DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

THE VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Statement and Vignettes



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and Child Development

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Project Overview

The Research Centre for Languages and Cultures was commissioned by International Education Services to undertake research and development to create a statement about the value of international education that may be used to communicate about the nature and benefits of international education for South Australian government schools.

This document consists of two sections:

1. **A statement of the value of international education.** This statement was based on the final report for Stage 1 of The Value of International Education project, completed in 2012 and on further research in the literature about international education. The statement is organised around three themes:
   - what international education is;
   - the value of international education for schooling; and
   - needs for undertaking international education.

2. **Vignettes prepared by five schools** each focusing on a different aspect of international education:
   - Glenunga International High School - Changes in teaching approach and practice due to having international students in the classroom.
   - Norwood Morialta High School - Exploring the changes in international students' use of languages (English and their native language) during their time in Australia.
   - Henley High School - The shift in the student population from largely mono-cultural to multi-cultural.
   - Linden Park Primary School - Learning experiences from the student perspective, reactions of local and international students.
   - Adelaide High School - A Principal's perspective on leading a school with a strong international student cohort.

What is international education?

International education involves:

- learning how to live and work in a complex, linguistically and culturally diverse world characterised by increasing mobility and internationalisation;
- accepting linguistic and cultural diversity as the reality of the contemporary world and developing educational approaches that foster diversity within the school and the community;
- developing intercultural understanding and the ability to communicate effectively with people from linguistic and cultural backgrounds by connecting across languages and diverse cultures in creative and productive ways;
- recognising that knowledge is created and communicated through language within a cultural context and that different people bring different insights, experiences and knowledge to learning that enrich their own learning and that of others;
- recognising that all learning takes place in a linguistic and cultural context and that the diversity of students' languages and cultures both challenges ideas about teaching and learning and provides a resource for enriching teaching and learning;
- using the diversity of students' knowledge of the world as a resource for teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum by valuing knowledge drawn from other cultures and capitalising on the different perspectives students bring to the classroom to create new knowledge and understanding;
- providing content and learning experiences that engage with international realities and which develop connections between the curriculum and students' experiences and aspirations;
- fostering the presence of students from different countries in the same classroom and supporting all students to participate actively in the school and the community.

What is the value of international education?

International education is of value to students, the school and its community in the following areas:

Learning



International education enriches learning and supports personal growth for students and learning of the school as a whole by bringing the diversity of the world's experience into the classroom and school community, enhancing students' understanding of languages and cultures, and providing opportunities to be both more inclusive and to broaden the scope of learning for all students. Teachers and students can become aware of the cultural contexts of their own assumptions and learning, drawing on the highly diverse life-worlds and experiences that local and international students bring to their learning, and can reflect upon and understand themselves as examples of this diversity. Together, these experiences open up the world beyond Australia by creating a 'global community' of learning and prepare students for living and working in the linguistic and cultural diversity of the contemporary world.

Open-mindedness

The presence of international students brings diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives into the lives of students, and supports and strengthens such values as harmony, tolerance, and international mindedness. It supports students in questioning their own stereotypical assumptions and in developing a stronger sense of responsibility to and for others, along with increased understanding and respect. Students can engage with and learn from this diversity first hand, developing an awareness and appreciation of the multiple perspectives of others and an awareness of how their own perspectives shape how they think and act, grounded in the immediacy of personal experiences across languages and cultures.



Language and culture

International education involves students and the school community in opportunities to learn and share in the interpretation and exchange of meaning that fosters linguistic and cultural understanding. The value here is in understanding language as the primary cultural resource by which we make and interpret what each other mean, including how we think, our assumptions, values, attitudes and beliefs. The profound lesson is that languages and cultures mediate all we can experience and know, shaping how people from all backgrounds learn about the world, and understand themselves and each other.

Relationships and friendships

Perhaps the most immediate value of international education is the new relationships and long term friendships that it fosters. These are life changing, spanning languages and cultures, countries and regions of the world, and engaging not only students but their families and the wider school community. Local and international students

form relationships with people from a world that lies beyond their experience and, discovering for themselves the dynamic nature of diversity in the contemporary world.

