

Learning Portfolio
LOTE Position Paper

This paper has been written in response to SSASA members' identification of LOTE as an area of concern at a significant number of sites. So much so, that whilst LOTE is one of the 8 areas of study in SACSA, many schools have chosen not to offer LOTE to their students. Unfortunately, many of the issues identified have, to varying degrees, existed as long as the teaching of LOTE itself, which in itself is a major concern.

Overall, the issues generally relate to 2 main areas: Staffing (HR) & Learning Programs. The issues & recommendations outlined are a collation of responses from SSASA members as well as ideas generated in discussions with District staff, Languages Policy & Program Officers & SSASA members.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- Lack of suitably qualified/trained staff -
- Difficulty in enticing & keeping staff, particularly graduates to small communities (especially rural, isolated communities)
- Sustainability of programs which are often linked to 1 staff member - if that staff member moves on, the program ceases
- Small staffing entitlements in many schools leaving little room to manoeuvre, especially where sites have a stable staff profile
- Small FTE vacancies for LOTE makes it difficult if not impossible to fill vacancies
- The 'costs' associated with 'Open Access' courses - ie loss of FTE enrolments resulting in negative effects on staffing entitlements and the school budget
- inability to fund 'over-entitlement' staffing

The following recommendations have been separated into short and long term because of their impact on the provision of LOTE & the perceived benefits in terms of sustainability of programs. Not all of the short term recommendations, in particular, will suit all sites but many are at least worth considering when attempting to set up or deliver a program.

LONG TERM:

- that LOTE is a requirement of all tertiary teaching courses
- greater commitment from Govt/DECS in terms of funding & resources
- retraining schemes to be offered (again)

SHORT TERM:

- permanency given to graduates (with LOTE as an area of expertise) willing to work in country locations for an extended period of time
- liaise closely with HR Consultant & make LOTE an integral part of all vacancies where they exist using the normal transfer/School Choice processes
- contact Policy & Program Officers to discuss possible options including 'pilot programs'
- investigate the use of technologies - CENTRA, CD-ROMs,
- increased (targeted) funding from DECS for schools to set up sustainable programs
- retraining schemes to be offered (again)
- liaising with other sites & combining vacancies to increase FTE - the teacher then works at a number of sites
- sharing a LOTE teacher with a number of sites - other small schools or local area/secondary school
- a District LOTE person who works in a similar way to PRT's (to be funded by DECS)
- forging links with Universities re Country Placements for Practicums
- forging links with students who are part of the Country Scholarships Scheme

- better 'selling' of country locations to graduates (& others) as well as the incentives that are available for particular sites
- linking with the local secondary schools to identify students wishing to undertake teaching courses
- greater incentives for staff to move to small isolated communities
- 'whole school' approach to LOTE
- improving the profile of LOTE by making it an integral part of the Site Learning Plan - all staff involved

LEARNING PROGRAMS:

- Poor/superficial LOTE programs - mainly being offered because of pressure to do so
- LOTE as NIT - lack of ownership by students, staff; difficulty in developing a whole of school approach
- multi level classes R-3 & 4-7 or R-2 & 3-7 - are especially difficult when numbers are above 15 or so
- lack of community support - negative perceptions of the need for LOTE, especially if the language on offer is different to that of the local secondary school. This issue is exacerbated when the primary school feeds into more than one secondary school which offer different languages to each other
- SACSA Framework

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- appropriate funding & support (local, District, Central Office) to develop & sustain quality programs
- networking with similar schools as well as local secondary schools - especially schools which have successful, high quality programs already 'on the go'
- a 'whole school' approach to the teaching of LOTE
- relevant, accessible T&D
- establishing networks of LOTE teachers & supporting staff in attending hub meetings
- some theory of practice during tertiary courses re multi-level classes
- high levels of local support for staff 'new' to multi-level classes - work shadowing, mentoring, site visits - observation days etc
- district based support to be increased
- involve community members with appropriate skills in LOTE programs