



**Australian Government**

**Quality Teacher  
Programme**



## **Report-in-brief**

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**Statement**

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## Project overview

The former Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), now the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), under funding from the Australian Government Quality Teaching Programme (AGQTP), commissioned the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures (RCLC) at the University of South Australia (UniSA) to research, develop and manage the Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice (ILTLP) project. This project was designed to develop a professional learning programme focused on extending teachers' engagement with intercultural language learning as a basis for renewing languages teaching, learning and assessment for the benefit of students.

Intercultural language learning represents a major direction in languages education. It is an orientation towards languages education that underpins the National Statement and Plan for Languages in Australian Schools 2005–2008, developed through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and endorsed by all Ministers of Education in 2005. It provides a framework for languages education that:

- supports and increases students':
  - ability to communicate, to understand communication within their own and across languages and cultures
  - ability to develop a capability for reflection and learning about languages and cultures
  - knowledge of self and of the construction of linguistic and cultural identity
- supports and allows for dialogue and negotiation through which variable points of view are recognised, mediated and accepted
- engages teachers in a reappraisal of their own knowledge, understanding and engagement in planning, teaching/learning and assessing languages, thereby improving student learning and their own professional practice
- supports the teaching and learning of languages in a way that is integrated across the curriculum as a whole (see Crozet & Liddicoat 2000; Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003; Carr 2003; Crozet 2003; Liddicoat 2004; Kohler 2005; Liddicoat 2005).

The project involved an extensive national network of participants that included the project team (12 members, nine based at the University of South Australia; one from the University of South Australia, based in Sydney; one from the Australian National University and one from the Queensland University of Technology), the Project Advisory Group (PAG) including representatives of all major stakeholders, all state and territory jurisdictions through a network of State and Territory Implementation teams, close to 400 primary and secondary teachers of languages, teacher educators and the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (AFMLTA). The network was sustained through ongoing communication, including a dedicated website (<http://www.iltlp.unisa.edu.au/>).

The project was conducted in four interrelated phases, as follows:

- Phase 1 : Commissioned, supported school-based research and development to generate some sustained experience and exemplars in areas that are currently under-researched; specifically, long-term programming, assessment processes and describing outcomes of intercultural language learning.
- Phase 2 : Development of ILTLP materials based on sound principles of teacher learning (Crozet & Liddicoat 1999; Lo Bianco & Crozet 2003; Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005; Liddicoat et al 2005; Mann 2005; Scarino 2005; Tedick 2005; Liddicoat 2006) and including extensive exemplification.
- Phase 3 : Delivery of the ILTLP programme in each state and territory with classroom/school-based investigations, reflection, and state/territory-wide sharing.
- Phase 4 : Gathering and editing of exemplars for dissemination and preparation of the final report.

The project objectives were:

- (a) to provide teachers and school leaders with the opportunity to participate in a nationally coordinated professional learning programme underpinned by the latest research in languages methodology
- (b) to increase the national pool of languages teachers and school leaders with strong skills in, and knowledge and understanding of, the principles and pedagogy of intercultural teaching and learning
- (c) to provide ILTLP programme participants with opportunities to integrate their new knowledge and understanding into their classroom practice, long-term planning and programming, and assessment and reporting practices, while ensuring that students' language learning outcomes remain a central focus.

The anticipated outcomes were:

- a classroom-based research process and resources yielding exemplars of intercultural language teaching and learning specifically focused on long-term programming, assessment processes and describing outcomes of intercultural language learning
- a high quality national ILTLP programme that:
  - is designed, developed, nationally-coordinated and delivered to achieve the stated objectives
  - is grounded in practice
  - could lead to recognition in awards such as graduate certificates in languages education and/or specialisations within coursework masters of education
- the development and publication of a set of materials with processes and resources that would support the consistent delivery of the ILTLP programme in each state and territory
- the development and publication of a set of resources to support reflection and application of knowledge and understanding in the two designated focus areas:
  - long-term programming
  - assessment processes, and describing outcomes of intercultural language learning.

Each of the four interrelated phases is described in turn.

### **Phase 1: Commissioned, supported school-based research and development**

Phase 1 drew on the networks of state and territory educational jurisdictions, the AFMLTA, the RCLC, and participants in the Asian Languages Professional Learning Project (ALPLP) in all states and territories to identify a small group of experienced teachers of a range of languages who would work intensively with members of the project team. They would conduct a supported investigation in their classroom, focused specifically on long-term programming, and/or assessment processes and outcomes of intercultural language learning. Teachers were selected based on an expression of interest process. The call for expressions of interest for teachers to participate in Phase 1 was met with high interest. A selection process occurred, with the intention of including 15 languages teachers from around Australia, representing a range of languages, year levels and sectors, and who had a high level of interest or experience in intercultural languages teaching and learning. In fact, given the interest shown by teachers and the desire to achieve a spread of languages, levels and sectors, 22 teachers were selected to be part of Phase 1.

