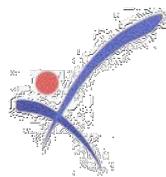**Professional Standards Project**

LANGUAGES

Teacher participant investigation

Janelle Charlton

French and German, Years 7 to 12

New South Wales

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.

TEACHERS' CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATIONS

Welcome to the examples of teachers' classroom-based investigations that have been drawn from their work in the Professional Standards Project. Teachers were asked to conduct an investigation into their own practice based on their work with the Standards.

A range of investigation topics and processes from across the states and territories of Australia have been chosen, although not all investigations that teachers provided have been posted on this website. These examples are provided for you to consider and use, while expanding your own understanding of the Standards and their use in the teaching and learning of languages.

However, you will not find examples of programming or practice that you can instantly adopt and use in your teaching. That was never the intention.

Furthermore, you will not find 'best practice' or exemplars of definitive investigations of languages teaching and learning.

So, what kinds of materials can you expect?

- You will find ideas about practice that teachers have investigated. You can use these ideas to stimulate further thinking when working in your own context.

- You will find some outstanding approaches to thinking about practice that advance our understanding of how to make teaching and learning languages a rich and effective learning experience for students, and a satisfying professional experience for teachers.

- You will also find professional educators striving to make sense of their work in teaching and learning languages. You will find a great deal from which you can learn.

What these programs show are 'teachers at work', examining their practices and pedagogies in relation to the Standards. The teachers responded to their particular contexts, the curriculum and assessment frameworks in which they work, the particular demands they and their students face in languages education, and their own 'learning-by-doing' from using the Standards in teaching and learning languages. The details about the specific context and the elaboration of the teachers' investigations give professional insights into the interaction of thinking and practice.

Reading across the full set of investigations you will get a sense of the ideas and issues that the Standards raise about languages teaching for teachers, for students, for whole schools, and for communities, across languages and age groups, and in the range of contexts in which languages are taught in Australia.

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS PROJECT
CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATION REPORT**

TEACHER	SCHOOL	LANGUAGE	YEAR LEVELS
Janelle Charlton charltonj@knox.nsw.edu.au	Knox Grammar School Pacific Highway Wahroonga NSW 2076 Phone: 9487 0154	French and German	7 to 12

CONTEXT

I chose to investigate how I promote the learning of Languages and Cultures (LAC) in my community. I wanted to reflect on what I am doing at the moment and to formalise this process (so that it is less *ad hoc*). I will be considering this in relation to these standards:

- **Professional relationships standard**: Accomplished LAC teachers are part of a professional educational community and they establish professional relationships with other LAC teachers, with teachers in other disciplines, with students, with parents or care-givers, and with school communities.

- **Active engagement with wider context standard**: LAC teaching is fundamentally about relationships to wider contexts and the ability to connect the local to the global

- **Advocacy standard**: Accomplished languages and cultures teachers are advocates for language learning, intercultural communication, intercultural sensitivity, and linguistic and cultural diversity. They are advocates for languages both with and for students, school, and communities. They also engage with the wider community to promote languages.

I want to discover how I can raise the profile and valuing of languages in my community. I feel that languages are undervalued, as numbers of elective students are low compared to other subject areas. Students often do languages homework last, and we are often targeted if hours of delivery are changed.

AREA OF INVESTIGATION

I examined the current way I advocate for and promote the profile of languages and cultures learning by listing and evaluating the methods used. At the same time I considered my professional relationships and my engagement with wider contexts and recorded areas for improvement.

Key question: How do I increase the status and understanding of the importance of languages and cultures learning in my community?

I chose this area because I feel that languages should have a higher profile in my school.

I wanted to examine the strategies that I have used to address this and to pinpoint areas for improvement or new directions.

How do I promote languages in my school (the role of LAC teachers in advocating for themselves)?

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

I tabulated some of the strategies I use for advocating LAC learning and identified connections and relationships. I then reflected to some extent on relationships that may need strengthening. I set a timeline for these initiatives to formalise the procedures, to help me clarify exactly what I do and when I do it. I then documented in more detail my reflections on five of these strategies.

The focus of my investigation is to examine the success of these initiatives and/or to set targets for improvement. Is there a new initiative that I can introduce?

DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

I brainstormed the question: How do I promote languages in my school?

I listed the strategies I use and the target audience.

	Strategy/Action	Who
1	Information evenings Talks to Years 8 to 11	Parents and students
2	Reports in school newsletters/ magazines News from the target country/publicity about events	Students and parents and staff and school community
3	Exchange program France and Germany	Students and parents and global communities
4	Language Merits	Students and parents
5	*Incursions* (special in-house events) Languages Day Workshops J Club Film Festival Boules competition	Students and other LAC teachers and other communities of users of the target language and school community
6	Excursions	Students
7	Department report for Headmaster	Whole school community

8	Participation in community events (e.g. Prep School Day)	Whole school community
9	Participation in in-service courses and sharing with colleagues	Other LAC teachers
10	Participation in curriculum groups (e.g. Heads of Departments)	Other teachers, School Executive

FINDINGS

I then reflected on each of these strategies, and their success, as well as areas for improvement. I have included detailed reflections below for the first five strategies.

