

ILTLP CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATION REPORT

TEACHER'S NAME	SCHOOL	LANGUAGE	YEAR LEVEL
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This class is a mixed group of students with different abilities. The class consists of 2 groups of students from Iran and Afghanistan. There is a huge gap between these two groups both academically and socially. The Iranians/Persians are coming from middle class families and are very open minded. In contrast many of the Afghani students come from very disadvantaged & religious families. Their level of proficiency in both Persian and English is quite low. Many of them are from very isolated and poor villages in Afghanistan. They speak very basic and undeveloped Dary which is related to Persian.

Our school is unique in so many ways. Students come to us from different schools (their day school) once a week. The class is a block session of 3 hours and held after hours from 5.00 to 8.00 pm. Many students see each other only in this class and have no other opportunity to mix with each other.

AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Considering the profile of my group, I planned to approach the intercultural aspect of this program through informing and questioning students about their own identity and culture and to reflect upon that. This could provide them with a unique opportunity to increase their level of intercultural competence.

From the first moment of attending this project the word '*values*' started flashing in my head and eventually it became the core of my investigation.

Based on this idea I decided to develop a long term program (one semester) for this diverse group to enhance their intercultural language learning in order to assist them to:

- think critically and be open-minded
- understand and respect others' values (cultures, beliefs, gender, appearances, sexuality...)
- develop self identity and be able to make connection with the rest of the community

DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

I took notes from group and class discussion and collected students work as well.

The word '*value*' seemed to open so many doors for discussion.

The results from data collected in the class and from Australian/other background students were very interesting. Values like love, wisdom, justice, education, freedom of speech, peace and trust were mentioned by almost everyone. The differences were more noticeable in values like power, divorce, hospitality, loyalty, pray, religion, job, dress code and marriage.

Some examples of responses from the class discussion and from students' work:

Love has the same value in all culture

Why religions take over other values
I didn't choose to be.....
Peace is a necessity value
War is not a value
We have suffered a lot
I want to be judged for what I am
Girls' power
Positive relationships are intercultural
If our parents knew as much as we know...
I think I can understand other cultures
If I rank values, education comes first
What is the relationship between wisdom and education?
I respect others' beliefs
Why should I pay a price for....?
I wish I could convince the whole world to forget about religions and politics! Human beings have so many good things in common
I think I have a lot to contribute
Religions shouldn't run the world
I believe good is good and bad is bad everywhere.

FINDINGS

I discovered:

- ways to elicit greater/deeper responses from my students
- even the less capable or less interested students became enthusiastic participants. I found this very satisfying and felt that I had been able to include all members of the class, regardless of their backgrounds
- the high level of student awareness about important issues. Even the less capable students seem to know more than we think
- students' engagement depends on their connection to the topic taught; so does their level of learning: the more they connected, the more they learn.
- I saw lessons as a dynamic vehicle which helps students to develop their interpersonal skills and gain confidence
- from collected data I noticed it is more proper to talk about differences/similarities rather than 'comparing'. Using 'compare' sometimes creates negativity.
- there were many different views about some issues. Students really loved to be engaged in the discussions and were very passionate about their own ideas. They were very prepared to debate their differences. I was amazed by their level of openness and respect for one another.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

- The whole process convinced me even more that students' engagement depends on their level of interest in the subject matter.
- Young people are flexible towards change; they need to trust and to be trusted. As educators, we have to find ways to work with them to create this healthy environment.
- Students themselves interpreted 'intercultural' as a healthy positive relationship among people.

MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS

The following materials are attached.

1. Semester 2 planner. The intercultural-focused activities have been identified by * next to them.
2. 'Where I live' booklet
3. See also page 4-7 (attachments 1-4)

EVALUATION

I initially prepared a long term program, however I had to do some correction/adjustment throughout, due to the students' needs. I couldn't change my summative tasks since this is a SACE subject and it was previously approved by SABSA. In general I am very satisfied with the results. However I should either change or adjust my summative tasks for next year.

