
**Classroom-based investigations of
intercultural language learning**

Module 5: Classroom-based investigations of intercultural language learning

Overview

The session aims to enable participants to facilitate intercultural teaching and learning, long-term planning, and assessment by investigating what happens in their own classrooms.

The previous four sessions have explored intercultural language teaching and learning in relation to pedagogy, long-term planning, and assessment. This session focuses on classroom-based investigations as a way of facilitating intercultural language teaching and learning. Classroom-based investigations are initiated and carried out by teachers in their classrooms and schools. They can facilitate programme development and evaluation because changing your teaching and learning practice requires an understanding of what you currently do, and in order to teach, plan, and assess, you need to understand students' own perceptions of interactions with language(s) and culture(s).

It may be natural to think of classroom investigation as something that can only happen 'in addition' to teaching and learning, something that can only be done after the needs of students have been met. Understood in this way, classroom investigations are intrusions on teaching and learning in an already crowded curriculum. This module promotes a different view. It seeks to develop the idea that classroom investigation can be an ongoing 'stance' that enables us to gather valuable information about teaching and learning practice that may otherwise go unnoticed. This information can in turn inform how we understand and develop intercultural language teaching and learning for our students.

The session introduces participants to key considerations in planning and carrying out classroom-based investigations and provides them with opportunities to develop their skills in designing investigations to support their teaching and learning practices. The session is organised around a sequence of questions that 1) exemplify the process of investigation and 2) provide participants with connections to their own experience. This learning is supported and extended by a sequence of tasks in which participants plan an investigation as a way of implementing intercultural language learning in their own professional practice.

Objectives

In this session you will learn:

- how classroom-based investigations can facilitate intercultural language teaching and learning, long-term planning, and assessment;
- to identify key considerations in planning and implementing investigations;
- to plan an investigation to support your own teaching and learning practice.

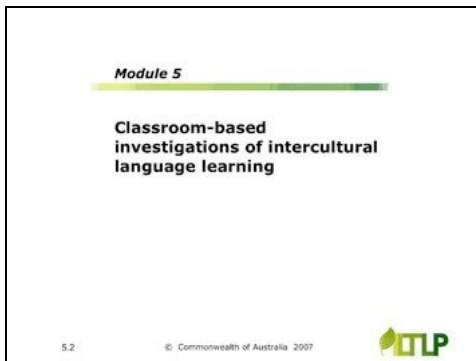
PRESENTER'S NOTES

Key Ideas/Learning

Introduction and context setting

The aim here is to provide participants with an understanding of the session focus, structure, and objectives.

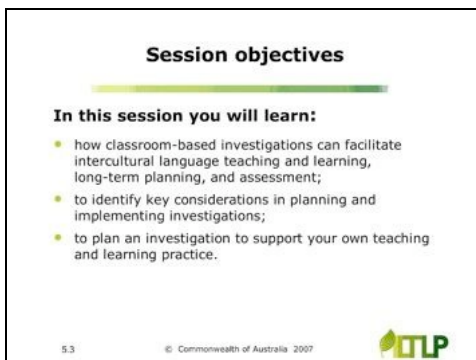
The facilitator introduces the session overview and objectives.



Welcome participants.

Explain that questions are appropriate at any point in the session.

Draw participants' attention to the PowerPoint slides used in the session and spaces for notes.



Introduce session overview and objectives.

Invite and respond to any questions.

Ask participants to form into groups of 4 to 5 in preparation for subsequent interactions/tasks.

Key Ideas/Learning
Introduction and context setting

<i>Interaction/task/questions</i>	<i>Supporting Resources</i>
Participants form groups of 4 to 5 in preparation for subsequent interactions/tasks Anticipated time: 10 minutes	PowerPoint slides 5.1 & 5.2

PRESENTER'S NOTES

Key Ideas/Learning

An investigative stance facilitates program development and evaluation in the context of intercultural teaching and learning


The aim here is to explain what an investigative stance is and how it can support intercultural language teaching and learning.