All 22 teachers received substantial support from members of the project team to develop long-term programmes and assessment procedures and schemes; implement them with their students; analyse the material/data and document the process and resources for incorporation into the ILTLP programme materials. The process was challenging because of the varied familiarity with and experience of intercultural language learning and because long-term programming and assessment were new areas of focus. The extensive support and detailed feedback provided to these teachers by the project team ensured that the exemplary materials were selected and annotated. This process was also intended to yield a range of documented processes for conducting classroom/school investigations and a set of discussion/issues papers arising from the investigations.

While this phase was supplementary to the requirements of the request for tender, it was highly generative and added value to the project because exemplars were simply not available and

professional development without such exemplary materials could only be superficial, unable to contribute directly to improved teacher knowledge, understanding and practice.

A national training programme was offered in Adelaide to launch Phase 1 of the project. It involved 22 teachers of Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Indonesian, from government and non-government primary and secondary schools. The programme included discussion on the following topics:

- the context of the ILTLP project
- the ILTLP project – a description
- extending our understanding of intercultural language learning
- a long-term perspective on intercultural teaching, learning and assessment
- setting up the school-based research and development – the project task
- the pedagogy of intercultural language learning
- considerations in relation to character-based languages
- a critical literacy approach to intercultural learning
- thinking about developing individual units/programmes: working in state/territory groups with project team members; establishing ways of providing feedback
- assessing intercultural language learning: rationale, elicitation, judging performance
- resources available: e-readings; ongoing feedback; 5 days teacher release; other resources needed
- workshop evaluation.

Each teacher involved in the national training undertook development of either a unit of work (Option 1) or a long-term programme (Option 2) and taught at least a part of the programme, in order to generate a range of example materials. Each participant received individualised, face-to-face support and detailed feedback from an assigned member of the ILTLP project team and written feedback from at least two or three members over the period September–December 2006. While the feedback process was more intensive than the ILTLP team had anticipated, it was both fruitful and generative. Throughout the process it became clear that teachers did not normally conceptualise their work within a long-term perspective and the process of assessment for intercultural language learning was challenging for all.

All teachers completed their units and/or programmes. Materials included documentation of the units and programmes, supported by audio/video recordings, samples of student work, teacher reflections, and teaching and learning context statements. While they are highly variable, they are useful in providing a snapshot of current teacher understanding of and engagement with intercultural language teaching and learning across a range of languages, sectors and phases of schooling.

The materials developed by teachers were valuable to the project as a whole. They were used as examples in the professional learning modules developed for Phase 3. The process of providing feedback was also documented and analysed with a view to identifying effective ways of clarifying teachers' understanding of intercultural language learning.

Phase 1 was a highly necessary and generative phase even though it was necessarily conducted within a compressed time frame. An assumption was made that the participating teachers were experienced in intercultural language learning. This experience varied. Some teachers of Asian languages had participated in the national ALPLP programme and had developed an understanding of some of the key ideas. Teachers of European languages may not have had access to this programme and were encountering an intercultural orientation to teaching languages for the first time. Furthermore, the two priority areas, long-term programming and assessment, were not well represented in the cycles of professional development normally encountered by teachers. While there is professional development on programming in most states and territories, it tends to focus on an individual lesson or a unit of work rather than a longer term such as a full year. Similarly, while there is professional development in assessment in most states and territories, it is based on local frameworks and procedures, rather than conceptualising assessment within an intercultural orientation. As such, the work in Phase 1 represented considerable challenge and new learning for all.

Having commenced the focus on long-term programming and assessment, it became evident that it would be desirable for at least some of the teachers to continue to monitor the implementation of their long-term programmes beyond Phase 1. Three teachers were invited to continue to implement,

monitor and reflect upon their long-term programmes throughout 2007 with a view to documenting more fully their experience of implementing intercultural language learning in a sustained way. They did so and their work is available on the project website.

## **Phase 2: Development of ILTLP materials**

Phase 2 involved developing a major professional learning resource and accompanying processes to be used as the basis for the professional learning programme that was conducted in each state and territory.

