Intercultural Capability: Unit plan,   
Foundation to Level 2

Connections between cultures



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The Intercultural Capability project

This unit is based on material developed with schools participating in the 2018 Intercultural Capability project. The project was conducted by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in partnership with the International Education Division at the Department of Education and Training. The units of work target the explicit teaching of the Victorian Curriculum: F-10 Intercultural Capability. They include formative assessment rubrics that the teachers designed to describe progression of student learning in Intercultural Capability and to provide guidance to students on how to make progress in their learning. This unit provides **one** example of how a school might plan for the explicit teaching of Intercultural Capability. It is not published as an exemplar.

Safety and wellbeing

Teachers must exercise their duty of care in ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained during the study of this Intercultural Capability unit. In addition to the usual pastoral care and health needs of students, teachers should bear in mind cultural sensitivities and the potential for disagreement or conflict over cultural/racial issues. Students should be given the opportunity to provide depersonalised responses or exempt themselves from activities of a potentially sensitive nature and should not be asked to speak on behalf of others. Harmful language or behaviour towards others on the basis of culture or race should not be tolerated. Where appropriate students should be counselled and/or debriefed. For further advice on navigating race and culture issues in the classroom, see the VCAA’s [Teacher Guide](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/viccurriculum/intcult/teachresources.aspx).

About this unit

**Unit title:** Connections between cultures

**Band:** Foundation to Level 2

**Teaching time:** 6 x 50 minutes

Context

* This unit was taught in a diverse primary classroom in a north-eastern suburb of Melbourne.
* The class had learnt about some cultural celebrations and traditions previously but this was students’ first introduction to the Intercultural Capability curriculum.

Overview

This unit was created in association with a formative assessment rubric (see below) which was used to plan lessons to help students make progress in their learning. The lessons address the actions in the rubric:

1. Demonstrates understanding of own cultural practices
2. Demonstrates understanding of others’ cultural practices
3. Identifies connections between cultures
4. Examines cultural diversity.

This unit aims to enable students in Foundation to Year 2 to explore and explain a range of cultural practices and the diversity of the community in which they live.

To prepare for the unit, each student will need to be able to name and locate their family’s country/ies of origin (see suggested preparation). Students then complete a series of activities to allow them to identify classmates from the same and different parts of the world as their family, to share with peers the nature and significance of cultural celebrations and to become familiar with the concept of cultural diversity. Students view source materials to get a glimpse of how culturally diverse people live around the world and deepen their understanding by finding and sharing a practice from one of the unfamiliar cultures viewed.

The unit concludes with students teaching or showing each other something from their culture, finding connections between different cultures and identifying benefits of sharing culture with each other.

The unit and associated rubric target the following part of the Victorian Curriculum: F–10 Intercultural Capability curriculum:

**Band:** Foundation to Level 2

**Strand:** Cultural Practices

**Content descriptions:** Identify what is familiar and what is different in the ways culturally diverse individuals and families live ([VCICCB001](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCICCB001))

**Strand:** Cultural Diversity

**Content descriptions:** Identify and discuss cultural diversity in the school and/or community ([VCICCD003](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCICCD003))

**Achievement Standard:** By the end of Level 2, students begin to ***distinguish what is familiar and different in the ways culturally diverse individuals and families live***. ***They describe their experiences of intercultural encounters, and*** ***identify cultural diversity in their school and/or community***.

Formative assessment rubric

The formative assessment rubric below was used to help identify the steps in learning, to collect evidence of learning and as a basis for providing feedback. The lesson plans that follow specify which part of the rubric was targeted in each lesson.

