

ILTLP CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATION REPORT

TEACHER'S NAME	SCHOOL	LANGUAGE	YEAR LEVEL
Ida Harsojo	Richard Johnson Anglican School Ph. 9677 2455	Indonesian	Year 5

CONTEXT

Profile of school

Richard Johnson Anglican School, located in the western Sydney suburb at Oakhurst is under the Anglican Corporation. It is a K-12 school which has its first 17, Year 12 students sitting the HSC 2007. There are 608 students at the school. Years 1 – 4 students study German and Years 5 – 7 students study Indonesian. There are approximately 55 students in each year group at primary level, and 60 students at Year 7 and 8.

Indonesian is not yet offered as an elective in Years 9 -12 due to the number of students.

In 2007 there is one Year 11 student who is studying Indonesian Beginners Course and one Year 11 student who is studying Indonesian Background Speakers Course through The Distant Education School.

Indonesian is well resourced. Every year the school receives funding from The Australian Government Languages Program Grant, distributed through the Association of Independent School of NSW to implement special projects and provide teaching aids.

Profile of students' group

Year 5 class with which I have been doing the investigation has 27 students. They are Australians with different backgrounds; namely, three Filipinos, one Indian, two British, one New Zealander and the rest are local.

Profile of self

I have been teaching Indonesian in various schools in both Primary and Secondary levels for eleven years in NSW and I was an EFL teacher in Surabaya, Indonesia for fourteen years.

I was born and brought up in Surabaya, Indonesia and I believe that teaching is not only my career but also my calling. I moved to Sydney in October 1996 and started teaching Indonesian in January 1997. I am always keen to update my teaching skills. Apart from teaching, I have been involved in writing Beginner's Syllabus, marking, judging and designing HSC Indonesian Examination Paper and currently I am a part time Indonesian Consultant at Department of Education and Training in NSW. I am a wife and a mother of two grown-up sons.

AREA OF INVESTIGATION

- To enable the students to notice specific language & culture in the unit of work 'overcoming sickness' and compare it with their own experience
- To enable the students to understand common sicknesses & traditional treatment in Indonesia
- To enable the students to understand and use expressions like *jamu*, *masuk angin*, which can't be translated into English.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

During Term 3, the Year 5 students learned the vocabulary of the body and in conjunction, the unit of work covers learning about common sicknesses and the medicines used by Indonesians.

My area of investigation was a small section of this unit of work, namely, asking the students to compare and contrast different types of common sicknesses in Indonesia to those in Australia, and that the Indonesians have an alternative medicine called *Jamu* besides western medicine commonly used in both Australia and Indonesia.

I asked my students to watch an Indonesian television advertisement on medicine.

I also explained about *Jamu* with teaching aids, such as 'Ibu *Jamu*' doll (the *Jamu* lady who goes from house to house selling home made *Jamu*), pictures from magazines and real *jamu* packets.

I gave a questionnaire to my students to trigger them to reflect on their experience and compare it with what they saw in the advertisement.

Then we had an in-depth discussion about *Jamu* and I recorded the discussion.

In doing so I modified my teaching learning activities with the emphasis on the students' experience and listened to their opinions more. I also needed to think about and design of the questions I was asking to direct the students to be able to think reflectively and interculturally.

The class was really enthusiastic with all the activities and the students were heavily and happily engaged in the discussion as seen by their questions and answers to their peers' questions. The class became more lively and it amazed me that the students also learnt a lot from each other.

As I recorded the process of discussion, it gave me the opportunity to look back, reflect and contemplate on my own style of teaching so far. With this, I was able to see clearly the strengths and weaknesses of my teaching style.

DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

I audio-recorded the 30-minute students' discussion and I also did the written assessment at the end of term.

The students' reaction was very positive, they were very attentive and engaged and they used the idiom *Jamu* without hesitation in a correct context.

Since the data were collected, I was able to refer back to them and use them as needed.

The discussion process itself and the data collected became an assessment to give me feedback on how well the students understand this unit of work.

The written assessment at the end of topic includes reading comprehension skills such as answering questions, writing skills such as labelling body parts, writing a sentence using pictures as stimulus and answering 5 questions about *Jamu* in English.

FINDINGS

From the discussion and the written assessment that the students produced, I discovered that Year 5 students are able to look at difference without necessarily coming to the idea that being different is always bad. In fact, they are able to see the positive side of difference.

I have also found that Year 5 students are also able to think critically and interculturally.

Out of 26 students, 17 students said they are willing to take *Jamu* as an alternative medicine stating their reasons and only 8 were reluctant to try *Jamu*. This evidence shows that they are open minded and tolerant.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

From the findings, I have to adapt my strategy of the teaching and learning process to focus more on

culture than language. I can use culture as a starting point or a spring board to open their students' mind to another world and another community.

I expect the students to learn not only the language but beyond the language, which is culture where the language lives and flourishes.

I did not expect them to use the word *Jamu* readily and naturally, without trying to translate it into English. However, the students were ready to use it without hesitation. I have also found from their discussion, that the students are able to see themselves as Indonesian children, in which role they seem to know a lot about *Jamu*.

Since we spent some time discussing *Jamu*, we did not have as much time to practise the language as I usually have during language lessons.

This was my first classroom investigation and I found that I need to develop in the area of asking the right questions of the students, and that the right questions are not easy to formulate.

I have found that this investigation is very valuable for both the students and the teacher in relation to intercultural language teaching and learning, because it enriches the process of understanding the language and the culture. It also engages the students more than does learning the language only. It gives the students the opportunity to think conceptually.

