H1 MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE & MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE 'B' SYLLABUS
Pre-University

Implementation starting with
2020 JC1 and Pre-U 1 Cohort

Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

CONTENTS

SINGAPORE CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY

The Singapore Curriculum Philosophy represents MOE's beliefs about teaching and learning. These beliefs, which place every student at the heart of our educational decisions, guide the design and implementation of MOE curricula.

Summary of the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy

We believe in holistic education.

We believe that every child wants to and can learn. We focus on children's learning needs when designing learning experiences.

We believe that learning flourishes:

- *in caring and safe learning environments,*
- *when children construct knowledge actively,*
- *through the development of thinking skills and dispositions, and*
- *when assessment is used to address children's learning gaps.*

©Ministry of Education, 2017

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- Learning Objectives

- Guiding Principles

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning Objectives

The revised 2020 H1 Mother Tongue Language (H1 MTL) and Mother Tongue Language 'B' (MTL 'B') syllabuses aim at developing engaged learners of MTL. Teachers will build on students' knowledge and skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and oral and written interaction acquired in primary and secondary school; guide them to find connections across content areas to achieve deeper understanding of issues; and create opportunities for them to learn and use the various language skills in an integrated and meaningful way.

Aligned with the 21st Century Competencies (21CC) framework, students will acquire, develop and apply skills from the three 21CC domains, namely Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills; Civic Literacy, Global Awareness and Cross-Cultural Skills; and Critical and Inventive Thinking Skills.

Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills

Students should be able to communicate persuasively in their MTL. They will build on the foundational language skills they have acquired up to the secondary level.

At the end of the course,

H1 MTL STUDENTS
will be able to:

MTL 'B' STUDENTS
will be able to:

✓ Read functional texts, authentic texts, essays (with elements of narrative, argumentative and expository writing) and literary works.	✓ Read functional and authentic texts.
✓ Write complete and coherent essays (narrative, argumentative and expository).	✓ Write simple and clear functional texts (e.g. emails, short messages) and basic narrative essays (e.g. journal entry).

✓ Express and exchange views on general topics through spoken and written interaction, draw connections across issues and transfer their understanding to multiple contexts.

✓ Leverage ICT to access extended MTL reading materials online and interactive learning modules for self-directed and collaborative learning, e.g. Student Learning Space (SLS) and iMTL portal.

Civic Literacy, Global Awareness and Cross-Cultural Skills

Students should be able to understand and develop their national and cultural identity through a deeper appreciation of culture, traditions, literature and history.

Students should also understand Singapore in relation to the world.

At the end of the course,

H1 MTL and MTL 'B' STUDENTS

will be able to:

- ✓ Learn and appreciate the culture and history of each MTL community.

- ✓ Respect people from diverse cultural backgrounds, with different worldviews and perspectives.

- ✓ Develop a sense of moral values, good character and civic responsibility.

- ✓ Recognise, analyse and evaluate the impact of local and global issues.

Critical and Inventive Thinking Skills

Students should be given opportunities to hone their higher order thinking skills, further developing their MTL proficiency.

At the end of the course,

H1 MTL and MTL 'B' STUDENTS

will be able to:

- ✓ Develop key understandings from knowledge gained during their MTL lessons.

- ✓ Develop multi-dimensional perspectives.

- ✓ Think creatively and critically, assess options and make sound decisions.
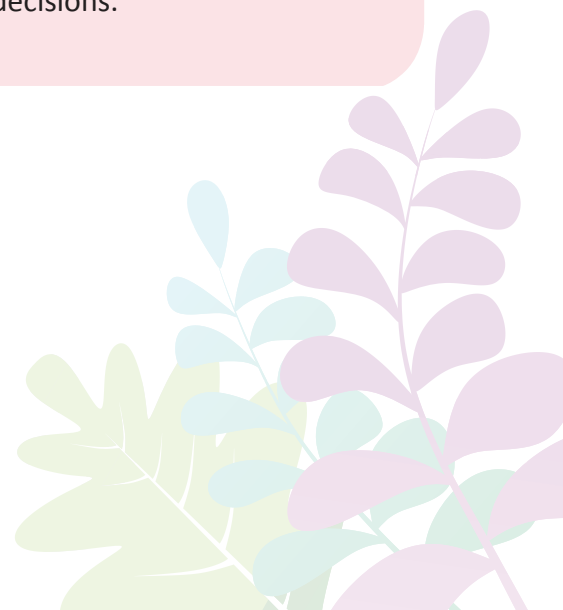
Guiding Principles