The facilitator presentation is followed by group discussion and whole-group feedback.

What is an investigative stance?

An investigative stance is not an 'add on' to language teaching and learning. It is:

- an orientation to noticing, documenting, and making sense of the actions of teachers and learners.
- an ongoing interest in using information about the classroom to develop language teaching and learning practice.


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Introduce the investigative stance as an aspect of effective teaching.

Investigation in teaching

Effective teaching is informed by personal knowledge, trial and error, reflection on practice, and conversations with colleagues. To be a teacher means to observe students and study classroom interactions, to explore a variety of effective ways of teaching, and to build conceptual frameworks that can guide one's work.

(Fischer, 2001: 29)


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Emphasise that it is not an addition to teaching but involves systematically making sense of what is going on in classrooms with a view to developing classroom practice.

Why investigate your classroom practice?

An investigative stance facilitates curriculum development and evaluation in the context of intercultural teaching and learning because:

- changing your teaching and learning practice requires an understanding of what you currently do; and
- in order to teach, plan, and assess, you need to understand students' own perceptions of and interactions with language(s) and culture(s).

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Explain that an investigative stance is valuable in intercultural teaching and learning for the reasons given on the slide.

Pose the focus question and explain the task.

Suggest a time of 10 minutes with 5 minutes' feedback.

After the groups have discussed the question, invite the groups to feed back their ideas.

Summarise how the participants see the value of an investigative stance.

Key Ideas/Learning

An investigative stance facilitates program development and evaluation in the context of intercultural teaching and learning because:

- *changing your teaching and learning practice requires an understanding of what you currently do; and*
- *in order to teach, plan, and assess, you need to understand students' own perceptions of and interactions with language(s) and culture(s).*

<p>Focus question</p> <p>Why investigate your classroom practice?</p> <p>Task</p> <p>In small groups reflect on the focus question. In addressing this question you might consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how you understand the value of investigations for teaching and learning; • how investigations could support classroom practice, long-term planning, and assessment; • what it might mean to you to develop an 'investigative stance' to teaching and learning; • what assumptions you make about how your students understand and interact with their own and other languages and cultures; • how investigations might support planning and assessment; • how your students might benefit from/engage in investigations. <p>Be prepared to share your ideas with the other groups.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Anticipated time: 20 minutes</p>	<p>PowerPoint slides 5.3 to 5.5</p>
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PRESENTER'S NOTES

Key Ideas/Learning

The investigation potentially involves every aspect of teaching and learning

The aim here is to develop participants' awareness of the scope of an investigation that focuses on intercultural language teaching and learning practice.

The facilitator presentation is followed by group discussion, whole-group feedback, and then an explanation of Attachment 1.

Participants make draft notes on Attachment 1 as a preliminary to planning their own investigation.

What is the potential scope of your investigation?

The investigation potentially involves every aspect of teaching and learning because:

- Intercultural language teaching draws on every aspect of teaching and learning in a new way in relation to language(s), culture(s), the interpersonal, and the personal.

Explain that the scope of an investigation could include any aspect of teaching and learning for the reasons given on the slide.

Pose the focus question and explain the task.

Suggest a time of 20 minutes with 10 minutes' feedback, followed by 10 minutes for participants to reflect on their own investigations using Attachment 1.

After the groups have discussed the question, invite the groups to feed back their ideas.

Summarise how the participants see the value of an investigative stance.

Explain that the headings on Attachment 1 reflect the stages of an investigation, that these are the focus of the rest of the session, and that participants now have 10 minutes to note any ideas for their own investigations on Attachment 1, based on the discussions they have completed.

