

# Professional Standards for Lead Teachers of Languages



## Acknowledgement of country

The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continued connection to languages, culture, land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

## Lead teachers of languages

Being a lead teacher of languages means being a person who knows, uses, and teaches languages 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 has a reflective, theorised and evidenced view of languages education and engages with current debates and developments. Lead teachers use their knowledge and insights to engage with the profession both in and out of schools, to support the professional learning of their colleagues and to work towards improving language education as a field.

## Guidelines for using the Standards

These Standards are designed to be read in conjunction with the AFMLTA's Professional Standards for the Accomplished Teaching of Languages. The Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages 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 these Standards and reflect a different way of engaging in the profession. Being a lead teacher of languages involves collaborative practice and working with others to promote one's own 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 ongoing development of the teaching and learning of languages across professional contexts.

The professional Standards for lead teachers have been developed using the dimensions of the AFMLTA's Professional Standards for the Accomplished Teaching of Languages, so that the parallels between each set of Standards can be preserved and enhanced.

The professional Standards for lead teachers of languages are articulated through the following dimensions:

- educational theory and practice
- language and culture
- language pedagogy
- ethics and responsibility
- professional relationships
- active engagement with wider context
- advocacy
- personal characteristics

# Professional Standards for lead teachers of languages

## Educational theory and practice

Lead teachers of languages have demonstrated consistent and innovative practice over time.

They:

- ◆ engage in ongoing reflection and self-development and share their experience and knowledge with others to develop the whole profession
- ◆ engage with current theories, evidence and developments in education and from their engagement lead others to discover and apply this knowledge
- ◆ actively lead others to develop their understanding of education policies and curriculum and assessment policy
- ◆ take a leading role in developing and implementing language and education policies in their own schools and in the profession more broadly
- ◆ 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 innovation and responsiveness to change and emerging ideas 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 have a sustained practice of maintaining their knowledge of the language and culture they teach, of intercultural communication, and of general principles of language, culture, and learning, and their interrelationship.

They:

- ◆ maintain an active engagement with communities using the languages they speak through spoken, written and technologically mediated communication and lead others to do the same.
- ◆ lead others to understand better the language and culture they teach, and the role of language and culture in teaching and learning more generally.
- ◆ 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, caregivers, colleagues, and community members?

## Language pedagogy

Lead teachers of languages have a strong knowledge of contemporary theory, research, and practice in education generally, and languages education more specifically, 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 and others' practice and share this understanding with others.
- ◆ work with others to identify needs and opportunities for developing knowledge of teaching and learning practice and theory.
- ◆ work with others in designing, implementing, and evaluating languages programs and languages learning models, suitable to different contexts.
- ◆ communicate developments in educational research and practice to others and support others in applying this knowledge through professional learning.
- ◆ support others in creating a culture of learning in their classrooms/schools that fosters an interest in and engagement with languages and encourages learners to accept responsibility for their own learning.
- ◆ engage actively in supporting and developing languages programs suitable for the diversity of students in Australian schools.
- ◆ support others in identifying and selecting appropriate ways of teaching to foster students' achievements in learning languages.
- ◆ 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 additional language literacy inform your decision-making about curriculum, teaching and program development, and that of others? From what sources do you obtain this information, and are there other and emerging sources you might consider investigating?
- ◆ 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 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?
- ◆ 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 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.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ problematise potential ethical dilemmas in languages teaching and community relationships, and act for positive ethical outcomes.

### *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 community?
- ◆ What do you know and understand about the communities to which students and colleagues belong, their aspirations, expectations, desires, and interests? How do you actively seek to understand such situations and consider ethical perspectives on these?
- ◆ 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? How do you promote these qualities with others?

## Professional relationships

Lead teachers of languages provide leadership in their professional communities through informal and formal relationships in their schools, the profession, and the wider community.

They:

- ◆ establish professional relationships which benefit the quality and appreciation of teaching and learning of languages.
- ◆ actively participate in establishing and working within mentoring relationships and establish pathways to support early career and pre-service languages teachers.
- ◆ seek leadership positions in representing languages teachers and language learning locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you contribute to your profession and professional relationships?
- ◆ 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, including 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.
- ◆ How do you seek out leadership roles in appropriate forums, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, and use these to contribute to the benefit of the profession?



## Active engagement with wider context

Lead teachers of languages actively engage with social, political, economic, and technological contexts relevant to the field and lead others to similar engagement.

