Australian Government

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

Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide

Practice example

On the need for change

Research Centre for
**Languages
and Cultures**

UniSA

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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	A reflection on the need for change
Language	Indonesian
Level	Middle school
Teacher	Joachim Cohen (NSW)
	The following is an example of a teacher's reflection on the need for change in languages teaching and the orientation required from the teacher to adapt his practices: from a new teacher of Indonesian in a middle school setting.

| **Evaluating language programs**
Evaluation as an ongoing process
Evaluation in context
Purpose and scope of evaluation
Evaluation as inquiry | The teacher reflects on how the process of developing a unit of study to incorporate intercultural language learning has had interesting personal and teaching outcomes. The teacher sees himself as having become somewhat disenchanted in having to revisit the perennial question of the value of teaching and learning another language: he has become convinced that the intercultural stance has given him a more meaningful way of teaching language. He acknowledges the importance of questioning in teacher practice, in developing knowledge and learning, in interaction, debate and as an assessment tool, but also for the personal growth of the student. |

This teacher reflection is from a classroom-based investigation report

Indonesian: Year 8

Reflection on need for change

Before completing this investigation I felt as though I was a little lost in my role as a language teacher; I was continually facing the battle of 'Why are we learning Indonesian and about Indonesians?' This process has given me renewed determination to ensure students not only gain further linguistic skills, but also essential intercultural growth. The changing face of Australia makes this process essential especially in a school such as mine, steeped in Anglo-Australian culture, and somewhat unwilling to accept or merely tolerate change and difference.

Unfortunately, I do feel somewhat false in making all the comments and statements that I have, with only limited proof and experience. I deeply regret missed opportunities to have had more meaningful data and as a result more concrete conclusions. This program has, however, given me the inspiration and drive to explore the intercultural further. This is because I can see the results of my hard work in action and I would like to do justice to all the research and knowledge passed on to me as part of this program. If this experience were just about personal growth and a change in practice, then it has succeeded, and I am now a walking, talking advocate of the intercultural who will endeavour to spread the message amongst my peers about the benefits of this approach.

By far the most meaningful personal outcome from this investigation for me has been the understanding of the importance of questioning in the teaching process. Questions have the ability to alter what a student takes away from a learning experience, and indeed can promote personal growth. Questions whilst an effective tool for assessment of learning, can be used to much greater effect in pursuing interaction, debate and critical thinking in a classroom environment: they can promote personal growth as well as growth of knowledge. As teachers, we always have to face the hurdle of behaviour management, and this is not made any easier by having to ask students to do that horrible thing called 'thinking for themselves'- yet, the value of it, in terms of positive learning outcomes, makes this approach worthwhile. Certainly, pursuing this style of questioning and lesson structure is of the utmost importance and it will remain at the forefront of my mind.

I anticipate the personal growth and development of students and the tolerance and strengthening of identity they will receive through the intercultural approach to be invaluable; it provides teachers with an avenue to the ultimate destination, which is providing students with an ability to grow, blossom and find strength within themselves.