

Teacher notes

Lost and Found

Background

Lost and Found is a teaching resource for refugee youth classes, and can also be used as a professional development tool for those working with refugee youth. It consists of a DVD, student workbook, and these teacher's notes.

The idea for the film and learning activities grew out of my experience teaching a transition class for teenage refugees at Forest Hill Secondary College in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The class was a partnership between the Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) and the school. Over the year, the class had an average of 12 students from 16 through to 20, mostly from Sudan but also from Afghanistan, Liberia, Thailand, and Myanmar.

One of the greatest challenges for the teachers was the lack of resources specifically designed for classes of this nature. Mainstream secondary materials were generally inappropriate culturally and linguistically, and adult ESL materials were not age-appropriate. The current resource has been created in part to fill this gap.

General approach and aims

The students at Forest Hill College were very keen to be part of the mainstream school, and resented the fact that they were in a separate class at the start of the year. They had little understanding of the significant educational, conceptual and cultural gaps that existed between them and their Australian peers, and little natural desire to explore their past or the aspects of their lives that made them different from others at the school – i.e., the fact that they were refugees.

The main purpose of the film and teaching materials is to provide opportunities for young refugee learners to reflect on their own experiences and the difficulties they face through an exploration of the scenes in the film.

The scenes in the film are all based on the real-life experiences of the learners in the class, and are not meant to be representative of the experiences of all refugees. Nevertheless, it is hoped the events portrayed can act as effective stimuli for class exploration of the refugee experience.

Lost and Found aims to assist the learners to

- integrate aspects of their past into their present lives, particularly with regards to how those experiences have shaped their expectations and behaviour
- recognise how their needs are different from those of mainstream students, and identify appropriate support mechanisms and personal strategies to close that gap
- recognise some of the key difficulties facing teenage refugees (particularly where family is concerned), and thus start thinking consciously about how to make the most of their situation
- recognise that though every refugee has different circumstances, there are common issues and difficulties that define and unite them as a group; in turn this can lead to exploring strategies for dealing with these issues.

Using this resource

For classroom work, we recommend viewing and working through the associated activities of one section at a time, rather than starting with the whole film at once. While the film has been constructed to show a chronological progression from childhood through to the present, each section can stand alone, and address themes that may appropriate for a particular group.

Generally, the workbook activities that accompany each section have a similar structure, as follows:

1. Before watching	Prepares the learners for the theme and/or vocabulary of the scene
2. Understanding the story	Comprehension activities on the events in the scene
3. Understanding the feelings	Activities designed to build empathy and connections with the characters in the film
4. Discussion / thematic activity	Activities that explore the main theme(s) of each scene

Resource map

Section	Brief description of section in film	Topics covered
Before watching	N/A	Vocabulary for emotions Vocabulary for personal strengths Films as study items
Childhood and flight	Using drawings, shows a progression of childhood pastimes / war/conflict / flight away from trouble / dreaming of life in Australia / flying to Australia.	Dealing with bad memories Expectations of Australia
First Impressions	Photos of the new arrivals are superimposed on a kaleidoscope of images of people, media and Melbourne sights.	First impressions of Australia Culture shock/ adapting to the new environment
At school - in class	A Sudanese boy struggles to cope with the noisy class environment. He is unable to hand in the classwork and the teacher thinks it is due to lack of interest.	Difficulties at school Study habits
At school – in the yard	The same Sudanese boy watches the other students playing at lunchtime. He is alone and feels invisible.	Making friends Starting conversations
School camp	An Afghani boy brings a note home about a school camp. His mother refuses him permission to go as both sexes will attend.	Conflicts in families Personal values

Home late	A Sudanese girl comes home late. Her mother is angry and suspicious and demands that she come home directly from school in future.	As above
At the bus stop	A man asks a Sudanese girl lots of questions, slightly intrusively. An Australian woman confronts him and he stops.	Racism
Getting a job	A Sudanese boy goes to the same shop three times, asking for part-time work (these scenes are spread through the movie in the full version). In the final scene in this sequence, the manager of the shop telephones the boy to arrange an interview.	Job seeking Part-time work
Reflections	Members of the transition class (some of whom appeared earlier in the film) look back on their progress in Australia so far, and what they think the future will hold for them now.	Discussing the film as a whole What have you learned already in Australia?

