

ILTLP CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATION REPORT

TEACHER'S NAME	SCHOOL	LANGUAGE	YEAR LEVEL
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CONTEXT

Boys' school

Start French in Yr 8

3 x 50 mins in Yr 8 all year

3 x 50 mins in Yr 9 over 3 terms

4 x 65 mins per week Yr 10

Programme length: 3 weeks

Constraints

- Interrupted by my unforeseen departure overseas before the end of the program
- Interval of 3 weeks between end of term and start of next because of camp
- Had to hurry last part of project as was given a practicum student who was only with us for a week, so had to hand over the class to her

AREA OF INVESTIGATION

My cultural baggage has been moulded by the fact that I spent the first 28 years of my life in various parts of Africa and also by the school trips I have accompanied to France with my students.

Having had to make the necessary adjustments to living in different cultures as we moved through Africa and then into Australia, I have been aware of having to understand my own cultural background and how this has affected my perceptions of other cultures. Previous values and practices have been challenged and I have had to evaluate what I had previously accepted as being "the norm".

Taking students to France over the past 14 years has shown me how insular many of them are and how, lacking the skills to deal with a different reality, they can be insensitive and inflexible when they are in the reality of life in a different culture. Conversely, when interacting with a student or adult from a French-speaking country, they are usually not aware of any sense of responsibility for that interaction; they lack the skills to see the "Australian experience" from the other person's point of view.

What has driven me then in my project, is the desire to start the development of intercultural skills that will better-equip my students to engage in the global reality of the 21st century. At the same time I wanted to show them that they are now capable of operating in the TL at a more sophisticated level, extending the more able students yet allowing the less-able to function at a satisfying level.

Specifically, I wanted to develop a long-term project that would allow students to

- Reflect on what the term "culture" means to them
- Notice differences and similarities between their culture (or a situation) and that of another culture
- Develop the skills to understand how their cultural background can influence their reaction to or understanding of an intercultural experience
- Understand how/why cultures evolve differently
- Through the above, begin to develop their intercultural learning skills. To develop their skills in integrating intercultural understanding into their growth as a global citizen, with a responsibility to understand their place in the world
- Enable students to use their existing bank of language proficiency and function at their level in the TL as much as possible, to give them a sense of satisfaction and achievement

I hoped to be able to do this by linking language, culture and intercultural understanding.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Sequence of activities:

1. Reflection on the meaning to each student of the word "culture". (See questionnaire *Réfléchissez un peu*).
2. View (through digital projector) and discuss in TL different dwellings. Questions provided on worksheet to accommodate those whose learning style is more visual, and for the less able students. Also discuss what values inhabitants might have.
3. Students then selected a dwelling from a source of their choice and wrote about it in French along the lines of the discussions in class. They then showed a partner the picture and talked about it, with the partner asking one or two questions as per the model in the whole-class activity.
4. After talking about houses, lifestyle, leisure students drew a mind-map to illustrate how these are influenced (consensus: by environmental, social and economic/political factors.)
5. Students were asked to record what came to mind when they heard or read the word *Africa*. This was a precursor to the next part of the project, which was to use the DVD "*Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages*" as a springboard for further activities which I hoped would develop students' awareness of how their cultural perspective can influence their reaction to another culture.
6. I took inspiration from the site of the Alliance française de Sydney (for *Kirikou* activities) to discuss the geographical and climactic similarities between Australia and the *francophone* area in which *Kirikou* appears to have "lived".
7. Students were then re- shown photos of some of the houses previously seen and had to say why they thought *Kirikou* would/would not live in them, using the TL. They had to call on their knowledge of the culture and geography as well as their language to do this:

e.g.: il n'habite pas le château *parce qu'il n'y a pas de château en Afrique/parce que le paysage n'est pas comme ça dans la région équatoriale*.

Or: *peut-être parce qu'il y a des musulmans qui habitent en Afrique*.
8. We then moved to the frontespiece of the book of "*Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages*" which shows an African village with lush gardens and traditional thatched huts. Students were given a sheet of vocabulary and had to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. This vocabulary was essential to allow them to talk about what they saw in the village picture.
9. Students described (in TL) what they could see in the picture to a partner whilst teacher circulated.

