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CONTENTS

From the Editor	4
ICC and EUROLTA news	6
KEYNOTES	
Zhaoming Wang	9
Developing intercultural Competence at UK Universities	
Ozlem Yuges	17
Does Language Teacher Training Need to Change?	
Svetlana Popova	25
Why is it Important to Integrate Games Technologies into the Process of Teaching?	
Jean Langlois-Berthelot & Nicolas Giraudet de Boudemange	28
Cognitive Stimulation and Virtual Reality: Implications for Teaching and Training in Defence and Security	
WEBINARS	
Rebecca Oxford & Matilde Olivero	32
Peacebuilding Activities in the Language Classroom	
Gabrielle Hogan-Brun	38
Why Study Languages?	
Geoff Tranter	42
Strategic Competence	
Nik Peachey	51

Developing Materials for Remote and Hybrid Classrooms

TEACHING TIPS

Susan Stempleski & Barry Tomalin **57**

Motivating Language Learners through Interests and Culture

REVIEWS

International Business Negotiations **60**
Pervez Ghauri, Ursula Ott & Hussain Rammal

From the Editor

Happy New Year, everybody and welcome to our Winter edition of ICC Journal, a bit later than we wanted but full of really interesting and useful ideas and advice for all our readers.

Motivating and engaging our students through cultural sensitivity and paying attention to their personal needs is a key theme of our Winter edition. Two of our KEYNOTES address how to better motivate and engage learners in their language studies. First Dr. Zhaoming Wang explores the personal issues faced by foreign students studying at universities in the UK and shows how intercultural training can help them integrate their study and local communities much more successfully and engage with their studies much better.

In our second keynote, Ozlem Yuges, ICC-Languages co-ordinator and an EFL teacher, focuses on training teachers to be more interculturally sensitive to their students and take the trouble to find out what their needs are. Ozlem believes that language teacher training courses need to change in order help new teachers do it successfully. Hence her title, *Does Language Teacher Training Need to Change?*

In our WEBINARS, Gabrielle Hogan-Brun asks *Why Study Languages?* and explains how to motivate students. Did you know that language learning can help you maintain good health and even prolong your lifespan? In our TEACHING TIPS Susan Stempleski offers some ideas on intercultural motivation, describing activities aimed at getting students to talk about their attitudes to the language they are learning and its culture and to express their personal interests.

Meanwhile, going back to our KEYNOTES, our third and fourth keynotes focus more on educational technology. Svetlana Popova addresses the importance of integrating gaming technologies into the teaching process and Jean Langlois and Nicolas Giraudet de Boudemange explore the role of cognitive stimulation and virtual reality in training defence and security personnel.

We had some fascinating WEBINARS in the second part of 2021. We've summarised the presentations in this issue but you can access the recordings at icc-languages.eu/webinars.

Apart from Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, who we mentioned above, Rebecca Oxford and Matilde Olivero show how to bring peacebuilding activities into the classroom. A fantastic presentation with all the right ideals. In *Strategic Competence* Geoff Tranter explains how using the right language in the right context can improve relations. I was fascinated to see how the use of the question tag in English, 'isn't it?' can open up a conversation. Geoff's message? Don't just get the language correct, adjust the language you use to fit the context.

Nik Peachey, Pedagogic Director of Peachey Publications, has built a successful company developing online lesson plans for teachers. In his webinar he shows the technologies he uses to produce them and how to develop your own teaching materials both for face-to-face and online teaching.

I would urge you especially to watch the recordings of Nik's and Geoff's webinars as they show visual illustrations we couldn't show in the text.

Finally, our REVIEW this issue is for business language teachers and cultural trainers. Written from a business perspective, *International Business Negotiations* is full of critical incidents and case studies you can use in class and online and offers masses of practical business and intercultural information to help make your clients' and students' business operations a success.

And that's it from me. Have a great read and if you would like to publish your ideas and teaching tips in ICC Journal or indeed run an ICC-Languages webinar, we would love to hear from you.

Barry Tomalin

Editor ICC Journal

ICC and EUROLTA news

ICC-Languages goes from strength to strength as we welcome new members from around the world.

ICC-LANGUAGES CONFERENCE APRIL 8-10 2022

The big news as we enter 2022 is the ICC-Languages Hybrid conference planned to be held in Athens, Greece from April 8th to 10th. The conference is entitled: ***Winds of Change - teaching and learning languages in a changing environment and explores what the future of language teaching looks like after Covid-19.***

The pandemic has made us rethink our views about language teaching and learning and the best way to do it, especially considering the increase of migration into Europe both for work and safety reasons and the demand for languages in a global economy, not to mention the threats of climate change.

As always, the 2022 conference will create a platform for teachers to present their ideas, share good practice in lectures, workshops and poster presentations both online and, hopefully, face to face.

The following topics will be covered in the presentations, workshops and poster presentations.

- The changing environment of learning and teaching languages – do we still need language teachers?
- Hybrid, Hyflex or blended language teaching and learning?
- Teacher and learner motivation
- New technologies are here to stay. Smart phone and mobile applications for the language classroom (automation and communication)
- The importance of teacher training and in particular one-to-one teacher training
- Language lasts but Culture is quicker. Engaging language learners through culture
- Refugees and migrants' language and cultural challenges– How does our teaching need to adapt?
- Teaching languages for specific purposes online

- Best practice in online assessment
- KPI – Key Performance Indicator – driven language learning and how to measure success
- Coaching and accelerated learning– can they work together?
- Do L2 teachers need EMI (English as a medium of instruction) support?

There is a whole new sub-sector field about SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) partly because of the pandemic and partly because of the need for wellbeing in education and reducing stress.