Key Ideas/Learning

The investigation potentially involves every aspect of teaching and learning because:

- *intercultural language teaching draws on every aspect of teaching and learning in new ways in relation to language(s), culture(s), the interpersonal, and the personal.*

<p>Focus question What is the potential scope of your investigation?</p> <p>Task In your group, reflect on the context of the investigation, i.e. the ways in which intercultural language teaching might change your teaching and learning practice, planning, and assessment. In particular, you might consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students' perceptions of language(s), culture(s), how they interact, how they understand themselves; • what you do in the classroom; • who/what else might be affected; • how an investigative stance helps you to make/manage these changes. <p>Be prepared to provide feedback to the other groups. At the end of the task you will have 10 minutes in which to reflect on/plan the scope of your own investigation using the attachment provided.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Anticipated time: 45 minutes</p>	<p>PowerPoint slide 5.6 and Attachment 1</p>
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PRESENTER'S NOTES

Key Ideas/Learning

The focus of your investigation depends on the need it addresses

The aim here is support participants to narrow down the scope of the investigation from what is possible to what they might actually choose to focus on in their own investigation.


This encompasses group discussion and whole-group feedback, based on consideration of the focus question, the example investigation provided in Attachment 2, and on the suggested focus areas in Attachment 3.

Participants make draft notes on Attachment 1 as a preliminary to planning their own investigation.

What might be the focus of your investigation?

The focus of your investigation depends on the need it addresses. In other words, it depends on:

- where you see the potential for intercultural language teaching and learning in your classroom;
- what information about yourself and your students you need in order to develop intercultural teaching and learning in your classroom.

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Explain that the focus of the investigation participants choose to do will depend on how they themselves understand and prioritise intercultural language teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Pose the focus question and explain the task.

Explain that Attachment 2 provides a sample investigation and that Attachment 3 provides possible focus areas that they might refer to during the task.

Suggest a time of 15 minutes for the task, 10 minutes to feed back their ideas, followed by 10 minutes for participants to continue to plan their own investigations using Attachment 1.

Key Ideas/Learning

The focus of your investigation depends on the need it addresses

<p>Focus question What might be the focus for your investigation?</p> <p>Task In your group reflect on your discussion in the previous task. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in which areas an investigation would most help you in teaching, planning, or assessment;• the example investigation on Attachment 2;• the suggested focus areas included on Attachment 3. <p>Create a list of areas that you consider to be most important or relevant to you. Make notes in the space provided on Attachment 2.</p> <p>Be prepared to share your ideas with the other groups.</p> <p>At the end of the task you will have 15 minutes in which to reflect on/plan the focus of your own investigation on the attachment.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Anticipated time: 40 minutes</p>	<p>PowerPoint slide 5.7 and Attachments 1, 2, and 3</p>
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PRESENTER'S NOTES

Key Ideas/Learning

The approach to the investigation depends on its purpose, how you will conduct the investigation, and whose investigation it is

The aim here is to support participants in deciding on how they will approach their investigations, and in doing so to highlight key considerations that will affect their planning.

This includes a facilitator presentation followed by group discussion, whole-group feedback, and individual planning using Attachments 1, 2, and 3.

The facilitator explains that participants are to use Attachment 4 to record their investigations.

How might you approach your investigation?

- Your approach depends on **why** you are conducting the investigation (its purpose), in particular who you are seeking to benefit, e.g. learners, teachers, administrators, materials developers.
- These considerations determine **how** you conduct the investigation, i.e. how you understand the investigator and participant roles, broadly speaking.

Purpose of investigation	Investigator and particular roles
To understand	Investigator as observer and participants as observed
To change	Investigator as participant and participants as investigators

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Explain that a key consideration in planning the investigation is who is to benefit. This will no doubt include students, but it could include other groups depending on the need the investigation addresses.

The approach to the investigation will also depend on how it will benefit these groups, and how they are to be involved in the investigation.

To whom are you accountable?

This is an ethical question. The answer depends on:

- the investigator and participant roles;
- who is affected by your investigation;
- the users of your investigation;
- who you share your investigation with.

