

Introduction to Language Teaching Programme

by Odette Mitchley, Thornton School, 2017

I originally began teaching in South Africa many years ago. There, it was compulsory to teach two languages explicitly (separate lessons for each language). After moving to New Zealand, I only used English in the classroom with some Te Reo Māori words and phrases used throughout the day.

ILEP support was recommended to us, when our school was selected as part of a Round Two ALLiS Cluster, with the programme starting in the beginning of 2017. In the course of the ALLiS programme, I began teaching Japanese with no previous teaching experience in this language and little language knowledge.

I entered into the Introduction Programme as I had hoped that ILEP would give me some support with regards to resources and answer questions I had wondered about how to include Japanese in an already busy primary school curriculum, especially as most other information/help was aimed at High school level. Since I had never taught Japanese before, but needed to support our native speaker's lessons with follow up lessons, I was really looking forward to some personalised support.

The Introduction Programme has helped me a lot in this situation. I love the fact that there is a Moodle site which I can get into to see what others are using to enhance their programs. The workshops that are held have also been invaluable in allowing me to network with teachers from other schools about their findings and experiences. The fact that I am expected to conduct an inquiry into my Japanese teaching practice is hugely beneficial. It is helping me to focus on my goals for my students as well as help me to become more confident in teaching and using Japanese. The ILEP Teacher Development Advisers are awesome and Moodle support is invaluable!

My students know that I am learning alongside them and that has motivated them to challenge themselves and me, to use Japanese more in the class (especially during other topics) as well as outside while playing. If I say something that they remember the Japanese word for, they are quick to point it out. Thus, their use of Japanese language is also growing beyond the classroom. One day, when I was driving a group of students to a sports meeting, the students began playing 'I Spy'. Then one student 'changed' the game by saying "I spy something aka" The game soon developed into students attempting to outdo each other by including Japanese words in their game. This kind of game was exactly what I now had the confidence to initiate in class, thanks to my involvement in the ILEP Introduction Programme.

I am definitely planning to participate in other opportunities to further develop my language teaching. The team at ILEP are quick to pass on any language learning/teaching opportunities and I certainly hope to take advantage of one in the near future. I would like to be completely fluent in Japanese and I would like to turn to ILEP again to feel as supported as I have this year.

I wish to recommend the Introduction Programme to anybody who is passionate about extending their cultural knowledge of our Global Family or anybody with an interest in languages. There are so many different languages that one can choose from, but the support from ILEP remains the same. All the basics for second language learning are covered, so it just seems easy!

