## ILTLP CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATION REPORT

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<th>TEACHER'S NAME</th>
<th>Janine Davison</th>
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<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>Learning Services South, DoE, Tasmania PO Box 919 Hobart Tas 7001</td>
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<td>LANGUAGE</td>
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<td>YEAR LEVEL</td>
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### AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Firstly, I am not a paid participant, but have attempted a project because I was fortunate enough to attend the PL and was interested. However as I do not have students of my own, and chose to try to work with volunteer students in an after-school, independent context, my research is pretty 'Mickey Mouse'. You may want to stop reading now!

My investigation question was: **Does independent student use of learning objects to support a classroom language program promote intercultural language learning? How could this be strengthened?**

Why? I have a background in developing learning objects (for languages and other learning areas), most particularly the Indonesian Online Resources which consisted of learning objects and accompanying Teacher Resources. I believe that used properly, learning objects are a very useful resource that can enhance student engagement and language learning.

I was initially interested in auditing the use of learning objects (LOs) against the Principles of Intercultural Language Learning. As I don't have any students of my own, I approached a teacher in the ILTLP project here, and her school, to gain permission to ask for student volunteers to use Indonesian LOs in their own time outside school, for a three week trial. The students have had some experience with learning objects before in Indonesian, but not used them regularly. Indonesian class time is limited (45mins a week), so I tried not to impinge on that.

I chose the learning objects to fit in with the language that students would have covered in their own class, after discussion with the teacher. However this was not necessarily recently covered language.

I planned an introductory session for each week, where I introduced that week’s learning objects and what I wanted students to do. Then at the end of the week I visited and interviewed students and talked about their answers to the questions. This interview was often at lunch time in the library.

Recognising the flaws in my project design quite early, I also interviewed Ingrid Colman, the Indonesian teacher, about her experiences planning and teaching a learning sequence built around the use of one of the Indonesian LOs that I was involved in developing. Ingrid taught this learning sequence with the whole class over an extended period. This is not included in this report but is available if you are interested.

### CLASSROOM PRACTICE

I have strong beliefs about good practice in the use of LOs – they must be planned for, built into a learning program, introduced properly and students supported in their use; that students should often collaborate to discuss their learning; that students need a clear goal for each session using the LO; that they need time to discuss the LO at the end of a session.

So to be honest, my project design went against most of this and was almost doomed to failure from the...
I must be an incurable optimist because I expected that students would be interested enough in both Indonesian and using ICT to sign up for three weeks to doing extra work outside school time! Hmm…

Anyway – I chose a couple of different types of LOs to showcase and visited the Grade 5/6 class for 15 mins at the end of an Indonesian lesson, showed the learning objects, explained what they were and modelled what I wanted students to do. I then handed out letters for students to take home and talk over with their parents – then volunteer if interested.

I explained that:

- they would need a computer at home that could use CD-ROMs and had sound
- each week for three weeks they would get a new CD-ROM with three different LOs on it, and some questions to answer about each LO (I had modelled the type of questions in the demonstration lesson)
- they were asked to spend a minimum of 20 mins of their own time at least twice a week and fill in a weekly timetable with the time they spent on the LOs
- I would come and talk to them at the end of each week, and that I was interested in the students’ comments about the learning objects as well as their answers to the questions.

The class seemed reasonably responsive to the demo of the LOs, but I only ended up with two volunteers – very keen though, one in Year 5 and one in Year 6.

So the M.I.L.O. (Mt Nelson Indonesian Learning Object) Project was born. Each week the students received a CD-ROM containing copies of several LOs on a similar language topic and question sheets about use of each LO.

I tried to choose LOs that were all do-able in short periods of time and by students working individually at home; but also a mixture of approaches in terms of presentation of language and culture.

I gave students my email address so that they could contact me if they were having problems. I also suggested that they could get together to do the LOs if they wished. I talked to the class teacher about the possibility of some before school time, but this was not supported.

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DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

I asked the students to rate their liking for both Indonesian and using computers from 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly dislike and 5 is strongly like. The Year 5 student rated Indonesian 3, computers 5. The other student rated Indonesian 3 as well and computers 4.

Data gathered each week included both boys' timetables and question answer sheets. I also talked to them about their answers because I found that they tended not to write in detail but were happy to expand when I was talking to them. These interviews were audio-recorded.

**Week 1:** The LOs presented on CD-ROM all dealt with clothing as the basic language ‘set’. This was chosen because students had some prior experience but also because it dealt with everyday language and was culturally familiar (in the Australian setting) for students.