A note on the filming style

The scenes set in Australia use a combination of still images (photos) and sound, rather than the usual moving video/film footage. The decision to edit the film using this style was based on the practicalities of working with a cast that had little or no drama experience prior to making the film. Shooting it 'rough' in camera enabled us to capture performances that were spontaneous and emotionally fresh. The footage was then edited into still images to 'smooth out' the camera work that had been responding to the action as it happened.

DVD sections and workbook

Before watching

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. develop a greater vocabulary in relation to emotions
2. practice empathising with people's emotional states
3. reflect on their own strengths
4. develop their vocabulary in relation to films.

Workbook Activities

Talking about feelings

Key points

- Expression of personal emotions is in part determined by culture, in addition to gender and personality.
- The ability to recognise one's own emotional states and where appropriate discuss them is an important life skill.

Teaching notes

- Discuss how emotions are usually expressed in the students' culture(s) of origin, and how they perceive the Australian culture to be similar/different to that.

Talking about strengths

Key points

- Different cultures value different strengths.
- Strengths are largely defined by the physical and social environment of the country of origin. (It's possible to use clothing as an analogy: in a hot climate, people wear fewer clothes compared to those living in a cold climate).
- Recognising these similarities/differences can help understand Australia, and may in the long term make for more effective settlement.

Teaching notes

- Identify similarities/differences between qualities valued by their own culture and by Australian culture(s).
- Emphasise all cultures have positive and negative aspects.
- Focus on understanding the differences, not judging any one set of values as "better" than another.
- Discuss the relative importance and relevance of such values as physical strength in different contexts.

Extensions

- Students choose a particular emotion and write about a time they felt that emotion.
- Students identify a particular strength they have, and write about a time they displayed that strength.
- Students role-play the situations in stories 4 - 6 to try out different outcomes.

Childhood and flight

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. reflect on the personal strengths that the refugee experience might develop
2. reflect on their own expectations of life in Australia
3. develop their understanding of the effect of expectations in relation to the migrant experience.

Key points

- Young refugees typically like to focus only on the future; however, it is their past that defines them as a group and largely shapes their expectations and potential.
- As refugees, many of the students will obviously have had traumatic experiences which could interfere with their learning and adjustment process. It is important to recognise some of the likely symptoms of trauma, and know how to make an appropriate referral to either designated support staff in your own organisation, or Foundation House.

Teaching notes

- Some students may find these scenes uncomfortable or confronting to watch, as they may stir their own unpleasant memories. It is recommended that the content of the scenes is discussed using the sample pictures in the student workbook prior to viewing, and that students are given the right not to watch if they feel it may distress them.
- At no time should the students be pressed into exposing their own experiences of trauma.

Workbook Activities

Expectations of Australia

Key points

- Typically, young refugees have very unrealistic expectations of their pathways in Australia. Most see themselves going on to university, despite the significant gaps in their education.
- Helping the learners choose more realistic pathways (that may include TAFE and/or traineeships) without crushing their hopes for a successful future is one of the key functions of their educational institutions.

Extensions

- Depending on the group, it may be valuable to discuss some of the symptoms people who have experienced trauma, including loss of sleep, and difficulty in concentrating and learning

new things. Students should be aware of the services provided Foundation House, and their contact details:

FOUNDATIONHOUSE

THE VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE INC.

6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick, 3056, Victoria, Australia

Telephone: 03 9388 0022

Fax: 03 9387 0828

Email: info@foundationhouse.org.au

Web address: www.foundationhouse.org.au

FOUNDATIONHOUSE AT DANDENONG

Level 5, 280 Thomas Street, Dandenong 3175

Telephone: 03 8791 2450

Fax: 03 8791 2472

First Impressions

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. share their own first impressions of Australia
2. discuss how their understanding of Melbourne/Australia has changed since their arrival.

Key points

- The learners' first impressions of Australia are usually very strong and lasting.
- Looking back at how their understanding of Melbourne has changed can give some sense of progress.
- Understanding the importance of first impressions may help the learners in their socialising, and educational and vocational pathways.

Extension - Culture Shock

Key points

- All the learners will be experiencing culture shock to different degrees.
- An understanding of the process of adjusting to a new country may help the learners make a more positive transition, as well as those working with them to provide more effective support.

