The Middle Primary Teacher’s Book from the Scholastic Reconciliation Kit has some excellent activities and lesson ideas related to the Aboriginal Languages Map.

Episode 5 of Many Nations One People is all about Language. [http://www.abc.net.au/schoolstv/nations/ep5.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/schoolstv/nations/ep5.htm)

The songs on the Growin’ Up Strong and Happy to be Me CDs by Aunt Wendy’s Mob are positive, upbeat and catchy and they reinforce the diversity of Aboriginal language and culture. 22 Aboriginal language groups have been included in the lyrics of the songs on Happy to Be Me. The songs also reflect the interests and life experiences of Aboriginal children that all can relate to.

Display the Aboriginal languages map on the wall in your classroom so that students can locate the places on the map that they sing about in the songs.

Brainstorm all the languages the students have heard of. Ask them if any of the languages displayed are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages.

Brainstorm all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages they have heard of.

Show them the Aboriginal languages map. Explain that before colonisation all Aboriginal people spoke the language belonging to their own Country as well as other adjoining countries. Explain that many Aboriginal people still speak one or more of these languages.

Find out the name of the local language(s) and locate it on the map.

List some words they know in the local language

**NOTE:** For students who are competent speakers of the local language, list words they know from other Aboriginal languages.

Use the GECKOS Program to invite an Aboriginal person from the local community to teach some common words from their language or for a deeper appreciation have a local Aboriginal language specialist teach an Aboriginal language as part of your LOTE Program.

- Teach body parts in the local language to the tune of *Heads, Shoulders Knees and Toes*.
- Teach a greeting
- Teach some common words
- Label pictures of plants, birds and animals
- Create a word bank.

Introduce an Aboriginal language dictionary for the local language

Develop language games and activities using words from Aboriginal languages, eg word sleuths & crosswords
• Learn some songs in an Aboriginal language:
  ○ Invite a community member to teach a song in language
  ○ *Koolangka Warangka* is a CD of songs in Noongar language made by Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School in Bunbury
  ○ The *Scholastic Reconciliation Kit* has a recording of the *National Anthem* in the Dhariawal language.
  ○ The song *I am Australian* now includes a chorus sung in Noongar language

• The *Learning Walmajarri* CD Rom has stories, songs and games as well as lessons on how to pronounce and spell Walmajarri words. As language carries culture, students of the language also learn about culture.

• For teachers in schools in the Murchison and Gascoyne regions, like Geraldton and Mullewa, *Working with Wajarri Language* provides background information and practical activities for including Wajarri language in the classroom.

• Teachers in Noongar country can encourage the learning of Noongar language by using the posters in the *Yelakij Koondarm Noongar Language Resource Kit* for colours, numbers, directions, seasons and body parts. The kit also includes encouragement and reward stickers featuring Noongar language.

• Read books written in an Aboriginal language. There are many picture books available which have the text written in both English and an Aboriginal language. Some of these have CDs to facilitate pronunciation of an unfamiliar language.
  ○ For schools in Noongar country, the *Nidja Noongar Boodjar Noonook Nyininy* (NNBNN) Kit contains books written in both Noongar & English
  ○ For schools in Nyikina country, the *Nyikina Language Culture Resource Kit* has books written in Nyikina & English. [www.majala.com.au](http://www.majala.com.au)
  ○ Batchelor Press in the Northern Territory is printing bilingual books in Aboriginal languages from all over Australia [http://batchelorpress.com/catalog/language-resources](http://batchelorpress.com/catalog/language-resources)
  ○ Language Centres produce and sell books written in the languages of the surrounding area.

• In the picture book *Corroboree*, Noongar words are used throughout the English text, with the translations around the borders of each page. Students in other places could substitute words from their own Aboriginal languages as cloze activities.

• Students could write their own books in their local Aboriginal language with the English translation.

• List towns, suburbs and streets with Aboriginal names and find out their meanings. Identify similarities in the names, such as ‘up’ or ‘in’ at the end of Noongar place names, meaning “place of”.

