EIA Research Impact Template

1. Institution

The University of South Australia, Research Centre for Languages and Cultures (RCLC)

2. Unit of Assessment

- Primary SEO Code: 9399 Other Education and Training
- Secondary SEO Code: 9502 Communication

3. Title of Case Study

Learning languages in multilingual and multicultural contexts – an intercultural orientation

4. Context

In the current context of globalisation where the scale and speed of migration is unprecedented, communicating successfully to develop understanding and exchange meaning across languages and cultures is critical. Learning languages has impacts not only in education itself, but also more broadly for politics, economics and history. Language learning is understood to be enmeshed with ‘important issues for the future of humanity’ (p23, Della Chiesa, B., Scott, J. & Hinton, C. (eds) Languages in a global world: learning for better cultural understanding (2012). OECD Publishing.

In education, learning languages and developing intercultural sensitivity are not only the means to improve the communicative repertoires of students, but they also play a crucial role as predictors of academic achievement in learning. The intercultural orientation responds directly to the requirements of language learning in the context of the diversity of Australia and its global relationships.

The Research Centre for Languages and Cultures (RCLC) conducts high quality and high impact research with an emphasis on the application of knowledge. The work is conducted in collaboration with government, industry, commerce, the professions and community groups who are the beneficiaries of the work. The RCLC works to improve understanding of the role of languages and cultures in education, work and life.

The research of the RCLC draws on various fields of linguistics to address questions relating to:

- Living in a linguistically- and culturally-diverse world;
- Working in a linguistically- and culturally-diverse world;
- Learning and teaching languages in a diverse world; and
- Examining the structure and use of languages in a diverse world.

The RCLC’s researchers have diverse backgrounds, with training in general and theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, educational linguistics, languages education at all levels, and more broadly in education.

5. Summary of the Case Study Impact

The body of research conducted by the RCLC during the period 2002-2012 focused on an intercultural orientation to language learning and teaching, and spanned 9 national projects.

The impacts were:

- Shaping of language education policy in Australia and beyond through challenging
established norms and practices; this represented a major conceptual shift in languages education in Australia, addressing directly the goals of language learning and language in education in contemporary times;

- Definition of professional standards for the language teaching profession;
- Shaping the professional practice of teachers of all languages;
- Shaping curricula in all states and territories of Australia, including Languages in the Australian Curriculum (which is currently under development);
- Shaping language teacher education programs in many Australian universities;
- Influencing research directions in languages education and provided ways of ‘translating’ research into practice; and
- Enhancing cultural and intercultural understanding of the phenomenon of language learning in the context of diversity.

6. Details of the Impact

A study from 2005 identified that nearly 1 million children in mainland Australian government schools study languages. The RCLC’s research in languages education has investigated teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation practices and developed frameworks and models for teaching and learning languages that have been incorporated into the policy of State and Australian governments and into the practice of education systems.

A. Impacts via direct delivery of research to industry

The RCLC has disseminated much of its research directly to industry through reports and advice. Examples include:

- An Investigation of the State and Nature of Language Learning in Australian Schools (http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/programs/pages/languageseducation.aspx);
- Professional teaching journals - see research outputs below; and
- Professional learning programs for teachers and websites, such as Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning Project (ILTP) (http://www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au/)
  Professional Standards Project I (http://www.pspl.unisa.edu.au/)
  Professional Standards Project II (http://afmlta.asn.au/professional-standards/)
  Guide to teaching and learning languages (http://www.tllg.unisa.edu.au/)

B. Impacts via dissemination of research in the context of policy

Research conducted by RCLC has been incorporated into a range of Government policy documents and outputs. This work has therefore reached a broad spectrum of the language education profession, with impacts evidenced by:

- Direct citing of research by RCLC and its members on government websites and in other
documents relating to languages policy and practice;
- Adoption of key ideas from commissioned research in the policy and practice of educational jurisdictions – especially those relating to intercultural language teaching and learning;
- Requests for consultancies and advice for government policy, curriculum and assessment documents in language education;
- Approaches to RCLC members to provide consultancies for the production of language textbooks based on ideas developed through RCLC research; and
- Requests to provide professional learning programs for educational jurisdictions to facilitate the adoption of ideas developed through RCLC research in the teaching profession.