I believe this program was a very valuable experience for my students. I could see them becoming more confident about their own identity and preparing to talk about issues more freely. It has broadened their level of understanding and has helped them to view things from different perspectives. They saw differences as a positive factor that can enrich our lives and make the world a better place for everyone. They also learnt to become more flexible towards changes.

REFLECTION

As a non-English Speaking Background teacher, I am very passionate about language learning and believe that culture is embedded in language. That's why I became enthusiastically involved in this project.

My goal was to teach and convince my students to make the most of all the available resources in order to enrich their own lives as well as making positive connections with their surroundings and the environment.

To help my students to remove the stigma they were attached to in one way or another, I eased the situation by freely presenting my own profile as 'a migrant Persian woman' who fulfils many roles (a mother, wife, teacher, colleague, community member, activist, chief assessor, friend...) with extremely strongly held cares and concerns about all the issues such as human rights, freedom, peace, environment, youths, animal rights.

I described myself as 'two halves' (Persian and Australian) which have the same value in accomplishing and nourishing my life. Due to this quality I have been able to establish a very positive relationship and have made connection with others.

The response I have received from my students and their families is overwhelmingly positive.

Attachment 1

Survey

Use this survey to interview your friends from different backgrounds.

Use the information obtained to write a summary in Persian or English to identify your friends' eating habits. What are the similarities and differences with your eating habits?

1. What is your background?
2. What is your favourite food?
3. What is your famous food?
4. Which country's food do you like the best and why?
5. Do you think eating habits and food reflect a particular culture? Why?
6. What do you/your family think is healthy food? Give an example.

7. What do you/your family think is unhealthy food? Give an example.
8. Do you/your family like home made food or prefer to eat out? Why?
9. When it come to choose a food, which one do you/your family value the most, tasty food, healthy food or any other criteria? Why?

Attachment 2

1. Complete the 'My place' chart below

My place:	
Is on a chair
In the room of...
In the school of...
In the street of...
In the suburb of...
In the city of...
In the State of...
In the country...
On the earth

2. What do you think about the meaning and morals of this chart?
 Discuss it with your partner and write your ideas and feelings in either English or Persian and share it with the class.

Attachment 3 Values activity

1. What do you value most in life? Mark in the column across each value that best represents you

Values	Extremely important	Important	Not important
Wisdom			

Skill			
Power			
Love			
Wealth			
Knowledge			
Health			
Education			
Trust			
Faith/religion			
Justice			
Ethic			
Family			
Freedom of speech			
Job			
Honesty			
Marriage			
Pleasure			
Achievement			
Divorce			
Helping others			
Respect adults			
Right to choose (in general)			
Morality			
Loyalty			
Pray			
Dress code			
Hospitality			

2. List the top 10 values in order of importance.
3. Share your list with your group.
- 4 Summarise your group result. What are your findings? How do you analyse your findings?
5. Ask your Australian friends (at least 2) to complete the worksheet.
6. Identify their top 10 values (as you did in part 2). What are your findings?

Task: Based on your collected information from the values sheet, write a summary in Persian/English to outline your finding. What are the similarities and differences? How do you interpret the result?

Attachment 4

Survey

Use this survey to interview your friends from different backgrounds.

Use the obtained information to write a summary in Persian or English to highlight similarities and differences of your daily and weekend routines with your Australian friends

1. In few words, explain one of your typical weekdays
2. In few words, explain one of your typical weekends
3. What is the highlight and downside of your weekdays?
4. What is the highlight and downside of your weekends?
5. What is your favorite activity?
6. What is your favorite week day?
7. What is your favorite weekend day?
8. What kind of responsibilities do you have at home? Please provide example(s), e.g.: cleaning, shopping...
9. How do you spend your weekend? Do you spend it with your family or your friends?
10. How much/to what extent do your parents/families influence your daily planning and activities?