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PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION PLANNING

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ABSTRACT. This paper discusses the principles that underlie rational language policy-making and language-in-education planning. It is argued that the ultimate determining factors are the nature and needs of the society, the goals identified for the society and its future development, and the consequent language needs. It is also argued that implementation should be an integral part of policy development and presentation since policy that cannot be implemented in practice is spurious. In addition, the policy statements must be set in a rational justification with on-going evaluation being an integral part of implementation. The principles discussed are illustrated by reference to a State language education policy recently prepared by the author and a colleague.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing interest worldwide in systematic language policy-making. Now, instead of being the incidental concerns of politicians and language teachers, language policy-making and language-in-education planning have become distinctive disciplines within applied linguistics, from which they draw both their conceptual bases and, ideally, their methodology. There are many factors external to applied linguistics which have generated this interest in policy-making, not least the new salience of language issues created by vastly improved transport and communications, the continual mixing of peoples and languages as a result of migration and tourism, the post-imperialist resurgence of the languages that had been suppressed during the colonial era, the breakdown of old political barriers most vividly seen in Europe, and the growing economic interdependence of all countries.

This interest in formalized language policy-making and language-in-education planning is no better exemplified than in Australia where, up until 1982,
language policy-making was not so much overt and rational as stochastic
and largely incidental to other things, in particular, to curriculum development,
immigration policy and government administration of ethnic affairs. However,
in 1982, following almost four years of agitation by the Australia Federation
of Modern Language Teachers Associations (e.g., Ingram 1979) and other
organizations, the Australian Senate referred the matter of a national policy
on languages for inquiry by its Standing Committee on Education and
the Arts. Since then, a national policy was released in 1987, and Australian
Government “green” or discussion paper was released early in 1991 with
a “white” or policy paper due before the end of the year, and every
State and Territory in the nation has produced its own language education
policy (e.g., Ingram and John 1990).

Despite the increased interest in language policy and language-in-education
planning and the immense efforts that have been put into these activities
worldwide, one has to be sceptical as to the quality and intellectual rigour of
much of it and there is need to emphasize that the “ideal” referred to earlier of
policy-making using rigorous applied linguistic methodology is far from
commonplace. There remains a need to emphasize that policy-making is not
a matter of putting together a string of good ideas or warm good wishes for the
well-being of languages and their speakers, but that it should be a rigorous and
rational process, leading to coherent, comprehensive and informed policy and
implementation with continuous evaluation being and integral part leading to
policy adjustment in the light of new insights and changing needs.

In 1989, in the context of reviewing language-in-education planning for the
Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (Ingram 1989), the present writer found
that very few of the published policies could be considered either systematic,
rational, argued or coherently structured across a framework of needs,
implementation and evaluation. Many policies, in fact, tend to remain
a collection of piecemeal “good ideas” lacking in rigour and rationale,
formulated incidentally to other things (e.g., immigration policy), or containing
good policy recommendations that founder on implementation practices
paying too little regard to quality and changing needs. Unless language and
language education policy are needs-based, coherent, rational, comprehensive,
and rigorous in their design, they will contain inherent flaws which will, sooner
or later, condemn them to failure. The 1987 national policy on languages in
Australia (Lo Bianco 1987) well illustrates this since, though it was in many
respects an excellent document that has put Australia to the forefront of the
English-speaking world in terms of systematic language policy, it gave too little
attention to teacher education and to evaluation with the result that the
implementation of the policy is seriously inhibited by a lack of adequately trained teachers while the lack of a continuous evaluation and policy revision mechanism has undoubtedly contributed to the need that has led the Australian Government to introduce green and white papers on language policy with the serious risk of seeming to resile from its 1987 policy (see Ingram 1988 for a more complete discussion of the 1987 policy). It is essential that careful consideration be given to the design of language and language education policy, to how they may be made needs-based, coherent, rational and comprehensive, to how they can be continuously evaluated and revised, and, in brief, to how they may be given intellectual rigour.

