Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide

Practice example

Context statement

UniSA | Research Centre for Languages and Cultures

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

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	Context statement
Language	Indonesian
Level	Year 9

The following is an example of a context statement for a program designed for a particular group of students in a metropolitan high school. It describes the learners, the teacher and the school in which the program is to be taught.

| **Programming and planning**
Planning language programs
Long-term and short-term planning
Planning for conceptual learning
The place of context in planning programs
Scoping and sequencing of learning
Planning interactions
Personalising learning experience | Planning a language program involves planning for the learning of individuals in particular settings. The planning process is supported by the writing of a context statement that identifies who the learners are, who the teacher is, the school in which the program is to be taught, and how each of these influences the learning environment. This ensures that the program developed reflects the particular learners, their linguistic and cultural identities and their experiences. The teacher may also identify overarching aims and student learning outcomes, to focus the unit, build on past learning and provide links and connections across units of work and work with other teachers within the school. |

Year 9 Indonesian Long Term Program

Context statement

This year long program is based on a program taught at a large northern metropolitan high school in Adelaide.

Class profile
The class consisted of 23 students: 14 boys and 9 girls. While this is not necessarily significant in itself, the gender identity of the group very quickly emerged as a factor in the group's engagement with languages learning for two main reasons: interests and approach to learning/interaction.

The boys were largely interested in sports, cars, technology and girls! The girls were largely interested in relationships, sports, image and appearances and, to a lesser extent, boys (though certainly not in the boys of their own age group).

In general, the girls were engaged, positive and willing to participate and keen to establish a close relationship with me. The boys, again a generalisation, were largely uninterested in language learning, keen about physical activities and movement around the room, eager to impress each other and the girls and, while not keen about a close relationship with me, they were also keen to impress me, particularly with their humour.

The group consisted largely of students of Anglo-Saxon/Celtic background; one student of Spanish background (able to interact with family in Spanish); one student of Croatian background (able to understand but not use Croatian) and one student of Italian background (with limited understanding of grandparents' Italian). Approximately eight students had previously studied Indonesian during their primary schooling i.e. from Reception to Year 7.

Aim/goals
My aim in designing the program was to generate maximum engagement from the group, as they felt quite disengaged following their Year 8 language learning experiences. It was necessary to establish early on the nature and extent of students' language and culture knowledge and I did this using a diagnostic assessment task (Unit 1).

The program needed to connect with students in the here and now of their lives, as many expressed a lack of perceived relevance of Indonesian now and in the future: they had little or no desire to visit or work in Indonesia. Hence, many of the units focus on life in Australia, and offer a comparative perspective with Indonesia, and the relationship between Australia and Indonesia. This was also important given that Year 9 is possibly the last time students would be exposed to Asia during their secondary schooling and it is an opportunity to consider their place as Australians in the region.

The program is designed to raise awareness of the place and nature of language and culture in everyday life, for students and others. The units begin with a focus on self and an expanding circle of contexts from 'home' to 'neighbourhood' (and in particular the Asian region) before shifting to the more abstract notions of teenage life (outside of school), and storytelling.

The program is written with use of questions because this helped me consider what may be of interest to students and to connect with the questions they face in their lives, creating an immediate point of engagement. Year 9s are developing views and opinions on a range of matters particularly related to their immediate lives and the questions may act as an entry point for them.

Connections across the program
There are three major connecting features across the program.
1. There is an underlying orientation to explore the interconnections between Australia and Indonesia and challenge assumptions about the nature of Indonesia and Indonesian people e.g. assumptions that Indonesians are poor, unclean and not to be trusted.

2. The program seeks to develop a critical disposition: students are required to explore different perspectives and begin to develop a critical language learning and literacy approach to language and culture through study of a range of texts.

3. The program includes a holistic reflective task: time has been allocated for students to make entries in a journal (they are also free to write at any time when they have completed set tasks). They are encouraged to respond to specific questions and also to enter any further observations, reflections and evidence of language and culture learning.

Students are invited during the year to reflect on their entries in order to a) take stock of their own learning and b) gain a sense of their learning as cumulative.