The revised syllabus is guided by the following three principles, in line with the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy:

1. **Holistic education is centred on values and character development.**
    There are many opportunities during MTL lessons to develop students' appreciation of culture, history, heritage and values, especially since cultural heritage is best experienced in its original language. To do this, there should be careful selection of resources to generate meaningful discussions.

2. **Students are motivated and challenged when they find meaning in learning.**
    Students should be given opportunities to learn and use the various language skills in an integrated and meaningful way, so that they will take ownership of their learning.

3. **The development of thinking skills and dispositions is an important part of learning.**
    Teachers should guide students to construct, interpret and evaluate knowledge from different perspectives. By being more conscious about their own thinking, students can monitor, assess and improve their learning, and attain the key understandings of each theme.
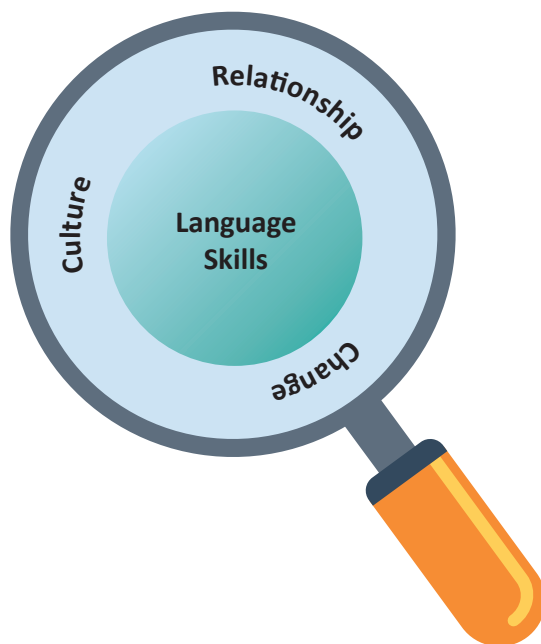
SECTION 2: CONTENT

- Syllabus Framework
    (a) Language Skills (Core)
    (b) Three Broad Themes (Context)

- Curriculum Time

2. CONTENT

Syllabus Framework

The Syllabus Framework represents how teachers will design learning experiences that encourage H1 MTL and MTL 'B' students to learn and apply language skills in an integrated and meaningful way.

(a) Language Skills (Core)

Our Mother Tongue Languages (MTL) are living languages. As active learners, students should use their MTL to communicate proficiently in everyday life. Thus, there should be various language activities and tasks in class for students to apply and develop their communication skills. In real-life communication, much of the language is used in interaction, requiring a combination of receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Many real-life situations require spontaneous two-way interaction (e.g., listening and responding orally during a conversation or reading and responding in writing to an email). Hence, the curriculum emphasises spoken and written interaction skills in addition to the four basic skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing.

(b) Three Broad Themes (Context)

Language skills have to be taught in context. The new syllabuses are anchored on a framework of three broad themes. This allows H1 MTL and MTL 'B' students to learn and apply language skills in an integrated and meaningful way, and achieve deeper understanding of issues through different perspectives. These themes were selected for their relevance to students, as well as the educational value of understanding individuals, communities and the world.

The three broad themes are **Culture**, **Relationship** and **Change**.

● *Culture*

Culture exists in all aspects of communal life. Culture encompasses the set of values, conventions and social practices associated with a particular field or a particular group of people at a particular time. It is built and evolves over time. It could be material or immaterial, tangible or intangible. Since societies and communities are not homogenous, the peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between different cultures inhabiting a common space becomes an important pursuit of multiculturalism. Understanding the concept of culture helps students develop a stronger awareness of their living environment and of the larger global community. It provides them with a lens to examine human actions and behaviours. In real-life, culture is also embedded in language use and influences the way we communicate.

