

Professional standards for lead teachers of languages and cultures

Australian Federation of Modern Language
Teacher Associations 2012

An additional dimension to the Professional Standards for the
Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Cultures, AFMLTA 2005

These standards are designed to be read in conjunction with the AFMLTA's Professional standards for the accomplished teaching of languages and cultures. The standards for accomplished teaching were designed as aspirational standards that reflect the on-going professional knowledge and conduct of teachers over their entire professional life. The standards for lead teachers grow from the standards for accomplished teaching and reflect a different way of engaging in the profession rather than reflecting a higher level achievement. Being a lead teacher of languages and cultures involves collaborative practice and working with others to promote theirs or others' needs, rather than a concentration on one's own practice or career trajectory. It is through the exercise of leadership in the profession that lead teachers contribute to the on-going development of the teaching and learning of languages and cultures across professional contexts.

Being a lead teacher of languages and cultures means being a person who knows, uses and teaches language and culture in an ethical and reflective way. It involves a continuous engagement with and commitment to learning, as a life-long learner, a teacher, a colleague, and a mentor. A lead teacher of languages and cultures has a reflective and theorised view of languages and cultures education and engages with current debates and developments. Lead teachers use their knowledge and insights to engage with the profession of teaching both in and out of schools, support the professional learning of their colleagues and to work towards improving language education as a field.

The professional standards for lead teachers have been developed using the dimensions of the AFMLTA's Professional standards for the accomplished teaching of languages and cultures, so that the parallels between each set of standards can be preserved and enhanced.

The professional standards for lead teachers of languages and cultures are articulated through the following dimensions:

- educational theory and practice
- language and culture
- language pedagogy
- ethics and responsibility
- professional relationships
- awareness of wider context
- advocacy
- personal characteristics

Educational theory and practice

Lead teachers of languages and cultures have demonstrated consistent and innovative practice over time. They seek to improve their practice and share their experience and knowledge with others to develop the profession as a whole.

They engage with current theories and developments in education and from their engagement lead others to discover and apply this knowledge.

They actively lead others to develop their understanding of education policies and curriculum and assessment policy. They take a leading role in developing and implementing language and education policies in their own schools and in the profession more broadly.

They work actively with others to create connections between curriculum areas and between teachers of different languages.

Suggested questions for reflection

- What are the characteristics about your work that show you are innovative in your practice?
- What strategies or activities have you used to share your practice with others in the field?
- How do you keep up to date with new learning theories and developments in language education and how do you communicate this knowledge to others?
- What roles do you take in developing policies around languages in your school and more widely?
- How do you work with others beyond your immediate teaching areas to develop learning connections?

Language and culture

Lead teachers of languages and cultures have a sustained practice of maintaining their knowledge of the language and culture they teach, of intercultural communication, and of general principles of language and culture and their interrelationship.

They maintain an active engagement with communities using the languages and cultures they speak through spoken, written and technologically mediated communication and lead others to do the same.

They lead others to understand better the language and culture they teach, and the role of language and culture in teaching and learning more generally.

They have a developed intercultural awareness, which they model for others in their interactions inside and outside school, and work to increase the intercultural awareness of others in the school and in the wider community.

Suggested questions for reflection

- How do you use and develop your language abilities and intercultural understanding?
- What sorts of contacts do you have with target language communities, personally or through reading, the media or the web/internet? How do you introduce others to these points of contact?
- What recent activities have you undertaken to develop your language and cultural knowledge of the language you teach?
- How do you support other teachers in developing their own knowledge and experience of language and culture?
- How do you express your intercultural understanding in teaching and in daily life?
- How do you develop the intercultural awareness of others including students, parents, colleagues and community members?

Language pedagogy

Lead teachers of languages and cultures have a strong knowledge of contemporary theory, research and practice in language education, in areas including teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment, and evaluation and have a commitment to applying innovations in their own practice and sharing this with others.

They reflect on their own practice and share this understanding with others.

They work with others to identify needs and opportunities for developing knowledge of teaching and learning practice and theory.

They work with others in designing, implementing and evaluating languages programs and languages and cultures learning models, suitable to different contexts.

They communicate to others developments in educational research and practice and support others in applying this knowledge through professional learning.

They support others in creating a culture of learning in their classrooms/schools that fosters an interest in and engagement with languages and cultures and encourages learners to accept responsibility for their own learning.

They engage actively in supporting and developing languages and cultures programs suitable for the diversity of students in Australian schools.

They support others in identifying and selecting appropriate ways of teaching to foster students' achievements in learning languages and cultures.

They are committed to the creation of a culture of learning in their professional communities and support investigation and evaluation of their own practice and in that of others.

