Intercultural Capability: Year 9 unit plan

*The Island* process drama



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The Intercultural Capability project

This unit plan is based on material developed with schools participating in the 2017 Intercultural Capability project. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, in partnership with the International Education Division at the Department of Education and Training of Victoria, conducted an action-research project with nineteen schools from the Government, Catholic and Independent sectors.

This unit plan provides an example of how a school might plan for the explicit teaching of Intercultural Capability knowledge and skills. It is not an exemplar. Schools are advised to consider whether this plan meets the needs of their student cohort and is appropriate in the context of their whole-school teaching and learning plan. Additional support and advice on high-quality curriculum planning is available from the [Curriculum Planning Resource](http://curriculumplanning.vcaa.vic.edu.au/).

Schools have flexibility in how they choose to use this resource, including as:

* a model that they adapt to suit their own teaching and learning plans
* a resource to help decide on their approach.

**Print and web-based resources**

Some of the print resources contained in this list may be out of print. They have been included because they may still be available from libraries, bookshops and private collections.

At the time of publication the URLs (website addresses) cited were checked for accuracy and appropriateness of content. However, due to the transient nature of material placed on the web, their continuing accuracy cannot be verified. Teachers are strongly advised to prepare their own indexes of sites that are suitable and applicable to the courses they teach, and to check these addresses prior to allowing student access.



About this unit

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| **Unit title** | **Year** | **Total teaching hours** |
| *The Island* process drama | 9  *Note: Unit focuses on the Level 7 and 8 Achievement Standard.* | 5  *Tip: Lessons are nominally designed to take 1 hour.* |

* This is an integrated unit that combines Intercultural Capability with Drama. The focus of this unit plan is Intercultural Capability.
* This unit was developed by a secondary college in a rural Victorian town. The school perceives itself as monocultural.
* The unit is based on material presented at a 2016 Jumpstart [Drama Victoria](https://www.dramavictoria.vic.edu.au/) workshop by Jo Raphael and Helen Sandercoe. It was initially developed in conjunction with the Immigration Museum, and has also been used with students at Akita International University (Japan) as part of a program on intercultural understanding.
* A similar unit of work had also been devised by Robyn Ewing and John Saunders and is published in *The School Drama Book*, Sydney Theatre Company, 2016. There are other examples about how this text has been used as a Drama unit, including [Community Cohesion and the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Drama Resources](http://www.nationaldrama.org.uk/shop/product/community-cohesion-and-the-prevention-of-violent-extremism/) for teachers in the classroom published by National Drama in the United Kingdom.
* During the lesson planning phase, the teacher decided to focus on the content descriptions and achievement standards in Levels 7 and 8 for their Year 9 class. This approach provides scaffolding for students who are commencing learning in a new curriculum area.
* Once teaching of the unit commenced, the teacher adapted the original lesson plans to focus on the process drama activity as this was proving both more challenging and more fruitful for the students. The focus of this unit plan is therefore on the process drama activity.
* The process drama activity used in this sequence of lessons was undertaken during the Year 9 camp, allowing more time on task for the students than would usually be available in a classroom setting.
* As a summative activity, the teacher introduced current topical issues (Pauline Hanson wearing a burka in the Australian parliament) to draw links between the curriculum, the pedagogical approach and the real world.

Content descriptions

*Cultural Practices:* Analyse the dynamic nature of own and others cultural practices in a range of contexts (VCICCB013)

*Examine how various cultural groups are represented, by whom they are represented, and comment on the purpose and effect of these representations (VCICCB014)*

*Cultural Diversity:* Identify the challenges and benefits of living and working in a culturally diverse society (VCICCD015)

*Evaluate the ways in which the community demonstrates the value it places on cultural diversity, and why this valuing of cultural diversity is important to the community (VCICCD016)*

Achievement standard

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| --- | --- |
| **Level 6** | **Level 8** |
| By the end of Level 6, students *demonstrate an understanding how beliefs and practices can be influenced by culture and explain how intercultural experiences can influence beliefs and behaviours.*  *Students identify the barriers to and means of reaching understandings within and between culturally diverse groups* and the ways in which effective engagement with those groups is promoted or inhibited. | By the end of Level 8, students explain how cultural practices may change over time in a range of contexts. *They understand how cultural groups can be represented, and comment on the effects of these representations.*  *Students understand the challenges and benefits of living and working in culturally diverse communities.* |

Introduction

In this unit, the class is guided through a sequence of drama activities based on *The Island* by Armin Greder. Through these activities, the students explore themes of otherness, fear and prejudice, inclusion and exclusion. Through dramatisation of this allegorical tale, students are placed in imaginative roles and scenarios that ask them to demonstrate actions, make statements from a range of perspectives, and reflect on character and community motivations for decisions and reactions.