● *Relationship*

Relationship refers to the way in which things are connected, the emotions people feel and how they behave towards one another. It is important for students to identify relationships that exist between people, events, communities, environment and objects. Appreciating the web of intricate relationships that exist in the world helps students understand the inter-connections around them and develop stronger global awareness. In everyday life, much of the language used is for communication, and effective communication builds good relationships.

● *Change*

Change takes place constantly around us. It has influence on individuals, societies, countries and the environment. It is apparent in many aspects of life. Change is often the result of many complex forces interacting with one another. It can bring about both positive and negative impact. Change is sometimes uncomfortable, but we are bound to experience change, and humanity's resilience in overcoming obstacles is profound. We learn to adapt and become stronger. In other instances, resistance to change could be valuable, for example, in upholding the continuity of tradition and heritage. By understanding the temporal and spatial qualities of change, students can examine issues more dynamically. The concept of change can also be connected across different domains to allow more productive discourse.

The introduction of the three broad themes also presents opportunities for teachers to better organise learning.

Use of Themes to Organise Learning

The selection of teaching and learning materials could take reference from the three themes. As the world is constantly evolving, the choice of materials will inevitably change over time. Keeping the themes constant will provide students with big, transferable ideas that transcend time, place and situation. The aim is not so much to focus on facts and content, but on learning to make sense of them. This is done through the gaining of key understandings of the three themes and to acquire them as lenses.

Use of Lenses

The three themes can be used as lenses to see things from different perspectives. The syllabuses recommend the application of the three lenses (Culture, Relationship, Change) to facilitate the examination of cases, topics, issues, problems and opinions through different perspectives. This will generate richer discussions and enhance students' thinking skills.

For example, under the theme of Change, the evolution of modes of transport may be discussed. Students may be asked to evaluate how the use of personal mobility devices has impacted their lives.

Teachers can further extend the discussion using the other two lenses:

- **Culture:** How has the use of personal mobility devices helped to promote a car-lite culture?
- **Relationship:** What causes the tension between users of personal mobility devices and other road users?

Such discussions would encourage students to think deeply, adopt broader perspectives and appreciate the inter-connectedness of issues.

Further elaboration on the key considerations in the design of a H1 MTL and MTL 'B' lesson is appended in the Annex.

Curriculum Time

The recommended curriculum time for both H1 MTL and MTL 'B' is 4 hours per week. Where possible, schools should schedule double periods so that more engaging pedagogies and sustained learning can take place.

SECTION 3: PEDAGOGY

- Considering Learners' Profiles and Empowering Learners:
  Effective Differentiated Learning

- Selecting and Sequencing Content,
  Planning and Using Key Questions to Deepen Learning:
  Thematic Learning with Effective Facilitation and Questioning Skills

- Deciding on Teaching Aids and Learning Resources:
  Effective Use of ICT and Authentic Materials

3. PEDAGOGY

The change in syllabus seeks to engender a shift in teachers' pedagogical practices towards teaching language skills in a more integrated way and placing a stronger focus on the key understandings. It also seeks to strengthen students' proficiency and effective communication in MTL through engagement in higher order thinking.

Improving teachers' pedagogy is the key strategy to achieving effective teaching and learning in MTL classrooms. In this aspect, teachers should take reference from the Singapore Teaching Practice (STP). The STP describes how effective teaching and learning can come about, guided by the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy and theoretical underpinnings of teaching and learning. The STP does so by providing a meta-language and framing to help teachers understand and discuss matters related to teaching and learning across school contexts. In this way, teachers can adopt the STP to continue discussing the various teaching strategies and approaches used in the MTL classroom over the years.

