

Intro to IYIL

A lesson plan

By **Jeanie Clark**

enviroed4all

A plan

How do you introduce the International Year of Indigenous Language to a class of mixed level middle and upper primary students in rural Victoria? The below is the sequence I used, spread out over a day, which worked out well and may be of use to you.

What other words do you use for the greeting "Hello"?

- What was/is the IL greeting here?
- What is an IL?
- Challenge: Find words inside 'indigenous'
- What was/is the region of our IL and its First Peoples?
- What Creation heritage is in the IL? (names and stories)
- How can you share in telling this as an oral story?

This laid the groundwork to add other Indigenous Languages activities or stories, e.g. the six seasons of the year (so far).

A Wimmera example

"Hello!" How many ways did this group of children know how to say this? It turned out to be surprisingly few as I wrote them up on a big sheet of paper. They came up with "Hi", "G'day", "Good morning" and stalled. I asked for other languages. Some had learnt Italian some years ago and confidently offered "Ciaou". None realised that the Auslan they were currently learning as a LOTE could be included, but eventually the hands went up waving. Surprisingly, the couple with migrant histories had not been taught a greeting word in their parent's/ grandparent's languages. There was less cultural diversity in this class than might be elsewhere!

- Have you ever heard the word 'Dalk'? Some did recall it from a visit to the Brambuk Aboriginal Centre at Gariwerd/ Grampians NP. This greeting word would have been used where we live before the arrival of white settlers. I wrote it on a big sheet of paper over the other



Story telling aid by middle schoolers

ones. We practised saying it to each other.

- So now I could introduce the concept of an 'Indigenous Language' as the words spoken by the original people (the Wotjobalak here) who live where we live now and who spoke the languages of Wergaia. (They got it easily.)
- The 'word nerds' loved this!
- I created a worksheet for discussion:
- the IL logo (having got permission to use it from IYIL)
- the statement "We respectfully acknowledge the First Peoples of this land, the Wotjobalak Traditional Owners, past, present and future as we learn about their culture in the land we live on today".
- Victorian maps from the web of 'First Peoples' and 'Aboriginal Language Areas' - peoples and languages areas may not be exactly the same.
- Pronunciation of Wotjobalak and Wergaia - practised

- Notes: 20 clans spoke Wergaia in 4 dialects.
- I created a worksheet of Wergaia words and English translations to match when watching the youtube video "Tchingal: stories of a Wotjobalak Country". The first viewing was to get the story, the second was to find the vocab, and a third for pleasure, requested by the children.
- The children created drawings of the most important part in the creation story. They practised telling the story that went with this. Then they were paired with Junior class children to tell them that part of the story. It went really well, but I would have liked to have had much more time to have organised and shared the stories as a sequence in a whole group rather than pairs.

Although I did this as a CRT, I hope the ideas inspire you to start exploring the Indigenous languages for where you live!