The professional learning resource included:

- a set of modules, designed for different audiences: primarily for teachers of languages in a range of settings (government and non-government schools, the network of Schools of Languages, distance/open-access schools, ethnic or community schools); the modules addressed the needs of teachers who have had different levels of engagement and experience of intercultural language learning
  - coverage of four areas:
    - exploration of the nature of intercultural language learning
    - pedagogies for intercultural language learning with a focus on long-term programming (including the development of resources for teaching and learning)
    - assessment processes for eliciting and judging student performance
    - how to describe and report learning outcomes and ways of investigating intercultural language learning in an ongoing way
  - within each module:
    - a module outline, presentation slides and notes, handouts, exemplary materials in different languages (mainly, but not exclusively, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian and Japanese) and at different levels of schooling
    - exemplary materials with annotations (from Phase 1), module tasks, suggested activities for sustained in-classroom/school investigations
    - teacher reflections
    - suggested further readings
    - a presenters' version, for each module there are guidelines for presenters that ensure that the materials are able to be used in the first instance by state and territory implementation teams and subsequently by other facilitators in diverse settings beyond the ILTLP
- discussion/issue papers.

## **Core modules**

The professional learning materials that were developed include the following five interrelated modules:

- The intercultural in language teaching and learning
- Exploring intercultural language teaching and learning
- Long-term programming for intercultural language learning
- Assessing intercultural language learning
- Classroom-based investigations focused on intercultural language learning.

The five modules are preceded by an orientation session that seeks to specify the current context and rationale for intercultural language learning.

In the process of development, drafts of the modules were discussed at the face-to-face meeting of the PAG in November 2006. Feedback from PAG members was highly positive. Members raised questions about the quantity of material planned for 2.5 days. The team was mindful in this regard of creating a set of materials that would be appropriate for the planned conferences, but that would have durability beyond 2007. In response to feedback and team discussion of concepts, processes and teacher requirements, further drafts were developed. The revised materials were forwarded to

the PAG for feedback, after which further revisions were made. Feedback was again highly positive. Team members collectively reviewed and redrafted the modules to ensure coherence and continuity across the modules as a set of learning materials. The full set of materials for the Professional Learning Programme manual for presenters was edited and desk-top published.

The five core modules formed the basis of the initial 2.5 day programme for Phase 3 in all states and territories. As a set of materials, they cover introductory understandings of the nature of 'the intercultural' and develop these understandings in relation to teaching and learning languages. Emphases on long-term programming and assessing are provided in modules 3 and 4. The final module on classroom-based investigations locates intercultural language teaching and learning within an investigative framework.

The materials also include of a range of language-specific exemplars of student tasks, unit outlines and student assessments. The final package of modules included exemplars from Phase 1 teachers' materials in a variety of ways. Module 3, focused on long-term programming, includes three fully developed long-term programmes. These programmes are Jill Bignell's Japanese programme for Years Prep–10; Stephanie Andrews' Chinese programme for Year 9; and Melissa Gould-Drakeley's Indonesian programme for Years 11 and 12. These programmes were selected for inclusion as they provided examples in three languages across the spectrum of school years, and addressed intercultural language learning from a long-term perspective. In Module 4, which focused on assessing intercultural language learning, five examples of assessment materials are used as exemplars. The decision was made to include full programmes as exemplars, rather than extracts. This was done to contextualise the examples as much as possible. When extracts are offered, it is often difficult for teachers to perceive how the extracts relate to the programme as a whole. Phase 1 exemplar programmes are available on the website.

### ***Self-access learning modules***

Additional materials for workshops focused on specific pedagogies ('pedagogies in practice') to further elaborate the core modules were developed as 'self-access learning modules'. These are available on the project website. These can be used by individual teachers for further professional development sessions. As these modules can be accessed in teachers' own time there are no time limits in them, and some go into considerable explanation and exemplification to support teachers interested in the particular pedagogies. Self-access modules available on the website include:

- Critical literacy in intercultural language teaching and learning
- Information and communication technologies (ICT) in intercultural language teaching and learning
- Performance and intercultural language teaching and learning.

### ***Discussion papers***

Discussion papers arising from developments in Phases 1 and 2 concentrated on the issues relating to a contemporary rationale for intercultural language learning, programming, changing practice, and provision of feedback. They include:

- Why the intercultural matters to languages teaching and learning: an orientation to the ILTLP programme
- The challenge in developing learning programmes for intercultural language learning
- Developing programming for intercultural language teaching and learning; insights from project team feedback
- The importance of questioning in intercultural language teaching and learning.

### ***The outcomes of Phase 2 included:***

- a comprehensive professional learning resource with modules designed for different audiences
- a final version of the professional learning resource, including guidelines for presenters
- a set of discussion papers.

### **Phase 3: Delivery of the ILTLP programme in each state and territory**

Phase 3 involved the delivery of the ILTLP Programme (1) nationally, by members of the project team for the purpose of 'training the trainers', and (2) in each state and territory by state and territory implementation teams, in conjunction with members of the project team and local experts. This was in line with the findings of the external evaluation of the ALPLP (Asia Education Foundation 2005) that highlighted the value that teachers placed on working directly with those who were generating theoretical work in relation to intercultural language learning. The delivery in each state and territory was 'customised' to take into account state and territory curriculum, assessment and reporting frameworks and other contextual priorities that were negotiated with state and territory implementation teams.