The rubric was developed using the relevant Intercultural Capability achievement standard/s and the [Guide to Formative Assessment Rubrics](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/viccurriculum/formative_assessment.aspx). More information about the terminology and structure of the rubric can be found in the Guide.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | *Intercultural Capability, Foundation to Level 2* | | | |
|  |  |  | *Phase 1* | *Phase 2* | *Phase 3* | *Phase 4* |
|  |  |  | *Students in this phase can identify*  *cultural practices and diversity* | *Students in this phase can describe and compare cultural practices and lifestyles* | *Students in this phase can explain the significance of and connections between different cultural practices* | *Students in this phase can identify benefits of intercultural connections* |
|  | | |  |  |  |  |
| *Organising Element/s* | *Action* |  | *Quality Criteria* | | | |
| Cultural Practices and Cultural Diversity strands | 1. Demonstrates understanding of own cultural practices | *Insufficient evidence* | *1.1 Identifies own cultural practices* | *1.2 Describes nature of own cultural*  *practices* | *1.3 Explains significance of cultural*  *practices within*  *own culture* |  |
| 2. Demonstrates understanding of others’ cultural  practices | *Insufficient evidence* | *2.1 Identifies others’ cultural practices* | *2.2 Describes others’ cultural*  *practices* | *2.3 Explains the significance of others’*  *cultural practices* |  |
| 3. Identifies connections between cultures | *Insufficient evidence* |  | *3.1 Identifies similarities and differences*  *between cultural practices* | *3.2 Identifies connections between the practices of different cultures* | *3.3 Identifies benefits of connecting with other cultures* |
| 4. Examines cultural diversity | *Insufficient evidence* | *4.1 Identifies cultural diversity in a group or country* | *4.2 Identifies what is familiar and different about how culturally diverse people live* |  |  |

Unit lesson plans

The following lessons were created to facilitate progress in student learning. Each lesson is linked to a particular action/s in the formative assessment rubric above and the associated quality criteria. Teachers should give students ongoing feedback on the next steps in their learning and provide opportunities to make progress in their understanding of the targeted area of the curriculum.

Suggested preparation for unit – Where our families come from

Advise parents/carers in a letter (see example in Appendix 1) that the class will be studying familiar and unfamiliar cultures and cultural practices and invite them to discuss their own culture with their child in readiness for the unit. They should share with their child the part/s of the world they/their ancestors come from, what culture/s they identify with, examples of the practices of their culture/s, including those involved in at least one significant cultural celebration, and what their cultural celebration/s mean to them.

*Resources:*

Letter to parents/carers (Appendix 1)

Lessons 1 and 2 – Our cultures and cultural celebrations

*Rubric areas targeted:*

* 1.2 Explains nature of own cultural practices
* 1.3 Explains significance of cultural practices within own culture
* 2.2 Describes others’ cultural practices
* 2.3 Explains the significance of others’ cultural practices
* 3.1 Identifies similarities and differences between cultural practices
* 4.1 Identifies cultural diversity in a group or country

*Success criteria for lessons:*

* We can identify someone from the same part of the world that our family comes from; and/or We can identify someone from a different part of the world from where our family comes from
* We can talk to our peers about an important cultural celebration our family takes part in
* We can listen carefully to and talk respectfully with a peer to find out about their culture
* We can explain what cultural diversity is and give an example of it.

*Tune in:*

Introduce the unit and explain the success criteria for this lesson.

Read *I’m Australian Too* by Mem Fox with the class as a prompt for discussing the many people in Australia that come from different parts of the world. Note the fact that all Australians except Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were born overseas or are descended from people born overseas.

Show students a world map/globe and point out the different continents. Work with students to annotate a world map template to show the continent/s and country/ies their family came from.

*Whole class:*

Read storybooks about the celebrations of different cultures, such as:

* Christmas
* Easter/Greek Easter
* Diwali
* Ramadan/Eid
* Chinese New Year
* Carnival (celebrated by a range of cultures) or Carnaval (South America).

Talk about what each book shows about the features of the celebration and (if applicable) its origins/significance and use examples of the ways different celebrations occur to explicitly introduce the concept of a cultural practice.

Have students complete the ‘My Culture’ worksheet individually.

*Small groups:*

Review with students what listening carefully and talking respectfully with each other looks like, sounds like and feels like.

Ask students to get into groups according to the continent their family comes from and to share their responses to the worksheet about their own culture; here students might note as part of their response that people from the same continent do not necessarily have the same cultural practices.

*Pair work – listening:*

Have students find someone whose family is from a different continent than their own family. Each student interviews their peer using the ‘My Peer’s Culture’ worksheet and fills in the responses. Remind students that they need to listen carefully and speak respectfully with each other to record the information correctly.

*Reflection:*

Have students share with the whole class at least one similarity and at least one difference between their culture and their peer’s culture.

Introduce students to the definition of ‘cultural diversity’ (see Intercultural Capability Glossary above) and note the diversity of cultures across the continents encountered in this lesson. Explain that often there are diverse cultures within a country too. With the class, identify examples of diversity within the students’ countries of origin, e.g. a country where there are several languages spoken or where people of different religious traditions live side by side. Check for student understanding of the definition of cultural diversity and ask students to nominate whether they think the class and/or Australia is diverse and, if so, to give examples. Revisit the discussion from *I’m Australian Too* to assist students in finding examples.

