
CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

A Multilingual Self-Introduction: An Icebreaker for Fostering Collaboration and Cultural Competence

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Objectives

- To facilitate students in introducing themselves in the languages of their peers
- To foster an appreciation and respect for the languages and cultures of their peers
- To enhance student engagement through interaction and collaboration with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds

Level: Grade 6

Materials: Pen and paper for writing the phrases, stop watch

Estimated Time: 50 minutes (It is subjected to the strength of the class)

Rationale

In a multilingual classroom setting, students often seek friends who share their linguistic background, potentially affecting interpersonal relationships with peers from different linguistic backgrounds and hindering collaboration among students who speak different first languages (L1s). Conversely, collaboration among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds fosters intercultural understanding and enhances critical thinking skills, essential for their development. Often, during the initial self-introduction session on the first day of class, students are expected to introduce themselves in English. Due to limited exposure to the language, they often mimic their peers who have previously introduced themselves, resulting in repetitive use of phrases

and vocabulary. To mitigate this repetition, encouraging students to introduce themselves in their native languages can add diversity and stimulate interest in learning different language, which may enhance collaboration among them.

Procedure

STEP 1- Introduction Stage

The teacher starts the timer and asks the students to walk around the classroom to meet three to five peers from various linguistic backgrounds.

For example, if the speaker is from a Telugu background, s/he meets a speaker from say Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam backgrounds.

All of them introduce one another in their first languages.

They also exchange phrases like, what do they do in their spare time or what do they want to become when they grow up or other phrases.

STEP 2- Note Making Stage

In this stage, the Telugu speaker writes down the Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi introductions.

STEP 3- Presentation Stage

In this stage, each student will present the introduction in the three languages. For instance, the Telugu speaker will introduce her/himself not in Telugu, but in Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi (See the two examples below).

Example 1

Presentation of a Tamil Speaker in Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi

Telugu-Namaskaramu, Na peru Ilayaraja. Nenu Chennai nundi vasthunanu. Na kali samayamlo paata paduthaanu. Naaku teacher avvalani undhi.

Malayalam-Namaskaram, Njaan Ilayaraja. Nijaan Chennaiyil ninnanuvathu. Ozhivu samayangalil njaan paattukal pada ennikiishtamanu. Enikki oru teacher aakanam.

Kannada-Namaskara, nanna hesaru Ilayaraja. Nanu Chennaininda bandiddene. Nannu nanna biduvina samayadalli haaduttene. Naanu Teacher aagalu ichchisuttene.

Hindi- Namaste, mera naam Ilayaraja. Me chennai se arahaanhoo. Mei kaali samayam may ganne gaata hoon.

(English meaning: Greeting, My name is illayaraja, I have come from Chennai. I sing in my spare time. I like to become a teacher)

Example 2

Presentation of a Telugu Speaker in Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi

Tamil- Vanakkam en peyar Ashraf. Naan Guntur larunthu varen. Oivu nerathula kavithai eluthuven. Enaku doctor aaganumnu aasai.

Malayalam- Namaskaram, Njaan Ashraf. Nijaan Gunturil ninnanu varnathu. Ozhivu samayangalil kavithayezhuthaan enkkishtamaanu. Enikki oru software engineer aakanam.

Hindi- Namaste, mera naam Ashraf. Me Guntur se arahaanhoo. Mei kaali samayam may shayari likta hoon. Mei doctor bana chatha hoon.

(English meaning: Greetings. My name is Ashraf. I come from Guntur. I write poems (Sahayari) in my spare time. I want to become a doctor.)

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