Throughout both the train-the-trainer workshop programme and the programme in each state and territory, participants were involved in a range of tasks designed to clarify and extend their learning. Participating teachers were also invited to apply their learning in their own classrooms, with support from members of the project team and state and territory Implementation Delivery Teams; both on-programme and in-classroom tasks included teacher reflection designed to support this developing understanding and renewal of their teaching and assessment practices.

#### ***A national workshop for trainers***

For the national workshop to train the trainers for delivery of Phase 3 states and territories were allocated funded places for participants. Some states and territories requested additional, self-funded places. Each state and territory was given approval to send one further person only. Where this was taken up, this person was the languages manager in the government sector. In addition, all members of the ILTLP project team participated. Judy Gordon (DEST, now DEEWR) and Lia Tedesco (President of the AFMLTA) also attended.

Each participant was provided with a copy of the ILTLP manual for presenters and materials for the recall and reporting days. The programme involved working through each of the modules, highlighting conceptual issues to address with participants and providing guidance on processes for leading the interactions during the training.

By the end of the programme all members understood how the project was to be conducted in each state and territory and the respective roles of the project team and the state/territory teams. They also gained a sound understanding of the key ideas and scope of the ILTLP programme and intended outcomes for state/territory participants. Feedback on this activity indicated that there was a high degree of satisfaction and anticipation. To assist manageability of the programme in the larger states (New South Wales and Victoria), the project directors funded an additional facilitator from the project team to contribute to the process in these states.

#### ***Delivery of the ILTLP programme in each state and territory***

The initial 2.5 day conference was held in each state and territory. Two project team members facilitated the programme in each state and territory, with three in New South Wales and Victoria. Much more of the facilitation was undertaken by the project team than originally anticipated. The project team felt that this was necessary owing to the scope of the modules. The additional support was much appreciated by the local facilitation teams.

#### ***Participation in the ILTLP programme***

The table below details the participation in Phase 3 of the ILTLP programme by state and territory. The number of allocated places was adjusted for reasons of budgetary constraint; most states and territories use a higher rate of teacher release than the rate assumed by the Commonwealth.

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Allocated places ILTLP Phase 3</b>	<b>Adjusted figure</b>	<b>Actual numbers</b>
Australian Capital Territory	20	20	22
New South Wales	120	90	91
Northern Territory	20	20	18
Queensland	60	50	50
South Australia	30	30	25
Tasmania	20	20	23
Victoria	90	90	104
Western Australia	40	40	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>373</b>

The additional places in Victoria were funded by the government system.

### ***Recall and reporting days***

In the original project design, based on the train-the-trainer model of professional development, it was not anticipated that it would be necessary for the project team to be involved in the facilitation of any of the recall or reporting sessions in the states and territories. As the project developed, it became apparent that the state and territory teams preferred the facilitation of the project team. The materials for the recall days and reporting day were revised following the national workshop for trainers and distributed to key contacts. The recall sessions were developed to provide participants with the opportunity to regroup and develop their classroom-based investigations after the initial 2.5 day conference. The sessions gave participants the opportunity to workshop ideas for their investigations and network with colleagues in an organised and supported way. Participants sought support and shared ideas at these sessions, and project team members were able to further develop participants' understanding over the course of the sessions.

Recall Day 1 was attended by at least one team member in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland, where project team members are located. In Victoria and New South Wales project team members contributed owing to the large number of participants. In Tasmania a project team member contributed in response to a special request from the local facilitation team, and at the Tasmanian team's expense. In the Northern Territory the facilitation team held Recall Day 1 in both Alice Springs and Darwin to accommodate the needs of the participants. The project team provided ongoing support by email and telephone to both state and territory implementation teams and individual teachers.

Recall Day 2 was attended, as originally planned, by at least one project team member in every state and territory; two in Victoria and three in New South Wales. The purpose of Recall Day 2 was to provide feedback to participants on the progress of their investigations. They were able to share the progress, challenges and successes of their investigations at this point before finalising their reports. Project team members and facilitation teams reported that teachers' engagement with the project and enthusiasm for their investigations was evident at the second Recall Day.

The Reporting Day was the final planned session for participants in the ILTLP programme. It provided an opportunity for participants to present the findings of their investigations to their peers. Although project team members' participation in the final reporting days was not planned, it was felt that the participants and state and territory implementation teams would appreciate the sense of continuity in being able to conclude the project with all team members with whom they had built a professional rapport and relationship.

Meeting four times over the year afforded participants the opportunity to continue discussions after a period of classroom experimentation which was highly beneficial and valued by all involved.

