# ILTLP CLASSROOM-BASED INVESTIGATION REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER'S NAME</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>YEAR LEVEL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Spinks</td>
<td>Upper Yarra Secondary College Little Yarra Rd, Yarra Junction</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
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## CONTEXT

Our school has two languages, Japanese and German. Students choose the language they want to study as they enter year 7 and continue this until the end of Year 9. At this time, they can select the language as an elective if they wish. I have conducted an investigation in one of my Year 8 Japanese classes.

## AREA OF INVESTIGATION

I initially wanted to investigate body language and interview procedures with my Year 10 class to coincide with their mock job interviews for their CWE class. Due to the timing of that event, it was not possible to use this as my investigation. After the initial three-day conference, I found myself thinking increasingly about how I was teaching intercultural language in the classroom and I soon discovered myself exploring the topic of family in my Year 8 class. I was interested in finding a range of intercultural materials and delivering lessons that were truly intercultural. As there are many aspects of interculturality between Australian and Japanese families, I planned this unit as my area of investigation.

## CLASSROOM PRACTICE

I have taught the topic of family in the past and have always focussed on the language aspect of this topic. For example, expressing how many people in a family, who they are and what they like to do. In this unit I wanted to introduce the concept of traditional families and modern families in Japan. Sometimes, I think I have often focussed on traditional aspects of Japan rather than also making the comparison to modern elements. Students were then asked to compare these kinds of families to their own. This discussion then lead to the types of houses Japanese families and Australian families live in. This difference will often reflect something about a family. Students also read information on the Japanese family crest and what it means to Japanese people and what is says about Japanese society. Students were asked to design their own family crest with a meaning. Students were to express how many people are in their family, their names and ages and what they like to do.

My focus was how to present this information and where to find the materials I would need to make the unit intercultural. How could I prepare worksheets and activities that incorporated both aspects?

## DATA OR INFORMATION GATHERED

I tried to use a range of materials in this topic with regard to intercultural teaching. Firstly the students watched a video on traditional Japanese families. This included the role of the members of the family and the kinds of attitude they had. Students then watched some footage of a more modern Japanese family and students were quite able to see the difference. Students were asked firstly to compare these
two families. When that was done, students were asked to think about their own family situation and make comparisons.

Secondly, the students were asked to look at Japanese style houses and how this compared to their own living arrangements. Students were given a comic from their textbook written entirely in Japanese. As a class, we discussed the cultural aspects in the comic after reading it. Students were given reflection questions on this task.

My personal observations were noted not only on the students’ progress but mainly on how I was presenting and information and designing the lessons.

FINDINGS

Students seem to enjoy the aspects of family studied in this unit and they enjoyed discussions about family customs and traditions. Exploring the cultural elements in addition to the language added more enthusiasm to their language learning. Students were able to form opinions on the topics discussed.

I found that some students had never really reflected on their own ‘culture’ before and at times, this was a challenge. Students found it very difficult to comment on ‘Australian families’ as a whole as they were quite unaware of the whole society. I needed to narrow the scope down to simply making comparisons to their own family or families they knew.

Students also developed their group work skills as they shared their ideas and opinions with others.

I did find it a challenge to find lots of materials for this unit. I found some videos and documentaries and some information from the internet. I found that intercultural activities and worksheets needed to be created by me to effectively meet the students’ needs and language level.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

As mentioned above, the focus of my investigation was my own teaching. I think with this unit I definitely made a shift from a language focus to a general family theme. It was no longer about teaching how to talk about your family, it was also about understanding your family and other families and realising that not all families are the same. In the broader sense, students were asked to think about their own family culture.

I allowed students more freedom to work things out and discuss them with each other before sharing ideas as a class. This created a deeper learning as students were able to be more analytical about their tasks.

I also believe that allowing time for discussion was very valuable. The students were interesting in finding out about Japanese customs and we explored these further than I first had planned.

