



Australian Government

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

Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide

Practice example

Adapting resources



UniSA

Research Centre for
**Languages
and Cultures**

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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	Using resources, questions and discussion Adapting resources
Language	German
Level	Year 7
Teacher	Marina Haslett (Victoria) This is an example of selecting a resource that allows the students to bring their own experience to the discussion and learning. The teacher notes also that intercultural teaching and learning needs discussion in English and that more factual cultural understanding is in the target language.

Resourcing and materials Selecting resources The purposes of resources <i>Adapting resources</i> Using resources critically Relating resources to each other Contemporary resources Learners as resources Developing a resource bank	Resources can be used as a starting point for conceptual understanding and as in this case can be supplemented to suit the teacher's goals and/or the students' interests/learning needs. The teacher asked students questions prior to their exposure to the video which enabled them to have a resource of their own to draw upon after viewing the video. This enabled the class to address concepts such as identity and stereotypes; these were not necessarily the intended purpose of the resource but were enabled by asking carefully planned questions both before and after the video. The teacher was able to achieve greater complexity of understanding and maximised the value of the resource by supplementing it with her own materials developed to connect the particular student group with the resource materials.
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German Year 7

The following unit of work is designed to be used at the junior level (preferably Year 7) in high school. Although the following questions are based specifically on the video series 'Hallo aus Berlin' (available from the Goethe Institute), similar questions could be used with any video which introduces students to the cultural values or way of life and thinking in German speaking countries.

Initially students will be exploring what makes up their *personal world*. This discussion would have already been broached in the English course, but this will now be explored from a different point of view during German classes.

It would be advantageous to introduce this material during Semester 2, so that students already have some basic knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure, in order to answer some basic questions related to the material in German.

The following key questions could be raised before the video series to direct students' thinking. They have to learn to notice, to compare, to respect and after experiencing differences also to reflect on what they have learned.

Key questions: *What is your ethnic background? What other languages are spoken in your extended family? Who makes up your family? Which suburb do you live in? What traditions/customs are important to your family? What ethnic groups are represented in your school/class?*

Since the aim of this unit of work is for students to reflect on and make comparisons with the German culture, they will be asked to answer the following questions, *before* viewing any material:

What do you expect German teenagers to be like?

Do you think they will be different from you? In what way? Why?

It is important for this intercultural learning to be in English (the students' first language), for them to really think deeply about their views and make important comparisons with their personal world, as there is no other specific forum for this knowledge acquisition in their school program.

The German questions based on each episode would be much simpler and would be based on cultural rather than intercultural information, due to language limitations at this level.

I chose this area of investigation because of a single incident at the beginning of 2007. We were covering the topic of German greetings in class and I was demonstrating the German art of handshaking, when a student called out 'That is just crazy!'

I suggested that it was maybe 'different' to what he was used to, rather than 'crazy'. With this project, I wanted simply to demonstrate that 'different' can sometimes be very interesting, even fascinating, rather than 'crazy'.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

1. We had an initial pre-video discussion about our ethnic backgrounds, the type of families we belong to, the suburbs in which we live, the traditions/customs which are important to us (ranging from Christmas, birthdays, name days to Grand Final celebrations).
2. Video No.1 was shown and then we had another discussion about what we had seen, before writing our own responses.
3. The oral work in German (cultural information from the video) was covered in a separate lesson.
4. There was a short introduction about 'Food', before video No.2 was shown, then a class discussion, after which the students wrote their responses.
5. The oral work in German was again covered in a separate lesson.

DATA GATHERED

1. The only data used was in the form of two written responses, although we did have discussions before video no.1 and after video no.2.
2. In hindsight, these discussions should have been recorded, because there were things that were not expressed verbally, that the students felt they could express in the written form and vice versa.
3. I analysed the data by reading through the responses and sorting them into categories of opinion.

FINDINGS

1. The pre-video class discussion was hesitant at first, but students warmed to the topic quickly when they realised there were no right or wrong answers. Their subsequent responses to the following

questions were mostly very thoughtful: **What do you expect German teenagers to be like? Do you think they will be different from you? In what way? Why?**

1/17 students (5.9%) wrote 'Everything in Germany is different.'

12/17 students (70.6%) mentioned a combination from the following list: different traditions/holidays, weather, food or sports.

2/17 students (11.8%) thought German teenagers 'might be the same or might be different'.

2/17 students (11.8%) felt German teenagers 'will be the same' as us.

2. After the first video about five teenagers living in Berlin, students answered the question: **In what way do young people in the video have a way of life that is similar to yours?**

2/17 students (11.8%) felt that there were no similarities whatsoever.

13/17 students (76.5%) listed activities that they had in common with the German teenagers e.g. shopping, having pets, doing homework, going on a bike ride, having fun, doing 'the same activities as us.'

1/17 students (5.9%) thought 'their life is exactly like ours.'

1/17 students (5.9%) felt they couldn't make a comparison because 'it was merely a children's show.'

3. Students had trouble with the question: **How has your view of German people changed? If so, then in what way?**

13/17 students (76.5%) felt that their view hadn't changed, although their answers showed me that they had indeed noticed many similarities between the German teenagers and themselves, both in their written responses and in the class discussion following the video, which they had not considered previously.

1/17 students (5.9%) felt Germans 'were a bit weird', but no further explanation was given.

1/17 students (5.9%) stated 'I thought they were aggressive, but they're not aggressive.'