*Resources:*

*I’m Australian Too* by Mem Fox

World map/globe

[World map template](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BlankMap-World-large.png)

Stories about cultural celebrations:

* *Christmas in Australia* by John Williamson
* *The Easter Story* by Russell Punter and John Joven or Jojo's *Easter Egg Hunt* (Greek Easter) by Sujatha Lalgudi
* *Lighting a Lamp: A Diwali Story* by Johnny Zucker
* *Sweet Dates to Eat: A Ramadan and Eid Story* by Johnny Zucker or Going To Mecca by Na’ima B. Robert
* *Fang Fang's Chinese New Year* by Sally Rippin
* *Charlie's Magical Carnival* by Marit Tornqvist

‘My Culture’ worksheet (Appendix 2)

‘My Peer’s Culture’ worksheet (Appendix 3)

[Intercultural Capability Glossary](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/intercultural-capability/introduction/rationale-and-aims)

Lessons 3 and 4 – How different people live

*Rubric areas targeted:*

* 2.2 Describes others’ cultural practices
* 4.2 Identifies what is familiar and different about how culturally diverse people live

*Success criteria for lesson:*

* We can say what is familiar and different about how culturally diverse people live
* We can find and share a cultural practice associated with an unfamiliar place.

*Tune in:*

Recap the previous lesson and explain the success criteria of this lesson.

*Whole class:*

Read *If You Lived Here* by Giles Laroche.

Show and discuss the photographs of children at play around the world. Note that each represents a snapshot of one place and that the country likely holds many different kinds of play spaces. In the discussion, guide students to reflect on the theme suggested in the series that no matter where in the world kids live, ‘kids will be kids’.

Have students draw themselves and their friends at play, and to add a sentence comparing it with one of the images in the book/photos.

*Reflection:*

Discuss with the class: What is familiar and different about the way people live around the world? In the discussion students could support their view by using examples form the books read so far, their discussions with peers or their responses to the images of play. Provide students with feedback on their progress in learning and next steps.

*Extension (opt.):*

Discuss why houses/schools/play spaces are different in different countries. Note factors such as weather, the type of land (e.g. hilly, rocky, fertile) and access to money and building materials. Draw on these factors to consider an example of culture such as traditional clothing, e.g. how climate might have influenced the design. Make relevant links to the Geography curriculum.

*Resources:*

*If You Lived Here* by Giles Laroche

[Photographs of children at play around the world](https://read.bi/2QW1x8A) (Note: Before using the photographs, consider students’ countries of origin and the potential sensitivities of how they are represented)

Pencils/crayons/textas

A3/A4 poster paper for each student

Lessons 5 and 6 – Sharing culture

*Rubric areas targeted:*

* 1.2 Describes nature of own cultural practices
* 3.2 Identifies connections between the practices of different cultures
* 3.3 Identifies benefits of connecting with other cultures

*Before the lesson:*

Ask students to prepare something simple to teach or show the class about their culture, e.g. how to say hello in the home language, how to do a simple dance or play a game, or how to make a paper lantern. Invite parents/carers to assist, and, if needed, allow time for research/support in class time. Students sharing the same culture could work together.

*Success criteria for lessons:*

* We can teach or show our peers something about our culture
* We can find connections between our own culture and another
* We can say why it is good to share culture.

*Tune in:*

Explain to students the success criteria for the lesson and explain that the lesson will be about how we can share culture together and why.

*Whole class:*

Invite students to teach the class a phrase, song, dance or game/activity from their culture. Afterwards, students identify something they learnt about another culture.

String activity: Have students stand in a circle. Start by sharing a cultural practice that you enjoy from your own culture, and wrap the string/wool around your wrist. Then ask who else enjoys doing the same cultural practice and give them the string to wrap around their wrist. If no-one shares the exact practice, ask in a broader way, e.g. ‘who likes to sing Christmas carols?’ might be broadened to ‘who enjoys singing something in their culture?’ etc. until everyone is connected by the string.

Prompt students to think about the broader message of the string activity, e.g. that people are connected even though they come from different parts of the world and have different cultural practices. Prompt them to think about how sharing cultural knowledge and practices might add to a sense of connection and belonging.

Read *Shake a Leg* by Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod together.

*Small groups:*

Discuss the following questions about *Shake a Leg*:

* Who was the main character?
* Where was he from?
* Where did he travel and why?
* What cultural practices were the characters able to share with each other? How did this benefit them?