Examples include: yourself, students, parents, colleagues, school and professional communities, other agencies, e.g. curriculum or funding bodies.

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Explain that a further consideration is the ethical responsibility of the investigator. This arises because any investigation represents and affects people in ways that could be unethical.

It is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure that the investigation is conducted ethically, and to reflect carefully on how he/she is ethically accountable and to whom.

Pose the focus question and explain the task.

Explain that participants can continue to refer to Attachments 2 and 3.

Suggest a time of 20 minutes for the task, 10 minutes to feed back their ideas, followed by 20 minutes for participants to continue to plan their own investigations using Attachment 1.

Key Ideas/Learning

The approach to the investigation depends on its purpose, how you will conduct the investigation, and whose investigation it is, i.e. how you understand the investigator and participant roles

<i>Purpose of investigation</i>	<i>Investigator and participant roles</i>
To understand	Investigator as observer and participants as observed
To change	Investigator as participant and participants as investigators

<p>Focus question How might you approach your investigation?</p> <p>Task Reflect on your long-term planning, what you want students to take away, and how you are going to assess that. Based on these reflections, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why you will conduct your investigation (its purpose); • whose investigation it is, i.e. how you understand the investigator and participant roles; • what steps you will take in the investigation; • when/how often you will gather information; • how you will gather and make sense of the information; • how you will document what you have done; • who you will share the information with; • how you will use the information to inform your practice. <p>Be prepared to share your ideas with the other groups. At the end of the task you will have 40 minutes in which to reflect on/plan your own investigation using the attachment.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Anticipated time: 60 minutes</p>	<p>PowerPoint slides 5.8 & 5.9</p>
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PRESENTER'S NOTES

Key Ideas/Learning


Wrap up and closure

The aim here is to summarise the main points of the session and to foreshadow the investigation that participants will themselves conduct, based on their planning during this session.

The facilitator summarises the key points and brings the session to a close.

Summary

- taking an investigative stance in teaching;
- investigating the actions of teachers and students to promote intercultural language teaching;
- the potential scope of the investigation;
- the focus of your investigation;
- your approach to your investigation;
- your accountability.

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Summarise the key areas covered during the session, referring in each case to examples drawn from participants themselves.

Explain that Attachment 4 is provided to enable participants to record the investigation they have planned using Attachment 1.

Ask them to bring their completed Attachment 4 to the next session to share with other participants.

Further reading/references

- Burnaford, G.E., Fischer, J., & Hobson, D. (Eds.) (2001). *Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry*, 2nd edn. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Burns, A. (2005). Action research: An evolving paradigm. *Language teaching*, 39, 57–74.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983). *Ethnography: Principles and practice*. London: Tavistock.
- Hopkins, D. (2003). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*, 3rd edn. Maidenhead, Berks: Open University Press.
- Hubbard, R.S., & Power, B.M. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher-researchers*. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wajnyrb, R. (1992). *Classroom observation tasks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Remind participants of the readings provided and that the further readings will provide more information on areas covered in the session.

Key Ideas/Learning
Wrap up and closure

	Anticipated time: 5 minutes	PowerPoint slides 5.10 & 5.11
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Readings

- Fischer, J.C. (2001). Action research rationale and planning: Developing a framework for teacher inquiry. In G. Burnaford, J. Fischer, & D. Hobson (Eds.), *Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry* (chapter 2), 2nd edn. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hopkins, D. (2003). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*, 3rd edn. Maidenhead, Berks: Open University Press. (chapter 3)
- Hubbard, R. S. & Power, B. M. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher-researchers*. (pp 1–5, 31–34, 70–72, 110–112, 280–283) York, ME: Stenhouse.