**The Four Teaching Processes and Teaching Areas**
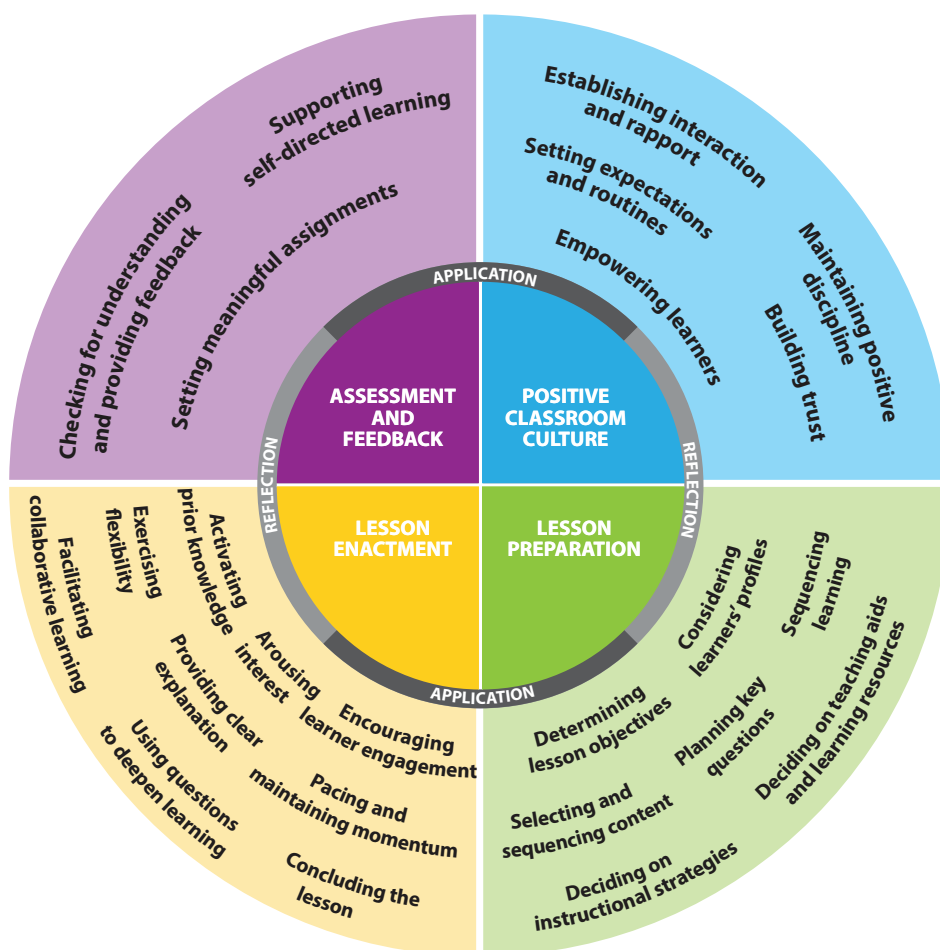
In the H1 MTL and MTL 'B' syllabuses, the following teaching areas are highlighted to help teachers reflect on how they can design the various learning experiences. Their connections with the teaching processes from the STP are visually indicated by the corresponding coloured quadrants:

Considering Learners' Profiles and Empowering Learners: Effective Differentiated Learning

"We value every child as an individual. Our children have diverse learning needs and bring with them a wide range of experiences, beliefs, knowledge and skills. For learning to be effective, we adapt our teaching pace, approaches and assessment practices to be developmentally appropriate."

(Singapore Curriculum Philosophy, The Singapore Teaching Practice, 2017)

POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

LESSON PREPARATION
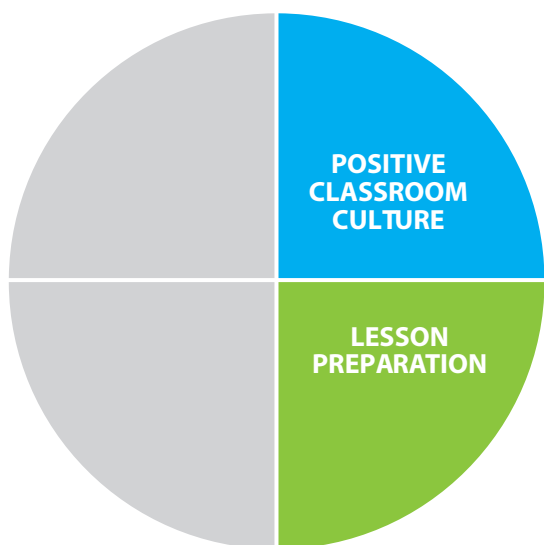
Effective differentiated learning is important in MTL classrooms as students have varying starting points. Thus, teachers need to create a positive and safe classroom culture to address students' different learning needs, abilities and interests. More help and support can be offered to weaker students in helping them develop confidence in learning the language, while stretching those who have stronger foundations in MTL. When students feel motivated to learn, they will continue to learn beyond the classroom.

For students who are weaker in MTL, the MTL 'B' syllabus aims at equipping them with a functional competency in oral and written communication to help these learners communicate with confidence in their MTL. This foundation will sustain their interest in MTL, and also stand them in good stead later in life when they need to deepen their MTL learning for personal or career development.

Selecting and Sequencing Content, Planning and Using Key Questions to Deepen Learning: Thematic Learning with Effective Facilitation and Questioning Skills

"Learning takes place individually and collaboratively, as children construct and co-construct meaning from knowledge and experiences. We guide learners to activate prior knowledge and assimilate and accommodate new knowledge, through exploration and interaction with others. This allows them to build a strong foundation of knowledge by connecting new ideas and experiences with what they already know, thus facilitating the understanding of concepts and the application of what they have learnt to different contexts."

(Singapore Curriculum Philosophy, The Singapore Teaching Practice, 2017)

LESSON ENACTMENT

LESSON PREPARATION

In the revised syllabus, thematic learning is adopted. The selection of teaching and learning materials take reference from the three themes of Culture, Relationship and Change. While the three broad themes are prescribed, the recommended topics are not. The discussion areas may span across topics associated with, but not limited to, Family and Community, Environment, Food, Entertainment, Health, Education, Technology, Heritage, Growing Up, and Aspirations. The topics chosen should preferably be contemporary issues of local interest and are age-appropriate for the students. The topics should also provide opportunities for students to draw on their own experiences. The content materials serve as context for the teaching of language skills, values and critical thinking.

With this understanding, teachers should plan and use key questions in guiding students to access prior knowledge and engage them in discussions to generate key understandings transferable over time and across multiple disciplines and situations. Teachers should encourage and facilitate collaborative learning, where students can explore and learn real world issues together. During this process, students should be provided with opportunities to build on their knowledge and skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and oral and written interaction previously acquired in primary and secondary school.

Below are some guiding questions and areas for discussion for the various themes:

Broad Theme	Key Understanding	Guiding Questions	Areas for Discussion
Culture	Culture shapes identity	1. Why is it important to understand culture? 2. How do our beliefs, values and cultural background influence the way we behave? 3. To what extent does culture shape our identity?	Culture is inherent in our MTLs. Learning the language forms a critical base to preserve the transmission of cultural values and traditions associated with our mother tongues. Culture exists in all aspects of life, such as customs, traditions, beliefs, lifestyles, arts and sports. Culture encompasses the set of values, conventions and social practices associated with a particular field or a particular group of people. Culture is built and evolves over time. Culture explains the way things are done and the mindsets of people. Culture is not inherited biologically. Fashion, food and norms of behaviours are what we can learn culturally. In the history of human civilisation, the confluence of different cultures brought about opportunities for the creation of new knowledge and ideas. Possible aspects to be discussed include festivals, arts, food, fashion, etiquette and protocol, beliefs, values, popular culture, cultural diversity, cultural nuances, multiculturalism, etc.
	Culture can be learned	1. How does one learn about one's own culture? 2. Should culture be taught explicitly? 3. Why do we need to appreciate cultural diversity? 4. How can we foster greater cross-cultural understanding to strengthen social cohesion?	