*Reflection:*

As a class, share responses to the questions above. Discuss how different cultures are connected and the benefits of connecting with other cultures. Provide students with feedback on their learning and next steps.

*Resources:*

Coloured string or wool

*Shake a Leg* by Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod

Appendices 1–3

Dear parents/carers,

Our class is currently studying culture as part of the Victorian Curriculum: F-10 Intercultural Capability. We will be talking to students about where their families come from in the world, and what cultural practices they traditionally observe.

Could you please do the following to assist your child in their learning:

1. Read about culture and cultural practices below. This explains concepts being taught as part of this unit.
2. Share with your child the following information so that they can bring this back to class:

* The country/countries where your family came from. If you were born in Australia and are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, state the country/countries your ancestors came from. If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, share where in Australia your ancestors came from, for example which Aboriginal nation/s.
* The country/countries of origin the family identifies with (e.g. Australian, Indian and Australian, Chinese, Korean and British, Somali).
* Some cultural practices the family observes (e.g. celebrating a religious holiday, wearing certain clothing, cooking or avoiding certain food) and why these practices are special or significant to you.

***Culture and cultural practices***

*Culture is made up of ‘cultural practices’ that relate to the ways a group of people live. Some cultural practices often involve material objects such as clothing or musical instruments but also non-material things such as language, customs and social roles.*

*Different cultural groups can have different practices, such as the food they eat and how it is made, the language they speak, the clothes they wear, the music and arts they create and the religious tradition they observe.*

*Cultural practices become traditional when they are regularly passed down to different members of the family and community through experiences and stories.*

*Cultural practices are guided by cultural values. For example, in Australia it is a common view that everyone should have a ‘fair go’, meaning that all people should have similar opportunities. Cultural groups often share similar values – such as fairness, politeness or respect for elders – even if they dress, worship or celebrate in different ways.*

**My name is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**My favourite cultural celebration is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What happens at the celebration is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This celebration is important because:**

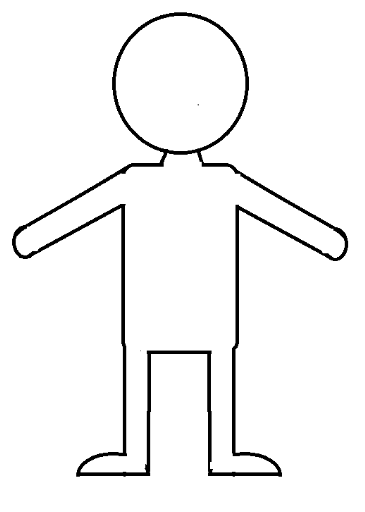
**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**MY CULTURE**

**The country (or countries) my family comes from is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This country (or countries) is on the continent of: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**



**My favourite foods from my culture are:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The language (or languages) my family members speak is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This is me in my cultural clothing**

**This is me in my cultural clothing**

**My peer’s favourite cultural celebration is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What happens at the celebration is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This celebration is important because:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**MY PEER’S CULTURE**

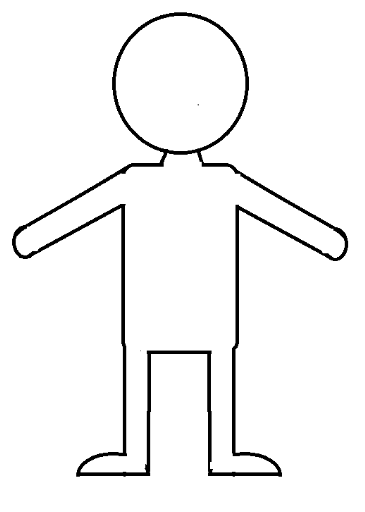
**My peer’s name is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The country (or countries) my peer’s family comes from is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This country (or countries) is on the continent of:   
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**



**My peer’s favourite foods from their culture are:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The language (or languages) my peer’s   
family members speak is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This is my peer**

**This is me in my cultural clothing**

There are no work samples in this unit.

Teacher reflections

Teachers involved in the Intercultural Capability Project were invited to reflect on their curriculum planning and teaching experience.

The teachers of this unit stated:

*We enjoyed the collaboration that occurred between classes and students, particularly the communication and building of speaking and listening skills. However, the oral nature of the unit made it difficult to assess at times. Some EAL students found it a challenge to complete all tasks. In future we would ask students to consider how their home lives are similar and different culturally.*