References/Further readings

- Burnaford, G.E., Fischer, J., & Hobson, D. (Eds.). (2001), *Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry*, 2nd edn. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Burns, A. (2005). Action research: An evolving paradigm. *Language teaching*, 38, 57–74.
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- Wajnryb, R. (1992). *Classroom observation tasks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

PowerPoint slides

Module 5

Classroom-based investigations of intercultural language learning


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5.1 _____

Session objectives

In this session you will learn:

- how classroom-based investigations can facilitate intercultural language teaching and learning, long-term planning, and assessment;
- to identify key considerations in planning and implementing investigations;
- to plan an investigation to support your own teaching and learning practice.


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5.2 _____

What is an investigative stance?

An investigative stance is not an 'add on' to language teaching and learning. It is:

- an orientation to noticing, documenting, and making sense of the actions of teachers and learners.
- an ongoing interest in using information about the classroom to develop language teaching and learning practice.


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5.3 _____

Investigation in teaching

Effective teaching is informed by personal knowledge, trial and error, reflection on practice, and conversations with colleagues. To be a teacher means to observe students and study classroom interactions, to explore a variety of effective ways of teaching, and to build conceptual frameworks that can guide one's work.

(Fischer, 2001: 29)

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5.4 _____

PowerPoint slides (cont'd)

Why investigate your classroom practice?

An investigative stance facilitates curriculum development and evaluation in the context of intercultural teaching and learning because:

- changing your teaching and learning practice requires an understanding of what you currently do; and
- in order to teach, plan, and assess, you need to understand students' own perceptions of and interactions with language(s) and culture(s).

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5.5 _____

What is the potential scope of your investigation?

The investigation potentially involves every aspect of teaching and learning because:

- intercultural language teaching draws on every aspect of teaching and learning in a new way in relation to language(s), culture(s), the interpersonal, and the personal.

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5.6 _____

What might be the focus of your investigation?

The focus of your investigation depends on the need it addresses. In other words, it depends on:

- where you see the potential for intercultural language teaching and learning in your classroom;
- what information about yourself and your students you need in order to develop intercultural teaching and learning in your classroom.

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5.7 _____

How might you approach your investigation?

- Your approach depends on **why** you are conducting the investigation (its purpose), in particular who you are seeking to benefit, e.g. learners, teachers, administrators, materials developers.
- These considerations determine **how** you conduct the investigation, i.e. how you understand the investigator and participant roles, broadly speaking.

Purpose of investigation	Investigator and particular roles
To understand	Investigator as observer and participants as observed
To change	Investigator as participant and participants as investigators

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5.8 _____

To whom are you accountable?

This is an ethical question. The answer depends on:

- the investigator and participant roles;
- who is affected by your investigation;
- the users of your investigation;
- who you share your investigation with.


Examples include: yourself, students, parents, colleagues, school and professional communities, other agencies, e.g. curriculum or funding bodies.

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5.9 _____

Summary


- taking an investigative stance in teaching;
- investigating the actions of teachers and students to promote intercultural language teaching;
- the potential scope of the investigation;
- the focus of your investigation;
- your approach to your investigation;
- your accountability.

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5.10 _____

Further reading/references

- Burnaford, G.E., Fischer, J., & Hobson, D. (Eds.) (2001), *Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry*, 2nd edn. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Burns, A. (2005). Action research: An evolving paradigm. *Language teaching*, 39, 57-74.
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- Wajnyts, R. (1992). *Classroom observation tasks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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5.11 _____

Attachment 1: Planning your investigation

Use the table below to plan your investigation during the session.

<i>Scope/focus/purpose (What need are you addressing? What do you want to achieve?)</i>	<i>Steps (What will you do?)</i>	<i>Documentation (How will you record your evidence?)</i>	<i>Drawing conclusions (How will you interpret/use what you find?)</i>

Module 5

Attachment 2: Planning your investigation (an example)

Consider the following example in planning your own investigation during the session.

