

Pre-service Teachers Reflecting on Intercultural Communication Awareness

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Motivation for Research

- Analyze intercultural communication events, different views and approaches to the development of intercultural communication competence (ICC) in ESL class.
- Encourage collective and individual reflection on intercultural communication concepts via debates and journal entries.
- Foster collective and individual reflection on intercultural communication concepts via social media and portfolio.
- Connect intercultural communication concepts to pre-service teachers' professional development.

Context and Participants

BA in Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL)

15 Mexican students / practitioners of ESL

Optional subject: Intercultural Communication (ICC)

Evaluation:

- 20% participation in class / social media
- 30% presentation in pairs
- 45% individual portfolio
- 5% participation in guide



Key Concepts

1- ICC in the Foreign Language Classroom

Language and culture in the foreign language classroom (Clouet, 2006; Kramsch, 1993)

ICC models (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2000; Byram, 1997)

2- Reflection On-In-For Action (Schön, 1987; van Manen, 1991; Kilton & Todnem, 1991)

Portfolio as a reflection tool for pre-service teachers (Smith & Tibbels, 2006; Darling, 2001; Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Barton & Collins, 1993)

Findings

Which culture to teach? From which countries/communities?

"It's important that learners are aware that there are a lot of accents around the world." (S2- Entry 16)
"Not everything related to the culture is positive. One has to be prepared to explain a cultural topic." (S15- Entry 18)

Non-native teachers, how to teach FL cultures I don't know?

"Teaching English culture, it is even more difficult, because I have never lived in an English speaking country." (S1- Entry 3)

"Many teachers teach a language from countries they have never been [...] it is up to the teachers to investigate and motivate themselves to gain cultural knowledge." (S1- Entry 15)

"Attitudes such as othering may occur in the classroom because learners do not have a real knowledge about the other culture, neither do we!" (S8- Entry 7)

Teaching materials or authentic materials?

"Cultural artefacts help to get in contact with the culture [...] see or experience the culture through the senses, it can be also a huge external motivator." (S9- Entry 13)
"Feeling the culture makes you feel excited about the possibility of visiting other countries [...] to communicate with people." (S2- Entry 18)

Growing professional awareness around intercultural communication competence in the FL classroom

"This experience helped me to develop professionally [...] I have been given the tools to ICC in my FL classroom." (S1- Concl)

"This type of reflective activities gives us the opportunity to be more open minded about relevant situations in our lives as teachers and learners [...] This is a never-ending circle." (S2- Concl)

"I know now that I need to know about our student cultural background and to identify ours as teachers to motivate them to establish a dialogue between cultures." (S11- Concl)

Raising intercultural awareness mission:

"As ESL teachers, we must make aware our students about all the issues that our community is facing up [...] help our students to be global citizen." (S4- Entry 4)

"When teaching languages it is important to teach the culture of the language as an extension of the socio-cultural realities of the target language." (S8-Entry 5)

Reflective structure: Them - Us - me

Conclusion

Participants were enthusiastic to reflect on intercultural communication awareness as individuals and as a part of their future teaching practice.

Students were able to understand and assimilate theoretical concepts related to intercultural communication in ESL classroom.

Students progressively acquire the ability to relate to this conceptual content through their experience as FL learners and ESL pre-service teachers.

Students raised awareness on the significance of integrating intercultural communication competence/skills in their (future) teaching practice.

Although students acknowledge the importance of teaching culture in ESL classroom, they addressed possible problematic issues: materials, biased by own cultures, authority on culture.



The Learner

THANK YOU!