

LP3 VOLUME 2 MARCH 2013

*THE BULLETIN OF RESEARCH, TEACHING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY
FROM THE SUSSEX CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, UK*

**You say “hi”, I say “bye”. Designing materials to introduce
Intercultural Competence in the classroom.**

Silvia Taylor and Viviana Coston - University of Sussex

In our global economy linguistic competence is not enough: Culture Shock can result in misunderstanding and poor communication and it could lose you a contract in a business situation, by causing unnecessary embarrassment. Research has suggested that Intercultural Competence (ICC) can offer a way to minimize Culture Shock, or a way to handle these situations. Traditionally knowledge of culture has been taught within language programmes and the poster considers the difference between Culture Knowledge and Intercultural Competence. Research in the field highlights the desirability of acquiring ICC as a transversal skill that can be applied in many different situations and contexts and it suggests that ICC should, therefore, be an integral part of any Language Learning Programme. However, materials with an ICC focus for use in the classroom are only just starting to become available for the teaching of Modern Languages. The poster introduces a step-by-step guide to developing such materials, based on current research on how ICC can be taught in the classroom. Finally there are examples of materials which have been designed with a strong ICC focus and which have been trialled at the University of Sussex.

YOU SAY "HI", I SAY "BYE".

Designing materials to introduce Intercultural Competence in the classroom

Viviana Coston & Silvia Taylor

Culture shock & the year abroad

Research showed that our year abroad students suffered from culture shock.



What is culture shock?

It is the psychological and social disorientation caused by confrontation with a new or alien culture (Furnham, 2004).

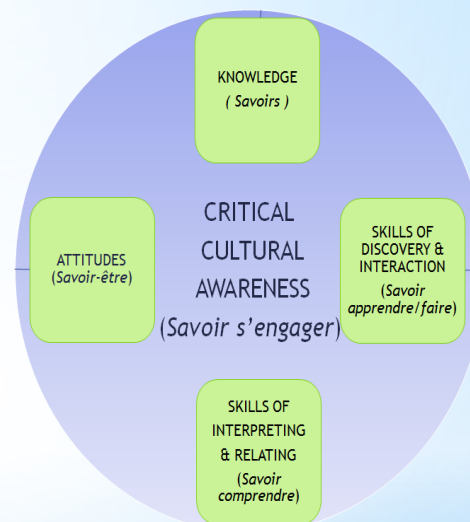
How do we teach intercultural competence?

Teaching to observe, compare and contrast



- Analysing your own culture in order to understand your own beliefs
- Comparing your attitudes and beliefs with those of others by
 - ❖ Reading/ listening to authentic materials
 - ❖ Becoming receptive to other ways of doing things
 - ❖ Asking questions
 - ❖ Participating in discussions
 - ❖ Observing

The Intercultural Competence model (Byram, 1997) can help minimize culture shock



Here is two we made earlier

Writing materials to introduce ICC

- Identify
 - ❖ learner's needs regarding ICC
 - ❖ learning outcomes
- Find resources (text/audio/video) on the chosen topic.
- Identify questions on the topic that consider the learner's culture & the TL's culture.
- Think of activities linked to the learning outcomes.
- Devise a project to assess learning.

Topic: Drinking culture

Introduced by questions about drinking culture in own country (**speaking**).

Text (reading): Adapted from a newspaper article about an Italian football manager losing his patience with English players' binge drinking. Followed by in class discussion (**speaking**).

Written exercises: vocabulary work, use of the conditional tense to give unconfirmed news.

Video (listening): Italian news clip, with comprehension questions.

Projects: 1 - Reading a text about young Italians and alcohol and reporting back to class. (**Reading/speaking**) 2- Interviewing Italian students on alcohol consumption and reporting back to class (**speaking/ listening**).

Topic: University life

Introduced by questions about expectations for the year abroad (**speaking**).

Video (listening): An Erasmus student speaks about her experience in a Spanish city; followed by a true/false exercise.

Text (reading): Adapted and translated from a blog about the main differences between studying a degree in Spain and in the UK. Two exercises with linguistic exploitation.

Project: 1- Writing a leaflet for Spanish Erasmus students coming to study in the UK. 2- Interview (**speaking/listening**) with a Spanish Erasmus student.

Writing a statement of teaching philosophy

Simon Williams, University of Sussex: S.A.Williams@sussex.ac.uk

Rationale

There is good reason to suppose that a teacher's values make a difference both to learner experience in the classroom and to the teacher's professional identity and career trajectory. Evidence for this can be found in teacher education and development policies referring to values and moral purpose and in the growing popularity since 1980 of the statement of teaching philosophy (STP), which has become a constituent of many teaching portfolios. Indeed, an STP is now required by some interviewers at the IATEFL job fair, and the attendance of two of the workshop participants was a direct result of their interview experience.

