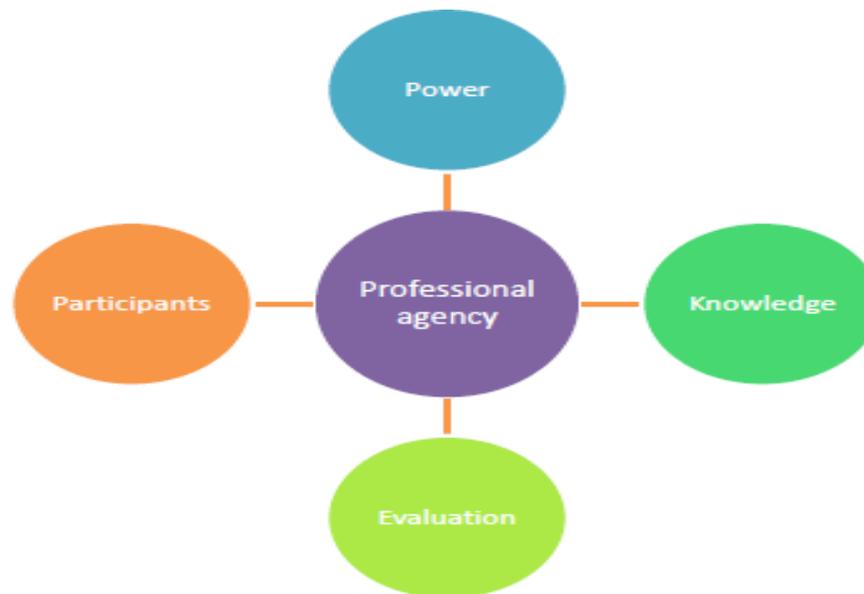


## *Module 2:*

# Investigating practice: working with professional agency

## Part 1: Evaluating



# Overview

- Segment 1a: Current understandings of evaluation
- Segment 1b: Evaluation processes
- Segment 1c: The role of evaluation in improving curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment
- Segment 1d: The role of evaluation in teacher learning, professional agency, and leadership

# Objectives

In this part you will:

- discuss current understandings of evaluation
- consider evaluation processes
- examine the role of evaluation in improving curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment in specific Asian languages
- discuss the role of evaluation in teacher learning, developing professional agency, and leadership.

# Connecting to the standards

- Professional standards for accomplished teachers of languages and cultures
- Language-specific annotations for Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese
- Professional standards for lead teachers of languages and cultures (draft only)
- AITSL standards

# Group discussion task

1. Give an account of a previous experience you have had with evaluation in general or in relation to the program in your particular Asian language. Consider its purpose, context, scale/scope, participants, processes, and outcomes. What are some features that characterise a useful evaluation? Draw together the features that emerge from the diverse experiences recounted.
2. What do you see as criteria for evaluating programs in your particular Asian language?
3. What do you see as the possible relationship between evaluation and professional agency?

# Evaluation for improvement

Stenhouse identified five criteria that the process of evaluation should reflect:

1. Evaluation should constitute a *philosophical critique*, disclosing the meaning of the curriculum, rather than assessing its worth. The data for the critique are from observation in classrooms which are responding to the curriculum.
2. Evaluation should identify the *potential* of the curriculum or educational practice in relation to its purpose and actual context.
3. Evaluation should identify *interesting problems*: a requirement of improvement is understanding and finding strategies to deal with barriers to learning which are persistent or recurring.
4. Evaluation should address *local conditions*: improvement is possible only if the potential of innovative practices (2 above) works to resolve the interesting problems (3 above).
5. Evaluation should *elucidate*: it should inform on the extent to which the curriculum throws light upon the problems of change in education, and to which it contributes to a theory of innovation, in a particular school or more generally.

(Stenhouse 1975, pp. 118–20)

# Group discussion task

Examine the five criteria that Stenhouse considers to be necessary in program evaluation.