Recommended resource

CMYI Fact Sheet No. 14 - Refugee Young People and Resettlement

This Fact Sheet includes a diagram of the phases of refugee adjustment, and can be downloaded free from <http://www.cmyi.net.au/ResourcesfortheSector>

Suggested activities

- Without seeing the diagram from the Fact Sheet, the class assembles their own diagram of the steps of adjustment based on their own experiences (many refugees have re-settled in a new country at least once already before coming to Australia).
- Alternatively, present the diagram from the Fact Sheet and use the following discussion questions as a guide.
 1. Have you experienced culture shock in your life before Australia?
 2. Based on your own experience, do you agree with the diagram?
 3. In the diagram, where do you think you are now?
- Learners write about their first day in Australia, or make a collage of their first memories, using pictures and words/phrases.

At school – in the classroom

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. discuss the differences between schooling they had overseas and schooling in Australia
2. discuss some of the difficulties refugee learners have in Australian schools
3. discuss strategies for coping with school
4. learn some effective study habits.

Key points

- The learners' capacity to adapt to the Australian schooling system is largely dependent on the level and quality of their prior schooling experience.
- Any schooling the learners received overseas is likely to have had very different approaches to teaching and learning from the approach used in Australian schools.
- Prior experience of schooling will determine the learners' expectations of education in Australia, and of their own and the teachers' roles.

Teaching notes

- Many of the learners will need to be explicitly taught good study habits. To be effective, these skills need to be regularly promoted and checked.
- Parents will often have little or no understanding of the schools' expectations and study requirements; it will be of great assistance if the parents are informed of these early in the school year.
- In particular, students may need help planning and following a regular study timetable at home. A blank study timetable is included in the Appendix to this Teacher's Guide. It is recommended that the teacher make photocopies of this document once it is completed, as the learners often misplace it or leave it at home. An alternative to using the included timetable is to teach the learners how to make their own timetable using Microsoft Word.

For an extended and detailed examination of the challenges facing secondary schools, and a collection of excellent strategies to help the refugee learners make their transition into

mainstream schooling, the Foundation House resource *School's in for Refugees* is highly recommended (available for download from <http://www.survivorsvic.org.au/publications.php>).

Extensions

Role of teacher

At school – in the yard

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. share/define their understanding of friendship
2. reflect on the qualities they value in friends
3. discuss and practise some strategies for making new friends.

Key points

- The learners may have quite unrealistic expectations of how they will fit in socially with Australian students.
- Lack of mutual understanding is the biggest barrier to developing friendships.
- The learners' first friendships will usually be with other refugees, as there is mutual understanding and shared experiences. Often, though, these friendships may not be valued as highly as those with Australian students.

Teaching notes

- Formal activities that bring the refugee learners in contact with the mainstream students can help bring about increased understanding and appreciation; for example, sporting activities or peer discussions/interviews.

Workbook Activities

The Friendship circles activity could be confronting for some students, if they become overwhelmed by their lack of social connections with the broader school. If doing this activity with a class, it is important to emphasise that

- 1.) the number of students in the school equals the number of potential friends, and
- 2.) it takes a special combination of qualities for two people to become close friends – they shouldn't expect it to happen easily or quickly.

The learners could also undertake a **personal challenge** to get more people into circles 2 and 3, without worrying about circles 4 and 5 at this stage. They can then count again after a month to see if they have increased the number of people they have in those circles.

Extensions

After the **Making Conversation** activity, the more confident students could role-play some of the conversations.

See the **Foundation House resource HealthWize**, health literacy teaching resource for refugee and other ESL students (2004), *Unit 4 Making Friends and Connections* for a broader range of activities to use. Available for download at <http://www.survivorsvic.org.au/publications.php>

School camp and Home late

The themes of these two sections overlap, as they deal with difficulties teenage refugees may have at home with parents.

Section objectives

These units provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. share common issues that arise between themselves and their families
2. reflect on their own personal values.

Key points

- Issues that commonly arise between teenagers and their parents are usually exacerbated in a refugee family, as the parents can easily feel threatened by the influence the new culture is having on their children, while the teenagers are often caught between wanting to fit in with their peers, and staying true to their cultural traditions and their parents' expectations.
- Some refugee youth have arrived in Australia without their parents, and any discussion about parent-child relationships may cause difficulties for them.
- Helping the learners clarify their own values can strengthen the connections with their own culture, and also enable them to make better decisions about what aspects of the new culture they are comfortable with.