To illustrate the policy design principles discussed in this paper, reference will be made to the recently released Queensland State language education policy in Australia or, more specifically, the project report which the present writer and a colleague produced for the Queensland Government in 1990 (Ingram and John 1990). In developing this policy, the authors sought to provide a rational framework and adopted certain basic premises around which the policy was constructed:

- The first basic premise was a concept of the domain of language policy and, in particular, of language-in-education planning.
- The second was a theory of the nature of language policy-making.
- The third, a corollary of the second, was an essential structure that a language policy must have starting with the nature of the society and its corollary needs, the individual's right to choose and to learn the language of choice, and the integration of implementation and evaluation as policy components in order to ensure that the policy is realistic, implementable and continuously evaluated.
- In order to meet present and often unpredictable future needs for language skills, the fourth premise emphasized the importance of offering a wide diversity of languages and of modes of language learning while also accepting that education systems must set priorities and select languages and activities.
- Finally, the fifth basic premise emphasized the necessity for any programmes undertaken to be of high quality with positive outcomes.

II. DOMAIN OF LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION PLANNING

The boundaries of language-in-education planning are often unclear but, in general terms, language-in-education planning is that activity which seeks to "indicate how, within the education system, the ideals, goals, and content of (language policy)... can be realized" (Ingram 1989). On the one side, it is fringed by language policy in general and, on the other, by curriculum- and syllabus-writing, methodology and materials development, and finally class teaching. It usually refers to official, government-level activity though schools, universities and other educational institutions may also develop their own language education policies.
III. THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE POLICY-MAKING

Policy-making is decision-making or problem-solving, i.e., it entails making decisions about languages, about language learning, about how to satisfy the language-related needs of society and individuals or it entails solving “problems” such as how to maintain and extend the level of skills in certain languages, how to ensure a harmonious and mutually rewarding multicultural society, how to maximize the effectiveness of trade, how to maximize students’ intellectual development, and so on. Language policy-making may also be either covert, as it was in Australia in the 1970’s when the piecemeal ideals often articulated incidentally to other policies contrasted with the actual but unarticulated language education policies which were implemented in most parts of Australia and led to a drastic reduction in the extent of language teaching in schools; alternatively, language policy-making might be overt, as it has become in Australia through the 1980’s, as national, State and Territory language and language education policies have been published.

In the sense of being problem-oriented, i.e., in that they seek to solve particular language-related “problems” that exist in the society, language policy-making and language-in-education planning are, like their parent discipline of applied linguistics, essentially practical activities but, also like applied linguistics, they are theoretical in the sense of being both theory-based and theory-making (see Ingram 1980 where the nature of applied linguistics has been discussed). Rational policymaking is theory-based in the sense that, like applied linguistics, it draws on the fundamental sciences that inform the problem to be solved. In language policy-making, the contributory sciences include the linguistics sciences (e.g., theoretical and descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and so on) but also any other field that informs the language problem (e.g., political science, demographic geography, psychology, economics, marketing, and so on). The policy-makers’ task is to identify and draw on the relevant sciences, seek insights that elucidate the essential nature of the problem, and deduce possible solutions. If this is to occur, then the policy-makers must have available both the theoretical knowledge and the practical experience of the problem situation that make the characteristics of the problem clear and enable them to derive adequate insights and deduce viable solutions. If either their knowledge or their experience is inadequate, then their policy and its implementation will be defective. This notion of policy-making must, therefore, lead one to question the “management principle” in decision-making, i.e., the practice popular amongst bureaucrats of putting “eminent persons”, political affiliates, “managers”, general educationalists, or even accountants, into decision-making or
policy-making positions rather than experienced and qualified practitioners, relevant academics, or similar experts.

Policy-making is also “theory-making” because the policy is essentially a theory about the nature of the problem and how to resolve it. National language policy-making, for example, essentially proposes a theory or policy about the nature of the society’s language needs at the societal, group or individual levels and how to meet those needs. As a “theory”, its validity has to be tested and hence evaluation is an essential (but often omitted) phase of rational policy-making.