	Strategy/Action	**Direction**
1	Information evenings Talks to Years 8 to 11	PowerPoint/Leaflet was first implemented in 2008, and was well received. The YouTube video was a good ice-breaker. I referred to the *Go8* brochure (bonus points for languages at eight universities). Ideas for improvement include: • Use the MLTA model for further ideas. • Leaflet – print in colour – take home. • Print the *Go8* brochure. This is my main opportunity to 'sell' to parents. In addition to this, I visit each classroom (ten in 2008) to talk to each class about languages. I want to make more use of senior students to help me.
2	Reports in school newsletters/magazines News from the target country/publicity about events	We have numerous languages noticeboards along the corridor outside the languages classrooms. These are used to display news and items of interest. Reports are written about items of note for the weekly school newsletter (online). Recent examples include: exchange student opportunities and introductions, student success (scholarship winners), information about language activities (e.g. Language Day). I want to increase the frequency of these contributions — reports about incursions, winners of Language Merit awards. I intend to investigate the creation of a *Languages e-bulletin*. In addition to this information, we could include publicity about languages events, news articles, website suggestions …and ideas, contributions from students, including work in the target language, as well as contributions from OKGA – past students will be invited to send in their comments about how they have used languages in their lives.

3	Exchange program France and Germany	Knox has a reciprocal exchange program for 2 x Year 10 students in both France and Germany. I would like to extend this program to include a Japanese school.
		I need to publicise this event more widely (not just in the Year 10 classes). I will also ask the Knox participants to talk to the incoming Year 10 students after their exchange (and even the whole year group or at school assembly).
		I have applied to the Knox Parents Association (KPA) to fund an annual Year 11 KPA Languages and Cultures Scholarship for up to $8000 to allow one student to participate in a commercial exchange program at the end of Year 11.
4	Language Merits	Knox has Language Merit stickers. Once students have 3 stickers, they receive a Languages Merit Award. I need to encourage the Languages staff to increase the use of these stickers to reward good work and to promote feelings of success among students. Award winners can be advertised in our e-bulletin and/or school newsletter.
5	*Incursions* Languages Day Workshops J Club Film Festival Boules competition	In 2008 we have tried to increase the number of incursions (special in-house events). A) Our first Languages Day was a great event, and we now have ideas on how to improve this in future years: - Greater emphasis on students actually *doing* activities (rather than watching) - More food! - Improved publicity before the event - Lead-up events — perhaps a quiz? In 2008 we incorporated a poster competition — Languages Matter (this was an assessment task for which I have attached the task details). B) Inaugural Boules competition for Year 8 French students — this was fun, with a Rebel voucher as a prize for the winning pair. We will repeat this event in 2009. C) J Club — this is a newly established lunchtime club where students interested in all things Japanese can gather to play Japanese games, talk, etc. The parameters of this club are still being developed. *Note*: Our elective numbers into Year 9 in 2009 have increased by 50%, from fifteen in each language, to around twenty-five in German and Japanese, and thirty-two in French (i.e. two classes!). One of our main tasks in 2009 is to maintain and build on this enthusiasm.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

I was able to see the extent of my capacity to advocate, and I have a number of ideas to improve this process. The direction forward and timeline are outlined in the table below.

	Strategy/Action	Who	Direction	Timeline
1	Information evenings Talks to Year 8 to 11	Parents and students	PowerPoint Brochure Use senior students	Terms 1/ 2
2	Reports in school newsletters/magazines News from the target country/publicity about events	Students and parents and staff and school community	Frequency Use of noticeboard Contributions from students and OKGA – create Languages *e-bulletin*	Start in Term 4, 2008 Ongoing
3	Exchange program France and Germany	Students and parents and global communities	Increase publicity Exchange student talk to Year group	Advertise in Term 4 Select in Term1
4	Language Merits	Students and parents	Increase use Notify winners in *Knoxonian* or at Year Assembly	Ongoing
5	*Incursions* Languages Day Workshops J Club Film Festival Boules competition	Students and other LAC teachers and other communities of users of the target language and school community	Target: Year 8 *Note*: increased numbers in Year 9 electives	Schedule in Term 4 Advertise Reports — ongoing
6	Excursions	Students	Not many in 2008 —Greater participation and forward planning	Schedule in Term 4
7	Department report for Headmaster	Whole school community	Wider publication?	Term 4
8	Participation in community events (e.g. Prep School Day)	Whole school community	Establish greater ties with Prep School Invite native speakers	Term 3 Prep Languages Day
9	Participation in in-service courses and sharing with colleagues	Other LAC teachers	Encourage attendance at courses Share with colleagues at department meetings or whole staff meetings	Term 1 — book in courses Organise department meetings every 3 weeks