Broad Theme	Key Understanding	Guiding Questions	Areas for Discussion
Relationship	Everything is inter-related	1. What are the types of relationships that exist? 2. Why are relationships/ connections important? 3. How are events affected by relationships and vice-versa?	We are all connected in one way or another. Relationships can be forged with both living and non-living things such as friends, family, community, nations, animals, the environment, objects and events. There are different types of relationships that exist at the personal, national and global level. Teachers should encourage students to discover the multi-faceted connections that bind our existence. This extends beyond human relationships and includes the relationship with our living and natural environment. By analysing the relevant topics at different levels, we can reflect on how relationships affect our lives and how relationships can be sustained.
	Relationships can be nurtured	1. What are the factors that can help or hinder the formation of relationships? 2. Why do we nurture a relationship? 3. How do we improve/ sustain relationships?	Much of language use is for communication, and students can reflect on how effective communication can help build good relationships. Possible aspects to be discussed includes human beings and the environment, social cohesion, relationships in the virtual world, fake news, generation gaps, community service etc.

Broad Theme	Key Understanding	Guiding Questions	Areas for Discussion
Change	Change is inevitable	1. What kinds of changes occur naturally? 2. What changes are brought about by people? 3. What causes a change to happen? 4. Is a change inevitable?	The concept of change pervades every facet of our lives. Since changes are inevitable, teachers could focus on the evolution of human civilisation through invention, innovation and initiatives pertaining to social, environmental, political, technological and economic domains. Much of the changes could be reflected at a personal and family level. The emotional and psychological changes that bring about personal growth could also be explored. Students can draw connections between an individual experience with a wider range of topics. This includes developments at the community, national and global level. Embracing a change is sometimes the first step towards improvement. In other instances, the resistance to change, for example, in upholding the continuity of tradition and heritage, could be somewhat valuable. Possible aspects to be discussed include the SMART nation initiative, technological disruption, preservation of traditions, resistance against globalisation, etc.
	Change leads to more changes	1. Why do we adapt to changes? 2. How do we embrace and adapt to changes? 3. How do changes affect our way of life?	

Deciding on Teaching Aids and Learning Resources: Effective use of Authentic Materials and ICT

The use of everyday situations and contexts, current affairs and contemporary themes, as well as authentic materials, will provide real-world context for classroom learning. This will allow students to see the relevance of MTL in their daily lives and enable them to achieve practical language competencies.

Teachers may consider including the following types of written and audio-visual materials as their teaching resources:

Written and Audio-Visual Materials	H1 MTL	MTL 'B'
Functional and authentic texts such as emails, journals, news reports (print and non-print), advertisements and publicity brochures	✓	✓
Audio-visual content such as documentaries, media interviews and short films	✓	✓
Interactive lesson packages on Student Learning Space (SLS) and iMTL Portal	✓	✓
Literary passages which are inspirational in content and beautiful in language	✓	

Teachers should leverage on students' familiarity with ICT for MTL learning. There will be occasions where ICT can be used to enhance the quality of student learning, as it opens up new possibilities such as the use of interactive content, assignment of individualised tasks and the provision of different resources and activities to suit different needs of students. Furthermore, through ICT, students can be provided with feedback beyond curriculum hours; the use of ICT can also help the teacher reach out to all students.

SECTION 4: ASSESSMENT

4. ASSESSMENT

"Assessment is integral to the learning process and helps children become self-directed learners. As such, we design assessments with clarity of purpose, to provide our learners and us with feedback to address learning gaps and improve teaching practices."

(Singapore Curriculum Philosophy, The Singapore Teaching Practice, 2017)

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning, but we have to shift away from an over-emphasis on academic grades to focus on our students' holistic education and nurture in them an intrinsic motivation to learn. Thus, MTL teachers should design teaching and learning so that students can learn meaningfully and deeply, and develop language skills and life skills, which are useful beyond classrooms.