<p><i>Scope/focus/purpose (What need are you addressing? What do you want to achieve?)</i></p>	<p><i>Steps (What will you do?)</i></p>	<p><i>Documentation (How will you record your evidence?)</i></p>	<p><i>Drawing conclusions (How will you interpret/use what you find?)</i></p>
<p>In order to develop intercultural language teaching and learning I need to understand how my students experience language(s) and culture(s). To address this need I will investigate how my students interact in language(s) and culture(s) inside and outside the classroom. I will use this information to develop students' opportunities for intercultural language learning.</p>	<p>Design a task that asks students to record their interactions with language(s) and culture(s) over three days. Ask students to do the task. Read and discuss the students' responses, looking for examples/patterns of interaction with language(s) and culture(s). Record my findings. Reflect on the extent to which my findings evidence intercultural interaction and their implications for intercultural language learning.</p>	<p>Record any issues that arise in developing the task. Gather and collate students' responses to the task. Highlight and record the types and patterns of interaction I notice. Document my reflections on what these findings mean for intercultural teaching and learning in my classroom.</p>	<p>Based on the findings I will develop a task for students that promotes their intercultural learning. Document any issues that arise in designing and running the task. Evaluate the effectiveness of the task in promoting intercultural interaction. Consider the implications of the findings for assessment and long-term planning.</p>

Attachment 3: Possible focus for investigation

The following are suggested focus areas for investigations to promote intercultural language teaching and learning. Consider these in relation to your own context and needs. What focus would address your needs?

The intercultural in language teaching and learning

- How is the intercultural understood in your school?
- How is the intercultural understood in your classroom?
- How are language and culture represented in your teaching materials?
- How well do you know how your students experience language(s) and culture(s)? Inside the classroom? Outside the classroom?

Focus for your investigation?

Exploring intercultural language teaching and learning

- How do you ask your students to notice language(s) and culture(s)?
- Design a task for your students that develops intercultural interaction. Observe how you set it up and how students engage with it. What do you notice?
- Audio or video record a lesson in which you focus on developing intercultural interaction. Select and transcribe segments and comment on how you and your students interact. What evidence do you see of intercultural interaction?
- Audio or video record 3 to 4 consecutive lessons in which you focus on intercultural language learning. Document the questions/explanations you use to promote students' thinking/understanding. What do you notice?

Focus for your investigation?

Developing long-term programmes for intercultural language teaching and learning

- Critically evaluate your current program on the basis of the extent to which it promotes intercultural language learning and prepare a set of recommendations for change.
- Develop a unit of work or a long-term programme. Explain how it promotes intercultural interaction and observe how you teach it and how the students actually interact.
- Develop a programme for intercultural language learning with colleagues in your school and document the interactions throughout the development process.
- Reflect on your experience of long-term planning. What can and cannot be included in a long-term plan to promote intercultural language learning?

Focus for your investigation?

Assessing intercultural language learning

- Develop 2 to 3 assessment tasks that promote intercultural language learning with a view to capturing different facets of teaching through formal and informal processes. Design the tasks and provide a critical commentary. Ask the students to do the tasks and analyse their results. To what extent do the tasks assess intercultural language learning? Document in detail the issues that arise as you carry out this development work.
- Develop student portfolios with a view to gathering evidence of intercultural language learning. Ask students to complete the portfolios. To what extent do the portfolios evidence intercultural language learning? Document in detail the issues that arise as you carry out this development work.
- Assess students' responses to a writing task from the perspective of gathering evidence of intercultural language learning. If possible, ask a colleague or two to carry out the same assessment task and compare the findings. Document in detail the issues that arise as you carry out this development work.

Focus for your investigation?

Attachment 4: Recording your investigation

Use the table below to summarise what you did in your investigation.

Bring the completed table to the next meeting.

<i>Scope/focus/purpose (What need did you address? What did you want to achieve?)</i>	<i>Steps (What did you do?)</i>	<i>Documentation (How did you record your evidence?)</i>	<i>Drawing conclusions (How did you interpret/ use what you found?)</i>