

REPORT ON LOTE IN THE DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Toowoomba has 26 primary schools and 9 secondary schools. Of the 26 primary schools, 10 are P-7, and 15 are 1-7. One offers both primary and secondary and goes from 1-10. Of the secondary schools, 4 are 8-12, while 5 schools are 8-10 (in one case, the school is on its way to becoming 8-12.) The primary schools are all systemic. Of the secondary schools, 5 are non-systemic diocesan colleges, 2 are systemic and 2 are order-owned. One of the diocesan colleges has a primary section (Years 5-7) attached to it.

1.1 Primary LOTE

Table 1 below shows the number of students taking a LOTE at the primary level in 1993. There are altogether 2503 students studying LOTE (approximately 48 percent of total primary roll). The Japanese language is the most popular - over 33 percent of primary students are studying this LOTE. This language is also offered at a variety of year levels: two schools offer it from Year 1 to 7, while another two offer it from Year 2 upwards. There has been a great expansion of LOTE in the primary schools in 1993: in 1992, only 13 schools offered a LOTE, 11 of them Japanese.

**Table 1: LOTE at the Primary Level, 1993: Student Numbers
Number of Schools and Year Levels Offered**

Language	Number of Students	Percentage of Total Primary Roll (N=5207)	No of Schs Offering the LOTE	Year ranges
Japanese	1757	33.7	17 (11)*	1-7, 2-7, 4-7, 5-7, 6-7, 7 (with most at upper levels)
Italian	280	5.4	2	1-7, 4-7, 3
Indonesian	306	5.9	4 (2)	6-7, 7 only
French	129	2.5	5	4-7, 5-7, 6-7, 6 only
German	31	0.6	2	7 only
Total	2503	48.1		

*The figure in brackets represents the number of schools offering LOTE in 1992.

1.2 Secondary LOTE

Table 2 gives the 1993 aggregate figures for students undertaking LOTE at the secondary level. Once again Japanese is the most popular LOTE but in all cases there is a substantial drop in numbers taking these LOTES at the higher levels. The drop occurs between years 8 and 9, reflecting the practice in all schools of including a LOTE as one

of the core subjects taken in year 8 usually for a semester. It may be that with the development of LOTE in the primary schools, a greater number of students might be motivated to carry on learning a LOTE beyond year 10. It remains to be seen whether such an assumption is warranted or whether there are other factors that determine the numbers that continue the study of LOTE up to year 12.

Table 2: Number of Students Undertaking Various LOTES at Secondary Level, 1993

Year Level	Japanese	French	German	Indonesian
	8*	3	1	1
8	644 (79.7) ⁺	247 (30.6)	28 (3.5)	33 (4.1)
9	164 (22.2)	46 (6.2)	6 (0.8)	--
10	138 (18.5)	17 (2.3)	8 (1.1)	--
11	43 (1.9)	5 (0.9)	5 (0.9)	--
12	25 (4.5)	11 (2.0)	1 (0.2)	--
Totals	1014 (29.7) [@]	326 (9.6)	48 (1.4)	33 (1.0)

*The figures in this row represent the number of schools offering that LOTE.

+The figures in brackets in the columns represent the percentage of students at that year level studying a LOTE.

@The figures in brackets in this row represent the percentage of total secondary roll studying the particular LOTE.

1.3 Teachers

At primary level there are 16.5 Japanese teachers, 2.5 Indonesian teachers, 2 Italian teachers, 4.5 French teachers and 1 German teachers. Teachers of a European language are likely to draw upon their high school French, while teachers of Asian languages are likely to be a mixture of those who might have studied the language at high school as well as those who have taught themselves, either through distance education or through intensive or on-going 'in-service'. Generally, teachers at primary level have considerably less experience in teaching the LOTE than have their counterparts at the secondary level.

At the secondary level there are 9^{1/2} Japanese teachers, 4 French teachers, 1/2 German teacher and 1 Indonesian teacher. All are qualified LOTE teachers. The experience of the teachers of French and German range from 14 years to 22 years, while for the Japanese language the range is from first year teaching to having taught it for 5 years. The one Indonesian teacher in the secondary system has taught it for 3 years.

2.0 POLICY MATTERS

2.1 LOTE Policy

Discussions with the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office (CEO) revealed that at the present moment there is no written policy about the development of LOTE in this Diocese. However, primary schools that introduce LOTE are urged to consider the

destination of their pupils so that the LOTE they offer is available to their students once they move into a secondary school.