- Rephrase each in your own words.
- Prepare a critical commentary on each of the criteria and on the set, for example, comment on:
  - Stenhouse's orientation to evaluation
  - Stenhouse's view of innovation.

Are there any issues that are not addressed in this general perspective on evaluation, especially in relation to your specific Asian language and your local or state context?

Anticipated time: Group discussion: 15 minutes  
Plenary discussion: 10 minutes

# Evaluation

- Is a practical, systematic process that involves gathering information and giving feedback on the way the curriculum works so that improvements can be made.
- All aspects of the curriculum should remain open to review.
- Evaluation is not static; evaluation is not an end in itself — it is geared towards improvement in student learning.
  - evaluation as judgment

# Changing evaluation

- Evaluation has changed over recent decades.
- Different paradigms: positivistic quantitative approaches vs naturalistic; qualitative approaches → give rise to different approaches to evaluation.
- Differences extend beyond methodologies:
  - positivist: sees the program as an objective reality external to the evaluator and evaluation
  - naturalistic: sees the program as a socially interpreted and constructed reality, one that the evaluator needs to understand

(Lynch 2003)

# Challenges for evaluation

Five challenges for evaluation:

- the purpose of evaluation in its social and political context
- the informants who people programs and evaluations
- the criteria which generate evaluation frameworks, instruments and ultimately judgments
- the data which validate these approaches and instruments and complete the construction of judgments
- the use of evaluation findings in managing social programs.

(Kiely & Rea-Dickins 2005, pp. 7–8)

# Participatory approaches to evaluation

- Necessarily include multiple perspectives (insiders and outsiders).
- Value is derived from individual and collaborative reflection on the nature, scope, processes and outcomes of curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessment.
- Reflection includes exploring and articulating the assumptions, recognising diverse understandings, values, desires, expectations.
- Focuses on reaching understanding as the goal of professional learning; this entails dialogue

# Group discussion task

Based on the presentation, and on the features identified in the first group discussion task, discuss again the role of evaluation in developing teacher learning, leadership, and professional agency.

Revise your statement of features of evaluations and develop a set of considerations that you should bear in mind as an investigator/mentor working in your specific Asian language.

Anticipated time: 20 minutes

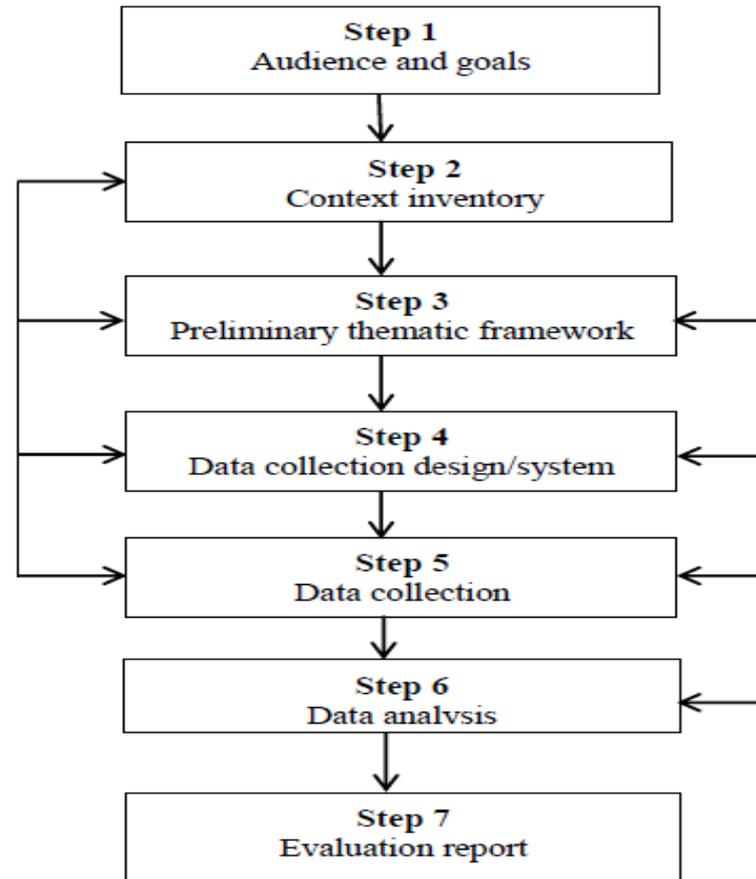
# Segment 1b: Evaluation processes

Lynch's (1996, 2003) context-adaptive model:

- accords central importance to the distinctive context of the programs
- ensures systematicity
- is progressively modifiable, that is, allows for adjustment along the way
- focuses on defensibility and evidence.

# The context-adaptive model of evaluation

Figure 1: The context-adaptive model



(Lynch 1996)

# Segment 1c: The role of evaluation in improving curriculum development, teaching, learning, and assessment

- Curriculum development, teaching, learning, and assessment as focal points.
- Some possible foci include:
  - exploring teaching-learning interactions
  - designing and evaluating assessment processes
  - critically examining the range of resources used, including IT
  - gathering evidence for the particular orientation of the program
  - examining gains in language learning

# Group discussion task

In small groups, brainstorm the resources that you would need to support an evaluation. Then stand back from the initial list of features you prepared.

What do you notice about your list?  
Are there any gaps?

Anticipated time: 20 minutes



# Segment 1d: The role of evaluation in teacher learning, leadership, and professional agency

Teaching necessarily involves being alert to what is going on in the classroom, noticing developments and changes, attending to emergent needs, comparing achievements at one point in time with what has happened before and what might happen after, reflecting on teaching practice and assessment, evaluating activities and plans, developing and drawing on curriculum, and the host of other activities that contribute to effective teaching practice. Of course these activities do not happen in isolation; they inform each other through the lesson, the day, the week, and over the longer term, acknowledging the perspectives and changing needs of students, teachers, and members of the broader school community.

(Crichton 2007, p. 8)

# Group discussion task

Discuss the quotation on Slide 81 (Crichton 2007).

Consider the relationship between evaluation and teacher learning, leadership, and professional agency. How do you characterise the notion of an 'evaluative stance'?

Prepare a list of characteristics for discussion.

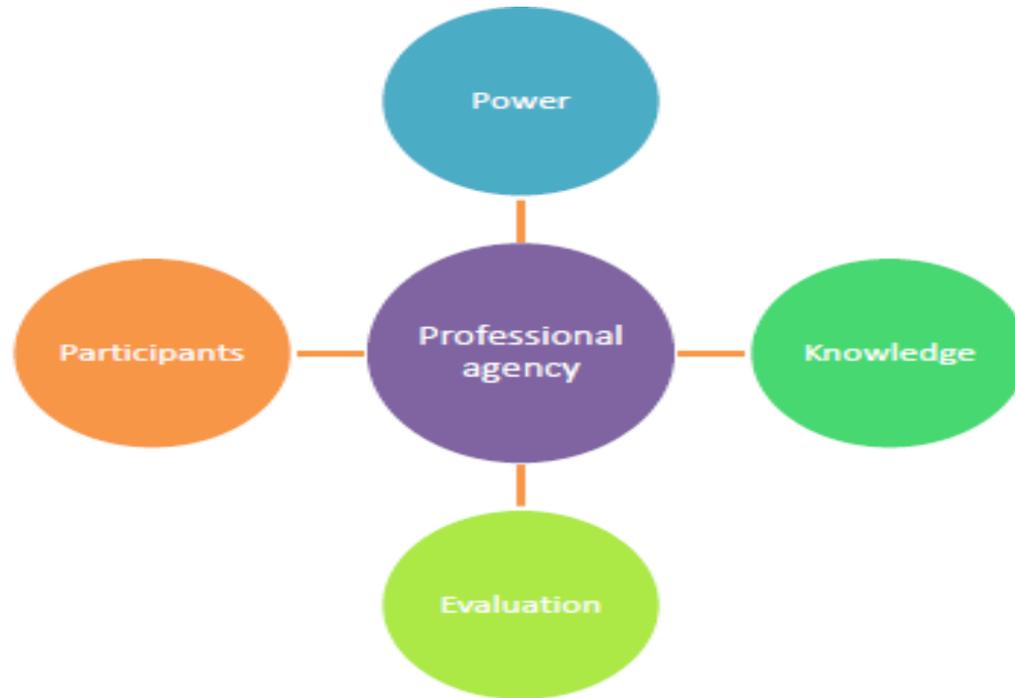
How do you think evaluation might become a part of your own practice?