This unit has links to Personal and Social Capability:

*Analyse factors that influence emotions, and develop strategies to demonstrate empathy and sensitivity (VCHPEP128)*

Advice on approach

This unit plan should be considered as a model only, and teachers seeking to use this unit of work may wish to adapt the plan to reflect their students’ readiness to learn in Drama and their level of Intercultural Capability. Teachers are encouraged to use current/emerging media stories or issues that draw parallels with *The Island*. This flexible approach allows this activity to link back to real-world learning.

* *Lessons 1 to 3* focus on the process drama activity.
* *Lessons 4* focus on analysing texts and media prompts and providing real-world material to help understand the allegorical story *The Island*.

Essential questions

Students will explore and address these recurring questions:

* How do you define culture?
* What do you identify as ‘Australian culture’?
* What is multiculturalism?
* What are the benefits of a multicultural society? What are the perceived disadvantages?
* To what extent is Australia a multicultural society?
* What are some multicultural practices you are familiar with?
* What attitudes and values are impediments to a multicultural society?

Evidence of student learning

* This unit of work prompted the following comment from a reticent student: ‘It is human nature to judge others – even when presented with evidence which shows otherwise. It is a constant battle between what we know is accurate and what we would like to think.’
* Another student provided the following journal entry: ‘When confronted with unfamiliarity, do you look for what is similar to your own world or do you lose yourself in the wonder of what is different?’

Lessons 1–3: The Island process drama

*Lessons 1–3 were delivered as a school camp activity. Teachers wishing to use this activity in a timetables/classroom context will need to ensure appropriate time on task for each drama activity to suit the time available. Indicative times have been provided.*

If delivering these activities across a number of discrete timetabled classes, you may need to commence each lesson with a narrative recap. It may be useful to break the activities into a three-part structure:

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| **Lesson 1** | **Lesson 2** | **Lesson 3** |
| *Drama activities 1 to 4* | *Drama activities 5 to 8* | *Drama activities 9 to 13* |

Assessment

Students keep a journal tracking their experience and to respond to a set of prompts across the lessons. The journal can be kept in soft or hard format depending on available resources.

Introduction

Explain to the class that they will be using a picture book as a prompt for a sequence of drama activities. You can use the book in different ways during these exercises, by either showing the page prior to the activity, or by showing the page after the activity.

Lesson 1

Drama activity 1: Making of the Stranger and the raft *– 15 mins*

* Each pair of students is given pipe cleaners, sticks, a piece of string and some tissue to make a person on a raft (this activity should be completed in 15 minutes)
* With music suggesting huge dark seas, students individually float their person and raft across oceans of the space of the room and come to be washed upon the end of a large piece of dark cloth. Rafts to be left there until the end of the story.
* This activity provides an opportunity to focus on the symbolic elements of the story.
* Suggested music: [Ambient Sea](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wlbnyde68_0), published by Qianta (YouTube).

Drama activity 2: The journey – *5 mins*

* In groups of four, students create freeze frames[[1]](#footnote-1) of what they think may have happened on the journey. Examples might include:
* A storm at sea
* Encountering pirates
* Catching fish
* Becalmed for a few days
* Being rejected from another island
* Circled by sharks.
* A class member is designated to narrate the event and we view scenes as ‘performance carousel’. Students position their groups around the perimeter of the room with the teacher moving from each freeze frame in a clockwise direction. Other class members observe as each group present their work with a narrator commentating (optional). No discussion of each group’s work is permitted during the presentation but students may offer comments and peer-to-peer feedback after all groups have presented.

