



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment  
and Workplace Relations**

# **Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide**

**Practice example**

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**Valuing the diversity of learners**



Research Centre for  
**Languages  
and Cultures**

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#### Disclaimer

The views expressed in the publication do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

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## Introduction to examples

Collected here are examples of teachers' work. These are drawn from teacher practice and are included here to exemplify aspects of teaching, learning and assessing languages, as discussed in the *Guide*. Teachers were invited to share their planning and programming documents and members of the project team worked with them to further develop aspects of their work.

### Programs

The collection of programs includes primary, middle and senior secondary long and short term programs. These contain annotations designed to point out specific points of interest for you to consider in your reading of them. At the end of each program you will find a commentary that describes how the program exemplifies selected sections of the *Guide*.

### A selection of teachers' work

This is a selection of programs and parts of programs, plans for classroom teaching, planned assessment tasks, descriptions of the teaching and learning contexts, investigations and evaluations of practice, and reflections on current practices. It shows teachers engaged in professional thinking, planning, reassessing, and evaluating what they teach, how they teach and who they teach.

### About the examples

- These examples of teachers' planning, practice and reflection are provided for you to examine, consider and perhaps use in expanding your own understanding of language teaching and learning. We know that teachers learn best from other teachers and so we encourage you to look across the set of examples in all languages rather than just the language(s) you teach.
- The examples of teachers' work included here belong to individual teachers and are taught in a particular context which means that you will not find models that you can instantly adopt and teach. Rather, you will find ideas about teaching and learning that you can use by adapting and reworking them to produce programs, classroom teaching, learning and assessment practices that you can use in your own context.
- The examples of teachers' work are not included here because they constitute 'best practice' or are exemplars of definitive programs for languages teaching and learning. You will find some outstanding approaches to planning and teaching that advance our understanding of how to make languages teaching and learning a rich and effective learning experience for students. You will also find teachers' honest reflections and evaluations of their pedagogies, questioning what they do and rethinking what they will do.
- The examples of teachers' work may include some pedagogies of which you may be critical. However, you will also find professional educators striving to make sense of their work with students, language teaching and language learning.

<b>Example</b>	Valuing the diversity of learners
<b>Language</b>	Japanese
<b>Level</b>	Primary
<b>Teacher</b>	Debbie West (Victoria) A teacher of primary Japanese sets out to engage learners by including the language backgrounds of different children in her class. She does this by using a commonly known storybook written in different languages.

<b>Teaching and learning</b> Classroom interactions The nature of interactional language Tasks and task-types <i>Student engagement</i> <i>Recognising the diversity of learners and their life-worlds</i> Technology in language teaching and learning	Through recognising and celebrating the diverse cultural backgrounds of her students this teacher enabled these young learners to draw connections between languages and cultures while motivating and engaging them in language learning. This learning provides powerful messages about diversity and communication.
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## Japanese: Year 1

About 10% of my ELC to Year 4 students come from non-English speaking backgrounds, encompassing Chinese, Japanese, German, Polish, Indian, Dutch and Russian.

I decided to make a conscious effort to design a program which would value the languages and cultures of some of our bilingual children. In Grade 1 there were children who understood French, German and Polish. We read, learnt and discussed a well-known English story called 'The Hungry Caterpillar.' First, we read it in Japanese, made flashcards, learned the vocabulary, played games, and watched the video; and then we learned it off by heart so they could all read it aloud without me. We then did exactly the same thing in French and German. It is possible to find the story in all these languages. The result was incredible. Those children who were bilingual were so excited when it came time for their language, they sat up tall and proud with big smiles; suddenly they felt they felt their status had grown in the eyes of the rest of the class.

The intercultural focus came when we looked at the sentence construction and **noticed, compared and reflected upon** the similarities and differences; these included ways of counting, using the definite article and how some words in French and Italian sound similar. We also looked at the food that the caterpillar ate and considered the cultural appropriateness of it.