



Australian Government

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

Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide

Practice example

Classroom interactions

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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.

Example	Transcripts of classroom interaction
Language	Chinese, Italian, Japanese
Level	Years 6, 8 and 9
<p>The following are examples of classroom interactions, as recorded from taped transcripts of lessons. Comments are included with the transcripts.</p>	

<p>Teaching and learning Classroom interactions The nature of interactional language Tasks and task-types Student engagement Recognising the diversity of learners and their life-worlds Technology in language teaching and learning</p>	<p>Each of these transcripts reflects the day-to-day interactional routines of the languages classroom. They reflect features of interactions which cannot be anticipated, but to which teachers must respond. In each case readers are invited to consider: What is the nature of teacher instruction? How effectively does the teacher handle learners' questions and interjections? Does the teacher make the most of the opportunity to build on learner knowledge and understandings, or does the teacher close the interaction down and move on without adequate resolution of the learner's problems or issues? What might the teacher have done to use the learner's own insights and interpretations to draw out meanings and clarify their needs more effectively?</p>
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Transcript: Japanese Year 9: *Why can't they all be the same?*

T: Okay, now what can you tell me about the 'counters' written in red ...

S10: They're the numbers one, six, eight, and ten.

T: Yes, very good, but something more. What about their sounds, or the way we say or pronounce them?

What do they have in common? S10?

S10: They've all got 'ppiki' written in it.

T: Excellent. The ones in red are what we call *exceptions*. They always take the form of 'ppiki' when we say or write these numbers, when talking about animals.

S3: How come they have different ways of saying different numbers? It makes it confusing! Why can't they be all the same?

T: I'm not really sure. There's not that many there to remember though. Now I just quickly, want to test some of you so we can move on.

Comment: The student seeks clarification on these exceptions, seeking consistency and certainty in learning. The teacher has the opportunity to highlight variability within and across languages, but fails to pick up on the opportunity, and moves on, leaving the issue unresolved.

Transcript: Italian Year 9: *How do we say it?*

T: When you need to say '400' ... we're just going back a bit to numbers. 400 ...
How do we say it?

S2: '*Quattrocento*'

T: '*Quattrocento*'. One word. '*Quattrocento*' not '*centoquattro*'. That would be wrong. It's exactly how you say it in English. You say the four then you say the hundred.

S4: I always thought it was '*centoquattro*.'

T: No, it's '*quattrocento*'. '*Quattro*' comes first just as we say in English; we say 400; that's how you say it in Italian.

You say the '*quattro*' ...

S4: But Italians say things backwards.

T: No, but in this case they say it the same way.

S6! What did I just say please?

S6: Something about the '*centro*' and the '*quattro*'.

T: That '*cento*' goes in front of '*quattro*'???

S6: Yeah, It's not '*quattrocento*'.

T: Are you sure?

S6: Yes.

T: Really? No, if you were listening, I said that the '*cento*' does not go in front of the '*quattro*'. It's exactly how we say it in English.

Comment: In reviewing responses to a test, the teacher reminds learners of numbering in Italian, in relation to English. Student S4 interjects, then states his/her view on the structure of Italian. The teacher's response doesn't address this notion of '*backwards*'-ness in the target language, or the student's concept of normality existing in their first language alone.

Transcript: Chinese Year 8: *How was his sentence wrong?*

- T: Okay, who can tell me what this means?
[writes on the board] *zhe shi shenme yanse* (what colour is this?)
(Teacher looks around the class as hands go up, but one student calls out the answer)
- SM: This is ... what is this?
- T: Ah ... good try SM but not exactly right, okay guys look at this... *zhe shi* means what?
- SS: This is ...
- T: Yes, *shenme* means 'what'...but what does *yanse* mean? (Quiet for a while)
- S: Colour?
- T: Yes, very good. We learnt this word yesterday, remember?
- S: Oh, yeah.
- S: No we didn't!
- T: Okay, so this means 'what colour is this?' *Zhe shi shenme yanse*. (this-is-what-colour?)
How do we answer this sentence then? *Zhe shi shenme yanse*. (this-is-what-colour?)
- SH: *Zhe shi shenme lanse*. (this-is-what-blue – 'colour' replaced by 'blue')
- T: Er... no ... anyone else? (Hands go up....) Yes D?
- SD: *Zhe shi hongse*. (This is red)
- T: Very good D, thank you. Okay, how was H's sentence wrong? ...
He said ... *zhe shi shenme lanse?*
- S: You should say *zhe shi* and then put in the colour,
not say *zhe shi shenme colour* ...
- T: Very good. So what does *shenme* mean?
- SS: 'What'!
- T: Good, so look at the sentences on the board. (Teacher points) To answer the question you get rid of the *shenme yanse*. Okay?
It is like the old sentence pattern, this is what? / this is ... *Zhe she shenme?*, *zhe shi* ...
a chair, or a book, *zhe shi shu* ... okay guys do you understand that?

Comment: The teacher uses effective techniques for eliciting learner interpretations of the sentence structure under investigation. Where learners' responses are incorrect, the teacher seeks alternative answers before returning to analyse the nature of learners' mistakes, through discussion, before reinforcing the nature of the structure in relation to prior learning.

Transcript: Japanese Year 6: *Haven't you missed something?*

T: Now I want to know if you can tell me 'How old are you?' in Japanese.

Remember, we have done this before. Can you do that?

S1: *Nansai desuka?*

T: Well done! Everyone say it, *Nansai desuka*

Ss: *Nansai desuka*

T: Well, then, if you were eight years old, how would you say it?

S2: *Hachi desu* (8)

T: Hmm, the number is correct, but haven't you missed something?

S2: Oh, *sai desu* (age)

T: So?

S2: *Hachi sai desu* (eight years old)

Comment: The teacher is reinforcing prior learning, eliciting responses from students and providing supportive feedback to assist learners to correct and embellish their response.

Transcript: Chinese Year 9: Which one are you going to use?

- T: Now, think about this sentence. If I say ... um ... 'he is taller' which one are you going to use?
- S4: *Bijiao! Bijiao!* (comparative)
- S2: He is taller. *Bijiao*
- T: Okay, translate.
- S2: Er,.. *ta*,.. er ...would you say *tade* (his) ? No...
- T: *Ta bijiao*...(he is, comparatively...)
- S2: Oh, *ta bijiao*...
- T: *Gao* (tall)
- S2: *Gao*.
- T: Okay. Now, next sentence: He is taller than his father.
- S2: Er,... *Ta bi*... (he is...compared to...)
- S7: *Ta baba* (his father)
- S2: *Ta baba...da*...(his father...is bigger)
- T: *Gao* (taller)
- S2: *Gao*.
- T: Very good. So everyone, are you clear?
- Ss: Yeah.

Comment: The teacher is attempting to reinforce the difference between two related grammar structures. However, in attempting to elicit responses from students the teacher often intervenes and as a result the students defer to the teacher and mimic the teacher's responses, there is no generation of student language, and no attempt to address learners' understanding of the grammatical concept under investigation.