Challenges

International education brings profound benefits but it is also an accomplishment by all concerned, dependent on an ongoing and coordinated commitment from the whole school community to learn from the experience, and in particular to understand and acknowledge the diversity of perspectives that students bring, to be open to working with the dynamic nature of international education and the changing and increasingly diverse and complex profile of students. This requires the constant and sustained drawing of connections across experiences and reflection that develops in all participants a deeper engagement with diversity.

What is needed?

International education works best in an environment where continuous effort is directed towards creating a culture of learning for all: students, teachers, parents and the wider community. Four aspects are particularly valuable:

1. Developing a 'whole school approach' to international education

A whole school approach encompasses all contributors, all organisational structures, pastoral care, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, ways of learning and teaching, resources, programs of events. It provides a range of experiences that bring students, teachers, families and communities together with a commitment to learn from each other, reciprocally. It involves designing school policies to support the changing school community, ensuring the welfare of students in all their linguistic and cultural diversity, profiling and understanding this diversity and what it means for the experience of all students, the implications for teachers and their professional development, the importance of appropriate support services, such as English as a Second Language programs, and of anticipating and responding to the changing needs of and opportunities for the curriculum, teaching and learning across all subject areas and levels. In addition to curricula, teaching and learning that are oriented towards linguistic and cultural diversity, schools may develop activities such as buddy systems, the 'friendship bench', the Chinese (or other language) club, various sporting or recreational clubs, the hosting of visiting students, welcoming students as homestays, exchange programs, and sister-school relationships that support various kinds of interaction. As such international education becomes part of the fabric of the school community as a whole.

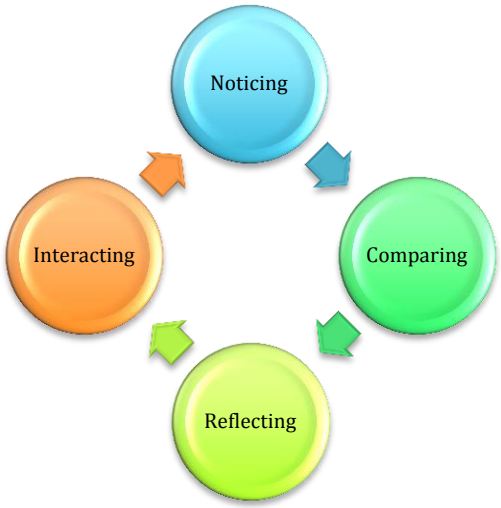
2. Attending to the life-worlds of students



All students, local and international, bring to their learning their own distinctive life-worlds, that is, their own personal histories and identities. This includes their life and educational experiences, interactions, opportunities, motivations, aspirations, etc., that influence how, what and why they learn. Their life-worlds are situated in the language(s) they use and the related culture(s). Students make sense of experiences and learn through the lens of their own languages and cultures. The classroom and school is comprised of increasingly diverse individuals with diverse life-worlds that should not be taken for granted. Rather, the diversity should be used as the foundation upon which to build new learning for the individual and as rich resources for ongoing discussion, comparison and learning for all learners.

3. Incorporating the interrelated processes of noticing, comparing, reflecting, interacting

The practice of teaching and learning in the context of international education includes four interrelated processes as depicted in the diagram.



Source: Scarino, A. & Liddicoat, A.J. (2009) Language Teaching and Learning: A Guide, Melbourne, Curriculum Corporation.

Given the reality of multiple languages and cultures that students bring to the classroom, they are encouraged to *notice* things that challenge their expectations and assumptions, raise questions or provide valuable connections with ideas from their experience of their own social life and learning. This noticing is an essential part of understanding new information and experiences. Students also notice and consider the responses and reactions of others.

In the context of the classroom and school as sites of diversity, students experience diverse linguistic and cultural systems. They learn to work across the different linguistic and cultural systems represented in the classroom/school. In so doing, they *compare*, noting similarities and differences. The students themselves as a group provide a source for comparative, cultural perspectives on knowledge, ideas and practices.

