

2021 brief bio

Joseph (Joe) Lo Bianco, AM, FAHA, is Professor Emeritus in language and literacy in the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne. He held the position of Chair Professor of Language Literacy Education from his appointment as Professor at the University of Melbourne in February 2004. In 1987, he authored Australia's first national language policy, recognised as the first comprehensive multilingual policy in the world, and between 1990 and 2002 was Director of Language Australia/The National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia. He was elected President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2012, the first educator to serve in this role. Professor Lo Bianco retired from the position at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education in June 2020 and was appointed Professor Emeritus of the University.

His academic specialisation is in language policy analysis, accompanied by an extensive track record in language policy advising. These assignments have concerned minority language rights, literacy and social opportunity, language policy and planning with a specific interest in conflict mitigation in multi-ethnic societies in South East Asia, educational equity for immigrant and Indigenous populations, multilingual and anti-racist education and language revitalisation. He has taken a long term interest in Italian diaspora studies, Italian language maintenance, the integration of minority communities into Italian society and education, and the maintenance of Italy's minority languages.

His academic analysis and theorization of language problems in education and society is complemented by extensive real-world policy writing, advising and engagement in 25 international locations. In recent years this has included a 8 year project in Southeast Asia for UNICEF under the title of Language, Education and Social Cohesion, focusing on conflict resolution in multi-ethnic settings in Malaysia, Myanmar and South Thailand and as consultant to a four year project on Multilingual Cities in 12 European municipalities responding to recent inflows of immigrants. Through this work he has pioneered a form of language problem solving called the Facilitated Dialogue which transforms public policy processes into realistic solutions and advances the notion of language rights. He has more than 25 books and major reports and over 130 articles and chapters