Figure 1 illustrates the structure of this process for the parent discipline of applied linguistics.

Figure 2 illustrates it for language policy-making or language-in-education planning.

In summary, the rational approach to policy-making entails a rational understanding of the issues involved, the development of insights into the problem to be resolved, hence the postulation of a “theory”, “principles” or approach to solving the problem, the clear identification of the ultimate goals to be achieved and the intermediate objectives to be sought, and the implementation steps to be taken. In addition, for the “theory”, principles or policy to be tested and for the whole process to be self-correcting of error, inadequacies, or changing needs, it must integrally include an evaluation process. This approach is not only theory-based and theory-making but it is also research-based in three senses: first, that research is needed to develop the fundamental sciences on which the whole rational process depends; second, that research is needed to identify the nature of the problem to be resolved, the needs to be met, the goals and objectives to be sought, and the methodology or implementation to be adopted; and third, that evaluation, which is research in practice, is an integral part of the process and impacts on all stages from the fundamental sciences to policy formulation and implementation.

IV. THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE POLICY

The nature of language policy-making or language-in-education planning just discussed leads to clear implications for the structure of a rationally developed language or language education policy. The basic “problem” to be resolved is how to maintain and develop the society’s language resources and how to meet the society’s and individuals’ language-related needs. Hence a policy must be based on the present and changing nature of the society and commence with a description of the features of the society that are relevant in identifying present and future language needs and in identifying the steps to be taken to satisfy them. Thence the policy must specify the goals and objectives
that it is seeking to achieve and enunciate the policy proposals. However, idealistic policy statements unrelated to how they can be realised in practice are practically worthless since the very fact that they cannot be implemented suggests that they are based on a deficient analysis of the problem situation; hence the policy must include actual implementation recommendations that enable each policy proposal to be related to the actual-life situation and to be realised in practice. Since rational policy is justified and founded in the theoretical sciences and in an analysis of the problem situation and since the implementation proposals must be logically related to the policy proposals and justifiable from an understanding of the nature of language and of the other relevant fundamental sciences, all the elements of the policy must be justified and the rationale must be made obvious. In addition, as already discussed, evaluation is an integral part of the structure of a rational and rigorous policy and leads to the on-going development and fine-tuning of the policy itself.

Thus, a rational policy will contain at least the following elements:

- A description of the nature of the society the policy is to serve;
- a statement of needs (both societal and personal);
- policy proposals;
- implementation recommendations;
- indicators of success or the basis for the evaluation of the policy and its implementation; and
- a summary rationale for each policy proposal and implementation recommendation.

In the Queensland language education policy (Ingram and John 1990), the policy document started with a description of the nature of Queensland society identifying, in particular:

- its multicultural, multilingual and multiracial population;
- the dominance of English;
- its economic dependence on foreign trade and its economic integration with the rest of the multilingual, multicultural world;
- its need, if it is to be economically secure and successful, to develop its level of so-called "elaborately transformed manufactures" (see Ingram 1987); and
- its vast geographical area and the relative isolation of many of its towns and schools.

This brief description of the nature of Queensland society led to the identification of certain corollary needs, specifically:

- the need to develop in Queensland children attitudes conducive to a harmonious and profitable life in their multicultural Queensland and world societies;
- the need for all Queenslanders to develop English skills to the level of proficiency that meets their needs and interests and enable them to access available services;
- the need to produce, promote and market products in the world markets with maximum effectiveness; and
• the need for all Queenslanders to have access to the learning of other languages and, in particular, the language that meets their own needs and interests wherever they might be located in the State.

From here, the Queensland language education policy (Ingram and John 1990) goes on to set goals and objectives, identify policy proposals and implementation recommendations, and indicate how the policy’s success or failure may be determined.