### ***Discussion Papers arising from Phase 3***

A further six discussion papers were developed during Phase 3. They are published on the project website and are entitled:

- Language choices in the intercultural classroom
- Assessing intercultural language learning
- Before and after; changes to programming arising from a feedback process

- In conversation with Nhu Trinh
- Culture knowledge and intercultural learning: Issues to consider from a teacher's perspective.

***The outcomes of this phase included:***

- a professional learning programme that was designed, developed and nationally coordinated and delivered in each state/territory
- a series of classroom investigations that were conducted and documented, with support, so that the experience could be shared
- a network for state/territory and national collaboration
- a set of discussion papers.

**Phase 4: Gathering and editing exemplars**

Phase 4 involved refining the ILTLP professional learning resources based on the experience of delivery. This included the reports prepared by each of the participants and a set of exemplars gathered from their work, and made available online.

The outcomes of this phase included a set of reports written by participating teachers, based on their experience of the ILTLP programme and their classroom-based investigations. It also included exemplars that emerged from the work of teachers through their classroom-based investigations. A selection of five of the reports prepared by teachers in different languages, at different levels of schooling are available on the project website. Each report demonstrates the learning undertaken by each teacher in his or her specific context. As a set the reports confirm the extent of teacher learning and its immense diversity.

**Key features of the research, development and implementation of the programme**

- The professional learning programme was designed to meet the needs of teachers of a range of languages.
- It was based on current and best research on intercultural language learning, pedagogy and its assessment.
- It focused on aspects of curriculum design that ensure sustainability in learning, with a specific focus on long-term programming and processes for assessing intercultural language learning.
- The team of facilitators had the capability to support classroom-based investigations carried out by teachers.
- The professional learning resources developed as a manual for participants and a manual for presenters included the following five interrelated modules: (1) the intercultural in language teaching and learning, (2) exploring intercultural language teaching and learning, (3) long-term programming for intercultural language learning, (4) assessing intercultural language learning, and (5) classroom-based investigations focused on intercultural language learning. These were supplemented by three self-access modules: (1) critical literacy in intercultural language teaching and learning, (2) ICT in intercultural language teaching and learning, and (3) performance in intercultural language learning. All materials developed include language-specific exemplars.
- The programme incorporated exemplars developed through a teacher research phase that preceded the development of materials.
- A set of discussion papers arising from the research and development process and from ongoing dialogue with teachers was prepared by the project team and made available to participants on the project website.
- The programme was successfully conducted in all states and territories.
- The traditional train-the-trainer model was altered to allow project team members to facilitate the full 5.5 day programme (an initial 2.5 day conference, two recall days and a final reporting day) in all states and territories, in conjunction with state and territory implementation teams. In this way participating teachers were able to work directly with the developers of the programme. This change contributed to the success of the programme.
- All teachers conducted classroom-based investigations, participated in peer discussion related to their experience and received feedback from the facilitators. They also prepared a report on their experience.
- A range of the resources generated from the teachers' investigations and a selection of their reports have been made available on the project website.

- The external evaluation report states that ‘the aims and intended outcomes of the ILTLP Project have been achieved to an outstanding degree, as a direct outcome of the project leadership and administration, collaboration, professional learning programme design, materials and management and reflective of the very high quality professional learning programme provided’. It highlights ‘the deep extension of knowledge and understanding of intercultural languages teaching and learning’, ‘the acquisition of long-term planning and programming skills’, ‘changed languages pedagogies and deep reflection on what is taught, how it is taught and assessed and why’, teachers feeling ‘re-energised and re-focused about the reasons for teaching languages’, ‘increased and significant engagement from students, with increased learning outcomes’.
- The project successfully managed the large scale and scope of the nationally-networked, collaborative programme, while recognising the nuance and delicacy of each teacher’s work in his or her own particular language programme in his or her own particular context.

### Examples from teachers’ investigation reports

The extracts below provide a small sample of the teachers’ experience.

*Overall this experience has allowed me to see the value of reflection, questioning and creating in education and cultural understanding. While I once saw an excursion as a tool to reaffirm material discussed in the classroom, I now see its stand alone value. The questions teachers pose to students and the corresponding discussion and reflection is so important to the way in which the students’ knowledge, tolerance and understanding grow. This can be applied to a wide range of situations and will most certainly influence my future practice and programming.*

*I think the most significant discovery I made was the one which altered my perception of a student’s role in the classroom ... I have realised that as changing beings or really ‘intercultural beings’ or ‘meaning-makers’, it is my role not to provide a prognosis or a finished state but tools (questions) to enable students to process and develop their own thoughts and understandings through experience, interaction and reflection.*

(Joachim Cohen, teacher of Indonesian)