The body of research has influenced policy makers at national and state levels in Australia and beyond. The National Statement and Plan for Languages 2005-2008 for example, included a specific focus on intercultural language learning as a policy direction arising directly from the work of the RCLC. Recent policy documents in all states and territories of Australia have cited our research. The work has also been cited in New Zealand curriculum policy documents. In addition, RCLC’s publication Guide to the Teaching Learning and Assessing of Languages in the 21st Century Project (http://www.tllg.unisa.edu.au/) is cited in the development of the new curricula for Mother Tongue Language Learning in Singapore.

C. Impacts delivered through adaptation of research into teaching practice
The professional standards for accomplished languages teaching developed through the research of the RCLC have been adopted by the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (see AFMLTA http://moreleaps.afmlta.asn.au/) and have informed the development of the national standards for teaching in general, developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSLS). The AFMLTA has also commissioned the RCLC to draft professional standards for lead language teachers. The RCLC-developed professional standards have generated a number of projects aimed at developing the professionalism of language teachers that have involved teachers in classroom-based research of practice. These include the Professional Standards Project (http://www.pspl.unisa.edu.au/) and, more recently the Mentoring and Reflecting: languages educators and professional standards (http://moreleaps.afmlta.asn.au/).

The work of language teachers, in terms of both teaching practices and their participation in classroom-based research, has been influenced by RCLC research on intercultural language learning and the professional standards. The websites developed to support the projects (listed above) include teacher-research case studies. Over 2000 teachers nationally have worked directly with the researchers in professional learning and classroom-based research projects. At least an equal number have worked with the resources developed in a range of state-based projects (see for example, the projects conducted by the Modern Language Teachers Association of Victoria (http://www.mltav.asn.au/). External evaluation reports on this research attest to its influence on teachers’ work. These evaluations were conducted by James Dellit and are available from the AFMLTA. As an example, indicative statistics from the Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning Project project (Evaluation report, p.17) show that:
- 400 teachers participated in the program;
- 87% responded that the program had “extended their thinking” about intercultural language learning; and
- 90% of participants indicated that their capability to program using intercultural language learning principles was extended.

The external evaluator states: “Participants overwhelmingly reported at a strong to very strong level that they were able to integrate this knowledge and understanding into classroom teaching and learning and that this had enhanced student engagement with Languages and improved student
Languages learning outcomes” (Evaluation report, p.17).

D. Impacts delivered through incorporation of RCLC research into teaching frameworks
The development of frameworks such as the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA) (2001) and the Victorian Essential Learning (VELS) (2011) framework have taken, as a conceptual basis, the intercultural orientation to language learning as developed through the research of the RCLC. All syllabuses in all languages in NSW have also adopted this orientation. The Shape Paper for Languages in the Australian Curriculum, authored by the RCLC’s Angela Scarino (ACARA, [http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp](http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp)) is the most recent example of impact. The Shape Paper provides the conceptual base for the curriculum development for the learning of all languages K-12, nationally which is currently being undertaken in Australia. As such, the research has become curriculum policy in all states and territories of Australia.

All teacher education programs in all universities in Australia include reference to the Report on intercultural language learning ([Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003](http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp)) and The Guide (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009) and incorporate the web-based resources indicated above.

Much of the current research in languages education is focused on the intercultural orientation to language learning. This orientation is also the subject of investigation by research students at Masters and PhD levels.

E. Impact through shaping new education and curriculum goals
The Australian Government has adopted the concept of ‘intercultural understanding’ as an educational goal, both in its articulation of the National Goals for Schooling (The Melbourne Declaration 2008*), and as a cross-curriculum capability to be developed by all learners in all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum (see ACARA, [http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp](http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp)) and in particular the document: General capabilities in the Australian Curriculum.

The nature of the impact pertains to a conceptual shift in the orientation to language learning. The conceptual shift includes a re-framing of the nature of language, culture and learning in languages education. The change has influenced and continues to influence policy, practice and ongoing research in languages education.

