



**Australian Government**

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

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

**Practice example**

---

**Evaluating practice**

© Commonwealth of Australia 2008

This work is copyright. It may be reproduced in whole or in part for study or training purposes subject to the inclusion of an acknowledgment of the source and no commercial usage or sale. Reproduction for purposes other than those indicated above, requires the prior written permission from the Commonwealth. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Attorney General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 or posted at <http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>.

#### Disclaimer

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

#### Acknowledgment

This work was funded by 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.

<b>Example</b>	An evaluation of practice
<b>Language</b>	Japanese
<b>Level</b>	Year 8
<b>Teacher</b>	Michelle Spinks (Victoria) The following is an example of a teacher evaluating her own teaching and the students' reactions to a unit of work designed and delivered using intercultural language teaching principles.

<p><b>Evaluating language programs</b>  Evaluation as an ongoing process  Evaluation in context  Purpose and scope of evaluation  Evaluation as inquiry</p>	<p>The teacher evaluates her teaching, noting the students' learning progress and changing her own practice from delivering and eliciting information, to designing lessons to give students time for discussion in pairs and small groups before class discussions, so as to allow time for analysis and growth of understanding. She notes her own learning in carrying out the new teaching tasks: that students needed to be guided in how to think about their own culture and that she needed to reframe and to narrow the scope of the cultural topic to be more within the reach of student's experience. The teacher also noted, as she allowed students more time for analysis and discussion, that students were more engaged in the lessons. She also begins to formulate ideas for implementing change in future programs.</p>
---	---

## Japanese: Year 8

### Teaching practice

I tried to use a range of materials in this topic to foster intercultural teaching. Firstly, the students watched a video on traditional Japanese families; it showed the roles of the various family members and what kinds of attitudes they had. Students then watched some footage of a more modern Japanese family and they were well able to see the difference. Students were asked firstly to compare these two families. Following that, students were asked to think about their own family situation and make further comparisons.

Secondly, the students were asked to look at Japanese-style houses and consider how these compared to their own living arrangements. Students were given a comic from their textbook written entirely in Japanese. As a class, we discussed the cultural aspects of the comic after reading it. Students were given reflection questions on this task.

My personal observations were also noted not only on the students' progress but mainly on how I was presenting information and designing the lessons.

### Evaluation

Students seem to enjoy the aspects of family studied in this unit and they enjoyed discussions about family customs and traditions. Exploring the cultural elements in addition to the language added more enthusiasm to their language learning. Students were able to form opinions based on the topics discussed.

I found that some students had never really reflected on their own 'culture' before and at times, this was a challenge. Students found it very difficult to comment on 'Australian families' as a whole as they lacked awareness of society as a whole. I needed to narrow the scope down to simply making comparisons to their own family, or families they knew.

I think with this unit I definitely made a shift from a language focus to a general family theme. It was no longer about teaching how to 'talk about your family', it was also about understanding your family and other families and realising that not all families are the same. In a deeper sense, students were asked to think about their own family culture.

I also allowed students more freedom to work things out and discuss them with each other before sharing ideas as a class. This created deeper learning as students were able to become more analytical during these tasks.

I also believe that allowing time for discussion was very valuable. The students were interested in finding out about Japanese customs and we explored these further than I had planned at first.

Students were more engaged in this topic than they had been in the past. By this, I mean that students were having conversations amongst themselves about the topic, and were interested in other students' opinions and families.

Next time I teach this unit I would like to discuss Australian families a little more. Students were able to make comparisons with their own families but found it difficult to know about others. I thought this unit could begin with an exploration of the different kinds of families within our society so they have more knowledge of Australian families as a basis. I am conscious that this will make the unit longer and this will need to be built into the semester plan.

I would like to extend my knowledge of how to ask 'reflection questions' and know more about how to formulate these in different ways. I would like to facilitate further my ability to help students reflect and evaluate what they have learnt.

If I was to do this project again, I would create more opportunities for collection of student data and I would have liked to have surveyed the students at the end of the unit to see directly what they thought themselves.