Anticipated time: 10 minutes

# References

- Crichton, J. (2007). Why an investigative stance matters in intercultural teaching and learning: An orientation to classroom-based investigation. Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice (ILTLP) Program, Discussion Paper 8: [www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au/doblibpapers/iltlppaper8.pdf](http://www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au/doblibpapers/iltlppaper8.pdf).
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- Lynch, B.K. (2003). *Language Assessment and Programme Evaluation*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
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# Part 2: Investigating



# Focal questions

- How do we understand investigations?
- Why do investigations matter in mentoring and in developing professional agency?
- How can an investigative stance frame mentoring practice?
- How do you help others to carry out and think through an investigation?

# Objectives

In this part you will:

- consider how investigations are relevant to mentoring
- critically discuss examples of how investigations can shape mentoring practice and provide a focus for the mentoring relationship
- identify key considerations in planning and implementing investigations independently or within a mentoring program
- begin planning an investigation to support your own and others' mentoring practices.

# Connecting to the standards

- Professional standards for accomplished teachers of languages and cultures
- Language-specific annotations for Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese,
- Professional standards for lead teachers of language and cultures (draft only)
- AITSL standards

# Mentoring as reflective action

*Mentoring has forced me to be reflective about my own beliefs about teaching, students and learning, and teaching as a career, [and] continued contact with mentees provides some of my richest collegial interactions.*

(Teacher mentor quoted by Huling & Resta 2001, p. 2)

# Reflective action as investigation

*Reflective action ... involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads.*

(Grant & Zeichner 1984, p. 105)



# Group discussion task: your professional experience

In groups discuss what investigations mean in your experience of mentoring. In your discussions you should consider:

- what practices involving investigations you are familiar with in your specific Asian language teaching contexts
- what you know of how investigations operate in different types of mentoring relationships
- what benefits and risk you see in the use of investigations in these relationships
- how you see the value of investigations in supporting reflective action (reflexivity).

Be prepared to provide feedback at the end of the task.

# Taking an investigative stance

As the quote from Grant and Zeichner highlights and the discussion in the task underscores, investigation is an ongoing stance involving:

- an orientation to discovering, documenting, and making sense of the actions of mentors and mentees
- an ongoing interest in using information about the mentoring process to inform, support, and develop the mentoring relationship and its goals.

# Why does an investigative stance matter to mentoring?

An investigative stance supports the professional learning mentoring relationship because:

- supporting change in practice requires an understanding not only of what 'should be' done, but also what is **actually** done and how this is **understood** by mentors and mentees;
- in order to mentor others you need to understand your own mentoring practices and also how mentees understand these through the process of mentoring.

# Investigations as both reflective and holistic

An investigative stance involves conducting, collaborating in, and mentoring investigations, and is:

- Reflective — continually observing, questioning and drawing conclusions from our own practice and that of others, for example:
  - What does this investigation mean to me/her?
  - Why did I/she do it like that?
  - What previous experiences influenced me/her?
  - How might I/she do/have done this differently?
  - What are the implications for my/her professional learning and leadership?
- Holistic — considering how instances of practice fit into the broader professional contexts of, for example:
  - curriculum content and sequence
  - assessment and reporting
  - professional accountability and standards
  - school context and stakeholders
  - school committee representation
  - educational policy.