*The class discussion and depth of investigation during this particular lesson permitted the use of the lesson’s outcomes as a hub for many emerging topics with intercultural relevance. The texts created and the discussion points brought forward by students permitted a student-guided exploration of many other intercultural-relevant concepts and topics such as the fluidity of culture, the construction of culture, the destruction of cultures, shame, forgiveness, migration, immigration, literacy, social distance, intergenerational aspects, assimilation, adaptation, disempowerment, dislocation, cultural carriers, loss of culture, interconnections and symbolic acts.*

*I discovered that I did not need to direct the discussion and it was easy to allow for a student-directed flow of ideas and topics. The flip back in the discussion from one cultural context to the other cultural context is a most powerful tool to encourage intercultural awareness. An example of this was moving from the target language related discussion on cultural historical shame, to considering similarities in the cultural context we identify in Australia. Additionally, the process of reflecting back fosters student comprehension that people in either of the two cultures are to a degree like leaves in the stream of historical events and are both coping as best they can.*

(Gabriele Fitzgerald, teacher of German)

*Another success of this project was that it encouraged students to focus on the similarities not just the differences when looking at Japanese culture. It also helped students to appreciate their own culture more as was evident in a students comment ‘Wow! Life is much easier in Australia!’*

(Kylie Farmer, teacher of Japanese)

*I have learned so much about myself, my students and how engaging teaching and learning can be by taking an intercultural approach. My course has become more relevant and meaningful to my students. However, it takes up a lot of time and energy to record my*

lessons, keep a reflection journal, gathering data and analyse them. I think my old teaching practice was also intercultural; however, it wasn't done holistically. After participating in this project, I realised that I have to re-consider many aspects of my teaching, for example, the whole teaching programme, the texts, the questions to ask in class and the tasks for students. I intend to generate a checklist for each area of my work to make sure my teaching is consistently intercultural.

(Toni Chen, teacher of Chinese)

My involvement with the ILTLP project has given me a new focus which has challenged my thinking. The new focus is on maintaining language content but going beyond this, to explore intercultural aspects at a greater depth, but still in a deliberate and planned way, which suits my personal teaching style. The (next) question I will focus on is 'how can I "tweak" my lesson content to make my lessons more intercultural?' I would like to connect language and culture, not in an incidental manner, as in the past, but in a planned and deliberate way integrated with the language and grammar- that is, to explore the culture through the language and the language through the culture.

I believe intercultural understandings result in students' better understanding themselves and this is achievable by gaining diverse perspectives on the culture through the language. Interestingly, I think this will help students with my second aim, which is to help them make the transition to secondary school. As people with a greater understanding of themselves, and how languages and cultures contribute to understanding who we are, they should be better prepared for this transition. I intend to work on finding a balance between my desire to provide rich and deep language learning experiences while also allowing space for students to take more control.

Through using this opportunity to investigate my practice and through developing my own understandings about the benefits of an intercultural orientation to languages and cultures learning, I have opened possibilities for improving my pedagogical practice that I will continue to explore.

(Julia Panagakos, teacher of Italian)

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 connect, 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.

(Shahla Pakrou, teacher of Persian)

## Key findings

The following are key findings of the project:

### Finding 1

*The orientation towards intercultural language learning is worthwhile and should be retained as the conceptual base for the development of languages education.*

The ILTLP project has been a successful undertaking for all participants. At the same time the shift towards intercultural language learning constitutes a significant conceptual challenge that needs to be further supported by the Australian Government, state and territory governments, universities and the professional bodies for the benefit of languages learning on the part of students. An intercultural language orientation should be retained as the conceptual base, specifically in MCEETYA's formulation of the next national statement and plan for languages education in Australian schools, and in related national, collaborative developments towards a national curriculum.

In the states and territories, jurisdictions have begun and should continue to integrate the ILTLP professional learning programme in their professional development plans and provisions, using the extensive resources and networks developed through the project. In this way more teachers will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of an intercultural orientation to languages teaching and learning, and jurisdictions develop leadership density in this area.

Given the value of this orientation, a request should be made of the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA) agencies to consider incorporating an intercultural language learning orientation in the redevelopment of syllabuses and frameworks.

Priority should be given to documenting systematically the student experience of intercultural language learning, connected with and arising from the evaluation of the ILTLP project.

### ***Finding 2***

*Sustained, nationally-networked professional learning programmes with appropriate time release for teachers achieve change.*

The success of the ILTLP project can be attributed to the following considerations:

- The programme was sustained with ongoing discussion and experimentation throughout the cycle of a year.
- The programme was nationally networked; teachers developed a sense of connectedness with colleagues across the state or territory and across the nation which they found highly valuable
- Teachers were provided with release time to engage in the professional learning programme and classroom-based investigations.
- New ideas and developments based on state-of-the-art research were presented to teachers by experienced facilitators.
- Teachers were invited constantly to question, consider and reconsider the ideas, their programme and their own work, recognising the diversity and specificity of their particular contexts.

