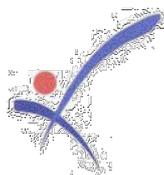**Professional Standards Project**

LANGUAGES

Teacher participant investigation

Una Leed

Indonesian, Years 6 to 7

Western Australia

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
Una Leed	School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE) PO Box 455 Leederville WA 6903	Indonesian	6 to 7

CONTEXT

This investigation involved a group of Year 6 to 7 students from a small, coastal, rural school, one and a half hours north of Perth. Fishing is the main industry. Many families are transient, because of fishing seasons and the availability of work.

Most students have been learning Indonesian for 2_ years via video conferencing (1x 40-minute weekly session) and an online delivery platform called Centra (1 x 40-minute weekly session). The online computer lessons are a recent initiative as the school previously received only video conferencing lessons.

The racial mix at this school is not particularly diverse. No students have an immediate Asian or Indigenous cultural background, and all are native speakers of English. The school has been positive about second language learning. Supervision of the students at the school end is inconsistent as the supervisor also runs the library and is not always available. The students are generally self-motivated and the learning area is quite well organised with support materials such as charts and posters on display.

AREA OF INVESTIGATION

In my current job at SIDE it is difficult and time-consuming to get to know students on a social and cultural level during lesson time, especially when groups can sometimes be larger than fifteen and communication is via online lessons/TV or voice only. During online lessons I am unable to see students' faces. They appear on screen as a list of computer numbers, which I then compare with a class list (e.g. Computer 12 = Jack).

Students must indicate their desire to speak, answer questions, or interact by raising a 'virtual' hand. There is a time delay for voice to travel over the Internet and conversations are often stilted with misunderstandings common.
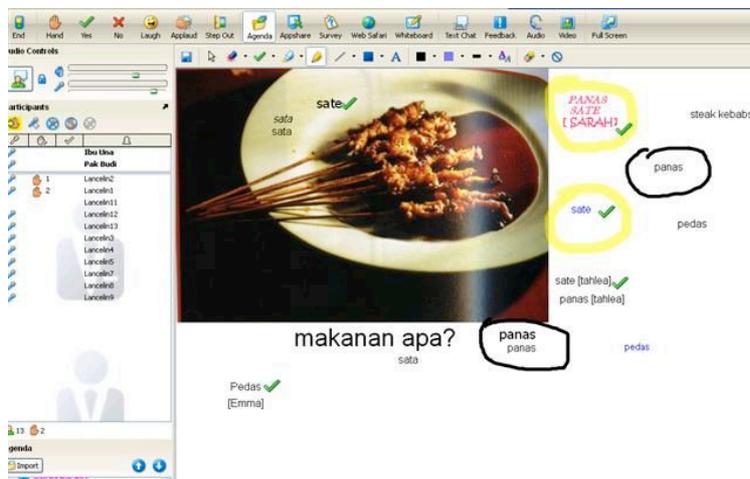
The Centra online classroom

During video conferencing lessons, students' vision of me is large and clear on the TV monitor, but my view of them is blurry and I am unable to determine who is speaking unless students identify themselves each time they speak. It is impossible to see expressions and facial features without zooming in — a slow and somewhat disruptive process that I tend to use only for group work or assessment tasks. In both online and video conferencing scenarios I cannot mark 'over the shoulder' or move around the room and chat with students casually in order to develop a relationship and get to know their characters and interests.

The video conferencing classroom

As a result of the above scenario, it was an easy decision to choose my area of investigation. I looked at the Ethics and Responsibility Standard, which says that teachers 'need to have a developed knowledge of their current students and strategies at their disposal to get to know new groups each term'. In order to develop my knowledge of this group of Year 6 to 7 students I designed a task intended to help me to profile the students by finding out about their social and cultural backgrounds, their home life, aspirations, and family history. With this knowledge I hope to improve my relationship with students and to establish more trust and respect for different values within our class and community. I hope to use the knowledge gained in my planning for teaching and learning.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

I designed a two-part profiling task in the form of a simple survey. I discussed my idea with several colleagues and asked them if they would be interested in trialling the task too. They were keen to do so. I enquired about the sorts of things they would like to know about their students in order to plan lessons and I used some of these ideas in the task. I brainstormed my current knowledge of my particular group of Year 6 to 7 students. Sadly, my current knowledge was very limited. Although I had taught this group 2 years ago for a year, I only started teaching them again in Semester 2, 2008: I knew that:

- Several students had visited Bali recently and therefore could add their knowledge of cultural aspects to class discussions.