Teaching notes

- As in the section on the differences in cultures, the emphasis should be on understanding the differences between their parent's expectations and beliefs, and those of the Australian society in general, rather than attempting to label either one *correct*.
- Wherever possible, make connections between the learners' values and the strengths they have developed as a result of their experiences as refugees.

NB: The **values** exercises in this section draw upon similar activities found in *Life Planning Education*, www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/lpe/index.htm

Meeting strangers

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. discuss encounters they may have had with strangers outside school, including incidents involving racism
2. discuss the causes and effects of racism
3. discuss strategies for dealing with racist incidents.

Key points

- It is not uncommon for learners to experience racism in their daily life in Australia.
- The learners may be used to a confrontational way of dealing with racism.
- The learners themselves may have acquired some racist attitudes towards others.

- The scene in the movie is not explicitly racist, though it is an example of inappropriate behaviour on the man's part. Racism is not always obvious, especially when the target is still developing skills in the English language.

Teaching notes

- The most important point to make is that racism flourishes where there is a lack of understanding of others' cultures, and where there is little or no personal contact between members of different groups.

Getting a job

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. discuss their experiences of, and attitudes towards work
2. discuss the advantages and disadvantages of part-time work for students
3. compare the job-seeking process in Australia and in other countries.

Key points

- Most refugee families are under some financial pressure, and some teenagers may feel they need to work to help support their families, or simply to earn money to spend.
- Taking on part-time work may detract from the learner's ability to catch up with school work.
- Parental expectations and boundaries will largely determine the learner's capacity to work.
- Refugee youth generally do not have the social connections that mainstream students have to assist them in finding work or work placement, and may have unrealistic expectations of the school's capacity to assist them in this regard, based on their overseas experiences ("Teacher, can you get me a job?").

Teaching notes

- There are many resources on the job-seeking process and career-choice available in secondary schools. Most of them will need some form of adapting for refugee youth.
- Return to the section on strengths to help the learners identify what their personal assets are in terms of future employment.
- Refugee learners may be unaware of volunteer work as a pathway to employment, as a means to get good references, and perhaps build a social network. www.volunteers.org is a good reference point for this type of work.

Reflections

Section objectives

This unit provides the learners with the opportunity to

1. reflect on the film as a whole
2. reflect on their own experiences of settling in Australia, and what they have learned so far.

Key points

- Typically of young people, refugee teenagers do not often look back to reflect on what they have learned already, though this is a potential source of strength and encouragement.

Teaching notes

- Once finished, the film can be used as a springboard for a variety of activities; here are some suggestions.
 1. Write a review of the film (the learners may need an example to use as a model).
 2. In groups, write and/or act out a scene that could have been included in the film.
 3. Choose one part of the film and write the story out as a narrative.
 4. Choose one of the characters in the film and write a story about what happens next in his or her life.

Appendix / additional activities

In this section there are three activities.

1. **Baba's Story**

the real story of one of Sudan's "Lost Boys". Though he doesn't appear in the film, his story gives another perspective on the themes of the film.

2. **Emotions cards**

Photocopy the table of words for exercise 1 and cut them up into individual cards. Distribute one complete set to groups of 3-4 students. Ask the class to sort them into sets of words with similar meanings.

3. **Study timetable** template.

Baba's Story

Baba Mojong is not in the film, but his story is a good example of someone who is working hard to achieve his dreams.

Read Baba's story, then answer the questions.

I was born in Sudan in 1985. When I was two years old my parents were killed. I went to Ethiopia as a refugee and studied in school for four years. I didn't learn much, though, because I was so young and also traumatised.



In 1991 I had to return to Sudan because of fighting in Ethiopia. There were many of us. The Ethiopian rebels and the Sudanese army were both attacking us, so we walked for three months to Kenya. On the way, we were also attacked by wild animals such as lions and African hunting dogs. It was really a very hard time for us.

Finally we reached Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. That was in 1992. I finished my First Certificate at primary school, then I finished year 12 in secondary school.

In the schools in Kakuma, there were no facilities like computers or libraries. We only had the notes that the teachers gave us to copy, so we didn't learn how to do research and write essays. The teachers were not friendly with the students; sometimes they caned us. You could not approach the teacher if you had a problem. The teacher was like a god to the students.