The classroom-based investigation really provides me with a different angle from which to see myself as a language teacher. I realised that although I have been teaching the culture from time to time, I do it subconsciously and hence I do not pay much attention to it. This investigation has enabled me to really stop and look back to what my students and I have been doing in the classroom and consequently I am more able to hone my cultural perspective into my classroom practice.

MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS

- I showed them some Indonesian television ads, a *Jamu*-seller doll, some pictures of *Jamu* and packets of real *Jamu*, which helped them to conceptualize the topic. The students enjoyed watching the Indonesian television advertisements and the advertisements created an Indonesian mood in the classroom.

- The students had the discussion about *jamu* with the teacher as a facilitator. The teacher recorded the discussion via a mobile phone. The mobile phone turned out to be very handy and practical piece of equipment which I used as a recorder, and students loved being recorded.

The transcript of discussion is as follows :

Student 1: Is selling *Jamu* legal in Indonesia?

Teacher: Yes, selling *Jamu* is legal in Indonesia.

Student 2: In what other countries can we find *Jamu*?

Teacher: Besides Indonesia *Jamu* can also be found in some other Asian countries like China.

Student 3: Does the *Jamu* seller have a husband and kids?

Teacher: Yes, they have their own family.

Student 4: Why does *Jamu* keep going on for generations?

Student 5: Because people will always get sick and they need *Jamu*.

Student 6: And because they are poor, they can't buy western medicine. *Jamu* is cheaper.

Student 7: Is *Jamu* sold in every single country in Asia?

Student 8: No.

Student 9: How old is the person who sells *Jamu*?

Student 10: any age?

Student 11 : 14

Student 12: suitable age – 18 and over?

Teacher: Older than that. They are more than 20 years old.

Student 13: How old do you have to be to be the drinker (of *Jamu*)?

Teacher: It depends on the sickness. Some *Jamu* are for younger people and some for older ones.

Student 14: So if you are one year old, can you drink *Jamu*?

Teacher: No, I think when you are 6 or 7 years old.

Student 15 (she was away last week): Does *Jamu* taste nice?

Student 16: Nope. It is yuck.

Teacher: What do you mean?

Student 16: Bitter.

Student 17: Is there alcohol in it?

Teacher: No, *Jamu* does not contain alcohol.

Student 18: How many types of *Jamu* are there?

Student 19: A lot.

Student 20: How long has *Jamu* been in Indonesia?

Teacher : *Jamu* has been there for a long time, maybe for hundreds of years

Student 21: (She was away last week): What is *Jamu* for?

Student 22: *Jamu* is used for when someone is sick or tired.

Student 23: What types of herbs are there in *Jamu*?

Student 24: Maybe coriander?

Student 25: Spices?

Student 26: Mint?

Student 27: Some lemon and lime?

Teacher: You are right, everything that is herbal.

Student 1: Do you know what ingredients are there in *Jamu*?

Teacher: Some, but not every ingredients because I am not Ibu *Jamu*.

Student 2: Sugar?

Teacher: Do you think it has sugar?

Student 3: No, because sugar is not very good and *Jamu* is a medicine.

Student 4: Yes, Because *Jamu* is bitter, it needs sugar.

Student 5: When did you know about *Jamu*?

Teacher: Since I was young because I lived in Indonesia before.

Student 6: Does *Jamu* have to be passed down by family or by friends?

Teacher: By their family like a traditional and precious recipe.

Student 7: What colour is *Jamu*?

Student 8: Brownish yellow colour.

Student 9: What countries can produce *Jamu*?

Student 10: Indonesia, China, America?

Teacher: Do you think Australians can take *Jamu* as an alternative medicine?

Student 11: No, because they are not used to it.

Student 12: No, because they don't like bitter food.

Student 13: No, because they can't pass quarantine.

Student 14: No, because it is illegal.

Student 15: Did *Jamu* work for everybody?

Student 16: No, because sometimes when you drink it, you become used to it and it didn't work.

From the discussion which I could play again and again, I concluded that the students learned from one another and the dialogue they were conducting expressed their process of thinking conceptually.

At the end of the topic, I gave them a written test.

EVALUATION

As my first experience of investigating the students' and the teaching and learning process, I feel this project has worked well, although it needs lots of improvement. It is a valuable experience for me as a teacher with eleven years of experience to stop, analyse and look back at what I have been doing so far. I think it valuable for my students as they experience the learning process slightly differently.

I need to develop my strategy of teaching by incorporating students' research through websites. However, some websites provide some pictures and videos which are not appropriate to Year 5 students.

To sharpen my intercultural teaching practices, I need to think of more suitable triggering questions which elicit the students' experiences of their own cultures so that they can have the habit of bridging the language through cultures.

REFLECTION

The process of investigation has been a very rewarding experience for me, helping me to improve my skills and knowledge of teaching. It also encourages me to take a further step of not only asking the students to compare and contrast between two or more cultures but to go beyond that, which is to think more interculturally, making the bridge between cultures.

I find I have become more confident in the way I conduct the intercultural teaching and learning process.

I have also been able to shift my practice from a teacher-oriented class to a student-oriented class.

The investigation provides me with an insight into culture as a means of teaching a language and as a bridge to understand another community which is different from our own.

I also find that language and culture is like a two-sided coin which always goes hand-in-hand and which cannot be separated.

Last but not least, I realize that the journey to travel is still long and winding and I need guidance and friends to support, to lead, to encourage and to give feed back to what I have been doing in my profession as a language teacher.