Assessment is the process of gathering and analysing evidence about students' learning and mastery, in relation to defined learning outcomes. Assessment-related teaching areas are not confined to the "Assessment and Feedback" quadrant, but could also be found in "Positive Classroom Culture" (e.g. Empowering Learners etc.); "Lesson Preparation" (e.g. Planning Key Questions etc.) and "Lesson Enactment" (e.g. Using Questions to Deepen Learning etc.).

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK	POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE
LESSON ENACTMENT	LESSON PREPARATION
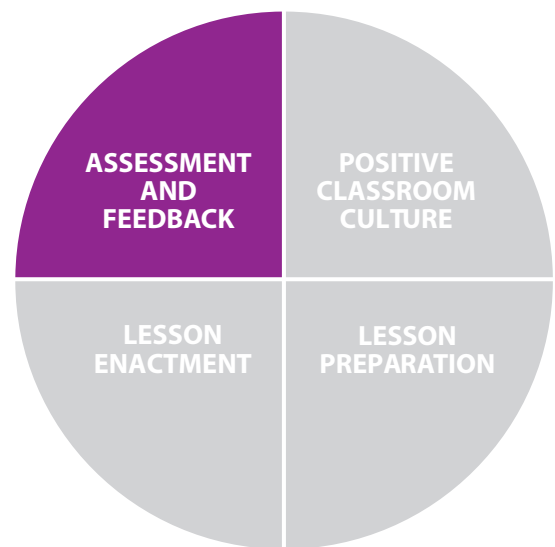
In the use of assessment practices, teachers need to understand that the "what" and "how" of assessment should be anchored on the "why", its clarity of purpose. In particular, teachers need to:

- align assessment practices with curricular objectives, content and pedagogy;
- identify students' learning gaps in relation to defined learning outcomes, so that they may adjust students' learning experiences to address these gaps;
- provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills and proficiencies through meaningful tasks;
- provide timely and effective feedback, help students understand the feedback given and provide them with opportunities to improve their learning;
- involve students actively in assessing themselves and one another (i.e. self and peer assessment respectively) using clear assessment criteria; and
- ensure a balanced use of formative assessment, such as effective questioning techniques, feedback, self and peer assessment, as well as summative assessment, such as weighted assessments, mid-year examination and end-of-year examination, to provide information to improve teaching and learning, as well as information on mastery and attainment.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

5. CONCLUSION

With the revised syllabus, H1 MTL and MTL 'B' students will be able to learn and apply the language skills acquired in their MTL lessons in an integrated and meaningful way, and achieve deeper understanding of issues. When students experience the joy of learning MTL in the last lap of their General Education journey, a strong interest in their MTL will be fostered and they will be motivated to continue learning and using their MTL beyond their schooling years.

SECTION 6: ANNEX

6. ANNEX

Key considerations in the design of a H1 MTL and MTL 'B' Lesson

Key Considerations	Examples
Choice of Language Skills	- Listening - Speaking - Reading - Writing - Spoken Interaction - Written Interaction
Choice of Theme	- Culture - Relationship - Change
Choice of Topic	- Youth - Environment - Food - Entertainment - Health - Education - Technology - Heritage (non-exhaustive examples)
Choice of Teaching Materials	- Authentic texts, such as press reports, news clips, blogs, audio clips, pamphlets, commentaries, etc. - Suitable literary passages for H1 MTL students.
Choice of Pedagogy or T&L Strategy	- Differentiated Instruction - Collaborative Learning - Self-directed Learning - Use of ICT - Questioning Techniques - Thinking routines - Other pedagogy or T&L strategy where relevant
Adopting Multi-dimensional Perspectives	To adopt lenses of: - Culture - Relationship - Change - Other perspectives where relevant
Transfer of Knowledge	Key understandings: - Culture shapes identity - Everything is inter-related - Change is inevitable - Culture can be learned - Relationships can be nurtured - Change leads to more changes
Choice of Assessment Practices	- Teacher assessment - Self assessment* - Peer assessment*

* Both self and peer assessments involve teachers preparing students on how to recognise important dimensions of learning and the features of progress.