These LOs were

- **Berdandan (dressing up)** includes some cultural information while **Hebat** does not (it is available in various language versions). All provide native speaker sound. **Hebat** does not show any text at all, but uses animation and
sound (e.g. sirens, cannon) to signal success or failure. *Berdandan* includes girl and boy characters and three different locations (sekolah, bola voli, mesjid). The clothes are both said and written in text.

Week 1 CD-ROM included:

- Mingguan Jadwal (weekly timetable sheet) tracking LO use (Appendix 1)
- *Hebat* – naming clothes question sheet (Appendix 1 – reduced in size)
- *Hebat* – coloured clothes question sheet (Appendix 2)
- *Hebat* – buying clothes question sheet (Appendix 2)
- *Berdandan* question sheet (Appendix 2)
- In addition, in case students finished early I had a link to 10 games or LOs on clothing, on the Victorian Languages Online site.

**Week 2:** This week building on from last week and focussing on body parts and adjectives

- **Sepak takraw – choosing shots**
- **Hebat – body parts**
- **Hebat – physical characteristics**
- **Hebat – at the doctors**

*Sepak takraw* is a much more culturally rich LO with information about this martial art as well as a simple interactive game using body parts to return the ball. It also presents the text for some of the Indonesian language and uses native speaker sound. *Hebat* is, as always, completely culture-neutral, does not show the text but uses native speaker sound and sound effects.

The CD-ROM for Week 2 contained the LOs above and the usual Mingguan Jadwal; question sheets for each of the four LOs and and a link to Victorian Languages Online website ‘body parts set of ten games / LOs. The questions asked are summarised on this question summary sheet for week 2. (Appendix 3)

**Week 3:** This week focussing only on one LO, *Di mana Cicak?* This LO is a problem solving one with three levels of difficulty. Students must read and listen to clues using positional and descriptive language to place geckos correctly. This was also the week for a final interview with students.

The CD-ROM also contained the usual Mingguan Jadwal, a vocabulary support sheet for positional language, an extension LO, called *Teka-teki Cicak*, where students could make new games for each other to play (they did not have time however) and the final interview questions.

**FINDINGS**

The Year 5 student tended to move on quickly from idea to idea and had more trouble sharing his ideas by writing than by talking, while the Year 6 student had better literacy skills. The students had some technical difficulties with *Hebat* (due to software versions) – but one student’s mother had a TLF CD-ROM which worked on their home computer, and the other used the Victorian online LOs when *Hebat*...
Janine Davison, Tas didn’t work.

Both boys were very enthusiastic, but this began to wane by the end of the third week as they were very busy at school and had various extra-curricular activities. One emailed me in the third week to say that his home computer had caught a virus and the sound had gone; but he and the other student made arrangements independently to get together and spend some time on the Cicak learning object.

The boys usually logged in to use the LOs three or four times a week, but the time varied a lot (highest 30 minutes to lowest 3 minutes).

The boys were keen to meet at lunch time and did not at all mind spending time talking to me about their experiences with the LOs. (The chocolate might have helped!).

I was really working in the dark not being with them when they used the LOs, and so tried to ask them questions to check whether or not they were reading and understanding the Indonesian, and to ask them how they worked out what to do.

Findings:

1. Could students tell the difference between a culture-neutral LO (like Hebat) and one that contained more authentic information about Indonesian culture?

Generally yes. It was easy for them with Sepak Takraw for instance, as there were photographs. They could also pick that Berdandan contained some cultural information, even though it was a cartoon drawing style. They realised that Hebat was not culturally specific for Indonesia (the presence of alien spaceships and doctors dropping patients through the floor might have helped).

2. Did they notice things in the LO independently?

This was difficult for me to answer as I was not there to see them spontaneously noticing things and tried to draw out their ideas in interviews that were maybe days after they used the LOs. However my impression is that they did not stop to think about or notice things when using the LOs, and that it was only my written and spoken questions that prompted them to think more deeply and compare languages or cultural practices.

3. How much were they thinking about and comparing Australian culture and Indonesian culture?

In Berdandan, each piece of clothing correctly selected goes onto the body of the Indonesian character getting ready to go out – except for the shoes, which flash onto the feet and then off, to sit on the floor beside the character.

