

Ethnocentrism in TESOL courses:



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- ‘A British person is used to fairly strong tea, made with boiling water, and served with milk. She goes to a foreign country and asks for tea. She gets weak tea, possibly made with water which hasn’t yet been boiled, and is served black. She tastes the tea and doesn't say it’s different. She says it's bad.’ (S. Leather, 2001)

What is the problem?

- We assume that the way we teach is the correct way.
- NABA (BANA) countries.
- Little consideration given to millions of ESOL students' contexts.
- Little regard given for the differences in socio-economic/educational ideologies.

No cultural content?

- Is culture covered on the Trinity courses?
- Materials?
- Groupings, etc?
- Assignments.

'One size fits all' approach

- Acquisition theories and teaching methodologies found in NABA countries. Are these effective? (Liu, D. 1998)
- Little effort has been made to collect data from other contexts from around the world. Trinity courses are taught around the world but are based British methods. Many teaching methodologies may be impractical or ineffective in non-NABA countries (Liu, D, 1998)
- Eg. in China vs. The UK

What do we need to address?

- A culturally appropriate pedagogy.
- Trainers need to practise ‘bicultural’ or ‘transcultural’ code switching between different teaching and learning approaches.
- Socratic vs Confucian dichotomy.
- Teacher training programmes need to focus not only on training novices/NNS on the fundamentals of teaching but should give them the tools to deal with a variety of issues presented in the modern classrooms around the world.

Research

- Former TESOL trainees,
- Questions:
- Do you feel that what you have learnt on the TESOL course was relevant to teaching outside of Britain?
- Everyone answered yes. Mostly positive responses but the negative responses included – large monolingual classes not covered well, and more needed on teaching children.
- How useful was the TESOL course for your current teaching context?
- FLT not in sync with teaching in Japan. Good refresher for grammar but detached from the realities of the job.

- Most useful/least useful part of the course once you had started teaching.
- First part (useful) was all positive. Second part – essay writing, lesson planning, early methodologies, course book evaluation, restricted to PPP, ‘psychological terrorism on TTT (teacher talk time)’
- What training do you feel you need in order to develop your own teaching?
- More on latest trends, , techniques to improve pron, further studies, using online platforms/moodle, updated TESOL training, more focus on YLs.

Further research

- How can we make relevant and realistic changes?
- Further longitudinal studies on NS and NNS trainees, pre- and post- course.

References

- Liu, D. (1998) 'Ethnocentrism in TESOL: Teacher education and the neglected needs of international TESOL students.' *ELT Journal Volume 52/1*
- Leather, S (2001) 'Training across cultures: content, process and dialogue.' *ELT Journal Volume 55/3*
- Skinner, B., Abbott, L. (2013) 'An exploration of differences in cultural values in teacher education pedagogy: Chinese English language teacher trainees' perceptions of effective teaching practice review.' *Teacher Development Vol 17, No. 2, 228-245*