Suggested questions for reflection

- What knowledge about patterns of development in language and second language literacy inform your decision-making about curriculum, teaching and program development and that of others?
- What recent activities have you undertaken with others to develop knowledge of language teaching and learning?
- How have you applied your recent learning to enhance your language teaching and that of others?
- How do you promote interest in languages and cultures and in linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom, the school and the community?
- How do you explain your reasons for using a particular pedagogical approach in your teaching? How do you support others in clarifying their thinking about their work?
- What strategies do you adopt to develop new opportunities for learning languages and cultures?
- How do you work with others to develop better ways of supporting student learning and assessing students' achievement?
- How do you demonstrate to others a reflective approach to and a critical about your own work?

Ethics and responsibility

Lead teachers of languages and cultures take responsibility for the teaching and learning relationship and for social and cultural relationships in their teaching and lead others to understand and accept this responsibility.

They model ethical behaviour in their teaching practice and in their engagement with their professional communities.

They model acceptance of multiple perspectives in teaching and learning and encourage others to adopt multiple perspectives in understanding issues so that they can make their own choices and judgments.

Suggested questions for reflection

- How do you model care and concern for students and colleagues in the context of language teaching and learning?
- How do you demonstrate respect for and valuing of linguistic and cultural diversity in your school and community?
- What do you know and understand about the communities to which students and colleagues belong their applications, expectations, desires, interests and their aspirations?
- What ideas and values inform your language teaching? Where do these come from? How do you demonstrate them to others?
- In what ways are your classroom and professional relationships characterised by dignity and mutual regard?

Professional relationships

<p>Lead teachers of languages and cultures provide leadership in their professional communities through informal and formal relationships in their schools, their profession and the wider community.</p> <p>They work to establish professional relationships which benefit the quality and appreciation of teaching and learning of languages.</p> <p>They actively participate in establishing and working within mentoring relationships and establish pathways to support early career and pre-service languages and cultures teachers.</p> <p>They seek leadership positions in representing languages teachers and language learning locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.</p>	<p><i>Suggested questions for reflection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you contribute to your profession?• How do you demonstrate active leadership in school, community and wider professional contexts?• How do you work with colleagues, parents and community members to develop the quality of teaching and learning in the school?• How do you use your own expertise to support other teachers, especially less experienced teachers?• How do you establish and develop mentoring relationships with colleagues? What mentoring roles do you take in these relationships? What is specific about mentoring in languages and cultures teaching?
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Active engagement with wider context

<p>Lead teachers of languages and cultures actively engage with the social, political, economic, and technological climate of the times and lead others to similar engagement.</p> <p>They model connections with a wider sphere of understanding of how languages and language learning relate to wider intellectual and global realities and support others in making these connections.</p> <p>They lead others to an awareness of the impact of languages and cultures on local and global contexts and on how people understand their place in the world, as culturally situated users of languages.</p>	<p><i>Suggested questions for reflection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you explain the knowledge, skills and understandings you most value in the teaching and learning of language and literacy?• How do you connect language learning to what is happening in the contemporary world? How do you share your insights with others?• How do you use your professional relationships as an opportunity for colleagues to explore the significance and consequences what is happening in other parts of the world for your work and theirs?
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Advocacy

<p>Lead teachers of languages and cultures initiate and foster action to advocate for language learning, intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity, and linguistic and cultural diversity.</p> <p>They are conversant with current national and international literature on languages advocacy strategies and practices.</p> <p>They ensure advocacy for languages both with and for students, teachers, schools and communities and work with the wider community to promote languages and language learning.</p> <p>They actively seek to represent language learning and teaching in local, regional, national and, where appropriate, international forums.</p>	<p><i>Suggested questions for reflection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you increase your understanding and of the importance of language and culture learning in your community?• How do you increase understanding of the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity in your communities?• How do you work with others to promote the significance and importance of language teaching and learning?• In what contexts (local, regional, national, international) do you work to promote the value of languages education?
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Personal characteristics

<p>Lead teachers of languages and cultures are passionate about the teaching and learning of languages and cultures.</p> <p>They have a commitment to the continued development of the profession as a whole.</p> <p>They connect and engage with learners and colleagues and inspire students, colleagues and others.</p> <p>They are committed to the value of multilingualism and intercultural understanding for themselves and for others and model this commitment to students, colleagues and communities.</p> <p>They adopt a critical stance on their own work and to themselves as mediators of languages and cultures, which they demonstrate in their own practice and through their commitment to the professional learning of others.</p>	<p><i>Suggested questions for reflection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you model and promote language as a source of interest, curiosity and pleasure?• How do you demonstrate your commitment to professional learning for yourself and for others?• How do you demonstrate, and inspire in students, a passion for experiences that have personal and cultural significance for them?• How do you demonstrate to students how much they can successfully achieve in the target language? How do you support others in doing this?• How do you evaluate the success of your own teaching? What steps do you take to ensure your teaching continues to improve?• How do you support others in working with their own professional practice?
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