10. Students were asked to suggest what the village's appearance tells us about the inhabitants. This was done using a range of questions (as per BLOOM'S taxonomy)

e.g: What do you see? What do they do? What is the same/different from where you live? Would you live to live there? Why do you think their houses are like they are?

This was done orally in a mixture of the TL and English.

11. Students then looked at pictures set in the western world of people going about their daily routine. Students were asked to say what they were doing in the TL, drawing on vocabulary used earlier in the year.
12. For homework they were asked to write answers (in TL) to the questions on the worksheet
13. Next they viewed pictures of people in Africa going about their daily routine. They gave oral responses in the target language to what they saw.
14. In pairs, students suggested what *Kirikou's* daily routine might be like.
15. They wrote responses on the worksheet (*See "Chez toi et chez Kirikou"*) which required them to compare their routine with what they imagined *Kirikou's* routine to be. Their answers were later discussed in class.
16. The second picture of *Kirikou's* village was shown (after the hyena had devastated the crops) and students were asked to come up with TL words to describe the reaction of the villagers. They also discussed in English why such an event would be considered so serious. Has anything similar happened in Australia (current drought). What are the consequences for both situations?
17. Students were to imagine they were staying with *Kirikou* and write a letter home to outline what they do on a typical day, and comment on how they feel about it.
18. Students then watched the DVD "*Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages*".
19. The final activity was to complete the evaluation and reflection sheet. (*See "Feedback and evaluation of the Kirikou activities."*)

DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

1. In (2) above (View and discuss in TL different dwellings), there was a lot of opportunity for questioning on different levels, from the simple "What style of dwelling is this?" to "Who might live here?" and "Would you like to live here?" This provided some rich exchanges of cultural/historical information. It also gave me a feel for the cultural "knowledge base" of the class.
2. When the picture of the shanty town was shown, most students said it was in Africa. Questions were asked in the TL as to what sort of leisure activities children of my students' age would have. A few suggested soccer and in response to my prompting questions "Do they watch TV,/play video games?" one student replied "No, because they are savages". We moved through that remark "What do you mean by *savages*?" to the point where the student rephrased his observation to say that they wouldn't play video games because "they don't have the technology". I asked the class to think about how they would entertain themselves in a similar situation and most suggested things they could make out of scraps *eg: a ball out of rolled up plastic bags*. I showed pictures of the wire and shoe-polish-top cars and motorbikes made by children in these areas and the class came to the conclusion on their own that this in fact is a form of technology. It was useful to be able to discuss that this was a similarity rather than a difference. *i.e. both forms of leisure activity are technology, just at differing levels*. In this way, students were able to situate themselves in both cultures.
3. When students selected their own dwelling to talk about, most selected rather grandiose ones!

4. Predictably, most students came up with the stereotype of life in Africa (poverty, war, AIDS, corruption, elephants, Mugabe, drought and famine). I showed again some of the dwellings from the first lesson and asked (in French) if people in Africa were likely to live in a house like these. I also showed a photo of a house in Johannesburg and one in Egypt, and this led to some interesting discussion about the danger of stereotyping. We also discussed where their mind picture of *Africa* had come from. As quite a few students in the class are into music, we also talked about some of the *francophone* musicians who are known in Australia and the fact that there are established authors too.
5. Students were able to justify their opinion as to why/why not *Kirikou* would/would not live in the houses shown to varying degrees of proficiency, but they all appeared to recycle the reasons raised in earlier discussions of the first activity on dwellings. This suggests they were looking at a different context with the skills used earlier.
6. The students participated readily both in oral and written activities.
7. They were happy to complete the feedback questionnaire.
8. I was disappointed that there was insufficient time to do the "write a letter home" activity as this would have given valuable insight into the extent to which the students were able to sight themselves as a participant as well as an observer.

FINDINGS

I find it difficult to keep this section separate from "Interpreting the information"!

1. I had anticipated that some students would display a propensity to stereotype and this was evident.

e.g.: the remark "because they are savages" I had hoped that after the project there would be evidence of a change in this through an emerging awareness that this stereotyping can block or limit intercultural interaction.