Reflection is the process through which students interpret and make sense of their experiences and memories of social life and of learning. In the context of international education, students draw upon multiple perspectives as they consider the significance of particular ideas, perspectives, and positions; the rationale for certain actions; and the judgments that people make about ideas and practices. They consider their own interpretations, reactions and responses in relation to those of others.



Through *interaction* students are encouraged to be active participants as well as reflective observers in exchanging ideas and exploring feelings, attitudes and meanings with others. This participation and reflection needs to be taught and learned explicitly.

Through these four interrelated processes students participate in the ongoing experience of engaging with and negotiating knowledge from multiple perspectives in the context of diversity. In so doing they learn how to make sense of the complex nature of diversity and recognise its power to change the way we understand knowledge, learning and community.

4. Engagement, experience, building community

International education is not passive; it requires meaningful engagement – learning through experiencing interaction among people who differ in their experiences and perspectives. Experiential learning involves participating in rich experiences within the classroom and school as well as bringing the community into the school and the school into the community. Visits, exchanges, stories, memories, language learning, discussions, pen pals, performances all build the community of the school as part of the fabric of international education.

Vignettes

Glenunga International High School

Changes in teaching approach and practice due to having international students in the classroom

Glenunga International High School (GIHS) is a large culturally rich public school where students currently come from 74 different countries of birth. Our school has high academic standards and offers specialty programs in IGNITE (for Students with High Intellectual Potential) and the International Baccalaureate Senior Diploma.



In 2010 our community identified the Values of *international mindedness* and *excellence* defined as each student achieving their personal best, *harmony* and *opportunity. Harmony* enables students from diverse backgrounds to work and play together in a peaceful, safe environment and to celebrate each other's differences as well as our common humanity.

The school's strategic directions place a strong focus onto student learning, in particular teachers' curriculum delivery, and student wellbeing. Discussions in Learning Areas and at school level occurred to capture teachers' views of the key characteristics of exceptional practice. In addition, in our student survey, students were asked to identify the characteristics of a "good" lesson from their perspective and the frequency with which they experienced these characteristics to complement these discussions. The two developments came together when student leaders presented their information to staff and then staff incorporated the student information into their evolving practice.

One of our Strategic Directions specifically relates to 'international-mindedness': the way we will develop it across the school with all our students and teachers in all subjects. Our curriculum reflects this commitment and our students focus on challenges that face young people as well as what they can do to help solve global problems. We are committed to ensuring that our International students succeed in our environment and that all teachers are equipped to support non-English speaking background students to thrive.

We have built a structure that gives students a voice in many areas of school life because we want Glenunga students to feel connected to the school. We respect the students' views by listening to them and showing how we incorporate them into our programs and classrooms. In short, feedback from our students is important for our development as a school. This is why we conduct a survey where our students reflect on our teaching and inform us how we can cater to their needs.

Challenges in education, if taken as opportunities, necessitate adaptive changes to be made to teaching practice. This is certainly the case for teachers at GIHS who will all teach an extraordinarily high number of students from Non English Speaking Backgrounds. The challenge primarily divides itself into two domains: practitioners will refine aspects of their personal approach in dealing with international students, and they will learn to adjust their teaching methodology.

Personal changes are usually adjustments. For instance the need for patience by a teacher is assumed, however for a new International student this must be extended to permit the student greater time to make language translations

and interpretations within their own mind. The afforded patience will almost certainly also give the student a sense that you value them and appreciate their situation. Experience in teaching international students will over time help a teacher determine the strategies that will work for them. However, applying some principles may offer the new teacher an advantage. For instance, a teacher that senses and recognizes when a student is lost and has become disconnected may need to apportion a significant amount of class time for one to one tuition with international students. In such situations nuances in understanding and communication can be resolved – often by employing symbolism and analogies that may appear awkward if expressed openly in front of the class.