Evidence for these impacts is available in the policy documents, curriculum policy and curriculum and assessment frameworks, in the teacher education programs of Australian universities, in publications by teachers and researchers.


7. Research Underpinning Impact (indicative maximum 500 words)
The work of RCLC in language education has been an on-going, decade-long program to establish a coherent body of research that examines the conceptualisation and practice of language education and especially the integration of language and culture in language education pedagogy, curriculum assessment. The research has developed insights in a range of key areas in developing the agenda for language teaching and learning:

In pedagogy:
- The significance of reflection and reflexivity in teaching languages for intercultural awareness;
• The identification of teaching practices that enhance the integration of language and culture in language learning;
• The identification of processes that develop meta-awareness of language and culture and their relationship; and
• An examination of the nature of reflection and reflexivity in language learning.

In curriculum:
• The development of principles of curriculum design that integrate language and culture learning and develop intercultural understanding
• Documentation and critique of curriculum practices from the micro through to the macro levels; and
• Examination of the impact of curriculum choices of the possibilities for learning.

In assessment:
• Documentation and critique of existing assessment practices and their capacity to elicit and identify valued learning
• The development of accounts of the construct for assessment of an intercultural perspective in language education; and
• Examination of the role of new assessment practices in assessing more sophisticated constructs of language and culture.

8. Research Outputs from Research Underpinning Impact

Pedagogy

Curriculum

Assessment
9. Additional Information

a) Validation of the Impact

Several industry partners are able to attest to the value and impact of the research. These include:

- Dr Amanda Day, former Director, Languages & Asian Studies Section at DEEWR, Amanda.DAY@deewr.gov.au
- Ms Lia Tedesco, Principal, School of Languages, lia.tedesco@schooloflanguages.sa.edu.au
- Mr Nick Perkins at ACARA, nick.perkins@acara.edu.au
- Academics who have used the research of the RCLC in teacher education:
  - Associate Professor Lesley Harbon (University of Sydney)
  - Dr Robyn Maloney, email: Robyn.Moloney@aces.mq.edu.au at Macquarie University.

b) People

The research team has included: Associate Professor Angela Scarino; Professor Tony Liddicoat; Dr Jonathan Crichton; Dr Kathleen Heugh; Dr Michelle Kohler; Ms Kate Loechel (former member of RCLC); Ms Nives Mercurio (former member of RCLC); Dr Anne-Marie Morgan (former member of RCLC); Dr Leo Papademetre (former member of RCLC); and Mr Andrew Scrimgeour, as well as collaborating researchers (e.g. Dr Jo Carr, QUT and Dr Chantal Crozet, ANU for ILTLP).

The network of participation in the research has included DEEWR (as the funding and policy-making body); all government and non-government educational jurisdictions; several universities, including teacher education departments; the national, professional bodies (e.g. the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia) as well as language-specific associations (e.g. national and state associations for the teaching of Chinese); foreign government organisation (e.g. the Japan Foundation) and primary and secondary teachers of different languages.

c) Research and Investment Income

Research and investment income includes:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>Report on intercultural language learning (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, Kohler, 2003)</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
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<td>(DEST, now DEEWR)</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Development of Standards for Teachers of Indonesian (Liddicoat, Tognini, Kohler, Fischmann, McLaughlin, Scarino &amp; Dellit, 2005)</td>
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<td>2006-08</td>
<td>Intercultural language teaching and learning project (Scarino, Liddicoat, Carr, Crichton, Crozet, Dellit, Kohler, Loechel, Mercurio, Morgan, Papademetre &amp; Scrimgeour, 2007)</td>
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<td>Period</td>
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<td>2006-2009</td>
<td>Assessing the intercultural in language learning, ARC Linkage [Liddicoat, Scarino, Mercurio (adjunct)]</td>
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<td>Industry partners. Department of Education &amp; Children’s Services – SA and SA School of Language</td>
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<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Guide to teaching and learning languages</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Professional Standards Project II</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Preparation of the Shape Paper for Languages in the Australian Curriculum (Scarino)</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Mentoring and reflecting: languages educators and professional standards</td>
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