

Teaching multilingual learners in a community centre in England gave me unique insights into the role of context, culture, and language in learning. While the learners I worked with were from diverse backgrounds, the lessons I drew are relevant for any classroom. In this talk, I will share practical reflections and anecdotes that show how valuing students' differences, experiences, and prior knowledge fosters engagement, trust, and motivation. Attendees will see how principles of intercultural competence (such as empathy, flexibility, and recognizing students' individuality) can be applied in monolingual, culturally homogeneous classrooms. Attendees will leave with ideas to enhance classroom participation, motivation, and learning outcomes, realizing that lessons learned in one context can often inform and enrich teaching practice in another.