2. I had also wanted to make students more aware of their role as a global citizen, to have them begin to see that they have a responsibility towards being both audience and participant in intercultural exchanges. I didn't think such an awareness existed and discussions and reactions confirmed this.
3. The students in this class are serious students, who are concerned about their academic performance. I noticed that in most of the activities they were very anxious to get the language right. ie their focus was on the French more than on the concepts. The less-able ones were often lagging behind in discussions because of their concern to answer questions in written form and to check the grammar and spelling.
4. When responding to the "How would you feel/what would you do?" type of question there was the anticipated range of responses, from the serious, reflective consideration to the joker. Students readily volunteered suggestions and commented vigorously on some of the answers. It was worthwhile doing the "think-pair-share" approach to some of the discussion activities as this took students away from the predictability of their usual partner's responses.
5. Our college has invested heavily in a program of "learning to think" so the students are used to coping with the different levels of questioning.
6. Predictably, the discussion/oral/aural activities were more popular than written activities.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

I have spent many hours reading and re-reading documents in the ILTLP file and the discussion papers recently received. Out of all of this, my biggest concern is the nagging question

What differentiates what you are doing here, using languages, from what they might learn in a SOSE class?

This is probably because I have battled to fully grasp the concept of linking language to culture beyond the obvious consideration of register (e.g.; *tu/vous*)

On the one hand is the observation from Angelo Scarino in her discussion paper on programming that

The essential feature of intercultural language learning is its focus on the interpretation, the making and the exchange of meanings in interactions among teachers and students, processes that are central to both the communication and the learning.

And then there is the observation by Anne-Marie Morgan in her summary of feedback from team members to teachers in Phase 1 of the project:

The project team often noted that the links between language and culture must underpin the whole planning process, as this concept is central to the construct of intercultural language learning.

Did I observe meaning-making? YES! Was there an exchange of meanings? YES! But what were the links between language and culture? I'm not sure that I mastered this concept or dealt with it in my project.

So what I am left with is the doubt that this has in fact been an Intercultural Teaching and Learning Project.

I did react quite strongly to points raised in the discussion paper (Angelo Scarino) on the need to shift "from the prioritisation of content in programming to the prioritisation of interaction" in which Angela refers to Shepard's view that

The traditional view of programming is derived from a view of learning understood as a process of accumulating items of factual knowledge, which are tightly sequenced and organised hierarchically (Shepard, 2000).

....I can't think of too many teachers who teach in the way outlined as being "traditional"!! I don't think of my students as empty vessels needing to be force-fed like the geese in France. Teaching boys and having been immersed in thinking skills, questioning etc has positioned me away from such a narrow pedagogy. You can't help but be aware of the boys as being "meaning-makers". Getting into their heads to anticipate how they are going to react and how this affects what is included in a programme and how that programme is going to be delivered has long been the exciting challenge of teaching boys.

So I am not a traditionalist obsessed with content, but am I an Interculturalist?!! I have to continue the doubting and the questioning. Is it enough that

1. Students have been seen to think comparatively about languages and cultures.
2. They have generalised from their observations of particular cultures to cultures in general?(*But not from a particular language to languages in general.*)
3. Do my students "*reflect and respond to what they see and understand about languages and cultures?*" (A-M Morgan in the discussion paper "feedback from team members to teachers") Again, if the word "languages" is omitted, they do!
4. They have noticed similarities and differences within cultures (but not *between languages and cultures*). There is a pattern here: I have not made the connection, either for myself or my students, between the language and culture. So although we used a lot of the TL am I not left with a SOSE-type project? How do I address this lack of a link between the language and the culture?
5. Responses to the feedback questionnaire threw up the following observations:

6. Not all students were aware of the aim of the project as I had presented it to them. The question was: *What do you think was the aim of this program? What was the point in doing all the activities?* Responses ranged from

- To learn how to speak about someone else in French. Also the culture of another country.
- To get a sense of the cultures that are different to ours whilst learning French.
- To get a better understanding of the language and practice makes perfect.
- To develop understanding of different people's lives.

Later in the questionnaire I asked students to respond to questions which specifically addressed what I had had in mind were the aims of the project. There was some redemption in replies like :

- I would feel more comfortable in a different culture now; when we started to learn about Kirikou and his culture it made me start to think differently.