Drama activity 3: The villagers of the Island – *5-7 mins*

* Students close their eyes and imagine a remote island. Ask them to visualise the following: ‘They and their ancestors are the people who have always lived there. They love their island and know the island very well. Very few others have ever visited the island. Each of them has a role in their community – they might be a fisherman, farmer, teacher, baker, carter.’
* Alternatively, the teacher could make a list of roles from the book and give these out.
* Ask them to imagine themselves carrying out a daily task in the village.
* One at a time, they enter the space. They say who they are and what they are doing, then strike a pose as if doing that task.
* When the entire village has been formed, the scene is brought to life. This is an opportunity for students to role-play in a non-threatening, whole class environment and students are advised to make their character clear in both what they say and do in this activity. On a given signal, students move around the designated space ‘in character’, interacting with other villagers and manipulating their voice and movement to illustrate their role. Encourage students to have a purpose in their movement and think about where have they been and where are they going. Provide one student with some ‘island gossip’ to share with another villager. The teacher may call out ‘freeze’ and then select one/two students to continue their conversation as other students remain frozen. Alternatively, the teacher can call ‘freeze’ and then forward to another time in the day. ‘It is early evening. You’ve just arrived home.’

Drama activity 4: First encounters – *15 mins (including presentation and discussion)*

Marking the moment using a freeze frame and thought tracking.

* *Read* the first page of *The Island* without showing any pictures
* Divide the class into two groups. Look at one group at a time, so half can watch and evaluate the suggestion.
* Each group designates a Stranger and the rest of the group are Islanders. Bamboo sticks can be provided for this activity. Each group creates a freeze frame of the moment of the encounter.
* Tap in for the thoughts of the Stranger and the Islanders. This exercise shows that meaning can be created in many different ways, and it is the beginning of exploring how meaning is communicated.
* *Read* and show the students the image on the first and second pages of the text.

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| **Journal prompts** |
| * *What attitudes and values did the villagers display when they encountered the Stranger?* * *How would you like to be received in a strange place if you were the Stranger?* * *What Australian attitudes and values are similar and what are different? Why?* |

Lesson 2

Drama activity 5: Islanders encounter the Stranger – *10 mins*

This exercise is a variation on ‘the thought tunnel.’

* Read page 2: ‘The people stared at him…’
* One student as Stranger strikes a pose as on page 1. Each of the Islanders enter the space and speaks a thought about the Stranger out loud. They then strike a pose in the space to show their attitude toward the Stranger (close, distant, high, low...)
* *Read* from ‘But the fisherman knew… So they took him in… they took him to… a goat pen…they locked the gate and went back to their business…life on the island returned to what it had always been.’

Drama activity 6: Rumours – *10 mins*

* But life did not quite return to normal. The Islanders could not completely forget about the Stranger. They began to talk about the Stranger in hushed tones. They told of what they had heard from others and rumours about the stranger spread.
* Students as Islanders move around the space telling the rumours they have heard (“Have you heard?”).
* Finally, ask Islanders to form a tight circle and share some of the gossip they heard.
* *Read* from ‘One morning the man appeared in town… but despite this, the man’s presence continued to trouble the people.’

Drama activity 7: The nightmares of the people – *15 mins*

Poetic image making using ‘He haunted their days and often their dreams’ as prompt.

* In groups of four to five, students create a Islander’s dream/nightmare scene.
* Encourage students to think about non-naturalistic styles and the strange things that often happen in dreams – repetition, bizarre juxtapositions, slow/fast motions etc.
* *Read* until ‘“Foreigner spreads fear in town”, said the newspaper in big black letters’

Drama activity 8: Newspaper Headline: ‘Foreigner Spreads Fear in Town’ – *10 mins*

* Ask half class to be reporters and the other half to be Islanders, including the Teacher, Parents, the police, the Church, etc.
* In pairs, one reporter and one Islander, interviews are conducted with the reporter taking notes.
* Swap so that reporters become villagers and vice versa.

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| **Journal prompts** |
| *Writing in role of reporter*   * *Ask students to use their reporter’s quotes to write a short newspaper-style report or to draw an annotated cartoon based on their interview.* |

Lesson 3

Drama activity 9: Village meeting – *15 mins*

Role playing and improvisation with *Teacher-In-Role.*

* Convene a meeting of all the Islanders.
* The teacher can play the role of chair of the meeting or the mayor. The Islanders are asked to discuss their concerns about the Stranger and try to make a decision about what to do.
* After they have made their decision, return to the book to see what the Islanders actually decided.
* *Return to the book:* ‘The people grew restless, fear began to spread… seized the man, marched him to his raft and pushed him out to sea.’