This came up in my demo for the whole class and I asked them if they had noticed that one article of clothing ‘worked’ differently from the others. (Only some had) “Why might that be?” I asked (expecting that they may draw the conclusion that generally people do not wear shoes inside in Indonesia). The answers I got were all valid:

- He hasn’t got socks on yet, so he wouldn’t put the shoes on.
- They are sports shoes but he is still at home so he doesn’t need them yet.
- He doesn’t like wearing shoes.
- Some people don’t wear shoes inside.

Students simply did not know that overall not wearing shoes inside might be a general Indonesian cultural point.

When asked whether or not they thought that using the LOs in the first week had taught them anything about Indonesia, the second student said that he thought Berdandan did because it showed you them in a monks sort of place and it told you that they like to play badminton and what kind of things they wear at school.

Even where students notice something ‘cultural’ in the LO, there is no guarantee that they will draw the conclusion that was intended. There are often other valid explanations, and the variability of cultural behaviour in our own society means that the variation may not be seen as characteristic or culturally significant. The teacher needs to lead discussions to model noticing and comparing. Students may also need to be ‘given’ authentic cultural information rather being expected to always deduce it.
4. How much were students thinking about how English worked and comparing it with Indonesian?

I think they did this only a little and only when prompted by my asking questions. When asked to compare how we describe things in English compared with Indonesian, and whether or not there were any similarities or differences in how it is done in the two languages:

In week 1 the Year 6 student wrote: Yes, we both have light and dark e.g. dark blue = biru tua.
And in week 2 he wrote: We describe and then say what it is, but in Indonesia they say the word and then describe it.

The other student wrote: Well you say a book is green, in Indonesia they say (what they say) and its like twisting a cube.

In discussion he explained that he meant because the word order is different.

5. How much were students using the Indonesian language to work things out in the LO, or were they relying on ‘Sally Clicker’ guess and check methods?

There was a fair bit of ‘guess and check’ rather than carefully reading all the Indonesian, but at the same time the students were able to articulate what the LO was trying to teach them and always said that it did help them to learn or remember some Indonesian language. When asked how they knew what to do, especially when the Indonesian language was quite challenging (in Sepak Takraw), the Year 6 student said:

It wasn’t a problem because we went over what we had to do and I just clicked until I got it right.

I tried a few times to test how much new language they had retained by asking them what words they could remember, but it was pretty artificial. For each LO they did learn some new language, but often not the spelling (since Hebat did not show the text this was not surprising).

6. What types of LOs did they prefer? E.g. those with text and sound, more game like, more or less demanding in terms of problem solving and / or language?

In week 1 both boys said that Hebat was much more help with learning Indonesian because it didn’t show them the words so they had to listen really hard. They felt that the Berdandan LO gave them too much help as the name of each piece of clothing was shown when it was moused over. So basically the LO was doing most of the work for them, with too much support.

At the final interview, they both scored the more challenging LOs – both in terms of language and ‘intellectual demand’ – as more enjoyable and more challenging than the simpler ones. Although they also thought that the LOs about clothes and body parts had helped them learn and remember some new vocabulary.

When asked to “think about using LOs as part of learning Indonesian … was it enjoyable? Why or why not? Both said that it was enjoyable. Andrew thought that using LOs was “… better than normal school”.

When asked what they noticed the most when using a LO (e.g. pictures, sound, language), one student said ‘sound’ and the other said ‘sound and animation’.

In the final interview I asked the boys if they thought that using LOs for Indonesian would help them with any other subject area or skills such as computer use or problem-solving. They both said “Not really.”

I also said that “Some people say that it is hard to learn a language if you only have a lesson once a week because you forget things; and that it is better to look at some Indonesian a few times a week. What do you think about that?” Both said, Not really, prefer once a week.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

My original idea had been to audit the use of LOs against the Principles of Intercultural Language Learning. I had the idea that if all the principles were evident, then maybe intercultural language learning was taking place.

However my flawed project design makes my conclusions highly subjective!
• **Active Construction:** Students working on LOs which have a problem solving component are often involved in active construction. However this would be dependent on teacher management to avoid simple guess and check. Strategies such as a clear goal before use communicated to students; question or task sheets to prompt noticing and reflection; class pin-up sheets for collected examples of language and cultural points, and discussion or de-briefing afterwards where students explain their conclusions and the ideas behind them are necessary for active construction of meaning or understanding to happen.

• **Making Connections:** I had thought that this would be easy to see happening. Once again however, it needs to be planned for with many of the strategies above. While students did make connections to some of their prior experience and knowledge with Indonesian, it was very easy for them to see Indonesian as being in a separate box. They did not make connections naturally between what they were doing in Indonesian and what they were doing in other subject areas, including English. One strategy to promote this would be to make time for 5 minute summary discussion at the end of an Indonesian lesson and be explicit about those connections on a regular basis. The primary classroom teacher has a very important role to play in this.

