actually linked it to other things we were doing in the class.

Whilst there was no evidence to suggest that pre-service teachers had a deep understanding of these concepts, these initial data suggested a greater understanding of Languages learning and the capacities of Languages learning than was initially anticipated by the researcher. It was also of significance that IcLL, as previously discussed, has an unconscious presence in the pre-service teachers considerations. There is a fundamental intention that IcLL enables Languages learning and culture learning to be intertwined and interdependent to provide learners with a rich, diverse and deep understanding about the language, its speakers and its environment. Scarino & Liddicoat (2009), suggest that “a stance to languages learning that has IcLL at its heart involves developing with students an understanding of their own ‘situatedness’ in their own language and culture, and the recognition of the same in others” (p.33).

Within this theoretical framework, the data shows where pre-service teachers are positioned in regard to their beliefs regarding the make-up of a Languages program.
Tables 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 extend the information regarding their beliefs and begins to itemise components to provide the researcher with a clearer picture of the overall stance.

An interesting result and one slightly unexpected by the researcher was that the majority of pre-service teachers held beliefs that were not necessarily strong beliefs – only 7% held a strong belief regarding this issue. This could suggest that pre-service teachers, while holding a belief, were in a position to restructure that belief given further exposure to learning opportunities. This information has been interrogated further by the following table:

Table 1.5 Learning a LOTE is mainly about speaking the language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was slight evidence of this as 33% of first year pre-service teachers disagree with this statement and 46% of third year pre-service teachers disagreed. Richardson (1996) suggests that studies of teacher beliefs indicate that many different life experiences contribute to the formation of strong and enduring beliefs about teaching and learning but it is through a “learning and teaching framework during the teacher education program that these beliefs should be surfaced and acknowledged if the program is to make a difference in the deep structure of knowledge and beliefs held by the students” (p.106). The data from this statement also indicated that many pre-service teachers’ beliefs were not set with 35% returning an N result, signalling neither agreement nor disagreement.

The following table represent a different aspect but with similar results:

Table 1.6 Learning a LOTE is mainly about translating from the LOTE to English and vice versa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of interest is the $N$ component of these two results. Richardson (1996) suggests that “some pre-service courses effect change while other do not; some programs affect certain types of students and not others; and some beliefs are more difficult to change than others” (p.111). This implies the individuality of the learner and the necessity of learning opportunities can be varied. On reflection, further study would benefit the researcher’s understandings in determining the types of inputs that are required to have an impact upon pre-service teachers’ ability to learn. This may then influence beliefs to a greater extent as well as providing the researcher with the capacity to improve teaching practice to more adequately meet the needs of pre-service teachers.

The following table represents the remaining features that are predominantly a part of Languages programs. As with the other information, pre-service teachers have not held strong views, but, once again, of great interest to the researcher is the percentage of $N$. The data has been presented in a similar way so as this pattern can be clearly discerned.

Table 1.7 Learning vocabulary is the most important part of learning a LOTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Richardson (1996) discusses ‘confronting beliefs’ (p.112) as a means of providing an opportunity for beliefs to change for without this confrontation, asserts Richardson, beliefs may not change nor impact upon practice. It is also difficult to determine if one course or one program has the capacity to impact on belief systems. Whilst the researcher was encouraged by the results of the data as expressed in the first and third year pre-service teacher results, research suggested that caution and further analysis and investigation would be required before certain conclusions could be deemed authoritative. But a positive word from Pajares (1992, p.307) who suggests that “the beliefs which teachers and pre-service teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgements, which, in turn, affect their behaviour in the classroom and understanding the belief structures of teachers and teachers’ candidates is essential in improving their professional preparation and teaching practices.” This perception, coupled with the notion put forward by Richardson provides the researcher with a base from which to further explore pre-service teachers’ future potential to implement a Languages program.

Grammar learning provided a large $N$ response from participants. This statement was worded a little more generally than others regarding issues around Languages learning and was expected to provide a more definite response. This was not the case with 36.5% remaining neutral. It was interesting that there were no strongly disagree responses, with the strongly agreeing being the highest percentage for the statements within this theme.
Table 1.8 Learning grammar is an important part of learning a LOTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data provided the researcher with findings that were similar to previous results within this theme.