Drama activity 10: The expulsion of the Stranger – *10 mins*

* Tell the group that this is the climactic narrative moment and to try to reflect that in their character voice and movement
* Each person is given a stick and a line from the text (see below) to say. Each student says their line louder and louder to build tension as the stranger is forced to leave.
* We have to do something before it’s too late!
* We have enough trouble as it is
* He is not one of us
* He isn’t our problem
* He is a Stranger
* He doesn’t belong
* He has to go
* Use a freeze frame at the climactic moment.

Drama activity 11: Back on the raft – *3 mins*

Using puppets made in **Drama activity 1.**

* Take the rafts and float them slowly through the space (with music)
* Slowly sail the rafts to the middle of the room and leave them in a circle on the dark cloth.

Drama activity 12: Thoughts of the Stranger – *20 mins*

Using a ‘chorus poem’ (a process drama activity) to reflect on the story.

* On a strip of paper, each student writes one line of poetry, expressing thoughts, feelings or actions of the Stranger as he floats away on his raft.
* Then in groups, the lines are shared and are sequenced together by the group to form a poem.
* The group then works out an effective way to present or perform the poem as a chorus.
* Perform these as a performance carousel.

Drama activity 13: Building the great wall – *10 mins*

Creating a group structure.

* One by one in role as Islanders, they build the great wall. As they add their body to the wall, they make a statement to reflect their character’s view.

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| **Journal prompts** |
| *Students may answer a selection:*   * *Does the story remind you of any situations you’ve experienced? For example:* * *First day at a new school or a new town* * *Meeting new people or joining a group of unfamiliar people* * *Can you describe a current issue that creates similar conditions where people may have to leave one place and journey to a new place?* * *Why might people have to leave their homes?* |

Lesson 4: Discussing *The Island* within the context of a current issue

Task 1: Current issue

Tip: The following task uses a 2017 media prompt to draw parallels between the fictional text prompt in Task 1 and a real-world issue. You may wish to use the prompt provided here, or you may elect to adapt other relevant material for your teaching program.

Provide students with the article: [*Pauline Hanson burqa stunt: George Brandis pulls of his finest speech by calling out a dangerous fool*](http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/pauline-hanson-burqa-stunt-george-brandis-pulls-off-his-finest-speech-by-calling-out-a-dangerous-fool-20170817-gxyf7f.html), David Wroe, The Sydney Morning Herald, August 17 2017 (accessed 5 January 2018). The online article includes a video link.

1. Before students read the article, ask them to discuss the meaning of the following words with a partner. These appear in the article: Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), staunch, alienating, infringing, conduit, corrupted, impassioned, unequivocally, caveat.
2. With your partner, discuss your strategy for making sure you read through this article and remain focused on its content.
3. Read through the article with a partner: highlight key words and phrases which are unclear.
4. In your own words, write down in a single sentence the journalist's main contention.
5. Identify at least two arguments the journalist uses to support his point of view.
6. What point might the journalist be making about Senator Brandis when comparing him with 'the President of the United States'
7. What is your understanding of the expression 'thundering condemnation'? Why might the journalist have made specific reference to Brandis’ voice 'actually wobbling'? What specific response from the reader is he attempting to encourage?
8. The journalist also makes a brief statement: 'Yes Australians.' What is the specific purpose of having this as a short two word sentence?

Task 2: Exploring generalisations and stereotypes

This lesson focuses on how visual representation can be interpreted in a number of contexts.

Provide students with an explanation of generalisations and stereotypes.

1: In pairs, ask student to share their immediate reactions to the following image:



1. Write three to five adjectives/words which immediately come to mind.
2. Imagine that this image comes from a media text (newspaper) and is featured alongside a written news article. What kind of story may this image have accompanied? Write the headline.

Tip: Be alert to the possibility that students may respond with reference to negative stereotypes or generalisations. Encourage students to focus on positive headlines, such as ‘Young women benefit from educational programs’. Consider providing ‘sentence starters’ to encourage positive responses.

2: Students comment on political cartoons and how cartoons are used to present a viewpoint.