However, their replies on the whole had a heavy bias towards viewing the project as an investigation into another culture.

7. The average of the enjoyment rating scores was 7.7! I believe they enjoyed the unit and most believed it would be worth repeating with a Yr 10 class next year but I am left struggling with the question of understanding the language-culture mix!! It would have been really useful to have had access to the discussion papers earlier!) especially the one on the Team members' feedback and programming for ITL.

8. Is there some way I can get feed back from team members on my project?!

MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS

A selection of materials provided to the students follows.

EVALUATION

Too many dwellings included. Whilst students enjoyed guessing where they were and who might live in them, some found the activity too long. They enjoyed sharing their knowledge and listening to the historical background I gave them on *for e.g.* the château. Some felt they had to produce perfect written answers on the work sheet. I had gone through the first few questions at a pace which allowed them to write their answers but then realised this was going to take ages and was shifting the focus onto the language. It might have been better to allow students to take notes and then to select any 4 pictures and respond to the relevant questions.

QUESTIONNAIRE

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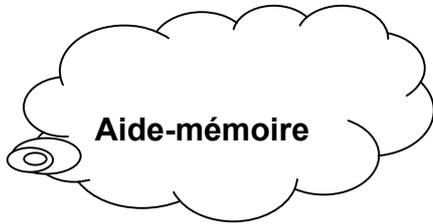
Réfléchissez un peu... *there is no need to put your name on this paper!*

- When you think of "culture", what comes to mind? Jot your thoughts in sentences or words.
- Do you feel a sense of culture in your life? Describe the culture to which you feel you belong, if this applies to you.
- Where does this sense of belonging to a culture come from? Why do you feel you can identify with this particular culture?
- What experience do you have of another culture? Briefly describe where/when/how/with whom you have experienced this other culture.
- How did you feel when you had something to do with this culture?
- In your language studies so far, how do you think of (for example) the French? When you think of France or French people, what images/feelings/thoughts/opinions come to mind?
- Where do these images/feelings/thoughts/opinions come from? What has shaped your experience or ideas of what it is to be "French"? What does "being French" mean for you? Your response can be in sentences, words or in graphic form.

WORKSHEET

(space for responses has been removed for publication here)

Les logements



un château; un immeuble; un chalet; un studio; une hutte;

une caravane; une petite maison à la campagne; une maison;

une cabane; un abri ; un appartement; une villa;

une maison ancienne;

Regardez les photos au tableau. Répondez à ces questions.....

1. C'est quelle sorte d'habitation?

C'est situé où? (sur le front de mer/en ville/au bord de la rivière?)

2. C'est quelle sorte d'habitation?

C'est une habitation typique de l'Australie?

C'est situé où? Qui peut habiter ici?

3. Qui peut habiter cette maison? Pourquoi dites-vous ça?

Où peut-on trouver une maison comme ça?

4. Est-ce qu'on trouve une maison comme ça en France?

5. Est-ce que cette petite maison se trouve à Perth?

Quel est le passe-temps préféré de la personne qui habite ici?

6. Qui habite ici? C'est comment, la vie pour les habitants?

7. Où peut-on trouver une maison comme ça? Pourquoi dites-vous ça?

C'est comment, la vie pour les habitants?

8. Dans quel pays se trouvent ces maisons? Elles sont comment?

Qui habite ici? Qu'est-ce qu'ils font dans la vie?

Est-ce que tu voudrais habiter dans cette maison?

9. Où se trouve cette habitation? Qui habite ici? Quelles sont les différences entre cette maison et votre maison?

10. Où se trouve cette maison? Quel temps fait-il? Que font les habitants?

11. Ce logement est construit de quel matériel? Pourquoi?

12. Cet immeuble se trouve où?

Discute avec ton voisin:

Imaginez la famille qui habite ici. Est-ce qu'ils vont à la plage? Est-ce qu'ils jouent au cricket? Est-ce qu'ils font un barbecue dans le jardin? Qu'est-ce qu'ils mangent au petit-déjeuner? Quand les enfants vont en ville, qu'est-ce qu'ils mettent? Où est-ce qu'ils retrouvent leurs amis?