Discussions with the principals and teachers in schools suggest that schools also have no written LOTE policy, though all schools think it is important to offer a LOTE. The reasons for this include the fact that curricular and attitudinal changes to LOTEs are occurring in the rest of the society and not to respond to them would make schools appear out of touch with current developments. In primary schools, the development of a LOTE may occur frequently as a result of one of the teachers having some proficiency in that language.

There does not appear to be any principled reason for starting LOTE in the primary school at a particular grade level. Table 1, for example, shows that Japanese is being taught at a variety of grade levels depending upon the primary school.

2.2 Choice of LOTE

In primary schools the choice of LOTE is dependent upon the availability of a teacher who knows a LOTE or the availability of Junichi Hatai, the Japanese advisor, who until quite recently, was attached to the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office. The adviser was available only within a certain radius of Toowoomba for reasons of transport. The easier availability of Japanese at Catholic high schools has been an added factor in its selection at primary level. In some cases the choice of a LOTE is determined by the LOTE offered at the local state high school to which many students proceed after completing their primary education. One school is offering two LOTEs this year as a trial before a decision is made about the LOTE that will be offered to their students.

The decision about which LOTE to introduce has been left in the hands of principals of primary schools. One principal suggested that this was not a sound policy, while another commented that he needed more information about the reasons for and advantages of introducing a LOTE in primary schools.

Attitude towards a balance between European and Asian languages varies from school to school. Some favour the Asian languages over the European because Australia is closer to Asia and therefore more likely to need to use those languages. Others think it is more desirable to have a balance between European and Asian languages in the Catholic system because Europe was still important for Australia, not the least for the cultural links.

All secondary schools currently offer Japanese, except for one which offers only Indonesian. Apart from Japanese, French is also offered in four of the nine secondary schools, while one school offers a third LOTE - German (see Table 2 for the numbers). The choice of Japanese appears to be based on both the perceived advantage of that Asian language and the employment of a native Japanese speaker in the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office five years ago. The offering of French and German has been a historical continuance and this is evident in the remarks made by those secondary schools visited that their French texts could be a little dated.

2.3 Goals of LOTE Teaching

At the primary level there are a variety of different goals for the LOTE offered. In most cases it is to expose students to another culture and thus broaden their horizons. Where it is possible, generally when the LOTE teacher also teaches other subjects to the class, it is tied in with social studies so that learning about a country occurs at the same time as learning a little of the language of that country as well as some of the more prominent cultural aspects of that society.

Exposure to a LOTE at primary level is also regarded as an orientation of students towards learning a LOTE so that by the time they get to year 8, LOTE study is not such a novel experience.

Fluency, however limited, is not generally the goal. This is attested also by the amount of time devoted to LOTE in primary schools, the modal time being half-hour per week.

At secondary level, a LOTE is part of the core that all students must take for at least one term or for a semester. Thereafter the goals are more language oriented - the development of proficiency in the LOTE. If students continue beyond Year 10, the goals of LOTE teaching are those set in the BOSSS Senior Syllabus.

2.4 Time on task

At primary level, LOTE is scheduled from half hour per week to two sessions of half hour per week. In the case of at least one primary school, the allocation is two three-quarter-hour sessions per week.

At secondary level, the time allocated varies from two 30- or 35-minute sessions at Year 8 to 5 periods at the upper levels. In the case of one of the high schools which operates on a unit system for each term, the LOTE (as with other subjects) is scheduled for 6 fifty-minute periods from Year 8 to Year 12.

2.5 Three LOTE Priorities

Teachers and principals were asked to indicate what they consider to be three urgent LOTE priorities in their schools. The priorities mentioned at the interviews fell into two categories: resources for teaching the LOTE and the professional development of the teachers. All interviewees, except at one school which deliberately allocated funds, indicated that there was a lack of in-service opportunities. Teachers stated that they would like to improve their own proficiency in the LOTE they were teaching and most primary LOTE teachers and some secondary indicated that they needed to be exposed to methodology of teaching a LOTE. Also mentioned were the articulation of LOTE between primary and secondary and the development of a coherent primary LOTE program.

Principals were also asked to rate LOTE amongst the overall school priorities. It was largely ranked medium to low. More effective delivery of the core program and ways in

which schools could create an appropriate Catholic atmosphere in the school were mentioned as having a higher priority.