• **Social interaction:** Working on LOs definitely encourages collaboration and discussion between students. Most of this at the primary level is in English but about the task and decoding / suggesting Indonesian words. The LOs do not necessarily promote social interaction in Bahasa Indonesia (depending on the topic), but they may model some aspects of social interaction such as greetings.

• **Reflection:** A culture of noticing and reflection must be planned for and nurtured in the classroom. This can be done best by discussion and questioning. Teachers can model the process of noticing and comparing with our own language and culture. Students can be encouraged to build knowledge together by adding to collected examples of linguistic and cultural similarities and differences, for instance. Primary age students do not naturally pause to notice and reflect.

• **Responsibility:** Again must be planned for to develop the idea / value of personal responsibility in the learning of a language, or the interaction with resources like LOs. I had the idea that participating voluntarily and keeping track of their progress, answering questions etc was showing ‘responsibility’ in this project. In that case, my students did show personal responsibility, although the time period was about right and I don’t think that they would have sustained the voluntary effort for much longer.

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**MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS**

Week 1 planning sheets.
Summary of week 2 questions.
Work samples are available but to save room quotes from them have been incorporated instead.

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**EVALUATION**

*Where I am up to now in my thinking:* My understanding of intercultural language learning is still developing! Reflecting on this project has brought me to wonder about a few things:

• I had thought that if the Principles of Intercultural Language Learning were all present, then intercultural language learning should / would be taking place. The first inkling I had that this was a furphy was when Andrew Scrimgeour asked me on Recall Day 2 what concept I was focussing on. I began to realise that I had a missing piece in my plan, and that what I was doing was investigating language learning (or trying to) but not necessarily intercultural language learning.

• I wonder whether there is a ‘missing’ Principle. It seems to me that the five Principles as articulated describe good pedagogy for language learning, but not specifically for intercultural language learning. In fact, they are so general that they are simply ‘good pedagogy’ for any learning really. So what makes the difference between language learning and intercultural language learning? I think that it is being explicit about developing conceptual understanding of the big-picture concepts that underpin all societies and all social interactions. This is important because deeper understanding of these
concepts is essential for effective communication between any people/s.

- One colleague suggested to me that the Principles can be used to ‘audit’ your language program to focus on improving pedagogy, and that they can be applied to intercultural language learning and to ‘normal’ language learning. I agree that they can have that function, but in that case why are they called *Intercultural* Language Learning Principles?

- Jonathon Crichton has suggested a focus on ‘interactions’ which I think is really useful as a way of re-focussing on the actual communication between people, or between people and the language e.g. with texts for instance. This is important when trying to develop some conceptual understanding as it helps avoid the danger of lapsing into culture-study programs. But I don't think that this is another missing principle, as a focus on interactions could also apply to other forms of language learning I think.

- The problem could be my (lack of) understanding of what the Principles actually mean. I am comfortable with them as good pedagogy, but maybe I am not unpacking them correctly. I begin to see that they effectively mean different things for different age groups e.g. what constitutes ‘responsibility’ would / should look different for a grade 3 student and a grade 10 student.

- However, my thinking at this time is that there is a missing Principle and that it is around the deeper understanding of big-picture concepts and the application of that understanding to our own and the target culture/s. This is what differentiates intercultural language learning for me from any other form of language learning. This is what makes it more than important – in fact vital – for Australian students even when they don’t go on to become fluent speakers of another language.

**REFLECTION**

I will make my reflections as a facilitation team member elsewhere. Reflecting as a participant, I have experienced moments of self-doubt and the slight worry that you are exposing your ignorance (LOL) … so it has been useful that way. But most of all it has been a real privilege to have the opportunity to take part in professional learning with people such as the Project Team members, who are such clear thinkers and outstanding communicators of ideas. And also to work once again with my wonderful Tasmanian language teacher colleagues.

Taking part in the project has given me some of those ‘light bulb’ moments that I value so highly in my professional life.

My position as a non-school based participant with no students means that what I have done is pretty ‘Mickey Mouse’. But it was useful for me to go through a similar process to the participants and have the same struggles that they did with time and other work pressures.

Where to from here? The effective use of LOs still fascinates me and still eludes many teachers for all sorts of reasons. So better understanding of intercultural language learning and trying to support teachers in making effective use of ICT in general in their practice are areas of interest.