In order to emphasize the rational nature of the policy and the integration of its parts, the policy is summarised in a section called the “Rational Frameworks” which takes all the ninety-four recommendations made and sets them in a table with interrelated columns headed

- Needs (Societal and Individual)
- Goals and Objectives
- Policy Recommendations
- Implementation Proposals
- Indicators of Success
- Rationale

These are illustrated in the Appendix.

V. LANGUAGE CHOICE

The fourth basic premise underlying the Queensland language education policy contrasts the need for diversity in language skills with the need for education systems to select. In fact, there are many reasons for learning languages, different individuals have their own array of reasons, and different sets of reasons lead to the choice of different languages. Hence, if the real needs of a society as linguistically diverse as Australia’s, integrated with an even more diverse world region, are to be met and if needs of the individuals within it are to be satisfied, it is necessary for the policy to provide a very wide, indeed, free choice. Overall, in Australian schools, about 40 languages are taught and are available for examination at matriculation or earlier. However, any education system has finite resources and must select the languages for which it can supply teachers and materials. Consequently, it is necessary for a language education policy to establish priorities and to choose what languages are to be given priority in the education system. Hence, on the one hand, all language learning should be valued, encouraged and recognized within the education system with individuals able to choose the language that meets their needs and interests but, on the other hand, an education system must establish implementable priorities. In the Queensland policy document, this conflict of principles was resolved by establishing certain priorities but also facilitating freedom of
choice by offering a wide choice of languages, a variety of modes by which languages may be learned, and procedures for the recognition by the education system of language learning that goes on outside the four walls of a school classroom. Recognition of such language skills values language learning that goes on in the home or through other out-of-school experience and recognizes and rewards individual initiative; in contrast, traditional approaches to school certification quite overtly say to learners that no language skills are of value unless they have been gained through the notoriously inefficient class teaching method followed by an examination.

Consequently, the Queensland language education policy establishes certain priority languages, allows students the widest possible choice of languages, provides a variety of modes by which to formally learn a language, and recognizes through the school certification system language skills that might have been acquired by some other mode (Ingram and John 1990: 37–38). The recommended choice of languages is shown in the following table:

**TARGET LANGUAGES FOR QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS**

*Group 1:* Chinese, French, German, Indonesian/Malaysian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish: priority languages widely available throughout State
*Group 2:* Greek, Russian, Vietnamese, Australian Sign Language: strongly to be encouraged
*Group 3:* Arabic, Korean, Portuguese, Thai: of national priority but hampered by lack of teachers; available through distance education and self-access
*Group 4:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages: the languages of the original inhabitants of Australia, hence significant, available in bilingual and maintenance programmes, in regular school language programmes, and in Aboriginal and Islander Studies
*Group 5:* Others: any other language

It is significant that the Queensland language education policy seeks to recognize language skills that may have been developed other than in the formal school system. In a linguistically diverse society and world, it is simply impractical for an education system to seek to cater for all the languages for which there might be a need and it is essential to find ways of encouraging individual and community initiative and to recognize learning that goes on elsewhere. To the extent that language programmes set proficiency goals, this is quite readily achievable. In the Queensland policy document, for instance, it is expected that most children will learn by direct teaching or, especially in remote localities, by teleconferencing supported by class teachers but, in order to make a wide choice of languages available, it accepts that language learning can go on by a variety of modes in a variety of different contexts. Some of these include direct classroom teaching (using both specialist, fully trained language teachers and language teaching assistants), bilingual and immersion programmes, teleconferencing, self-access centres, distance education, cluster schools
and semi-peripatetic teachers, Schools of Excellence, and Regional Language Centres. In addition, it rejects the notion that the notoriously inefficient classroom-based language learning is educationally valuable and worthy of recognition through the school certification system and tertiary entry criteria while the language skills a child develops often to higher proficiency by living in a bilingual home, travelling overseas, or studying in an ethnic school or private class are not recognized by the school system and are not credited on school certificates or in tertiary entry criteria. To recognize and encourage such language learning, the Queensland policy recommends that students be able either to take an examination in whatever language they have whether it is taught in their particular school or not or, if it is not available through examinations either in their own State or another, they should be able to go to one of the testing centres of the National Languages Institute of Australia to have their language skills assessed and certified for whatever purposes their school subjects are recognized. In the Queensland policy, the cost of such assessment falls on the student but this is a small cost in return for the benefit brought by recognition of their real skills. In addition, it is through this process of setting liberal priorities, providing a variety of modes of language teaching and learning, and providing a means of fostering individual initiative outside of the education system that the society's need for a wide range of languages can be met. It also goes some way towards responding to the unpredictability of future language needs in a linguistically diverse and politically inconstant world.