They:

- ◆ model connections between language learning and real world experiences support others in making these connections.
- ◆ lead others to an awareness of the impact of languages on local and global contexts and on how people understand their place in the world, as culturally situated users of languages.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you explain to others the knowledge, skills, and understandings you most value, and evidence supports, for quality teaching and learning of languages?
- ◆ How do you connect language learning to what is happening in local, regional, national and international contexts? How do you share your insights with others?
- ◆ How do you use your professional relationships as an opportunity for you and colleagues to explore the significance and consequences of what is happening in other parts of the world for your work and theirs?

## Advocacy

Lead teachers of languages initiate and foster action to advocate for language learning, intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity, and linguistic and cultural diversity.

They:

- ◆ are conversant with current national and international literature on languages advocacy strategies and practices.
- ◆ pursue advocacy for languages both with and for students, teachers, schools and communities, and work with the wider community to promote languages and language learning.
- ◆ actively represent language learning and teaching in local, regional, national and, where appropriate, international forums.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you increase understanding of the importance of language learning in your communities of practice?
- ◆ 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) and how do you work to promote the value of languages education?

## Personal Characteristics

Lead teachers of languages actively promote the value of their profession and foster in others commitment to teaching and learning languages.

They:

- ◆ have a commitment to the continued development of the whole profession.
- ◆ connect and engage with learners and colleagues and inspire students, colleagues, and others.
- ◆ are committed to the value of plurilingualism and intercultural understanding for themselves and for others, and model this commitment to students, colleagues, and communities.
- ◆ 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 self and others.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you model and promote language as a source of interest, curiosity, intellectual activity, 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, and using their wider linguistic repertoires, including all their language and culture experience? 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?

# Lead Teachers of Languages and the Program Standards

Lead teachers of languages recognise that accomplished languages teaching and learning can only occur in appropriate and supportive contexts.

They:

- ◆ actively promote the Program Standards which are included in the Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages.
- ◆ work within their spheres of influence to enact the Program Standards.

## *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How do you demonstrate an understanding of the importance of appropriate and supportive contexts for the successful teaching and learning of languages?
- ◆ How do you actively promote these Program Standards?
- ◆ In what contexts and how do you influence others to enact the Program Standards?

## Program standards

Effective languages programs are visible and actively valued within the school culture. Languages teaching and learning are valued explicitly in schools' statements and implicitly in the schools' planning and review and processes, timetabling and resourcing for languages. Schools actively acknowledge and foster connections between languages and other curriculum areas.

Effective language programs:

- ◆ focus on progression in language learning for all students, both during the year and across years. They acknowledge learners' progress through the program and ensure that prior knowledge is maintained and developed. They recognise that language learning is a life-long process and needs sustained learning during schooling.
- ◆ have timetabling for languages which allocates adequate time, in both overall hours and frequency of lessons, to enable effective and sustained language learning, recognising that achievement in language learning is dependent on time on task.
- ◆ are adequately staffed to ensure that language learning can be allocated appropriate curriculum time and language class sizes can be limited. Ideally there should be a team of teachers involved in teaching languages in a school. Staffing models must support teachers in forming effective professional relationships with students, colleagues, and the wider school community.
- ◆ are characterised by the allocation of dedicated space which is suitable for the teaching and learning of languages.
- ◆ have budgets that ensure appropriate access to resources for the teaching and learning of languages, including print and digital materials and digital technologies.
- ◆ include provision for professional learning for teachers of languages and with the wider school staff.
- ◆ recognise the practical and performance-based nature of language learning and the need for class sizes which are appropriate for facilitating language learning as a practical and intensive form of learning. The creation of language class groups also takes into consideration the learning and personal background of students.
- ◆ recognise that students arrive with differing levels of knowledge of and exposure to the languages taught in the school and have strategies to facilitate transitions and enhance learning.

### *Suggested questions for reflection*

- ◆ How does the school demonstrate that it values the learning of languages?
- ◆ How does the school demonstrate and foster connections between languages and other curriculum areas?
- ◆ How is the program planned to build on learners' knowledge across the years of schooling?
- ◆ How does the school support sustained language learning over a number of years?
- ◆ How does the teacher support sustained language learning over a number of years?
- ◆ How does the school decide what is adequate time for language learning?
- ◆ How does the school make adequate time available for language teaching and ensure frequent and regular time on task?
- ◆ How does staffing for languages in the school affect the language program?
- ◆ How do staffing decisions in the school have an impact on the language teachers' work and the presence and visibility of languages in the school?
- ◆ What space is made available to the languages program? How does this affect the nature of the program?
- ◆ How does the school decide what is an adequate budget for language learning? What resources does the school make available for language learning? How do these decisions affect language learning in the school?
- ◆ How does the school decide on class sizes and class groupings for language learning? How do these decisions affect language learning in the school?
- ◆ How does the school promote language and culture learning to the community?
- ◆ How does the school provide for professional learning for teachers of languages and with other staff?



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