- One student has learning difficulties and struggles to read English.

- Several students have siblings in other classes who are learning Indonesian.

- A small group of students are highly motivated and intelligent.

- The class as a whole love to play games and enjoy competition.

Before presenting the profiling task, I converted it into a four-part PowerPoint presentation, which is easily imported into an online lesson. The students really enjoy working on the computer and this meant they could complete the task online and I could capture the results immediately. I have never surveyed students in this manner before, although informal discussions have taken place about students' families and backgrounds when working on these topics in the target language.

Note: In designing the profiling task I deliberately did **not** ask a range of questions in the target language, despite the fact that a number of students would have been capable of understanding and responding in kind. The reason for this was that I wanted full and complete answers from **all** students. I did not want any student to limit their information or change their responses because of their inability to express themselves in Indonesian.

I presented the task to students in one teaching session, letting students know that the results of this survey would help me to plan activities that would be of interest to them as well as understand the things they were interested in and the activities they disliked.

DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

I gathered the data by capturing and printing out the completed profiles. The students were generally keen to complete the profiles, with many giving quite detailed answers. It was interesting to note that I was able to make some assessment of the students' literacy levels in English from their responses — this is helpful information, which will affect the manner in which I help students in their learning.

After data collection I read through the tasks, gaining a picture of the students as individuals and the group as a whole. I constructed a series of graphs to show student interests, languages spoken by students, and family origins. Apart from the information I have gained about students, I can also use these in my teaching of the target language, revising language such as 'saya berbahasa…', 'pada akhir minggu saya suka…'

Sample 1: Student Cultural Backgrounds (Keluarga saya berbahasa…):
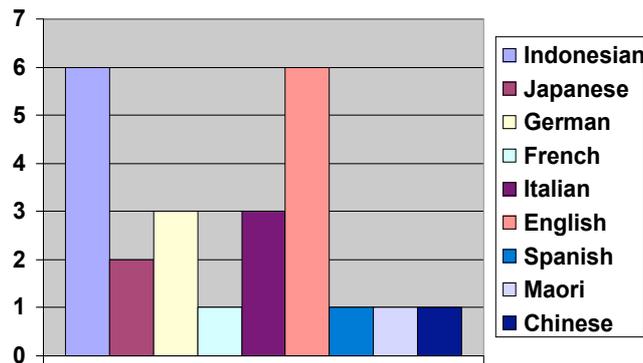
Sample 2: Student Interests and pastimes (Pada akhir minggu saya suka…):
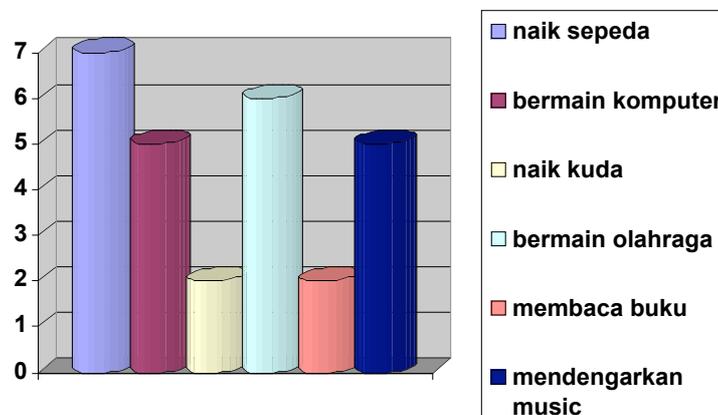
FINDINGS

I learnt a huge amount about my students and can include only a small amount here. As a group:

- 100% of this group of students were born in Australia
- 50% have parents or grandparents born overseas (England, Ireland, Germany, NZ)
- 50% have family members who speak another language
- 33% of students are able to speak or have learnt more than two languages
- 97% enjoy learning a second language
- 97% are keen to visit/have already visited Indonesia (some interesting comments here — 'because it sounds like a lovely place except when it gets bombed', 'because I want to travel all over the world'.