4. The series of questions about food and drink, weren't so 'confronting'; in fact, some students found the questions a bit mundane and hence gave the rather ordinary answers. More people were willing to take part in this class discussion. Was the topic somehow 'safer'? Some students tried to tell me where I should go for good coffee and cake, since I don't know the area so well.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

- In the initial discussion about our ethnic backgrounds, I was most surprised to discover that it was generally assumed that as a German teacher, I must be German myself, although they knew that my native language was Russian. They had somehow missed the connection.
- After viewing the first video, it was too early to ask students the question: **How has your view of German people changed? If so, then in what way?** This type of question would be more suited to the end of a series of videos, when the students have been exposed to a whole spectrum of cultural information, from which deductions could be made. I would delete this question next time the topic is covered. The above question also seemed to cause some confusion in their minds, as their responses seemed to clash with the previous question: **Is this what you expected? Why?** Therefore, the responses to these two questions were conflicting.
- I felt that the class discussions were very positive. Most students were interested in other points of view. The most academic students were the ones who were initially most vocal about their opinions. Students from a non-Australian background were reluctant at first to join in the initial discussion and mention their background, language spoken at home etc. but by the second discussion, this group had become more confident and vocal.
- I was able to hear what the students had to say about aspects of the German way of life, but they often wrote down what they didn't want to - or couldn't - say in front of their peers.

EVALUATION

- My questions need further refining, but overall I am happy with the initial responses.
- Due to a variety of factors, I was unable to complete all the videos and responses within the timeframe, but hope to do so before the end of the term.
- Students were very interested in the videos, although they are somewhat dated.
- They treated the videos seriously and not as 'fill-in lessons', because I had explained to them that the discussions and their written responses were an important part of the language course.

- I had used these videos in previous years and there had been discussions about the material as well, but comparing one's own experiences with the cultural material presented added an extra dimension to the students' learning.
- I felt that I really taught the class something valuable about themselves, which I hadn't felt before. Previously, I had felt I was teaching them only about the German language and way of life.
- To be totally honest, I was somewhat sceptical about the intrinsic value of inter-cultural learning until I had to think about it deeply and prepare the teaching material. The penny finally dropped when I had to teach in this mode.
- My students asked questions which I had never before heard in my class such as: What is tradition really? What does 'custom' mean?
- For Year 8, I would now like to continue a program of inter-cultural discussion using the remaining videos.
- I can now clearly see how the Year 8 cultural assignment could be converted into an inter-cultural assignment and would like to approach other faculty members about this.

MATERIALS I DEVELOPED FOR USE WITH VIDEO

Hallo aus Berlin – Video Series

What do you think?

Name.....

What is your ethnic background? What other languages are spoken in your extended family? Who make up your family? Which suburb do you live in? What traditions/customs are important to your family? What ethnic groups are represented in your school/class?

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What do you expect German teenagers to be like?
Do you think they will be different to you? In what way? Why?

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Folge 1 Wir

1. In what way do young people in the video have a way of life that is similar to yours?

.....
.....

2. Is this what you expected? Why?.....

.....
.....

3. How has your view of German people changed? If so, then in what way?.....

.....
.....

Oral work in German

1. *Wo wohnst du: in einem Dorf, in einer Kleinstadt oder in einer Großstadt?.....*

.....
.....

2. *Wohnst du in einem Haus oder in einer Wohnung?.....*

.....
.....

3. *Wie heißt deine Schule?.....*

4. *Welche Sprache sprichst du zu Hause?.....*

5. *Was machst du in deiner Freizeit?.....*

.....
.....

Folge 5 Essen und Trinken

1. Where do Miriam and Jessica eat sometimes and is that where you would meet up with family or friends? Why?.....
.....
.....
- 2a. Thomas and his aunty go out to have coffee and cake at a café. Is this something you would do with your family?
.....
- 2b. If so, where could you do this in Melbourne?.....
3. What do you think of this custom and why?.....
.....
4. People from many different backgrounds live in Germany. What country does Jala's family come from?.....
5. How is that similar to life in Australia? From which backgrounds are some of your friends at school? People in your suburb?.....
.....
.....

Folge 6 In der Schule

1. Are all Australian schools like yours? Do you know of any differences here in Victoria, or in other states?
2. What times does school start and finish in Germany?
3. Compare this to your school day. What are the advantages and disadvantages of our system compared to the German?
4. What is your view of smoking being allowed at the age of 16 in school, as in Germany? Should it be allowed here in Australia? Why?/Why not?
 - 4a. Was the punishment Arno received for smoking severe enough? Why?
 - 4b. What would have happened to him in your school?
 - 4c. Which system do you think is fairer? Give reasons for your view.
5. What do you think German students would like about school in Australia? What wouldn't they like?

Oral work in German

1. *Wann beginnt der Schultag in Deutschland?*
2. *Wann endet der Schultag in Deutschland?*
3. *Ist das eine gute Idee? Warum?*
4. *Ab 16 darf man in deutschen Schulen rauchen. Ist das eine gute Idee für Schulen in Australien?*
5. *Ist eine Schuluniform*
 - a. *praktisch*
 - b. *eine altmodische Tradition*
 - c. *zu teuer*

Folge 9 Ferien und Feste

1. Which holidays and festivals are important to your and your family?
2. Describe Elvan's festival Beiram. Who participate in this event? What do children receive?
- 3a. Describe Jessica's confirmation.
- 3b. Which religion does she belong to?
- 3c. What happens after the ceremony?
4. How do these two festivals compare with holidays and festivals that are important to you?

Evidence of Learning.

Evidence will be gathered from participation in class discussions and also from written responses.

Self-assessment should be included, as this recognises learning as a personal process.