The leadership team at GIHS assist teachers to identify and moderate their teaching approach largely by conducting professional development sessions in which teachers are asked to discuss their observations and remedies in forums. Notably, the force of frequently emphasizing the necessity to be sensitive to the needs of our international students has had the effect of making that imperative routine.

There are two sides to changing teaching methodology in response to dealing with International students. The first is to employ the diversity of cultural wealth, knowledge and experiences to deepen and broaden the learning experience for all students. Unsurprisingly, this enrichment permits the International student to know that she or he is appreciated, welcome, and a valued member of the community. In practice, teachers need to make curriculum relevant to student experiences and cultural heritage. At GIHS, teachers make specific references in their curriculum plans as to how they will add tasks and or introduce views that will extend the meaning of what students learn in a broader international perspective. The school facilitates this through the allocation of student free day time for teachers to reflect, research and adjust their practice. Given this impetus and some time, a mathematics teacher may, for instance, present the development of trigonometry as the collective success of many cultures. All students gain a richer perspective in their learning and international students are made aware that their history is relevant in an international context.

On the other side there is often a need to make basic adaptive changes in practice; these are usually made necessary because of language and linguistic challenges faced by international students, and not infrequently also because some or many may be accustomed to widely varying teaching and learning methodologies. An overseas student may have been accustomed to spending an extraordinary amount of time rote learning material – often at the expense of a richer conceptual development. By degrees these students can be supported by presenting more visual examples, scaffolding tasks, and information technology with the use of a Virtual Learning Environment, e.g. Vodcast to allow students to view explicit teaching as many times as they need to understand the concept. In addition, speaking more clearly and perhaps somewhat slower, providing clearer guidelines as to what is expected in homework and assessment items and clear worked examples, and spending time developing thinking skills in class are also valuable. Such efforts are often time consuming and require imagination. Nevertheless, investment in such efforts is supportive for engaging all the students in the class. This is not surprising in the least as students appreciate and respect clarity, and moreover are captured by the novelty of alternative teaching strategies.

Encouraging and creating opportunities for international students to participate in the class learning activities cannot be overvalued. Teachers need to create initiatives that help transition the quiet passive learner to a student that takes on a more active and vocal engagement in the learning process. In practice this will often require the teacher to first recognize the strengths of a particular student. For instance, many international students are well ahead in certain subject areas – not infrequently, in mathematics, science and aspects of history. The teacher's role is to make these abilities apparent by fashioning opportunities for students to take judicious risks. The student can, with some appropriate preparation, be asked to explain a concept or write out a solution on the whiteboard.

Opportunely, as confidence grows, the student can be asked to take on greater challenges – such as presenting a view on a matter and explaining their reasoning for that view. Alternatively, students can be placed into small mixed groups and challenged with rich tasks that call for varying perspectives or lines of reasoning.

It is also important to consider the international relevance of topic material and show that it is really important to our common development as sophisticated global beings and to our common humanity. Demonstration of this cultural respect requires embedding cultural aspects into the teaching, the presentation, and the assessment tasks. This is a tall order and yet quite achievable – mostly by small steps. Teachers are encouraged to occasionally present and advance topic material as proceeding from the cultures that developed them. This mainly requires some investigation and some imagination. How, why and to what avail did a particular culture adopt, advance or make use of this astronomical event, that method of accounting, these rituals, those technologies and so on.

Norwood Morialta High School

Exploring the changes in international students' use of languages (English and their native language) during their time in Australia



Norwood Morialta High School (NMHS) not only has large numbers of international students, but a large cohort of students for whom English is not their first language. Indeed, a large number of these students have Chinese as their first language. Throughout the school and throughout classrooms and study areas, it is quite common to hear a variety of conversations in a variety of languages occurring, not only with students but with staff members.

The entire NMHS community has embraced the three core values of the school *Distinction, Diversity* and *Respect*. The constant reinforcement of these values is vital in supporting international students' learning in the classrooms.