As individuals:

- One student has really poor written literacy skills although he could understand the questions (e.g. juman = German, have a bubey = have a Barbie). The same student's favourite activities included 'cutting up in cars' and 'shooting cockies'.

- Another student has a really varied family background and has travelled to several countries. Her mother speaks three languages and her father can speak Maori. This student has always been a self-motivated language learner and this information helps to explain this positive attitude.

- A student who has shown ability in language learning but not a great attitude expresses that he is interested in sport, riding his bike, helping on the farm. He says he dislikes spelling and reading. He or his family have never travelled outside WA.

- Two students expressed concern about/lack of interest in visiting a country where 'you might get bombed up' or because it is a 'third world country'.

- One student said learning Indonesian 'is confusing' and that's why she doesn't like it.

In general, my profiling task informed me about:

- the literacy levels of students

- preferred learning styles

- attitudes to language learning

- attitudes to Indonesia and its people

- cultural backgrounds of students and their families

- students' interests and hobbies.

I can use this information to plan activities with sufficient scaffolding and support so that students will succeed. I can develop tasks and programs of work that take into consideration the above information and thus are of interest and relevant to students in this group.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

I found the responses to the profiling task extremely interesting. After several weeks I am still re-reading student responses with interest and purpose for my teaching. Ideas for using this information continue to occur to me as I reflect on the questions I asked and their responses.

I didn't expect that all my students would have been born in Australia. Compared to the cultural mix of many classrooms in Perth at present, and the relatively close location of this country town, this figure is surprising. I didn't expect that almost none of my students would have family members with Asian links or background.

I was happy with my investigation design for the year level with which it was used and was able to collect the data I was looking for.

MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS

Below are two samples of completed profiling tasks. Sample 1 is from a Year 6 female student. Before the task I knew she was an academically able and confident student who was positive about learning and participated effectively in groups and by herself. I also knew her older sister, as I had taught her last year. I was aware she would go to a private school in Perth after Year 7 and that her family owned a farm in the local area. This was all I knew about her apart from her assessed ability in Indonesian.

STUDENT PROFILE EXAMPLE 1 (Part 1)

1. I am a: laki-laki ☐   perempuan ☑

2. I was born in: Australia ☑ overseas ☐ where? _____

3. I have lived *most* of my life in:
   Australia ☑   overseas _____ ☐

4. I can speak/have learnt some of these languages: <u>English,</u>
   <u>German</u>, <u>Italian</u>, <u>Indonesian</u>, <u>Japanese</u>

5. I have been to these schools:
   - <u>Calingiri</u> (my current school)
   - <u>"   "</u> (language I learnt there was <u>Indonesian</u>
   - <u>"   "</u> (language I learnt there was <u>"   "</u>)

6. I have been to these countries ✈:
   - <u>Phuket</u>
   - _____

7. I have been to Indonesia (this includes Bali!) 🇮🇩 Yes ☐ No ☐

8. I enjoy learning another language. Yes ☑ No ☐
   - Why? <u>Because it's fun. I want to visit those places one day</u>

9. In my family, these people were born in another country:
   - <u>Mum</u> born in <u>England</u>
   - <u>Nanny</u> born in <u>Ireland</u>
   - <u>Pa</u> born in <u>Germany</u>

10. In my family, these people speak another language:
    - <u>Pa</u> speaks <u>German</u>
    - <u>Nanny</u> speaks <u>Irish</u>

11. I would like to visit Indonesia. Yes ☑   No ☐
    - Why? <u>Because it sounds like a lovely place to visit except when it gets bombed up.</u>

(Part 2)

1. My favourite subject at school is *Indonesian* because *we get out of doing other boring work.*

2. Something I really don't like to do in class is *Read my books*

3. After school I enjoy *Going on the computer.*

4. On the weekends I always *Play hockey + go to football.*

5. With my family I like to *Go to Perth.*

6. My favourite thing to do on my own is *Listen to my music.*

7. My favourite thing to do with my friends is *Talk + walk.*

8. In class, I like to work: by myself ✓   in a group ☐

9. I learn Indonesian best by: listening ✓   drawing ☐ writing ☐
reading ☐ talking with a friend ☐ _____ ☐

10. My favourite part of Indonesian lessons is *Playing the games on languages onlinr.*

I now have a wealth of information about this student, her cultural background, interests, intracultural experiences, and personal history. In fact, while she was completing the task, I chatted with her about her aspirations for travel as well as her wish to continue studying a language in secondary school.