Political cartoons attempt to persuade us as well as amuse us. They appear in most major newspapers and often use humour to make a point. Political figures are often drawn as caricatures to exaggerate a physical feature of the individual.

Tip: Teacher may undertake their own research into a current issue and use other stimulus material for this activity.

Describe the Mark Knight political cartoon: [Hanson and her ilk are not interested in women’s issues](http://www.heraldsun.com.au/rendezview/hanson-and-her-ilk-are-not-interested-in-womens-issues/news-story/9f19e56784f0f572b49a513c5ceb793a) by Mark Night (accessed 5 January 2018).

Ask student if they can identify the three parliamentarians in the image and their respective roles (Senator Penny Wong [grey suit, left side of image], Senator Pauline Hanson [in burka, centre of image], Senator George Brandis [in glasses, facing away, right side of image]). If they are unable to identify the Senators, you may need to provide some context, for example, [Unrepentant Hanson hopes burqa stunt will create debate](http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/?P579ZC), The Conversation (*FUSE ID: P579ZC*).

1. Students may use the following stem starters to help their writing:

* The cartoon is in reference to the incident in which ...
* Pauline Hanson is shown wearing a ...
* In the foreground, senators... and ... are seated.
* The other issue referred to in the cartoon is...
* In response to the speaker's hope that no more time is wasted on MP's citizenship, Senator ... states, '...'.
* Through Senator Brandis' response, Mark Knight seems to be suggesting that ...
* The empty seats behind Hanson create the impression that ...

1. What other issue is being addressed in this cartoon? What point is the cartoonist making about Pauline Hanson's stunt in this image? How is this point made clear?
2. In a single sentence, explain the contention (main point of view) of the cartoon.

Task 3: Class discuss the allegory and identify possible parallels with global issues.

* What is *The Island* about?
* What are the strongest emotions/reactions on display in this story?
* How does the stranger pose a threat to the island? Is it real or imagined?
* How do people respond to individuals who disagree with the majority view?
* Does it remind you of any similar events in historic or contemporary times? What are some of these? How are they different or similar?
* What does the story tell us about human nature?

You may wish to formalise the way you collect student information during the discussion for assessment purposes. Think about whether anecdotal information is sufficient.

Ideas for extending and challenging students beyond the text

1. Ask students to create an alternative ending. How could the story have been different?
   * In groups, discuss some possible alternative ending to the story. These might be positive or negative endings, for example:
     + They decide to integrate him into the community.
     + He starves to death
     + He escapes
     + He is rescued by others like him/sympathisers
     + The fisherman persuades them to accept him.
   * In groups, students choose one ending and create a performance of it.
2. Anniversary of the expulsion of the stranger:
   * Group improvisation. In groups of 4 to 5, present an image and chant of what the islanders might include in a street march to mark the anniversary of the expulsion of the stranger. Possible use of bamboo sticks again here.
3. Into the future:
   * Pairs improvisation. What do various pairs of characters say to each other about the stranger many years later, when they recount the events? Do they regret or stand by their views?
     + Teacher/students
     + Parent/children
     + Boss/worker
     + Priest/parishioners
   * In role as these characters, improvise the discussion and then prepare for presentation.

Similar activities to those outlined in Lesson 4 are available from [Difference Differently: Media Madness](http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/?C4GHJN) (*FUSE ID: C4GHJN*).

*The Island* Assessment Rubric

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|  | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1 (No)** |
| **Explain how intercultural experiences can influence behaviours.** | I can explore behaviours by imagining myself in a different culture and role. | I can explain another person or character’s behaviour in relation to their culture. | I can compare different cultural perspectives. |  |
| **Identify the barriers to and means of reaching understandings within and between culturally diverse groups.** | I can identify and discuss reasons why conflict occurs between cultural groups in relation to *The Island*. | I can identify examples of conflict that has a cultural element. | With prompting, I can identify some cultural aspects within a conflict. |  |
| **Identify the ways in which effective engagement with those groups is promoted or inhibited.** | I can identify actions, attributes and/or behaviours that foster understanding between culturally diverse groups. | I can describe community members with negative views and positive views in The Island. | I can identify examples of positive steps and/or actions to engage with diverse groups. |  |

Comments:

1. *The School Drama Book* and other resources provide details about the process drama activities used in this unit. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)