Quite clearly, for students newly arrived to Australia, Adelaide and the NMHS, the immersion into an English speaking educational institution is quite daunting, confusing, frustrating, exciting and fulfilling.

Teachers in the Intensive Secondary English Course (ISEC) class have always been very understanding and experienced in supporting these students. They speak slowly, rephrase concepts in many ways, and support students in developing their oral and written language. In particular, there is emphasis on undertaking much conversation with students to develop their confidence in speaking, participating in group discussions, being able to ask questions and to ask for help with their schoolwork.

The use of students' first languages was restricted at first because it was believed that using the first language would make it harder to learn English. As the school community increased its intercultural awareness and "international mindedness", it was accepted that students could use their first language, and in fact, students were encouraged to communicate with each other in their first language. The understanding that conceptual development occurs in the first language led to an enhanced valuing of the first language.

Bilingual School Support Officers (BSSOs) who supported students in mainstream classes, did so by repeating and explaining what the teacher was teaching, i.e. the content, and similarly to explain the task that the students were required to do. Initially, in some classes, BSSOs were used to assist students to "interpret" and "repeat" what the teacher was instructing, e.g. content, terminology, application of concepts and assessment tasks. Now, during the teaching and learning program, teachers will often pause when they recognise that students do not appear to understand, and ask one of their classmates, who speaks the same language, to explain the work, question whether they have understood the work, or ask if they need further explanation. When students are working on particular tasks, it is now accepted that students will discuss the task in their first language and support each other in its completion.

Changes in use of language in the class

As most students enter their education at NMHS in the ISEC class, an "artificial" environment was created to facilitate their integration and use of the English language. To support their integration into a new culture, a designated classroom is provided, with kitchen facilities where they can congregate in a "sheltered" environment.

During classes, English only was encouraged. During break times, students were involved in lively conversations in their first language, which was a pressure release to having to concentrate intensely in English.

We have come to the realisation that this nurtured environment may be hindering their integration and development of their English language. Students are encouraged to spend break times in the cafeteria and other study areas where they are still able to interact in their own language, but at the same time are exposed to a range of other students and other languages, including English. Some of their classes are timetabled in specialist areas, e.g. Drama, Art and Science. As they are exposed to hearing and using English, this appears to support their language development as well as their confidence in interacting with others.

Teachers now value and understand that two languages can co-exist and allow students to use their first language and English in both oral and written frameworks.

Students are encouraged to discuss ideas in their first language, and often, teachers will ask a student to explain a task or concept to another student where it appears that they are confused or unsure what is required.

Progression from use of their native language to English
We have come to understand that our international students have had their initial education in their first language. Their thinking processes are in their first language. We now encourage and allow them the freedom to use and move between languages in the teaching and learning cycle. Understanding this concept has been paramount to their success. We use a range of strategies to support their language development:

Essay/Research/Report/Journal: In extended writing, students are encouraged to first get the inspiration/idea flowing without stopping to look up the English word or be concerned with grammar or sentence structure. If they are not sure of the word in English, then they simply write it in their first language. The priority is to get the student to actually attempt and complete a first draft by allowing them to use a mixture of different languages if needed. Once they have completed the first draft with all the ideas jotted down, then they redraft it a few times to correct grammar and sentence structure whilst also replacing words in the other language into the correct English vocabulary or terminology.

Oral/Speech/dialogue: Students practice presentations are videoed several times to reveal their progress and improvement. Students are also encouraged to video themselves using their mobile or laptop and make correction from the video in terms of body language, fluency, and pronunciation.

Dictionary use: Students are encouraged to use a common English dictionary like Merriam Webster which provides more detail about the attributes of the words such as verb, noun, and not rely on electronic dictionaries that translate into their first language. This dictionary provides the audio pronunciation of the word, which is extremely valuable to ESL students to learn how to pronounce the new words. Most Chinese, Korean or Vietnamese dictionaries only provide the meaning/translation.

Apps: Students are introduced to a number of Apps to practise in their free time. Some of the Apps are Practice English Grammar, Speak English and British Council Grammar. These allow students to record their own dialogue which can be compared to the native English speaker in the Apps to improve their intonation and pronunciation. Kids love them.