STUDENT PROFILE EXAMPLE 2 (Part 1)

1. I am a: laki-laki ✓   perempuan ☐

2. I was born in: Australia ✓ overseas ☐ where? _____

3. I have lived *most* of my life in:
        Australia ✓   overseas ☐ _____ ☐

4. I can speak/have learnt some of these languages: English,
_____ Indonesian, japan _____, juman _____,

5. I have been to these schools:
   • _cuss school_____ (my current school)
   • _____ (language I learnt there was _____)
   • _____ (language I learnt there was _____)

6. I have been to these countries ✈ :
   • _tasie_____
   • _____

7. I have been to Indonesia (this includes Bali!) [flag] Yes ☑ No ☐

8. I enjoy learning another language. Yes ☑ No ☐
   • Why? _____

9. In my family, these people were born in another country:
   • _____aus_____ born in __No_____
   • _____ born in _____
   • _____ born in _____

10. In my family, these people speak another language:
    • _____NO won_____ speaks _____
    • _____ speaks _____

11. I would like to visit Indonesia. Yes ☑   No ☐
    • Why? ____✓____ because i want to _____

Part 2

1. My favourite subject at school is _____sport_____ because
_____

2. Something I really don't like to do in class is _____english_____
_____

3. After school I enjoy _____moroto bike ridding_____
_____

4. On the weekends I always
_____go shooting_____
_____

5. With my family I like to
_____have a bubey_____
_____

6. My favourite thing to do on my own is ___shot cockes_____
_____

7. My favourite thing to do with my friends is ___cut up in cars_____
_____

8. In class, I like to work: by myself ☐   in a group ☑

9. I learn Indonesian best by: listening ☑   drawing ☐ writing ☐
reading ☐ talking with a friend ☑ _____ ☐
10. My favourite part of Indonesian lessons is
_____bingo_____

Again, this completed task informed me that the student has a relatively low level of literacy for his age and enjoys physically challenging and social rather than solitary activities. When I asked him about his answer in Part 1, Question 4 (I can speak these languages…), he said his cousin had told him how to say hello in German and he once went to a school in Perth for 2 weeks where they taught Japanese. It was great that he felt he had acquired some language from another country but it is doubtful that he had the opportunity to experience or develop any cultural and intercultural understandings.

EVALUATION

This was a relatively straightforward investigation to do. I developed the profiling task after brainstorming the various aspects I felt would be useful to know about students and assembling them in a survey format that was simple to complete and varied in nature. The students were keen to complete the profiling task. Being able to capture their work electronically ensured quick and easy gathering of information. It was a valuable exercise because of the wide-ranging information collected. The real value of this task to my students will be seen in the coming months as I incorporate the information I have gathered in the discussions and tasks I develop, as well as the way in which I relate to students and they relate to each other.

I would like to develop a profiling task that would suit younger students or students who have a low level of literacy in their own language. This could incorporate recording student stories orally.

REFLECTION

I understand now the importance of each student's story — 'their intracultural and intercultural experiences, their personal experiences, their relationships and interactions, their motivations and their aspirations' (PSP). All these factors influence their participation and ability to learn in my class.

I understand now that each of my students is a unique and special person who brings to my classroom and to their learning a whole history of social and intracultural events. These events, if shared and exploited in planned learning activities, can enrich and inform my thinking and that of the students. The trust that will develop as a result of this sharing of experiences will enable students to develop respect for different values within cultures.

I understand now that being aware of 'learner differences' encompasses a whole lot more than being aware of differences in *academic ability*. By recognising and celebrating cultural and social differences, I now have the opportunity to build a truly inclusive classroom.