# Supporting diverse mentoring relationships

An investigative stance can support a diversity of mentoring relationships, for example:

- as a co-investigator in which you as mentor share the investigator role with a mentee
- in a mentoring relationship in which you lead the investigation
- as the mentor of another who is conducting the investigation
- as a co-mentor in which one or both of the mentors are leading the investigation.

# What might be the focus of an investigation?

The focus of your investigation depends at any particular time on the interest/need that you are addressing. This could relate to diverse aspects of your professional context. It may be an issue arising in your context as a mentor that leads you to an investigation or an issue you become aware of through an investigation you are involved in. For example:

- a question about teaching and learning in a particular classroom
- an area of interest/need for the teacher(s), curriculum, or program
- a particular professional learning focus of interest in the school as a whole
- an area of interest/need that is shared with the wider community
- a focus involving (co-)mentoring with an outside organisation.

# Group discussion task: considering three examples

In groups, consider the three investigations in Handout 1 in relation to your professional contexts.

- How might you develop/adapt one or more of the examples to establish/support a mentoring relationship in your own context? Alternatively, what might be an appropriate focus in your context, in your program, in your specific Asian language?
- Who would be involved in the mentoring relationship? In what roles and tasks? Why?
- What kinds of evidence might you and/or others gather to support the mentoring relationship?
- How might you and/or others gather and record this evidence?

Be prepared to provide feedback at the end of the task.

# Assisting others to think through and carry out an investigation

Investigations support the diversity of mentoring relationships by providing a basis for ongoing reflection and reflexive action, for mentors and mentees.

In assisting a mentee, considerations include:

- gathering and recording evidence that can inform professional learning, for example, samples of students' work, recordings of classroom interactions, lesson plans and materials, reflections on teaching, program documentation, and conversations with colleagues
- the process of interpreting how the evidence gathered answers the questions raised, and deciding on how that will inform professional learning
- at every point the investigation involves a reflective and holistic stance for mentor and mentee.

# To whom are you accountable?

This is an ethical question.

The answer depends on:

- the participant roles
- who is affected by the investigation
- the users of the investigation
- with whom the investigation is shared.

Examples include yourself, teachers, students, parents, colleagues, wider school and professional communities, other agencies (e.g. education department, curriculum or funding bodies).

# Group discussion task: planning for investigation in mentoring

Based on the discussions on the task (Slide 96) and your reflections on the slides, in groups plan how you will use an investigation to support a mentoring relationship.

- How might you help others to carry out and think through an investigation?
- How might you and others gather/interpret/reflect on evidence, for example, in the form of a commentary or professional journal?
- What do you anticipate the investigation(s) may reveal about aspects of current practice?
- How will you adopt a reflective and holistic stance to support your mentoring relationship?
- How will you document and continue mentoring through your use of investigations?

Be prepared to provide feedback at the end of the task.

# References

- Grant, C.A. & Zeichner, K.M. (1984). On becoming a reflective teacher, in ed. C.A. Grant, *Preparing for Reflective Teaching: A Book of Readings*, Boston, Allyn & Bacon, pp. 103–14.
- Huling, L. & Resta, V. (2001) Teacher mentoring as professional development, ERIC Digest EDO-SP-2001-4.

# Part 3: Mentoring



# Module overview

This module is divided into three segments:

Segment 3a: Considerations in establishing and working in a mentoring relationship in Asian languages education.

Segment 3b: Planning a mentoring program.

Segment 3c: Gathering evidence of teacher professional learning and student learning through mentoring.

→ Critical self-reflection is an integral and ongoing part of the process of mentoring to develop professional agency and leadership.

# Objectives

In Part 3 of this module participants will:

- discuss considerations in establishing and working in a mentoring relationship in Asian languages
- identify a set of activities that can be incorporated in a mentoring program
- develop skills in evaluation
- consider ways of gathering evidence of teacher professional learning and student learning through mentoring
- reflect on their own and others' changing assumptions, interpretations, knowledge, experiences, and practices in developing professional agency and leadership.