Then I applied to go to Australia. I had to do many health tests, but at last I arrived in Australia on 23rd December 2004.

When I came here, I was like a water lily. I didn't know what to do. I didn't even know if I could survive. It was like when you throw a hammer into the middle of the deep blue sea. I knew nothing of this place, and I wanted to get back to the life I knew in Africa.

I went to school. I thought I could speak English, but my English was really out of the landscape. In Africa I had finished Year 12, but in this place I was like a Year 7 student.

I studied hard in AMES for a year, and then I won an award. Now I study in TAFE but it's still very hard. I have to write essays that are 20,000 words.

I have been here almost two years now, and my roots are starting to go down. I can communicate with my Australian friends and we understand each other. I have learned that sometimes, when you go through a hard life, you can really become a person. I want to do something that will make the community happy and unite it, and help the environment. That's what I learned from my hardships. I can choose what is right and what is wrong.

Questions

1. How many countries has Baba lived in?
2. Where did he start school?
3. What were the teachers like in Kakuma refugee camp?
4. How old was Baba when he came to Australia?
5. What do you think Baba means when he says he was like a water lily?
6. What does “like a hammer thrown into the middle of the deep blue sea” mean, do you think?
7. What is Baba doing now?

Discussion

Discuss Baba's story in your class. You might want to answer these questions.

- Is Baba's story similar to yours?
- Was your first school like the one Baba describes in Kakuma?
- Baba says he felt like a water lily when he came to Australia. Can you think of other ways to describe how it feels when you start a new life in a new country?
- What strengths do you think Baba shows?

Emotions vocabulary

afraid	aggressive	alienated
amused	anxious	bored
caring	cheerful	content
delighted	depressed	disappointed
disgusted	eager	embarrassed
enthusiastic	excited	fearful
frightened	frustrated	furious
glad	grumpy	hateful
homesick	hopeful	hurt
insecure	interested	irritated
isolated	jealous	joyful
lonely	loving	nervous
overwhelmed	passionate	pleased
proud	enraged	regretful
rejected	relieved	satisfied
scared	shocked	sorrowful
stressed	suspicious	sympathetic
terrified	thrilled	unhappy
worried		

My Study Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10- 11							
11 - 12							
12 - 1							
1 - 2							
2 - 3							
3 - 4							
4 - 5							
5 - 6							
6 - 7							
7 - 8							
8 - 9							
9 - 10							

Additional resources

- ✿ The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) www.cmyi.net.au – in particular Information sheet 14, *Refugee Young People and Resettlement*.
- ✿ Foundation House (The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc.) www.survivorsvic.org.au – in particular *School's in for Refugees, a Whole School Guide to Refugee Readiness and Healthwise*.
- ✿ Some of the activities in the Student workbook were inspired by *Life Planning Education*, an excellent resource available for free download from 'Advocates for Youth': www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/lpe/index.htm
- ✿ *Meeting youth settlement needs*, a report from an AMEP National Forum, includes many recommendations and is available from the AMEP Research Centre at MacQuarie University <http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au/>
- ✿ *Youth in the AMEP* – a Fact sheet also available from the AMEP Research Centre: <http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au/pdamep/factsheets.html>
- ✿ *Resource Gateway – for teachers working with refugee young people in Victoria* provides an overview of support available <http://www.dimia.gov.au/media/publications/settle/pdf/resource-gateway.pdf>
- ✿ *Meeting the needs of secondary ESL learners with disrupted schooling - Planning bridging programs* is a useful document available from http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/esl_lit.htm
- ✿ *African refugees with interrupted schooling in the high school mainstream: dilemmas for teachers* (J. Miller, J. Mitchell and J. Brown, Monash University) reports on the findings of research into this area. *Prospect* journal, Volume 20, No.2 August 2005
- ✿ *A New Life for Refugees*, an information booklet on Australia's Humanitarian program, is produced by the Australian government and available from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
- ✿ *'Not a Matter of Choice – Information about Refugees for Schools and Teachers'* is a video available from the Department of Education and Training, Victoria – cf www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/index.htm
- ✿ *Moving in new directions - Literacy strategies for ESL learners with disrupted schooling* (video) is also from DET, and has an accompanying document of professional development activities that can be downloaded from http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/esl_lit.htm
- ✿ *The Experience of Children in South Sudan* – video available from the Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council, Oakleigh. seaac@vicnet.net.au