Comment est-ce qu'ils vont à l'école? Et vous, comment est-ce que vous allez au collège? Qu'est-ce que vous faites pour vous amuser?

Écris un portrait de cette famille ici.

Réfléchissez:

Think about some of the dwellings you have seen.

What do they tell us about the people who live in them?

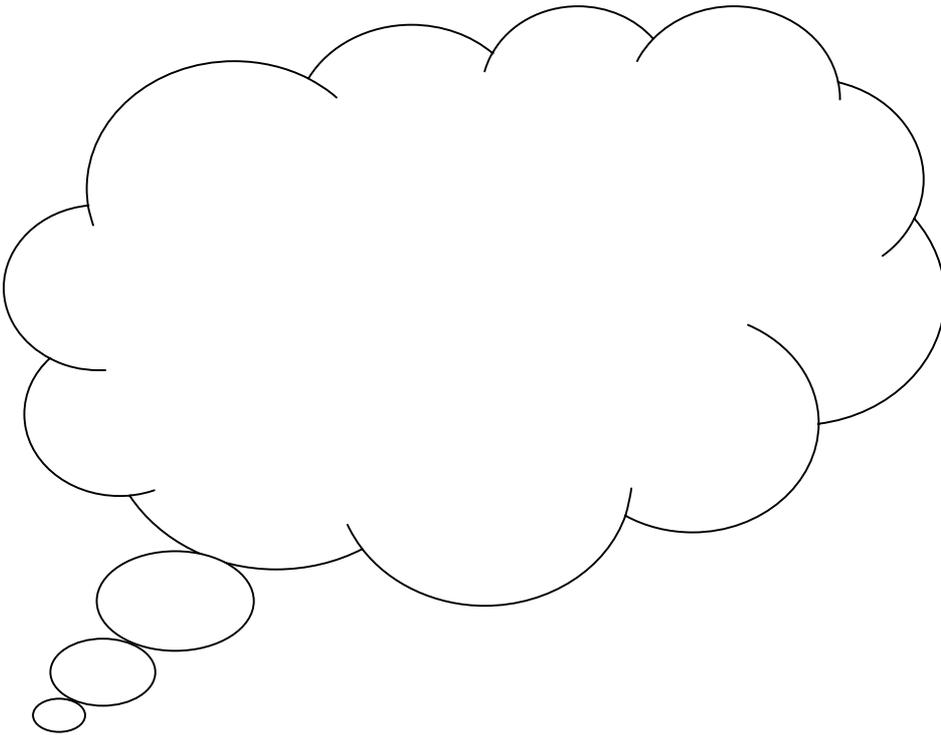
What can we learn about their values/what is important to them?

WORKSHEET

Où habite Kirikou?



Pour toi, que signifie le mot *Afrique*.....?



Qu'est-ce qu'on trouve ...

En Afrique

En Australie

une rivière; un fleuve; un désert; une montagne; de la savane;
une forêt équatoriale; une forêt tropicale;

Les climats

Quel temps fait-il chez Kirikou en hiver?

Et en été?

Et chez toi, quel temps fait-il en hiver?

Et en été?

Maintenant travaille avec un partenaire! Décide si Kirikou peut habiter dans les habitations que tu vas voir. Note tes réponses ici en te servant du vocabulaire que tu connais déjà.

Vous pouvez vous servir de ce vocabulaire...

Les habitants

une famille moyenne; une famille aisée; une famille noble;
un paysan; une retraitée; une famille pauvre;

La location

en + (feminine) country; au/aux + (masculine) country
à + town

au centre-ville; en banlieue; au bord de la rivière/au bord de la mer;
à la campagne; près d'une forêt; dans les collines; à la montagne;

La description

moderne; ancienne; de luxe; typique de; délabré; rustique;
en pierre; en brique; en bois;
l'architecture (*f*);

le climat/la situation a influencé l'architecture;

La vie est comment?

aisée; confortable;
on fait la chasse; on travaille dans le jardin;
on peut faire des randonnées

difficile; pas très confortable; fatigant; on a souvent faim;
on cultive les *olives*; on élève les *chèvres*;