It is apparent that all students surveyed saw the above aspects of Languages learning as important, however data indicated that not one of the above aspects was more significant in Languages learning and should therefore not play a major role. For example, 24% of first year pre-service teachers and 20% of third year pre-service teachers saw learning a language was mainly about speaking the language. Only 3% of the total surveyed pre-service teachers saw Languages learning as mainly translations, 6% of the total saw vocabulary learning as being of greatest significance and 59% saw grammar as being an important part of a Languages program. This was supported in pre-service teachers’ comments that rarely focus on the historical components of LOTE learning:

– the best LOTE learning I had was in primary school where my class teacher taught us and she would bring it in to many lessons. I can remember in Maths playing a game where we had to use Indonesian numbers.
– …our Music teacher used to teach us French songs that we would then sing to our French teacher when she was in the class. She always seemed very surprised and pleased with us.
– The worst part of my Languages learning was in high school when we seemed to spend so much time learning vocab and writing sentences using different tenses. In primary school, our teacher would support the LOTE teacher’s work by saying good morning in Japanese and singing songs and reading stories. This all disappeared in high school and Languages learning became quite separate to everything else we did.
– I can remember my teacher teaching us vocab using songs. It was fun!!
– In primary school I remember learning grammar – I thought having masculine and feminine words was funny!! But it was only a part of what we did and seemed to make sense with what else was happening.

and finally
– I can remember learning vocab in primary school but it was part of an activity that we were doing. It all seemed to fit together and it made sense.

These comments considered the issue of integration and the idea of embedding Languages into the curriculum as a way of providing relevant experiences to learners. It can be seen, therefore, that the ideas in theme one are supported and strengthened by findings in this area and certainly were strongly supported by the discussion in the literature review related to integration. Comments also supported the data in that pre-
service teachers did not highlight one aspect of Languages learning as being of greater significance than another.

They did, however, see the learning of culture as significant to their programs. For example:

– ...I don’t remember much except the basket the teacher bought in with her that had some games in it. I remember a cook up and dress up day we had.
– In Grade 7 we made traditional Indonesian puppets and had a puppet show and we had to make a poster advertising the puppet show
– I remember trying to make the Eiffel Tower out of straws and plasticine. It took me ages and I remember showing it in assembly.
– In Grade 6 we had a visit from an Indonesian puppet group. They then showed us how to make a shadow puppet and we made up our own plays.

These remarks provided an insight into the teaching of culture within Languages programs. As mentioned previously, the ways in which culture is and has been taught within the Languages framework to “represent different views of the nature of culture, different levels of concern for the relationship between language and culture, the different understandings of the place of culture in languages education” (Liddicoat et al. 2003, p.5) is considered. From pre-service teachers’ comments, the teaching of culture appeared to represent a paradigm whereby the ‘exotic’ is focussed upon and there appeared to be little link to a dynamic approach to second Language learning.

The puppet experience had the greatest potential, but it was unclear from the comments how the event was integrated into the overall program.

For the researcher, this data was significant as it provided an insight into pre-service teachers’ beliefs and understandings that was not initially conceptualised. There appears to be a much wider perception of what Languages learning is by the pre-service teachers.

Within each of the statements an interesting phenomenon occurred – a high percentage of N responses were recorded. 35% were neutral regarding speaking, 38% translating, 35% vocabulary and 36% grammar. This data was significant as it appeared that many pre-service teachers, both in 1st and 3rd year, were unable to determine the extent of the relevance of these factors in the overall Languages learning experience. Critical are the experiences that are offered to pre-service teachers in assisting in the development of pedagogical beliefs and understandings as the data suggested that many pre-service teachers had not yet fully determined these beliefs and understandings.

**Conclusion**

The data analysed from this theme areas suggested to the researcher that pre-service teachers had an understanding of the nature of Languages learning and the tasks involved but were unsure of the role and of the importance of many of the elements in learning a language. This was represented both by the high percentage of N responses to statements and the low responses to strongly agree and strongly disagree. A third year pre-service teacher, female aged between 18 and 25, best summarised this position:
I know that it is important to learn how to read, write, speak and listen in the second language and to learn about the culture of the country where the language is spoken, but I am not sure if I could organise my teaching to include all of this and not make it to top heavy with one bit. The idea of integration is important, but getting the balance right is just as important.

These types of concerns were evident throughout and perhaps are more clearly evidenced by the responses within the questionnaire, but it does highlight that pre-service teachers are looking at Languages learning in a positive light and are not particularly attached to a pedagogy for teaching languages. Evidence also suggests that aspects of IcLL pedagogy are present, albeit in a very embryonic state, in pre-service teachers thinking and could me fostered as a means of the way forward in promoting languages education within the context of this study.
References:


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