

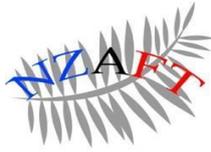
Summary of overarching concerns for all languages

The proposed reduction of teaching time in Years 7–10 to 30 min/1.5 hours per week (60 hours per year in year 9 and 10)

- The removal of the Communication Strand from the curriculum
- The optional status of *Learning Languages*, making it the only learning area not compulsory in the New Zealand Curriculum
- The word "translation" in the subject summary (which should be "understanding"). The wording used by the MoW reflects an old fashioned view on teaching languages that is not in line with current pedagogy.
- The unclear definition of "knowledge rich" in the context of language teaching (communication skills are knowledge).
- French:
 - The missing explicit link with French Polynesia as part of our ties with Polynesian/Māori whakapapa (e.g. New Caledonia is mentioned in Novice 1 Cultural knowledge but Tahiti is not)
 - The randomness and inaccuracy of some of the knowledge points listed in the draft curriculum (e.g. "When using je vien de, the de doesn't change based on the gender of the country, so it's always je viens de + name of the country. That's wrong, e.g. Je viens du Japon.

There are other things and overall the headings seem a little random. In short, the old curriculum was more detailed and better scaffolded and only needed a refresh (learning outcomes and vocab).

More detail in letter to Ministry (next two pages from NZAFT)



NZAFT Statement on the Draft Curriculum for Learning Languages

The New Zealand Association of French Teachers (NZAFT) wishes to express its deep concern about the direction indicated in the draft curriculum for *Learning Languages*.

The draft raises three major concerns:

- The proposed reduction of teaching time in Years 7–10 to 30 min/1.5 hours per week (60 hours per year in year 9 and 10)
- The removal of the Communication Strand from the curriculum
- The optional status of *Learning Languages*, making it the only learning area not compulsory in the New Zealand Curriculum

These proposed changes represent a significant step backwards for education and pedagogy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Languages are a cornerstone of global citizenship, intercultural competence, and inclusive education. They also strengthen literacy, cognitive development, and critical thinking. Positioning *Learning Languages* as peripheral rather than integral to the curriculum undermines these educational goals.

At just 30 mins/1.5 hours per week in junior programmes, it is impossible to develop fluency, confidence, and continuity of learning. Such a limited allocation of time makes it unfeasible to prepare students for success in the senior school or to cover the learning content outlined in the draft curriculum.

This reduction also prevents teachers from applying research-based best practices such as spaced repetition and retrieval practice — methods explicitly endorsed by the Ministry itself. Moreover, the proposed 1.5-hour allocation contradicts the Ministry's own *Key Things to Note* document (28 October), which states that “ongoing higher-intensity programmes (e.g. 3 hours a week) are more typical from Year 9.” This inconsistency must be addressed.

The proposed direction also contradicts the vision and values of the current New Zealand Curriculum, which aims to develop confident, connected, and globally aware learners. Removing the *Communication Strand* suggests that human connectedness and intercultural literacy are no longer priorities.

We note that communication and transactional communication is highlighted in the draft curriculum's purpose statement; however, its importance must also be reflected in addition to the two strands — *Linguistic Knowledge* and *Culture and Sociolinguistic Knowledge*.

The marginalisation of language learning deepens inequity: only students with access to language learning outside school will benefit. This undermines Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural foundations and its commitment to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

We therefore urge the Ministry of Education to:

- Reaffirm the equal status of *Learning Languages* alongside other core learning areas as an essential learning area
- Protect sufficient contact time to enable meaningful progression and fluency
- Recognise the long-term cognitive, social, and cultural benefits of language learning
- Consult closely with teachers and professional associations (for example: NZALT, NZAFT, STANZA)
- Allocate a minimum of 3 hours per week in Years 9 and 10

Languages connect Aotearoa New Zealand to the world. They foster empathy, identity, and opportunity. Weakening their place in the curriculum will have lasting consequences for our young people and for our nation's global capability.

We respectfully call on the Ministry to reconsider and to give *Learning Languages* the time, recognition, and support this learning area deserves.

Christchurch, 29 October 2025

The NZAFT Executive Committee and Regional Officers

Dr Stefanie Hossbach
(*President*)