WORKSHEET

(Photos were provided for this task)

Regarde les photos et réponds aux questions:

A. La routine d'une famille moyenne à Perth

1. C'est qui? Où est-elle? Qu'est-ce qu'elle fait?
2. C'est qui? Où est-elle? Qu'est-ce qu'elle fait?
3. Qui fait les courses chez toi? Où va-t-on pour acheter à quoi manger et à quoi boire? (pour faire les courses)
4. Où vas-tu pour acheter du pain?
5. Comment vas-tu à l'école? En taxi, peut-être?!
6. Et ton père, comment est-ce qu'il va au travail?
7. Où est-ce qu'il travaille?
8. Est-ce que ta mère travaille hors de la maison?
9. Quel est ton passe-temps préféré?
10. Qu'est-ce que tu fais après le dîner?
11. Et toi, que fais-tu pour aider à la maison?

Maintenant on va voir des photos qui représentent la routine quotidienne chez Kirikou.



La routine quotidienne

Chez toi

Chez Kirikou

Qui se lève le premier?

Qui prépare le petit-déjeuner?

Que manges-tu au petit-déjeuner?

Comment vas-tu à l'école?

Que font tes parents dans la vie?

Qui fait le linge?

Qui fait les courses?

Quel est ton passe-temps préféré?

Qu'est-ce que tu fais après le dîner?

Feedback and evaluation of the Kirikou activities



There is no need to write your name on this sheet! I value your comments, observations and suggestions, so please treat this seriously.

(spaces for response were removed for publication here)

Before starting, please have your file in front of you with all the activities to hand, to remind yourself of what we have done.

1. Rate your enjoyment of this part of your Year 10 course on the following scale. (1-10, with 10 indicating the highest level of enjoyment).

2. What do you think was the aim of this program? What was the point in doing all the activities?

3. Did you feel you had enough knowledge?

e.g. about France to deal with questions about what life is like for people living in the Paris apartment block?

Some of the questions were....

- *est-ce que les enfants jouent au cricket?*
- *Comment vont-ils à l'école?*
- *Es-ce qu'ils font un barbecue dans le jardin?*

4. This program was developed as a way of engaging you in Intercultural Learning. My aim was for you to develop skills which will enable you to understand
- why you see things as being *different* (Where are you coming from? What influences the way you react to a different culture? What "cultural baggage" do you have?)
 - the factors behind those differences. (What are the reasons for the differences between your culture and another one?)
 - why you react the way you do to those differences. (What is your reaction when you see that someone lives differently from you. How do you think about someone whose culture is not the same?)
 - that sometimes what appears different is really the same
 - that other cultures are as valid as your own
 - that you can do this whilst at the same time using the French you know

How far do you think the *Kirikou* program has allowed you to meet these aims? Has there been any change in the way you might think of other cultures or the way you will be if you find yourself in a situation where you are interacting with someone outside your culture?

5. Please make whatever comments you think would be useful about the following activities:

- **Réfléchissez un peu:** the questionnaire about "culture"
- **Les logements:** discussing who might live in various dwellings, and what they might do.
- **Où habite Kirikou?** Comparing climates; would Kirikou live here?
- Vocabulary to talk about the **1st picture of Kirikou's village.**
(*"Use your language skills to work out the meaning of the following words!"*)
- **2nd picture of Kirikou's village:** discussing reasons for the damage and what it might mean to the villagers; suggesting something similar that might happen to people in Australia.
- What do you think of the idea of not seeing the cartoon until this point?
- **La routine quotidienne:** Worksheet with the written version of the questions asked orally about your daily routine.
- **Une famille australienne typique?** Completing the sentences that accompany pictures about daily routine.
- **Chez toi et chez Kirikou:** comparing daily routines.
- Did you feel you had enough language to be able to express yourself in the various activities?

Sometimes most of the time all the time

- Do you feel (you may choose more than one here!)

your language skills have improved / stayed the same

your vocabulary has been extended /there was too much new vocabulary

the language used is useful / the language won't be useful in the future

- What do you think about the DVD "*Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages*"?
- Do you think this is a program that would be worth repeating in Year 10 next year? What changes would you make?
- *Any other comments?*