Challenges

As well as providing a more personal dimension to a teacher's profile, the self-reflection required to write a statement can be an enlightening and motivating experience in itself. It encourages teachers to reflect on key areas of practice and to recognise their overarching motivation for being in the profession. Despite the statement's utility and currency, however, personal values are difficult to articulate, and there is little consensus on the STP's generic conventions (Schönwetter et al, 2002). Further, whilst it may be tailored towards a particular aspect of professional practice, the STP must necessarily reflect a teacher's own approach and experience through the choice of key metaphors and narrative. Through the presentation of vox pop extracts, models and discussion, the workshop offered a social space for participants to explore these complex themes and draft a personal document.

Approach

A statement of teaching philosophy can be defined as 'a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning in a particular discipline and/or institutional context' (Schönwetter et al 2002: 84). What is effective teaching and learning? The workshop began with some short film extracts of English language teachers describing their 'best' teacher. The answers were diverse and included several patient Maths teachers and a Geography teacher who 'got outstanding results through a regime of fear ... but still gained lots of respect'. The diversity of the answers illustrated how, for learners, good teachers can come from an amazingly large constituency and perhaps helps to explain the popularity of both student-centred and subject-centred teaching and the historical swing between behaviourism and humanism. The curious can input the phrase 'statement of teaching philosophy' in the bibliometric tool Google Ngram Viewer and observe the spike that occurs 1900-1910, explained by Dewey's work on reflection being interrupted by the new interest in behavioural learning (see von Wright 1992: 59).

Structure

Adapting the prompts in O'Neal et al (2007), the workshop divided the STP into 7 sections:

1. Heading (metaphor)
2. Starting questions
3. Teaching methodology
4. Teaching situation
5. Favourite activity
6. Assessment
7. Challenges

It is a well-known axiom in the social sciences that eliciting background information from respondents can prime them for more complex questions; so the workshop began with participants

discussing their teaching situation (Section 4) and going on to describe their favourite classroom activity (Section 5). Where did participants' preferred assessment approach (Section 6) lie on the clines of learning payoff for students / ease of administration, e.g. setting multiple choice questions vs a researched essay? Participants next considered some rhetorical questions such as 'Why do I teach?', which could be genuine puzzles or dilemmas, to place at the start of the STP as organisational prompts (Section 2). They reflected on their preferred teaching approaches, e.g. communicative, and where possible related them to theory, e.g. Krashen (Section 3). They then thought about the challenges they faced, e.g. in resources or teaching accommodation, and how they met them (Section 7).

To elicit abstract entities like metaphors (Section 1), participants watched extracts of teachers talking about their metaphors for teaching and learning. Prefixing some of their answers with comments like 'That's a difficult one', the responses on film ranged from 'a journey' to 'a chicken farm in which students are force-fed information'. (For more ideas, see <http://www.learner.org/workshops/nextmove/metaphor/>.) Metaphors could be used as a heading, followed by an optional quotation, e.g.

'Mediation: A statement of teaching philosophy by A J Smith'
Teaching is the achievement of shared meaning (D B Gowin)

More quotations like the above can be found at www.ntlf.com or similar sites. Having sketched the bare ingredients of an STP in the workshop, it remained for participants to expand and redraft their notes, making adjustments for a particular purpose such as a job application, and to recognise that the process of writing an STP is an ongoing part of continuing professional development. 745

References

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From the 'Research on ELT' series of talks:

Intercultural communication through English as a lingua franca: the role of intercultural awareness.

Dr. Will Baker, University of Southampton, UK.: W.Baker@soton.ac.uk
Abstract from talk given at SCLS, November 2012.

The use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has raised important issues concerning how we interpret culture in intercultural communication. If ELF is not associated with any particular community, least of all native speakers of English, is culture still a relevant concept in the study of ELF communication? In this presentation it will be argued that culture is still a valuable concept but that it needs to be approached in a non-essentialist manner. Culture should be viewed as a resource that is made use of in emergent, fluid and hybrid ways with users drawing on and across, individual, local, national, and global references. Intercultural awareness will be presented as a way of modelling how participants in ELF communication are able to do this. Given the increasing role of the socio-cultural

dimension in ELT such changes to our understanding of culture have significant implications for teaching. These implications will be investigated through data from an exploratory course in intercultural communication for English language learners that translated insights from ELF studies and intercultural awareness into pedagogic practice.

Details of future talks available on the SCLS website:

Sussex Centre for Language Studies: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/>

From our students

Celebrating Diversity: The Significance of Cultural Differences on Reading Comprehension Processes of the Young Adult EFL Learner in a Matriculation Preparation Programme in Israel.