Programmes with these characteristics enable teachers to engage intellectually in professional learning towards changing their practices.

### ***Finding 3***

*Teachers benefit from language-specific materials within a common curriculum and assessment framework for all languages.*

Teachers working with the concept of intercultural language learning in general and with ILTLP materials in particular rely on the availability of language-specific examples. It is necessary to consider the development of language-specific versions of the ILTLP manual (especially Chinese, French, German, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese and Spanish); and to support language-specific communities in conducting language specific investigations over the long-term (e.g. a year) in both primary and secondary schools.

### ***Finding 4***

*Teachers working in primary settings benefit from additional materials focused specifically on early learners of languages.*

Given the policy emphasis since the late 1980s on offering languages in primary schools in Australian education, it would be valuable to provide teachers with supplementary materials that

pertain specifically to intercultural language teaching and learning in primary school settings. A small scale research project (with 8–10 teachers) to investigate the implications of intercultural language learning for early learners would be beneficial in generating such materials.

### **Finding 5**

*Teachers consistently observe that intercultural language learning increases student engagement; this observation warrants further investigation.*

There have been constant reports from teachers throughout the ILTLP project about the value of intercultural language learning in increasing student engagement in language learning.

Some of the features that appear to be contributing to student engagement include:

- a shift from a discussion of the content of the task or a text to a focus on comparison of phenomena and reflection on the significance of similarities and differences
- personalisation in relation to students' own cultural world and experiences
- authenticity in relation to the texts and resources used for learning
- interaction to discuss diverse responses offered by different class members and reflection on diverse perspectives generated
- use of the target language in interaction
- the use of stimulating questions that shift students' thinking
- constantly inviting reflection on the role of language and culture in exchanging meaning with others.

Given the stage of development of intercultural language learning in schools, it would be highly desirable that a research project be undertaken to examine the nature of the student 'engagement' that has been consistently observed and why it appears that this orientation is influencing student learning in this way. The research should include both teacher and learner perspectives.

### **Evaluation**

The state and territory key contacts and implementation teams had responsibility for collecting and forwarding to the evaluator the demographic data, evaluation surveys and teacher-generated materials related to the evaluation. Two sets of data were collected at the initial 2.5 day conference in each state and territory: demographic data and evaluative data.

In order to fulfil the requirements of the AGQTP, all state/territory ILTLP implementation teams were required to gather information on, and report to the ILTLP project team:

- total number of participants in the state and territory activities
- whether the activity targeted particular teacher groups (e.g. teachers from particular geographic locations, or types of teachers)
- whether the activity involved engagement with professional teacher associations or networks, or higher education institutions
- number and percentage of participants by:
  - length of service
  - number and percentage of participants by school role
  - number and percentage of participants by school location
  - number and percentage of participants by school sector
  - number and percentage of participants by school type.

These data were collated by the project team and reported on in the final evaluation report.

State and territory implementation teams were responsible for administering the evaluation process during and at the conclusion of the 2.5 day conference. Three documents were included in the ILTLP folder regarding evaluation. The first entitled 'Double entry' was provided as a familiar framework for participants to record their own reflections and was not collected. It provided a framework for critical self-reflection and was private to participants. Multiple copies of these were provided for participants to use during the conference days. The other two proformas were used to obtain evaluation comment and data:

1. An informal half page sheet for participants to write down thoughts, comments, questions or ideas to hand in during the progress of the programme. Many copies of these half-page

forms were scattered on the conference tables for participants to access. Participants did not have to use these but they were provided as a means of immediately recording interests or concerns.

2. A formal evaluation survey. This was to be completed by all participants. State and territory implementation teams were responsible for administering the survey and for explaining its purpose and nature with participants. All original, individual surveys were forwarded to the key contact.

Both the individual reflection sheets and the evaluation surveys were forwarded by the key contact to the external evaluator.

A summary of the findings of the external evaluation is as follows. The findings attest to the success of the ILTLP project.

#### Evaluation findings

The external evaluation reports that the aims and intended outcomes of the ILTLP Project have been achieved to an outstanding degree, as a direct outcome of the project leadership and administration, collaboration, professional learning programme design, materials and management, and reflect the very high quality professional learning programme provided.

The evaluation data demonstrated outstanding achievement of the intended outcomes. The comments below have been extracted from the external evaluator's report.

#### *Pedagogy*

- The deep extension of knowledge and understanding of intercultural language teaching and learning and how it provides a philosophical and educational stance from which to approach languages education.
- The acquisition of long-term planning and programming skills in languages education by participants.
- Changed languages pedagogies and deep reflection on what is taught, how it is taught and assessed, and why. Most languages teachers participating felt re-energised and re-focused about the reasons for teaching languages.
- An extended understanding of the nature and role of assessment in intercultural language teaching and learning, though assessment practices remain exigent and further professional learning activities to support this are recommended.