• In many places European names have replaced the original Aboriginal names, eg *Gantheume Pt* for *Minyirr* (in Broome) or *Ayers Rock* for *Uluru*. List other places where this has happened
• Discuss with students the differences between Standard Australian English, Aboriginal English and Kriol. Discuss how Aboriginal people had to learn to speak English in order to communicate with non-Aboriginal people and that few non-Aboriginal people learnt the local Aboriginal languages. Why?

• For teachers of Aboriginal students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect, Making the Jump is an essential resource book full of valuable information and useful strategies.

• Read the following books for an appreciation of the confusion that can arise for speakers of Aboriginal English in learning Standard Australian English.
  ○ What do YOU say?
  ○ Smartie Pants
  ○ Too Big for your Boots
  ○ Which Jack?

• Eli the Dragonfly is an interactive CD-ROM for lower primary school students learning English as a second language or dialect. It is very useful for teachers who are trying to get their heads around the language difficulties of their students.

• Read about Australian languages and how they have changed since colonisation in Australia’s Changing Voice (Our Voices Series). Listen to the accompanying Australia’s Changing Voice CD to hear what Ningali Lawford has to say about the changes to language in her community.

• Investigate why some Aboriginal languages are no longer spoken? Consider practices of colonisation, stolen generations and mission life. The Old Country New Country DVD gives some insight into this.

• Conduct a class discussion about what people can say without speaking. List some signals which are regularly used by people. For example:
  ○ Waving hello or goodbye
  ○ Pointing at your wrist ‘what’s the time?’
  ○ Shaking the head, ‘no’
  ○ Nodding the head ‘yes’
  ○ Screwing up the face to show distaste
  ○ Clapping hands ‘well done’
  ○ Pointing ‘that way’

• Identify others that the students know. Aboriginal students will know many that are probably unknown to others. Refer to the Wangkatha Dictionary for some sign language that is familiar to Aboriginal people in the Goldfields region.

• Identify signals that are used in the school or classroom. Negotiate with students a set of additional signals or non-verbal communication which will be incorporated into the class rules. Develop a class non-verbal language code.

• Discuss what gestures and sign language may have been used by early settlers and Aboriginal people in an effort to communicate. Alinta the Flame, the first film in the Women of the Sun series, depicts this well.

• Introduce the term Language Group.

• What language groups exist within the class? Do we all belong to language
groups? Why do Aboriginal people prefer to use this term over previous terms such as tribe? [http://www.fatsil.org.au/content/blogcategory/38/33/]

• What Aboriginal languages were spoken in your area before non Aboriginal people arrived? Are the languages still spoken today? Why / why not?

• Using a map which identifies Aboriginal languages such as:
  ○ Aboriginal Languages Map of Australia
  ○ Traditional Locations of Kimberley Languages
  ○ Maps of Noongar country (NNBNN Kit)
    ○ Identify and discuss any local Aboriginal place names such as an Aboriginal community or site of significance.
    ○ Examine the meaning of the Aboriginal word for any of these places
    ○ Research their English names and meanings
    ○ Identify any other places in your area, shire or state that have an Aboriginal name
    ○ Do any of these places have Creation Stories or Dreaming Stories associated with them? Investigate and map places or names that have a Creation Story or Dreaming Story.
    ○ Research the history of this place. Was it a meeting place for men or women? Was it a ceremonial place?
    ○ In which direction is the sea from this place? In which direction are any hills?
    ○ Find out the local Aboriginal words for directions: North, South, East and West
    ○ Identify a pathway which local Aboriginal people would have had to travel to meet with another near-by group. What features of the land would they have passed or used as way points? In which direction would people have to travel to meet neighbouring groups? What is the significance of message sticks during these travels?
    ○ Do they speak the same language? What evidence is there to show which languages are or were spoken. How do we know? Why/why not?
    ○ Make a place name chart with the Aboriginal and contemporary names and meanings.

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• Middle Primary Teachers Book. ‘Reconciliation Kit’. Scholastic, Lindfield, NSW. 2002


• Many nations, one people. ABC TV. 2005.


• Traditional locations of Kimberley languages (map). East Kimberley
Language Centre, Halls Creek, WA, 1991.