Devora Hellerstein-Yehezkel – Summary of PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2012.

Reading comprehension in English as a foreign language (EFL) is a key to success in academic studies in Israel. As Israel is a cultural melting pot, adult students come from widely diverse educational backgrounds, often determined by their cultural environment. They arrive at the university or college classroom with vastly different approaches to learning and reading, in general, and to reading in EFL, in particular. The challenge for the EFL teacher is to help students draw from their cultural toolkits while exposing them to new tools so that they can reach their full learning potential. The rationale of the current inquiry is that in order to tailor a programme that takes into account students' needs, a better understanding of the impact of cultural background on their learning process is essential.

This inquiry was guided by three main research questions: How do differing cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds impact upon adult students' approach to and process of learning reading comprehension in English? How do these backgrounds impact upon progress and achievement in reading comprehension in English? And which teaching approach or approaches can best address the range of needs of a culturally diverse student group? To address these questions, an action research study was conducted using a case study approach. Thirty-nine young adult students who participated in a year-long matriculation preparation programme in a teachers' college in Israel were examined. The programme was based on providing students with both bottom-up and top-down reading skills, with particular emphasis on reading strategies. The learning process that students underwent generated qualitative and quantitative data through class observations, interviews, and student records.

The data indicated that student background played a significant role in how learning, reading, and EFL were approached. Family background, whether more 'traditional' or less 'traditional', reflected students' cultural background, echoed by a school system sharing a similar mindset and approach to EFL pedagogy. As a result, students' background impacted upon their classroom behaviour and social engagement. Cultural distinctions were apparent at entry level, but were not determining factors in student progress and achievement over the course of the year. Students with greater intercultural competence adopted different learning approaches and reading strategies from those with which they had been educated in their cultural environment and appropriated them as their own. These students also made the most significant progress in their EFL reading comprehension, regardless of background. For students to share their diverse learning approaches and adopt new ones from one another, as well as the new strategies offered by the programme, the establishment of a 'third space', or classroom culture, was crucial. Providing such a space allowed students to exchange learning methods, examine their own, and finally adopt those that were most effective for them.

Enhanced reading comprehension at the end of the programme resulted from a process of several cycles of integration and engagement. Those students who reported feeling more integrated within mainstream Israeli society, in general, were also those who more easily integrated within the classroom culture. These students were also more socially engaged in class and showed greater engagement with texts in English. Consequently they made greater progress and reached higher achievements. When teaching EFL reading comprehension to a multicultural class of students, it is argued that a classroom culture should celebrate their diversity and allow them to voice their distinct learning approaches. At the same time, their voices should be harmonized through a unified learning approach, based on the application of reading strategies and engagement with a text.

**‘English Language Teaching in Norway: engaging with the world
or gazing at the native speaker?’**

**Brita James-Eide : britajameseide@gmail.com
Abstract from MA ELT Dissertation, September 2012.**

In a world where English is increasingly used for communication between non-native speakers, English language teaching (ELT) professionals need to address the implications that the consequent increase in language variability have for international communication and English language learning. These issues are at the core of English as a lingua franca (ELF) research. This research project investigates Norwegian ELT in light of the new insights brought to it by ELF literature. Based on research data from semi-structured interviews with three ELT professionals, it examines the extent to which language variability and ELF research is acknowledged within the Norwegian ELT community and investigates whether there has been a shift from a culture-specific to a global focus within Norwegian ELT. The data suggests that English language variability is to an increasing extent acknowledged by ELT professionals, but that there is little exposure to and knowledge of ELF research within the Norwegian ELT community.

The data suggests that English language variability is to an increasing extent acknowledged by ELT professionals, but that there is little exposure to and knowledge of ELF research within the Norwegian ELT community. The data also suggests that there is a shift towards a more global focus within Norwegian ELT which is affecting how English is viewed and taught in schools; however these changes appear to have a limited impact on teacher education programmes. The study concludes that Norwegian ELT is in a transition which would benefit from greater access to ELF research for both ELT professionals and English language users, thereby informing the transition in progress. Recommendations for how this could take place are offered. The traditional approach within ELT has often left learners gazing admiringly at and emulating the native speaker of English, whereas the new approach offered by ELF focuses on equipping learners with more appropriate skills and knowledge for engaging actively in multilingual and multicultural settings where native speakers are in a minority.

For contributions or ideas for future editions of the LP3 bulletin please contact:

Andrew Blair: A.M.Blair@sussex.ac.uk
Jules Winchester: J.Winchester@sussex.ac.uk
Jeremy Page: J.N.Page@sussex.ac.uk
Webmaster: Matthew Platts: M.R.Platts@sussex.ac.uk
