



## Foreign Languages

**As with English Language (see English Language paper)  
Foreign Languages reveal God the linguist and communicator**

**Since the Tower of Babel there have been many languages in the world, each unique and expressing different cultures and experiences. God, the great communicator, uses language to communicate with us and has given us the ability to learn other languages so that we can communicate and build relationships across other cultures and natural divides. God uses people from different countries to enrich us; to change our limited mindsets and views; to challenge our pride; broaden our perspectives and develop our understanding of Him.**

### **The Tower of Babel - Genesis 11:8-9**

'So, the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel – because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.'

### **Through foreign languages God restrained wickedness.**

God had to confuse man because of the power of his sinful unity to do works of evil. Originally, therefore, languages were the instrument of God's mercy to limit evil.

### **Through Christ, languages can be a means to increase godliness The Great Commission - Matthew 28:19**

God is committed to communicating His saving love to every tribe and nation **(Revelation 5:9-10)** and we may be called to be bearers of His message. God commissions us to 'go and make disciples of all nations' in order to restore mankind to God's unity and purpose – the worldwide body of Christ. This necessitates the learning of language in order to communicate and relate.

### **Barriers to overcome:**

#### **1. Negative attitudes in students**

It is often the case that students may present a resentful attitude because of the work and discipline that learning a language entails. Faith needs to be imparted that as they have learnt one language already they have the capacity to learn another! At the same time, we recognize that we have different capacities and abilities, therefore, allowances have to be made.

It is necessary to challenge any wrong national pride, prejudice, racism or resistance by explaining God's love for all people groups, His plan for the nations and our part in that. This will give a bigger vision. (See Curriculum Concepts 2, 7 and 13) Respect for other cultures and people's needs to be imparted, preferably from an early age. Students also need to be made aware of the future potential of holidays, relationships with pen-friends and career possibilities. All of these are situations where knowledge of language can be vital as well as enjoyable (Curriculum Concepts 16 and 20).

## **2. Separation of the language from the culture and history of the nation**

Language is living and is best taught in the context of a nation's culture and history rather than divorced from it. This will serve to highlight some of God's purposes and blessings in a nation throughout history and to impart respect for their national strengths. Conversely, such a study will also reveal ways in which the nation may have failed to be righteous or just, emphasising its need for the gospel and our prayer.

### **Aims**

1. Equipping pupils to carry the word of God to those of other language groups (whether locally or abroad) in these people's own languages and developing an understanding of, and commitment to, mission.
2. Developing an awareness and understanding of different cultures and ways of thinking and encouraging pupils to be critical of their own and not to make it absolute. Challenging British aversion to learning the languages and ways of others as sub-Christian and unbiblical.
3. Giving pupils linguistic skills to equip them for various callings in the world of work. Educating them to use linguistic skills responsibly and with integrity in this context.
4. Developing in pupils the motivation, skills and confidence needed to engage in language study on their own initiative now, or in response to future needs.
5. Developing an awareness and understanding of, and sensitivity to, language.
6. Giving pupils skills with which to serve others and encouraging them to do so.
7. Equipping certain pupils for academic study.
8. Providing enjoyment and intellectual stimulation in the classroom and enriching pupils' leisure time.
9. Learning in a foreign language context skill relevant to a broader curriculum (e.g. analysis, memorising, drawing of inferences) and in other ways making modern language teaching a well-integrated part of an overall Christian education, not a loosely related appendage.

Adapted from CST Policy Paper Series Modern Languages. D Smith.

## Letting the Bible's view of man shape our thinking

**Seek a vision as wide as God's purposes for the earth and small enough to deal with the immediate tasks, not one or the other. We all need our horizons stretching or shrinking at various times. 1 Samuel 17:20-24, 46.**

### **Some characteristics of the image of God to be respected in teachers and pupils:**

**Language** – vital to our existence as human beings; we all, by nature, have a capacity for language and language learning. (Curriculum concept 3)

**Relationally** – we were not made to be isolated individuals; our relationships are a crucial part of God's created order and reflect the relationship of the Trinity. (Curriculum concepts 10 and 16)

**Individuality** – we are all created as unique and differently gifted individuals; we are meant to respect and enjoy these differences, having patience and love for one another. (Curriculum concepts 1, 3, 7 and 16)

**Rationality** – we were given reason to investigate, appreciate and communicate the rationality of God's creation. (Curriculum concept 14)

**Morality** – as beings made in God's image, we have conscience and the capacity for moral decisions; we are accountable to God in all our ways. (Curriculum concept 10 and 11)

**Spirituality** – all that we are or do has a spiritual dimension because we are spiritual beings; whatever we do is oriented towards or away from God. (Curriculum concept 3)

**Creativity** – we are called to use our gifts creatively in the image of a creative Creator. (Curriculum concepts 3 and 4)

**Servanthood** – made to bear the image exemplified in Jesus Christ, we are to serve God's purpose with our work and our lives. (Curriculum concept 8)

**Responsibility** – we are given a task (The Great Commission and The Cultural Mandate) and the authority to carry it out in God's ways. (Curriculum concepts 2 and 8)

**Fallenness** – our capacity and weakness for sin is a key consideration in any realistic educational process. God's grace and forgiveness is available but there needs to be prayer for a dynamic change with the help of the Holy Spirit. (Curriculum concept 20)

Excerpts adapted from Christian Schools Conference Seminar 1993

## Resources

Refer to 'Towards a Christian Curriculum' by Barbara Lord

List of Christian Authentic Materials for German (H.Schwarz) available from ACT, Stapleford Centre, Nottingham

C.S.T. Policy Paper Series: Modern Languages by D. Smith.

Charis project: Christian curriculum for state schools available from ACT, Stapleford Centre, Nottingham

Charis Deutsch Yrs 9-11

Charis Francais Yrs 9-11

The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality and Foreign Language Learning by D. Smith and Barbara Carvill, pub. Erdmans