# Connecting to the standards

- Professional standards for accomplished teachers of languages and cultures
- Language-specific annotations for Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese
- Professional standards for lead teachers of language and cultures (draft only)
- AITSL standards

# Group discussion task

1. How do you understand mentoring?
2. Recount experiences you have had (if any) as a participant in mentoring (as a mentor or mentee)? What did you learn from these experiences?
3. How do you see the purpose and role of mentoring in Asian languages education?
4. What do you see as features of successful mentoring?
5. What are some of the issues/questions that are likely to arise for you in a mentoring program?

# Thinking about mentoring

- From expert-novice view → to a developmental partnership or shared adventure
- Both partners participate in reflection and professional learning (co-mentoring?)
- How it is conceptualised shapes its implementation

(MacCallum 2007)

# Complexity of the relationship

Knowledge transmission model → theory and practice connection model → collaborative enquiry model

(Wang & Odell 2002)

- asymmetrical → symmetrical relationships
- complex, interactive, dynamic process with different experiences, expertise, and worldviews
- includes critical reflection and feedback on practice
- coming to one's own informed conclusions

(MacCallum 2007)

# Characteristics of successful mentoring

Roberts' (2000) review of mentoring research found that successful mentoring has the following characteristics:

- a supportive relationship
- a helping process
- a teaching-learning process
- a reflective process
- a career developing process
- a formalised process.

# Roles of mentoring

- Several roles: emotional or social support, assistance/input, modelling/sharing, challenging assumptions and practices, facilitation that stretches, feedback, reflection
  - Role/relationship is unique to the participants
  - Has to be defined by participants and can be re-negotiated
- mutuality, collegiality, and responsibility in critical reflection

# Mentoring and leadership

## Task

Discuss the following quotation from Aoki:

“What is it to lead?”

I pose the question knowing full well that for there to be leaders, there must be followers. For me, ‘leader’ and ‘follower’, like ‘mother’ and ‘child’, or ‘teacher’ and ‘student’, need to exist only together. They make sense only when in each set the two are held together ...

But a question remains: How does a good leader know which path or way he or she should tread? It is at this juncture that we need to restore the two-fold of ‘to lead’ and ‘to follow’. A leader must be a true follower – in leading, he must follow. But follow what? If he is a leader, he must lead by following that which is true to that which is good in the situation within which he dwells. (Aoki 2005, pp. 350–1).

- Consider the implications of the discussion about the changing nature of mentoring and the link to professional agency and leadership. List them.
- Compare with your thinking as documented during the first group discussion task in this part.
- How do you see the relationship between mentoring and leadership? Identify principles that might characterise the mentorship relationship that you wish to develop.

# The process of mentoring

The process involves making decisions about:

1. the context
2. the goals of the mentoring program
3. the activities that will be undertaken
4. evidence that will be collected
5. reflection and re-framing
6. documenting/reporting the process, outcomes, and reflection.

# Group discussion task

Using Handouts 2 and 3 as a starting point, discuss each of the six areas identifying the specific decisions that must be made in each. This will form the basis for developing a mentoring plan.

The plan, to be developed collaboratively in the specific Asian language and specific context, should set out:

- activities, including specific foci, participants, data to be gathered, process of discussion/ interaction with mentor/mentee; timelines, contributions to a portfolio.

Anticipated time: 60 minutes

# Gathering evidence

Gathering evidence:

- of teacher learning
- of student learning and achievement over time.

→ Each participant builds a portfolio of activities with findings/outcomes and accompanying reflective summaries.

# Group discussion task

The facilitator continues the interactive presentation to prepare for further work on the group discussion task.

Continue developing a list, including specifically the evidence that will be gathered as evidence of professional learning.

Discuss the nature of 'reflective summaries'.  
How do you understand this idea?

# References

- Aoki, T.T. (2005). Revisiting the notions of leadership and identity, in eds W.F. Pinar & R.L. Irwin (2005). *Curriculum in a New Key: The Collected Works of Ted T. Aoki*. Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 349–55.
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