I have a summary of a two hour interview with Ingrid Colman looking at her use of learning objects in a planned and sequential learning sequence if you are interested.
Appendix 1:

Mt Nelson Indonesian Learning Object Project (M.I.L.O Project)

Nama saya ___________________________ Kelas ______________________

Mingguan Jadwal – Weekly timetable
Please fill in the timetable below when you use the learning objects.

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<tr>
<th>Hari Day</th>
<th>Mulai Start</th>
<th>Selesai End</th>
<th>Menit Minutes</th>
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Question sheet for Hebat – naming clothes
Nama saya ___________________________ Hebat – naming clothes

1. When you are first learning the names of the clothes, you drag a piece of clothing onto the person and they say “Saya suka memakai …” e.g. Saya suka memakai celana pendek.

What do you think it means?

2. Did this learning object help you learn and remember any Indonesian language? How?

3. Did you notice anything about how the Indonesian language?

4. What did you think about this learning object? Give a mark out of 10

   This learning object helped me learn and remember some Indonesian
   This learning object taught me some things about life in Indonesia
   This learning object was fun to do
   This learning object was challenging

Comments?
### Questions for Hebat – coloured clothes

1. When you are first learning the names of the clothes, you click the plus to put a piece of clothing onto the person, the robot says “Pakailah ….” E.g. “Pakailah celana panjang hitam.” When you click the minus, it says “Bukalah…” e.g. “Bukalah celana panjang hitam.”

2. What do you think this learning object is trying to teach you?

3. Think about describing the colour of something in Indonesian and in English. E.g. a book. Are their any similarities or differences in how it is done in the two languages?

3. What did you think about this learning object? Give a mark out of 10

| This learning object helped me learn and remember some Indonesian |   |
| This learning object taught me some things about life in Indonesia |   |
| This learning object was fun to do |   |
| This learning object was challenging |   |

Comments?

### Summary of questions for Hebat – buying clothes

1. This is the most difficult learning object in this series. Did you manage to work out what you had to do and make it work? What strategies did you use to learn what to do?

PS There is some information on the back of this sheet that might help you. Have a try first to work out what is happening and then check the word list.

2. In card 5, the shop person says the price and then says “Harga pas.” This means “fixed price”. Do you know why she would say that?

3. Do you think that you could work with a partner to write a conversation like this one in a shop? But changing what you want to buy and what is right or wrong with the clothes? What would you need to help you?

4. What did you think about this learning object? Give a mark out of 10 (Same as Q 4 above)

### Summary of questions for Berdandan – dressing up

1. Think about your clothes. What is the same or different about your clothes and Yanti’s or Yono’s clothes? (Choose the same gender as you.)

2. Did you notice what happens with shoes? Why do you think this happens? What happens at your house?
### Questions for Hebat: My body – Parts of the body

1. Did you know any of the Indonesian words for parts of the body before you used this learning object? Did this learning object help you learn and remember any Indonesian language? How?

2. This learning object doesn’t have the words for the body parts written in Indonesian. Was this a problem for you? Why or why not?

3. Does this learning object teach you anything about Indonesian culture? Does this matter? Why or why not?

4. What did you think about this learning object? Give a mark out of 10 [question in all sheets]

   - This learning object helped me learn and remember some Indonesian
   - This learning object taught me some things about life in Indonesia
   - This learning object was fun to do
   - This learning object was challenging

   Comments?

### Questions for Hebat: My body – Physical characteristics

1. What do you think that this learning object is teaching you?

2. Can you write down one of the sentences that you hear when you choose a new body part? Can you write what it means in English as well? Do you notice any pattern in the language used to describe the monster’s physical characteristics?

3. Compare how we describe things in English compared with using Indonesian. Are there any differences (apart from different words)?

### Questions for Hebat: My body – at the doctors

1. The doctor asks ‘Kamu sakit apa?’ What do you think that means in English?

2. This learning object had some body parts you hadn’t heard before. Did you manage to work out what they meant? How?

3. Do you think that this learning object teaches you anything about going to the doctor in Indonesia or not? (Give your reasons)

### Questions for Sepak takraw (Choose your shots)

1. This learning object has some quite difficult Indonesian language. Was this a problem? How did you work out what you had to do?
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<td>2.</td>
<td>What do you think this learning object is trying to teach you?</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>What does this learning object teach you about life in Indonesia? (Hint: You can think about the pictures and the information)</td>
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