Example of a H1 MTL lesson

Key Considerations	Design
Choice of Language Skills	- Listening - Speaking - Reading - Writing - Spoken Interaction - Written Interaction
Choice of Theme	• Culture
Choice of Topic	**Hawker Culture and Heritage:** • What does hawker culture mean to you? • Does hawker culture help to strengthen the Singapore identity? • Why should we preserve hawker culture? • How should we keep the hawker culture alive? • Do you support the nomination of hawker culture in Singapore to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity? Why?
Choice of Teaching Materials	**Authentic texts:** • Instagram posts by foodies • News video clips • Food blogs • News reports **Literary passage:** • Prose piece on food culture by local writer
Choice of Pedagogy or T&L Strategy	**Introduction:** • Check students' prior knowledge using online quizzes **Teaching activities:** • Use of thinking routine (e.g. Circle of Viewpoints) to support the generation of ideas and viewpoints from the perspectives of: hawkers, the government, customers, tourists. • Adopt differentiated instruction and collaborative learning strategy, e.g. Jigsaw, where students are assigned to various stakeholder groups. Students are assigned to groups according to their language proficiency. They will read articles and watch video resources related to the topic and use iMTL mind-map tool to organise discussion points. • After returning to the mixed groups, students will share viewpoints from different perspectives. Each group will give a 2-min oral presentation, based on the three lenses (see below). • Complete an essay writing assignment (Q4: 4 pictures relating to hawker culture; title: Preserving the Singapore hawker culture).
Adopting Multi-dimensional Perspectives	**Adopting lenses of:** • Culture: Does hawker culture help to strengthen Singapore identity? • Relationship: Does the promotion of Singapore hawker culture help to strengthen social cohesion? • Change: Does the nomination of hawker culture in Singapore to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity help to preserve traditional tastes?
Transfer of Knowledge	**Key understanding:** • Culture shapes identity
Choice of Assessment Practices	• Teacher assessment: Oral questioning, quizzes, class assignments, etc. • Self assessment: Checklist on the components of a good essay • Peer assessment: Oral presentation rubrics

Example of a MTL 'B' lesson

Key Considerations	Design
Choice of Language Skills	- Listening - Speaking - Reading - Writing - Spoken Interaction - Written Interaction
Choice of Theme	• Culture
Choice of Topic	**Hawker Culture and Heritage:** • Do you like hawker food? Why? • Is it important to preserve traditional tastes? Why? • How can we preserve traditional tastes? • Do you agree that hawker food reflects the Singapore identity? Why?
Choice of Teaching Materials	**Authentic texts:** • Instagram posts by foodies • News video clips • Food blogs • News reports
Choice of Pedagogy or T&L Strategy	**Introduction:** • Check students' prior knowledge using online quizzes **Teaching activities:** • Use of thinking routine (e.g. Circle of Viewpoints) to support the generation of ideas and viewpoints from the perspectives of: hawkers, the government, customers, tourists. • Adopt differentiated instruction and collaborative learning strategy, e.g. Jigsaw, where students are assigned to various stakeholder groups. Students are assigned to groups according to their language proficiency. They will read articles and watch video resources related to the topic and use iMTL mind-map tool to organise discussion points. • After returning to the mixed groups, students will share viewpoints from different perspectives. Each group will give a 2-min oral presentation, based on the three lenses (see below). • Student to complete a blog post or an email, based on one of the questions listed below: i. Blog: Write a social media post to share that your favourite traditional hawker stall is closing down as there is no successor. Suggest one way to preserve traditional tastes. (Lens of Change) ii. Email: Write an email to introduce one type of hawker food to a friend from overseas and explain to him/her why this food best reflects the Singaporean identity. (Lens of Culture)
Adopting Multi-dimensional Perspectives	**Adopting lenses of:** • Change: How do we preserve traditional hawker food? • Culture: Which hawker food best reflects the Singaporean identity? Why?
Transfer of Knowledge	**Key understanding:** • Culture shapes identity
Choice of Assessment Practices	• Teacher assessment: Oral questioning, quizzes, class assignments, etc. • Self assessment: Checklist on the components of a good blog or email