In summary, acceptance of a student's first language in the classroom teaching and learning environment is vital in helping them to progress the competence in the English language. Appropriate pedagogy, establishment of a warm and respectful classroom environment and trusting the student's first language skills, supports English language development. With scaffolding and mentoring students in vocabulary development, grammatical and sentence structure, and the writing of particular genres, students are able to progress along the continuum from using their first language, to thinking and writing in English.

Henley High School

The shift in the student population from largely mono-cultural to multi-cultural

As one element of Henley High School's 2010 – 2014 Strategic Plan, Internationalism became a focus that has now permeated all aspects of our school culture.



The reason for its inclusion in our plan at that time was obvious – the school had a mono-cultural student population that at times demonstrated unacceptable levels of intolerance, lack of acceptance of other cultures and a problematic lack of knowledge of or interest in the culture and people of countries outside of Australia.

Newly appointed leaders to the school were passionate about cultural understandings and globalisation and they were instrumental in raising the school community's awareness about, and developing a focus on, Internationalisation at Henley.

There had been attempts to become involved in International Education Services (IES) programs – but numbers remained small, homestays were difficult to find and interest in enrolment at Henley from overseas students was minimal. In 2009, the school reviewed its program because it was not financially viable. After discussion with staff from IES and much consideration within the school, a decision was made to invest in the program – because we needed to address the lack of acceptance and understanding of others evident in our classes and amongst some of our community

A selection of our more significant strategies included;

- Investment in Human Resources – the school determined to invest income from study tours into the appointment of an Assistant Principal to lead the program and full time School Support Officer support. More recently we were able to appoint two additional staff, part-time, to support the study tours and graduate/study abroad students as well as work with the ISEC students, where there has been a significant improvement in the achievements of the international students, but also local students who have enjoyed the persistent challenges. Staff and students and particularly parents and homestay families have indicated approval and appreciation of the additional investment.
- Investment in study tours – from a range of countries and including students, teachers, leaders and government officials. We have ensured high quality hospitality both on and off campus, involvement and availability of the Principal and other senior staff at all times. We have focussed on immersion of international students in school programs with their buddies and providing work-shadowing opportunities for teachers visiting from overseas and local teachers. The school leadership team provides Training and Development programs for international school leaders and Government officials. Assemblies are held to both welcome and farewell our international visitors and all our international visitors are supplied with a tablet or laptop that includes relevant software and textbooks. Buddies now regularly share homework challenges as well as experiences during their social excursions.
- Investment in our homestay program through the availability of a host family support 'hotline' and regular lunches, dinners and celebrations: we have developed a reliable, accredited, supportive, loyal and enthusiastic

team. Numbers of homestays and committed buddies continues to grow significantly with students gaining accreditation towards their Personal Learning Plan, Civics and Citizenship and Globalization qualifications. The Henley team receive outstanding support from their colleagues within International Education Services.

- Financially supported participation by staff and students in overseas visits and exchanges. Our teachers have travelled, or will travel this year, to Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Indonesia, India, South Korea, Japan and possibly Germany. One of our Assistant Principals is on a one year exchange in Japan during 2014. In the past 12 months, our students have accepted invitations to visit a school in Cambodia and attend an international student forum in Japan. In 2014, our students will have the opportunity to visit Japan and China and participate in the World Challenge.

We now believe that over 20% of our student population has regular social media contact with buddies overseas while we hold international focussed assemblies where we showcase international culture at least three times a term.

Our Strategic plan 2015 – 2018 continues to include the development of cultural understandings as we focus on broadening our student's exposure to other cultures further and provide deeper experiences, essentially through:

- The promotion and organization of structured student leadership programs centred on our international program: students to travel overseas, maintain regular electronic contact with buddies, and in the organization of, and participation in international student leadership forums;
- promotion and growth of ' Team International ' on our website and within the school community to consolidate our homestay program and ensure quality assurance of our on- site programs: to include the provision of electronic resources to our International partners to support changes in pedagogy needed to effectively use English to teach all aspects of the curriculum and focus on the development of essential skills;
- and our growing immersion of internationalisation within the culture of the school including the growth of our Language program and increased involvement of 'Team International' members in study tours and homestays: the provision of subsidies to promote and support more student and staff travel and exchanges overseas.