#### *'Discoveries' about students and their learning*

- Teachers were surprised and pleased with their students' responsiveness to an intercultural language teaching and learning stance from their teachers. Teachers reported increased and significant engagement from students with increased learning outcomes.
- Student engagement was evidenced through insights, critical thinking, increased knowledge of, and greater disposition towards languages. Participants reported strong student support for language teachers exploring intercultural language teaching and learning pedagogy.
- Teachers reported that they saw their students in a significantly stronger role as active contributors to language learning and for many teachers this resulted in more productive educational, as well as new ethical relationships with their students.

#### *Professionalism and professional standards*

- Intercultural language teaching and learning, as evidenced by participants' reports, provided languages teachers with a new rationale for teaching languages, and a new sense of purpose, importance and immediacy for their work.
- Participants reported in significant numbers that the ILTLP enabled a new sense of collegiality and collegial learning to be developed. For them this new collegial learning was inclusive of colleagues across schools and across states and territories, and also of academics and presenters. They appreciated the ability to share problems and achievements with academics and presenters, as well as check understandings, debate with them, and refine their own thinking as well as practice.
- Many participants used the survey forms and their final reports to express personal and individual teaching values and ethics beyond systemic values and collective professional ethics. The personal realisation of these new values and ethics made them somewhat more individual and more powerful.

- Participants reported that they significantly valued being treated as intellectuals, conceptual thinkers and professionals able to think critically, engage with complexity and ambiguity, and create positive learning for their students.
- Participants also reported that they appreciated being part of a 'national' project, with a sense of being at the forefront of 'big-picture' professional change, and both gaining from and influencing national perspectives on languages' teaching.

#### *The ILTLP Project's structure and professional learning programme*

- Participants strongly valued the ILTLP Project and many asked for more professional engagement with it or a similar project, especially in the area of assessment practice.
- Participants reported strong support for the professional learning programme provided, especially continuous contact with the original ILTLP Project team of academics, in what could be described as an 'iterative-connective' model of professional learning. This represented a collaboratively agreed variance from the planned 'train-the-trainer' programme, which did not suit the conceptual, exploratory nature of ILTL. The 'iterative-connective' learning model enabled teachers to think deeply and to test their intellectual, as well as practical, thinking and planning.
- Teachers reported strong support for the ILTLP 'extended' structure; that is, professional learning in stages over a year with regular reinforcement and collegial learning. The structure and the regular connection and reconnection with academics and presenters enabled iterative professional learning, supporting 'a theory into practice and practice into theory' approach.
- Participants recorded their appreciation of the referential usefulness of the printed, human and web-based resources provided: these resources were something participants returned to during in-school investigations and 'practice'.

#### *Evaluation against the aims and objectives of the ILTLP Project*

In summary and in consideration of the aims and objectives of the ILTLP Project, the evaluation makes evident that the ILTLP Project was an outstanding professional learning project in that participants overwhelmingly reported that they:

- were engaged at a strong to very strong level with the ILTLP Project's nationally coordinated research and professional learning programme, underpinned by the latest research in ILTL and grounded in classroom practice
- increased their knowledge and understanding of the principles and pedagogies of intercultural language teaching and learning
- were able to integrate this knowledge and understanding into classroom teaching and learning, and that this enhanced student engagement with languages and improved student languages learning outcomes.

Further work in languages education, intercultural language teaching and learning is required to build on this outstanding professional learning programme.

It is therefore recommended:

1. *That further on-going conceptual development of, and 'iterative-connective' professional learning programmes about, intercultural language teaching and learning (including assessment) as a means of re-focussing and re-purposing languages education in schools be undertaken at a national level.*
2. *That further national exploratory and consistent professional learning programmes for languages teachers in intercultural language teaching and learning be undertaken.*
3. *That the ILTLP Project model of the interaction of academic expertise, teacher professionalism and action, and state/territory managerial leadership, be further explored, extended and included in professional learning programmes for languages educators.*
4. *That ILTLP Project web-based resources and materials be financially supported to enable dissemination and use of flexible learning technologies to support further ILTL-based professional learning.*
5. *That further research be commissioned on students' learning and attitudes to languages within an intercultural language teaching and learning stance, and on the effect of intercultural language teaching and learning on retention in languages education.*

## **Conclusion**

The ILTLP experience has been of value and valued by all involved. There is evidence of substantial student and teacher learning that has set the foundation for an intercultural orientation to languages learning for the benefit of students. This orientation will require further sustained support for it to become integral to the teaching and learning of languages in Australian schools.

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