3.0 VALUE OF LEARNING A LOTE

Most primary schools see a value in learning a LOTE. This is seen largely in terms of an expansion of students' cultural horizons, the development of a better understanding of the structure of their first language (English) and the development of skills in learning which can be transferred to other subjects. In addition, teachers and principals value LOTE learning for its potential to develop children who are more tolerant of differences of behaviour (due to cultural upbringing) and who can grow up less ethnocentric. This attitude, however, is not always shared by students or in some cases by parents, particularly in the more isolated areas where the possibility of contact with speakers of LOTE being taught is remote.

4.0 RESOURCES

At the beginning of 1993 all primary schools were given grants to purchase at least one LOTE kit prepared for primary schools by the Queensland Department of Education. The Toowoomba Catholic Education Office also provided \$11.12 per student in the primary schools to support their LOTE program(s).

The LOTE kit is the basic resource that is used by primary schools. Only in a few cases are these resources supplemented by teachers. This occurs when the teacher is comfortable enough about his or her own proficiency to select other materials or in cases where the teacher is on the staff of a secondary school but also teaches one or more primary schools.

In terms of teacher resources most primary schools that were interviewed admitted that their LOTE programs would suffer a setback if the LOTE teacher were to leave. In those schools where LOTE teaching spanned a number of year levels, the departure of one of the teachers would result in the termination of LOTE at that level (or possibly in some cases a couple of year levels). Without suitable replacements it seems that such schools would end up offering disjointed LOTE exposure to their students.

The secondary schools seem to be adequately resourced as far as teachers go. Any LOTE teacher transferring out of the school would be replaced by another teacher capable of teaching the same LOTE.

5.0 TEACHER STANDARDS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many primary teachers have a very basic proficiency in the LOTE they teach. This proficiency may have been developed in high schools when they were students. This is generally the case for those who teach a European LOTE. Those teaching an Asian language are likely to have learned it after leaving high school in a number of different ways: distance education courses, short intensive courses, or on-going informal in-service

with the former language adviser in Catholic Education Office. In some cases, teachers are satisfied with the level of proficiency for the type of activities they organize for their students. This must be viewed in conjunction with the goals of LOTE programs in those schools. Other teachers would like to improve their proficiency in the LOTE but mention the lack of in-service opportunities for them. Most primary teachers also do not have any specialist training in the teaching of a LOTE. Limited proficiency coupled with the lack of training in methodology has resulted in a close adherence to the text that is used, especially the LOTE kits.

A number of high school teachers indicated that they would like to improve their proficiency in the LOTE they teach. This limited proficiency makes them more text-bound and they would like more personal input into the development of their lessons than is possible.

Both at primary and secondary levels, principals as well as LOTE teachers said that they had few opportunities for undertaking professional in-service courses. Even if they were to be invited to state-run courses, schools may have difficulties in releasing them as, unlike state schools, they did not have funds for teacher replacements. However, one secondary school indicated that it spent a considerable sum of money in the previous year for in-service for their teachers. It seems that schools may need to prioritize areas to which their financial resources are to be devoted, possibly on a rotational basis.

6.0 CURRICULAR ISSUES

The integration of LOTE with social studies at the primary level is dependent upon the situation in each school. There is a greater likelihood of integration with other subjects if the class teacher is also the LOTE teacher or if all teachers see a value in learning a LOTE and through collaboration with the LOTE teacher or teachers expose students to the history, geography and cultural aspects of the country where the LOTE is spoken as the native tongue. If a more consistent policy is to evolve in this area each school should collectively decide and agree that a LOTE should be a core at their school - from whatever year level it is agreed upon - and teachers, regardless of whether they taught the LOTE or not, should try to expose students to some history, geography, cultural matters and so on of the 'LOTE country'.

The matter of curricular integration and a primary LOTE curriculum was brought up, particularly by principals. They are aware that if the goal of LOTE teaching is to develop some proficiency in the language, then there needs to be a syllabus that progresses from one year level to another and which is integrated as best as it can be with the rest of the primary curriculum. This would be contingent upon the ability of the LOTE teacher at each level to translate the syllabus into appropriate classroom activities that lead to the stated outcomes.

With regard to a syllabus at the primary level some work has been done by the State Education Department to develop one for Years 6 to 8. This could form the basis for a LOTE syllabus in the Catholic primary schools.