10	Participation in curriculum groups (e.g. Heads of Departments)	Other teachers, School Executive	Increase active participation Email Executive with language news	Ongoing

MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS

- Information leaflet – university bonus for language study – website link: http://www.go8.edu.au/storage/go8_agreements//Go8_LOTE_Incentive_ Schemes.pdf

- Link to funny video – why learn a language: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT86iWiH2mI

- Copy of Languages Matter Year 7 assessment task + feedback sheet (attached at end)

EVALUATION

I have learned that the Knox Languages Department does many things to advocate and promote language learning. This investigation has been very helpful as I now have a clearer picture of the strategies we use, as well as some goals for improvement, and some new ideas. The next step is to present this information to my colleagues for feedback and further suggestions. It will then be time to implement the changes, and then to reflect on their success. The increased numbers in Year 9 in 2009 are significant, and we will need to reflect on how this was achieved. I intend to survey the current Year 8 students to see if we can pinpoint the strategies that were successful to encourage so many students to want to continue with their language studies.

REFLECTION

I was heartened to see the extent of the advocacy that the Languages Department carries out. I am much clearer about the time-frame for the actions and I will print out this table and place it above my desk, so that I can refer to it on a regular basis. I feel more confident in presenting this information to my staff and encouraging their increased contribution to these actions. I have raised the idea of an e-bulletin and one staff member has already volunteered to run with this idea.

 Knox Grammar School

Year 7 Languages 2008 Term 2 Assessment Task

ICT — Why should I learn a language?

You live a new life for every new language you speak.
If you know only one language, you live only once.
(Czech proverb)

2008 has been named the Year of Foreign Languages by UNESCO. To promote this year around the world they have come up with the slogan 'Languages Matter'.

Your Term 2 Assessment Task will be based around the idea that 'Languages Matter' and why it is important to study one.

The Task: Choose one language you are studying this year.

1.   Create a **Poster** on your laptop to promote the study of this language.

2.   Write a **Rationale** of approximately 300 words (using Microsoft Word).
      In this Rationale, you should:

   •   explain the design of your poster: your choice of particular images or colours,
       your slogan

   •   outline your reasons why languages matter.

3. Include a Bibliography of websites visited.

Some reasons you may wish to address are listed below:
   •   Family and friends
   •   Work, study or research
   •   Travel abroad
   •   Culture
   •   Religion
   •   Challenging yourself
   •   One language is never enough!
   •   To understand your own language and culture
   •   To keep your mind healthy
   •   To better understand other cultures

Here are some websites to help get you started:

http://www.vistawide.com/languages/why_languages.htm

http://goinside.com/99/2/concepts.html

http://www.omniglot.com/language/why.htm

http://www.essortment.com/all/speakforeignla_rvsp.htm

http://news.smh.com.au/national/aussie-kids-need-a-second-language-20080523-2hey.html

http://www.adfl.org/resources/lang_brochure.pdf

TASK CHECKLIST

Use this list to check you have completed the task properly.

Poster checklist		
Have I included some key phrases from the language I have chosen to grab the reader's attention?	yes	no
Have I included images that are relevant to why languages are important?	yes	no
Have I checked my spelling, including capital letters?	yes	no
Have I used a variety of colours and images?	yes	no
Rationale checklist		
Have I written approximately 300 words for my Rationale (not including bibliography)?	yes	no
Have I explained clearly the design of my poster?	yes	no
Have I explained **my** reasons why languages matter?	yes	no
Have I included a bibliography?	yes	no

Submission of Task:

You will be required to hand in a **hard copy** of your poster (A4) and your Rationale to your teacher by **Friday, 13 June (week 7)**.

Year 7 Language 2008   Name: ....

Year 7 ICT Assessment Marking Guidelines

Total Marks (10) – assessment value 10%

Outcomes assessed:

4.MBC: 1 Demonstrates understanding of the interdependence of language and culture.

4.MBC: 2 Demonstrates knowledge of key features of the culture of French/German/Japanese-speaking communities.

Poster checklist		
Have I included some key phrases from the language I have chosen to grab the reader's attention?	yes	no
Have I included images that are relevant to why languages are important?	yes	no
Have I checked my spelling, including capital letters?	yes	no
Have I used a variety of colours and images?	yes	no
Rationale checklist		
Does my Rationale have at least 300 words? (not including bibliography)	yes	no
Have I explained clearly the design of my poster?	yes	no
Have I explained **my** reasons why languages matter?	yes	no
Have I included a bibliography?	yes	no

Poster Criteria:

	1 Low	2	3	4	5 High
• Demonstrates excellent use of technology • Demonstrates accuracy in using the target language where appropriate • Has completed all sections of the task as per the instructions					

Rationale Criteria:

	1 Low	2	3	4	5 High
• Demonstrates depth and breadth in the treatment of the task through the presentation of relevant information • Has completed all sections of the task as per the instructions • Manipulates the information with a degree of authenticity and creativity					

Comments

....

....

....

....

Teacher Signature .... Date ....