VI. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE RIGHTS

Finally, in the context of considering the diverse societal and individual needs and rights that influence language policy development, there is worth considering what could, in the future, become a document of fundamental importance to language policy, viz., the Universal Declaration of Language Rights (see AFMLTA Information BULLETIN, NO 34, August 1990, pp. 2–7) that has been proposed by the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV). Significant changes have occurred in the development of policies in many countries as a result of the adoption by the United Nations or one of its related bodies of international declarations on such wide-ranging topics as capital punishment, racial discrimination, human rights, or freedom to form trade unions. The proposed Universal Declaration of Language Rights, recognizes, amongst other things, every child's right to learn another language of his or her own choice. Key clauses in the present version include:
"1. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, the
language of the linguistic group into which he or she is born...

"2. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, either
the official language or one of the official languages of that State, according to his or her own
choice...

"3. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, at least
one further language, chosen from a diversified range of languages, for the specific purpose of
enhancing international understanding.

"4. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, to
a level which ensures that he or she can communicate fluently and accurately, orally and in writing,
in each of the languages specified (above).

"5. Everyone has the right to learn any language or languages.

"6. Everyone has the right to identify with any language, irrespective of its territorial
boundaries, and to have the exercising of this right respected..."

Additional recommendations suggest that UNESCO and possibly the
United Nations will be persuaded to adopt this Declaration, language rights in
all nations are to be monitored, and member associations of FIPLV are asked
to seek to persuade their governments to elaborate and implement policies that
reflect these language rights. It is significant (especially in the English-speaking
world where monolingualism has been regarded as the normal state) that,
underlying the Declaration, is the unambiguous assumption that monolinguals
are unjustly deprived and must be given the opportunity to increase their
language skills and broaden their cross-cultural understanding through learn-
ing another language. In addition, the Declaration gives individuals the
unambiguous right to select the language or languages that meet their needs or
interests and consequently language policy-makers will have to consider how,
within the limitations of resources available and the consequent need to set
priorities, it is possible to provide the necessary freedom of choice. The
proposals just outlined from the Queensland language education policy are
designed to enable this to occur. What is also significant but too large an issue
to be discussed here is that the key to this problem is language assessment,
a fact which, with many others, points to a central role for informed, flexible
and sensitive language testing within language policy-making.

VII. QUALITY

The fifth basic premise of the Queensland language education policy was
that any programmes undertaken must be of high quality with positive
outcomes and, indeed, that should be a fundamental premise of any language
education policy. To ensure this, it is essential that appropriate materials and
equipment be available but, most of all, that teachers are sufficient in number,
proficient in the target language, and competent in modern methodology. To
this end, the Queensland policy has adopted a minimum language proficiency of S:3, L:3, W:3, R:3 (on the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings) as the desirable minimum proficiency for teachers (though there is some modification to this for reading and writing in character-based languages), all teachers are to receive some training in language teaching so that they can support their students in their language learning programmes whatever the mode that is adopted for teaching, and a career structure has been designed in order to keep good language teachers in the profession rather than oblige them to move out of language teaching to gain promotion. In addition, to meet the diverse needs through varied programmes, a variety of modes have been proposed including regular class teaching, intensive programmes, bilingual programmes, immersion programmes (currently in French, German and Indonesian with Japanese proposed for later introduction), distance education, self-access, and teleconferencing.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to define language policy-making and language-in-education planning, to identify their nature, and to propose an essential structure. It has illustrated this by reference to the recently released Queensland language education policy report produced at the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages in Griffith University (Ingram and John 1990).