The question of transition from primary to secondary schools has so far not been a critical factor because many primary LOTE programs have commenced only in the last few years. However, with the greater use of the Department of Education LOTE kits, students arriving at high schools will have some proficiency in a LOTE and if the same LOTE is offered at the high schools some account will have to be taken of this situation. It will be problematic if students have studied another LOTE and are put into a class where some have done the LOTE offered at the high school. A creative solution will have to be found in such cases. One of the schools in Toowoomba should not have any problems in this situation because of its unitized curriculum which would enable students to proceed to the second (or the third) unit.

7.0 COMMUNITY ISSUES

7.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands (ATSI) Languages

None of the schools that were interviewed has an ATSI language program largely because the number of ATSI students are small. In one of the remote areas where there are a substantial number of Aboriginal students the multiplicity of dialects spoken makes it difficult to choose one. One of the schools in the urban areas stated that their ATSI students only spoke English at home and therefore there did not seem to be any reason for even considering the introduction of an ATSI language.

7.2 Community and Student Attitudes Towards the Teaching of a LOTE

Discussions with the schools suggest that the urban parents are more supportive of the LOTE programs than parents in rural and remote areas. In some instances in the rural areas there was some initial resistance to the introduction of a LOTE but parents have come around to accepting it as part of the primary school curriculum. Only in one case are parents a little 'hostile' about the introduction of a LOTE as they see no relevance for their children. This attitude towards the LOTE has been reflected by the students who see little need to learn it. On the other hand, a rural school began offering a LOTE to their students because parents pushed for its introduction so that their children were not disadvantaged when they went to the local high school.

One principal suggested that even though parents were supportive of the LOTE program at his school, he doubted whether that support would translate into a monetary one.

It seems that schools in the rural areas might need to emphasize the educational value of learning a LOTE, both the cognitive advantages and the general social advantages of having more broadly educated citizens at a time events outside Australia impinge, directly or indirectly, upon life in Australia.

8.0 OTHER MATTERS

8.1 Open Learning

Discussions held with principals and teachers of LOTE suggest that learning a LOTE in other ways, through telelearning or distance education, have not been considered at all. In one rural and one urban school at least, two students in each case are studying through the Queensland School of Distance Education a different LOTE from the one offered at school. In one case the language is not offered at the school; in the other, there are too few students to form a class.

Telelearning has been used in the state system for some time now. This possibility is either not known widely or it has not been sufficiently explored by the principals or the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office as a possible way to involve rural and isolated schools in a LOTE program. It may be that the cost of setting up a number of telelearning centres may be prohibitive but the Catholic Education Office may wish to consider a pilot project as a start towards using technology in order to overcome LOTE teacher and curriculum problems.

8.2 The Formation of Networks

Discussions with teachers suggest that there are no networks of teachers in the Darling Downs area. Where there are a number of LOTE teachers in a primary school and all are teaching the same LOTE, there is considerable amount of interaction between these teachers. In one rural area, the teacher is able to access the State LOTE advisor and thus keep abreast of developments in LOTE in the state system and use them to the advantage of her students. In other rural areas, primary LOTE teachers have access to the teachers at the high schools, especially if the same LOTE is taught.

8.3 Schools selected for visit and discussion

Schools in the Toowoomba Diocese were chosen on the basis of the following factors: a mix of systemic, diocesan, and order-run schools; urban/rural schools; selection made so that all languages are covered; single-sex and co-educational schools; range of year levels taught at primary schools.

8.5 Case Studies

The two cases studies that follow are based on a primary and a secondary school, chosen because of the schools' decision to offer a LOTE (or LOTEs in the case of the secondary school) in an unusual manner.

8.5.1 Case Study 1

This is a primary, co-educational systemic school in a town near Toowoomba. It offers Japanese to students from Years 1-5 and also at Year 7. At years 4, 5 and 7, both 10 streams study Japanese; at other year levels, only one of the streams is offered the LOTE. Five of the classroom teachers (out of 14 altogether) are currently involved in teaching Japanese, though there is another teacher who could teach the LOTE also (Check).

Half an hour per week of Japanese is taught at all levels. It is integrated into other subjects in the classes because the LOTE teacher is also the class teacher.