I was motivated to do this investigation because I felt I did not know very much at all about my students, apart from a few snippets of information about their sporting interests, pets, and families collected anecdotally over several months. Because of the information I have now gathered, I have a more complete picture of my students and can use this information in various ways, not only to understand who my students are and where they come from, but also to advance their skills in the target language. The immediacy and recency of the information students have given will mean the learning tasks I develop will be relevant and interesting to them.

In the future I will always profile my students at the start of each year and I will also share this technique with colleagues to help them to get to know their students. I feel that I am now noticing more about my students' interactions, reactions, and contributions during lessons. I am asking more questions, listening more attentively to their answers, and the students are responding warmly and positively to my interest with questions of their own.

STUDENT PROFILE 2008

Nama: _____   Kelas: _____   Sekolah: _____

1. I am a: laki-laki � ☐   perempuan ☐ ☐

2. I was born in: Australia ☐   overseas 🌏 ☐ where? _____

3. I have lived *most* of my life in:

    Australia ☐   overseas 🌏 _____ ☐

4. I can speak/have learnt some of these languages: <u>English,</u>
    _____, _____, _____, _____

5. I have been to these schools:
    - _____ (my current school)
    - _____ (language I learnt there was _____)
    - _____ (language I learnt there was _____)

6. I have been to these countries ✈ :
    - _____
    - _____
    - _____

7. I have been to Indonesia (this includes Bali!) 🇮🇩 Yes ☐ No ☐

8. I enjoy learning another language. Yes ☐ No ☐
    - Why? _____

9. In my family, these people were born in another country:
    - _____ born in _____
    - _____ born in _____
    - _____ born in _____

10. In my family, these people speak another language:
   - _____ speaks _____
   - _____ speaks _____

11. I would like to visit Indonesia. Yes ☐   No ☐
   - Why? _____

• Student Profile Part 2

- **Nama: _____ Kelas: _____ Sekolah: _____**

-
- 1.My favourite subject at school is _____ because
  _____
  _____.

- 2. Something I really don't like to do in class is
  _____

- _____
  _____

-
- 3. After school I enjoy
  _____

- _____
  _____.

-
- 4. On the weekends I always
  _____
  _____
  _____.

-
- 5. With my family I like to
  _____
  _____
  _____.

-
- 6. My favourite thing to do on my own is
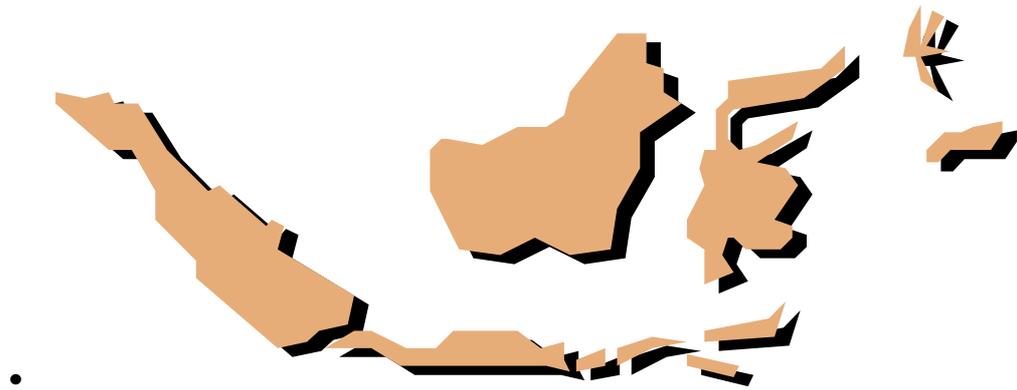 _____

- _____
  _____.

-
- 7. My favourite thing to do with my friends is
  _____

- _____
  _____.

-
- 8. In class, I like to work: by myself ☐ in a group ☐

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- 9. I learn Indonesian best by: listening ☐ drawing ☐ writing ☐ reading ☐ talking with a friend ☐ _____ ☐
- 10. My favourite part of Indonesian lessons is _____ _____
-
-
-