Linden Park Primary School

Learning experiences from the student perspective, reactions of local and international students



Linden Park Primary School offers a rigorous international learning programme in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide, six km from the CBD. The vision for the School is: "*A community of learners working toward global citizenship and the achievement of personal excellence in all that we do*".

The School is an authorised International Baccalaureate World School offering both the Primary Years and the Middle Years Programmes. The school is strongly committed to promoting international mindedness, intercultural understanding and respect. This is achieved by 'developing a community of learners who are inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring and who are helping to create a better and more peaceful world'. Embracing the inclusion of international students in the school community has strengthened this mission.

For over a decade, Linden Park Primary School has welcomed international students who come to the school for varying periods of time, working both within mainstream classes and within the Intensive Primary English Course Unit. Students are encouraged to become active, compassionate lifelong learners and global citizens, who understand difference and value diversity.

At Linden Park Primary School, International Students are enrolled in mainstream classes and attend an Intensive Primary English Course (IPEC) with a teacher and a Bilingual School Support Officer (BSSO), who is an important link between home, school and the community. Students benefit from attending mainstream class as they are immersed in regular dialogue with their peers and teachers.

The BSSO supports students in class to ensure that they understand classroom tasks and instructions. This helps them to get to know local students and to develop their confidence in communicating in English and understanding of the 'Australian way'.

"I came to Linden Park Primary in Australia because I need to practice and learn English. My dream is to speak English well. I like using laptops for researching information and making presentations, we have really good equipment at this school. I have made many friends at Linden Park, I like playing soccer with them and talking with them about weekends, birthdays, holidays and cricket." (International student)

Meeting and working with international students is also important for Australian students as it gives them an opportunity to meet and make friends with students from other cultures and to develop their intercultural awareness.

"It must be overwhelming for international students when they come here because it is so different here. The weather is different, the language is different, the classrooms are different. At Linden Park, all the kids like to be 'buddies' with new students because they can learn things from them and it's interesting to hear about other cultures and customs. Buddies show them around the school, keep them safe, do activities with them, you form a bond with

them. I try and be friends with new people so they can be happy and settle in. Playing team sports like cricket or netball helps you to get to know people and they get to know more people too." (Australian student)

International students are exposed to Australian culture through the learning program as well as a range of excursions, experiences (e.g. cooking, art, music) and special events (e.g. Australia Day, Harmony Day). Students are encouraged to participate in programs such as chess, debating and sport which enables students and families to form friendships and relationships outside of school hours.

Families are encouraged to establish support networks with other international families through morning teas, dinners, and special school events (for example a Korean barbecue or Japanese food stall). Families have opportunities to learn about school programs and to discuss their child's learning at a morning tea held once a term by the IPEC teacher and BSSO.

The benefits of the International Student Program to local and international students, staff and community includes; building relationships with students from other cultures; being part of an extended global community; being exposed to and learning about other cultures and traditions; increasing leadership skills; and developing open-mindedness and understanding.

Adelaide High School

A Principal's perspective on leading a school with a strong international student cohort



Adelaide High School is the oldest secondary school in the state, founded in 1908. Students by and large have come from local, migrant and refugee backgrounds, looking to further their educational prosects and in the main pursue tertiary education. The school's population has always been diverse and currently can be described as having over 60% of students and families from a non-English speaking background. More than 60 different languages are spoken in family homes. To complement this diversity, Adelaide High School has been the state's only Special Interest Languages School since 1974, offering seven languages other than English. All students from Years 8 to 10 are required to study one language but are able to study two if they wish. Students enrolled in the school through the Special Interest Language Program are obliged to study two languages other than English until at least the end of Year 10 and this significant curriculum commitment reflects the school's celebration and willingness to embrace diversity.