The program is strongly supported by the principal and the teachers who are involved in the teaching of the Japanese because it is considered that the study of a LOTE is enriching for the students, it widens their knowledge of other people, and it prepares students for the local high school by whetting their interest in a second language. This positive orientation towards the study of LOTE has resulted in an enthusiastic approach to its teaching and overt support by the principal.

The development of this program in the school occurred because of the support of the Japanese Adviser stationed, until this year, in the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office. He drew up a program of study for Years 1-7 and was instrumental in conducting in-service for the teachers. The 'drip-feed' nature of this in-service has resulted in a very basic proficiency and an eclectic approach to the teaching of Japanese to their students. The resources used in the classroom were also suggested by the Adviser. At the beginning of this year a LOTE kit prepared by the Queensland Department of Education was added to their resources, both for the teachers and for their students.

The program for the earlier years focusses on items such as greetings, some common classroom commands, songs and culture (e.g. working with origami). At Years 3 and 4, some writing in Hiragana is also introduced, much of this used for labelling. In the later year levels, some very basic structures related to personal likes and dislikes, and eating and playing are introduced.

The teachers are aware of the limited proficiency they possess in the language but are comfortable about using it for the program drawn up for their class level. In-service by the Adviser has ceased now and teachers are aware that they need some regular in-service in the language if they are to continue to function in the language in their classes. For this reason, both the teachers and the principal would like a specialist Japanese teacher in the school, with the teachers providing the support for it in the classroom.

The principal is aware that the way the Japanese program is offered at his school may not be ideal, but is, he believes, the best solution in the circumstances. He would like all classes to do Japanese but it can only be done voluntarily, and so some classes (e.g. Year 6) do not do any LOTE. However, the goal of LOTE teaching at the school is not necessarily the production of fluent users of Japanese, so this is not considered critical. More critical is the teacher factor, in that, if some of the present LOTE teachers were to leave the school, the program may be drastically curtailed.

Parents, initially not wholly supportive, have become much more supportive of the program. As in other rural areas in this diocese, parents do not initially see any value for a language that is not used in the community or whose speakers do not visit the area in any appreciable number.

CASE STUDY 2

The second case study deals with an order-run girls high school, currently 8-11, which has taken the bold step of developing a vertical curriculum comprising units of work in a particular subject. Each day there are 6 sessions of 50 minutes, covering 6 subjects that students choose each term. The following term they may continue with the next unit in each of the subjects or choose to do other subjects. During the first two terms of Year 8, students are not given any choice in subjects but must undertake a set program, which includes the study of a LOTE. Subsequently, students choose their subjects in consultation with their parents and the Assistant to Principal - Studies. The policy of the school is to promote a wide range of subjects so that students receive a broad education.

At Year 8, students must do one unit of LOTE, either Japanese or French. They may then choose to do the second LOTE or not study LOTE any further. Alternatively, students may undertake both LOTEs as far as they wish. Even though LOTE is not compulsory, the school believes the numbers studying LOTE at all year levels is satisfactory, especially up to Year 10. The numbers in Year 11 are small but are comparable or better than some of the other schools in the area. The vertical unitized curriculum offers a solution for the articulation between primary and secondary LOTE: those who show sufficient proficiency to undertake the second unit in a LOTE can do so. (The students at this school come from almost 40 different primary schools and proficiency in Japanese or French has not been sufficiently high for any student to skip the first unit). In addition, 50 minutes of LOTE per day for the term results in better learning so that even if there is a gap of a term or more, students are able to continue with the next unit with considerably less backsliding in their proficiency. Teachers report a high degree of motivation on part of the students, perhaps as a result of their involvement in the choice of subjects they can study each term.

The school does not plan to introduce another LOTE because it is considered that the introduction of another LOTE would only result in reducing the numbers taking the LOTEs currently offered. The major priority currently was to improve the resources in the two languages, especially at the upper levels, including computer packages.

Teachers are qualified LOTE teachers and have visited countries where the two LOTES are spoken. In spite of this, at least one teacher would like to upgrade her proficiency, especially for the upper classes. (At the time of writing it has been learned that this teacher has won a three-month study scholarship to France, beginning in September, 1993). The school spent \$50 000 on in-service in 1992, some of it on in-service for LOTE teachers. The teaching of the LOTES is oriented towards a mix of communicative and grammar-based activities so that there is a focus on both fluency and accuracy.

While the parents did not have a direct input into the choice of LOTES taught at this school, it was thought that they were quite supportive and this could be inferred from the number of students who want to do a LOTE.