MATERIALS AND EXEMPLARS

Sample One:

I have attached a sample of the comic studied on families. The comic comes from Hai! 3 (Sedunary, M. (2006) Hai! 3.CIS Heinemann. Melbourne). In the past I would have given the students the words which they did not understand in this comic to help them with the meaning. We would have translated the comic as a class one box at a time. This year, the students were not given the same level of assistance but instead were asked to see if they could discover the meaning on their own based on the pictures and the cultural elements we had discussed in previous lessons. Some reflection questions were also asked at the end of this activity. (Attachment 1)

Sample Two:

Students watched a video on traditional and modern Japanese families. They were given a video sheet. Some of the questions were designed to keep them on tasks but towards the end of the sheet students are asked to make comparisons. In the past, I would have asked students to make a comparison
between the two Japanese families, however, this year it was extended to making comparisons with your own family. (Attachment 2)

**EVALUATION**

Students were more engaged in this topic than they have been in the past. By this I mean that students were having conversations amongst themselves about the topic and were interested in other students’ opinions and families.

Next time I teach this unit I would like to discuss Australian families a little more. Students were able to make comparisons with their own families but found it difficult to know about others. I thought this unit could begin with an exploration of the different kinds of families within our society so they have more of a basis of Australian families first. I am conscious that this will make the unit longer and this will need to be planned into the semester.

I would like to further my knowledge of how to ask reflection questions and how to formulate these in different ways. I would like to further facilitate my ability to help students reflect and evaluate what they have learnt.

If I was to do this project again, I would create more opportunities for collection of student data and I would have liked to have surveyed the students at the end of the unit to see directly what they thought.

**REFLECTION**

I felt this was a worthwhile investigation. At the beginning of the assignment, I felt scared about my ability to find the materials I wanted and that I was not going to complete the unit in the way that was required as there was a lot of information to digest in the first three days.

After I began the planning and teaching of this unit, I could see the benefits and I was inspired by the possibility of making these connections with all the units of work I teach across all year levels.

I am still a little apprehensive about materials and I would love to find a way to share materials more easily with others as I have been and am, the only Japanese teacher at the school.
**Comic Questions**

__What is the cultural significance of the scenario in box 1? How would you compare this to your own house?__

__What cultural elements can you identify in box 2? How would this compare to Australian culture?__

__Why do Japanese people put a ___ in front of the word ___ when referring to another person’s family?__

__What parts of box ______ and___ might be similar to your family or a family you know?__

__Notice the use of ‘___’ after people’s names? Why is this important to Japanese people?__

__What activity do the girls enjoy together and what does this tell you about Japanese society?__
こんにちは、見て！
ああああああ！
ただいま！
ただいま！
ただいま！
ただいま！
ただいま！
ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！
ああああああ！
なかえりなさい。
ともだちの
りつこさんです。
川合りつこ
です。どうぞ
よろしく。
りつこさん、さようなら。
さようなら。おもしろいごかぞくですね。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>たんご</th>
<th>たらいま</th>
<th>I’m home</th>
<th>くさい</th>
<th>smelly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>おじょうします</td>
<td>Don’t mind me</td>
<td>ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！ちっ！</td>
<td>ピザ</td>
<td>pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>おかえりなさい</td>
<td>Welcome home</td>
<td>テイクアウトの～</td>
<td>takeaway</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How many people are there in きょうこ's family?
2. What do we learn about each person?
3. How does きょうこ describe her brothers?
4. In which frames do we see the げんかん of the house?
Attachment 2

**The Japanese Family - Video question sheet**

1. What sort of role does the__ play in the first family and what kind of jobs does this include?

2. What sort of role does the _ play in the first family?

3. How do you feel about these roles?

4. What are some differences between the first family and the second family?

5. What kind of pressure does a husband feel and what sort of things is he responsible for?

6. What kinds of technologies are making things easier for wives now?

7. What is the traditional way of finding a husband and why is the workplace considered a suitable place to find a husband?

8. Why can’t all families afford to buy their own home?

9. What effect does the housing problem have on peoples’ lives?

10. What must students do to get into schools and universities and why is this so important?

11. What do students miss out on because they study so much?

12. In what ways are these families and lifestyles different from your own?

13. What elements of these families would you enjoy/not enjoy? Explain why or why not.