Although languages have been taught and learned as second and foreign languages for thousands of years, it is only recently that formal and systematic language policy-making seems to have evolved. Undoubtedly, amongst other stimuli to formal language policy-making and language-in-education planning, a major factor has been the development of applied linguistics and, in particular, language proficiency measurement; the latter is significant because it has enabled planners to measure resources, identify needs, and set meaningful targets. As applied linguistics continues to develop and provide the tools that language policy-makers need and as the external forces stimulating language policy development continue and inevitably escalate, we can expect further development in language policy-making, more informed and rational language-in-education planning, and hopefully more systematic and effective language teaching. The 1990's have started with a breakdown of many old political barriers but only a change of location with little diminution of human conflict. Yet migration, tourism, technology, transport, communications and economics are all forcing the world's peoples into ever closer contact. The challenge for the last decade of the twentieth century will be to provide educational programmes that generate attitudes, skills and understanding that
will improve intercultural and international interaction, understanding and tolerance and minimize human suspicions and conflict. At the heart of this educational process will be effective, well-planned and highly competent language teaching emerging from rational, comprehensive, coherent and needs-based language policy-making and language-in-education planning.
## APPENDIX

An Extract from the Rational Frameworks of the Queensland Language Education Policy (Ingram and John 1990)

### SECTION VI. 1 RECOMMENDATIONS 72-73

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEEDS (Societal and Individual)</th>
<th>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adequately trained language teachers to implement this policy</td>
<td>Provision of sufficient teachers adequately trained in language teaching</td>
<td>Language teaching methodology should form a part of the pre-service of all language teachers and all language teachers should be trained to teach at all age levels.</td>
<td>72. All Primary and Secondary School teachers-in-training who wish to specialise in language teaching to take equivalent of at least two semester units in second language teaching methodology (including classroom techniques, syllabus design and program writing, and assessment procedures) and to be trained to teach throughout the Pre-School, Primary and Secondary School age range.</td>
<td>Inclusion of suitable units in pre-service training of all specialist language teachers</td>
<td>Language teachers will often be required to teach across full age range of children in schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEEDS</td>
<td>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
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<td>Societal and Individual</td>
<td>Language teachers with specialist graduate diploma or higher degree in applied linguistics</td>
<td>73. All language teachers should be strongly encouraged to take a specialist graduate diploma or higher degree in the area of applied linguistics including second language teaching. A specialist graduate diploma should be regarded as minimum qualification for promotion beyond the class teacher level from January 1995 with, during the interim period successful completion of substantial in-service courses run by LACU being accepted as an alternative.</td>
<td>- Provision for graduate courses in applied linguistics in universities. Promulgation by Department of these conditions on promotion. LACU to organise substantial in-service courses.</td>
<td>- Availability of necessary courses. All language teachers in promotional positions with graduate diplomas or higher degrees in applied linguistics.</td>
<td>- There is an urgent need to upgrade qualifications of language teachers in Queensland to facilitate implementation of the proposals in this report. Qualified and effective teachers are needed to assist colleagues, supervise programs, develop courses, etc.</td>
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<td>A cadre of highly proficient and professionally competent language teachers</td>
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- Financial incentives to do so are overdue and would be well received.
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<th>NEEDS (Societal and Individual)</th>
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<th>POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS</th>
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<td>78. LACU to negotiate with Board of Teacher Registration and the Universities to give effect to relevant Recommendations of Section VI.1 and VI.2</td>
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<td>- LACU to negotiate with Qld Teachers Union in order to utilize productivity provisions in teachers award</td>
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<td>- to provide incentives for language teachers to obtain recommended minimum qualifications</td>
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<td>- to amend its own promotional criteria to the same end</td>
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REFERENCES