The combination of a community where diversity is the norm and languages study is seen as an essential component of the curriculum strongly aligns with international education.

The school's Vision and Priorities underpins all actions and decisions in the school, and explicitly commit the school to provide a safe environment based upon respect. As a provider for DECD International Education programs the school endeavours to build upon the linguistic and cultural diversity of its community and to connect students, parents and staff with international communities**.** The school's commitment to celebrate diversity and to develop an international program has been one of the drivers for improvement in the Languages program. This commitment to Languages education has enabled staff to make explicit links to language acquisition, intercultural connections and to international mindedness**.**

This rich background was part of the school's success in being accredited through the Council of International Schools (CIS). Through the CIS accreditation process the school has developed stronger ties with schools in countries where the first language is one which is offered in the school curriculum. It has also led the school to develop interdisciplinary work with intercultural and international perspectives embedded across the curriculum.

The Vision and Priorities were developed over time as a collaborative effort; however the role of the Principal cannot be underestimated. A school flourishes with a Principal who understands leadership in all its dimensions and who has a strong Vision for what the school could become. In Adelaide High School's case at the inception of the program, the Principal was able to bring different groups of people together, allow others to take on leadership roles in those groups, but at the same time carefully lead and continuously espouse the Vision for the school. Over time, staff, students and parents connected with that Vision, because they were co-creators of it and therefore felt a sense of ownership. Leaders at all levels within the school, the general staff, students, Governing Council and a broad cross section of the parent body took part in the consultation process that led to the birth of the Vision and Priorities for Adelaide High School. Such a process doesn't happen by default, but through skilful leadership.

Trust also was critical in the development of the international program and the Principal's ability to take advice from people working directly within the program. Challenging negative and out-dated views on language acquisition was not only the province of the Leadership team member responsible for the program, but the Principal's willingness to challenge misconceptions was vital. The ability to articulate the benefit for local students and challenge misconceptions in the community about international students taking local student positions in the school was also fundamental in ensuring the school's international program was kept alive, allowing it to flourish.

The path was not always easy, but we now have a school that sees itself as an international organisation, one that embraces students from all walks of life and one that celebrates the unique and modern perspectives that international students bring into an already culturally diverse community.

International mindedness is a strong feature of the school ethos. The Student Representative Council has worked actively for many years in the human rights arena, raising funds for international organisations, developing curriculum for students to explore themes in human rights, and initiating a sister school relationship with Rauukan Aboriginal School in the state.

The school's ethos and aspirational students and parents, its strong links with international communities and languages other than English demand a more international curriculum and education. Indeed the school motto *non scholae sed vitae: not only for school but for life* commits the school to developing global citizenship and international education. The school was and is well placed to provide students with an environment that encourages a culture of respect and where teaching strategies for literacy, particularly for students from non-English speaking backgrounds are adopted. Our commitment to foster inclusivity and our belief that opening our doors more widely to the international community will assist us to break down barriers and stereotypes and to provide an education for local and international students that is truly global.

International education is part of Adelaide High School's mainstream offerings and culture. International students have elected positions in the Prefect body, are heavily involved in the co-curricular programs including student leadership. International Prefects address the entire school each year at our International Understandings Assembly which celebrates diversity within our community and promotes peace and intercultural understandings. For local students, international education means meeting and befriending students from other countries, learning about other cultures, languages and people, using their languages in real life situations and having opportunities to undertake study tours overseas.

International education at Adelaide High School is alive and well. Students work side by side, regardless of entry into the school; student leadership positions are open to all; international student success is promoted alongside success of local students; intercultural and international mindedness and awareness feature prominently within the curriculum and co-curricular programs.

The Languages program is strong and vibrant, fostering the notion that languages other than English can be used daily in our school in a range of ways without stigma. Cultural and linguistic diversity is prominent in our student and staff populations, but most importantly the school community embraces the broad significance of *not only for school but for life*.



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