ICC-LANGUAGES WEBINARS

ICC-Languages offers a monthly webinar, usually towards the end of the month. You can read summaries of our webinars in the ICC-Journal and access the recordings of the webinars at www.icc-languages.eu/webinars. In this issue we feature webinars by Rebecca Oxford and Matilde Olivero on *Peacebuilding Activities in Language Teaching*, Gabrielle Hogan-Brun on *Why Study Languages?*, Geoff Tranter on *Strategic Competence in Language Learning* and Nik Peachey on *Developing Materials for the Remote and Hybrid Classroom*.

EUROLTA NEWS

In October 2021 EUROLTA opened its new course online. It has 10 participants and it is going well. The programme has eight modules and they have just finished four modules. Sessions are on Saturdays from 9 am to 6 pm over six months. There are four trainers. Each one runs two modules and assessments are through portfolio, micro peer teaching sessions and one 90-minute teaching lesson.

Readers who are interested please contact Myriam Fischer at myriam.fischer@icc-languages.eu

The second round of EUROLTA online will start running on 5th February (with the same trainers). In the third round two more trainers will be joining.

EUROLTA for refugees (a new EUROLTA course based on refugees' needs)

Following a conversation with a teacher from India based in Germany, specialising in intercultural competence, a new course will be added to the EUROLTA family to address refugee learners' needs.

EUROLTA centres are expanding internationally with possible centres opening in Turkey, Mexico, Romania and Switzerland.

KEYNOTES

Developing Intercultural Competence at UK

Universities: a Review of Current issues of Intercultural Training at UK Universities with an Evaluation of the Course *Transcultural Communication*

Zhaoming Wang

PhD thesis (2018) *Developing Intercultural Competence at UK Universities: the Effectiveness of the Course Transcultural Communication*. <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/25296/>

Introduction

The UK is now the second most popular country for international students. In this context, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is of particular importance. Although the importance of developing graduates' intercultural competence in UK higher education has been highlighted, it seems there is still long way to go for its actual realisation. This article summaries some key findings of my PhD. research and integrates these findings with current issues of ICC training in the UK higher education system. It points out that, based on the positive results of the intercultural training course in students' ICC development, the new question now is how to support and promote ICC training to involve more students and staff within the university.

Current issues of ICC training in the higher education setting

Few concrete plans

Since the explosion of globalisation, the need for institutions to produce graduates who will become responsible global citizens has been highlighted. In the field of intercultural training, especially in UK higher education settings, universities have recognised the importance of intercultural competence and make powerful

claims regarding their international mission and goals. Policies have been announced in order to promote intercultural dialogue and internationalisation, such as the 2004 UK report *Putting the World in World Class Education* and the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* published by the European Union. However, it seems that most of the internationalisation strategy—the way in which universities infuse “*international, intercultural or global dimensions*” (Knight, 2003, p. 3) still remains as terms which value diversity and achieving cross-cultural capability rather than concrete plans (Koutsantoni, 2006a). There is research indicating that developing students’ ICC still remains at a surface level. For example, Koutsantoni (2006a) found that 87% of universities focus the majority of their effort on encouraging studying abroad or overseas collaborations, in particular the recruitment of international students. Although international students would increase the diversity of the campus, it may not necessarily lead to greater intercultural interaction or the development of intercultural competence (e.g., Pederson, 2009; Spiro, 2014; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2007). Lantz’s PhD. study (2014) further confirms that without any pedagogic intervention, the development of students’ intercultural competence does not naturally increase even though there may have been relatively high levels of intercultural contact during the students’ time at university.

Studies also show that international students and home students seem to disengage from one other. International students tend to feel alienated and excluded from higher education settings that are culturally new to them (Spiro, 2014). As a result, international students tended to remain within familiar social networks with fellow nationals, rather than forming social groups with home students (e.g., Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2007; McDowell & Montgomery, 2009; and UKCISA, 2004). From the home students’ perspective, they often see international students as “*threats to their academic success and group identity*” (Harrison & Peacock, 2010, p. 877). In particular, Harrison and Peacock used the term “*passive xenophobia*” to describe them as “*typified by a reluctance to interact voluntarily with international students at anything beyond the most surface level*” (2010, p. 877).

In all, these studies indicate the difficulty of bringing international and home students together (Teekens, 2007). Although policies have been made to enhance diversity and “*global citizenship*”, there are problems with the actual realisation of

these claims in a way that is meaningful and visible to the student themselves. Questions such as how to develop students' intercultural competence at universities and put it into daily teaching and learning still remains.

Few short-term training courses and evaluation

The second problem of current ICC training in UK higher education setting is that the evaluation of the training does not receive sufficient attention. Currently, there are over 20 universities in the UK which offer taught courses on intercultural communication at Masters Level (Hua, Handford & Young, 2017). Young and Schartner (2014) evaluate the effect of a Master's programme of cross-cultural communication (CCC) at a university in the North of England, which indicates the benefits of a long-term intercultural education in the UK higher education setting. However, it seems there is a gap in evaluating the effects of short-term training courses in the UK higher education setting. Fewer short-term courses are known, which aim to develop intercultural competence of the overall students at UK universities. The evaluation of such courses is even less frequent.

Little focus on home students

Although the literature mentioned above indicates the difficulty of bringing international and home students together or encouraging international students to adapt, there is little focus on the role that home students play in intercultural interaction and what they can do for successful intercultural communication. Especially in terms of intercultural training, most of the training has been focused on the sojourner. In the higher education setting, while international students have been one of the most-researched groups of intercultural sojourners (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2009), little attention has been given to the home students on campus who have the same responsibility as international students for effective intercultural interactions.

To conclude the literature reviewed above, currently in the UK universities, there are policies aiming to develop students' intercultural competence. There are universities offering intercultural communication courses at the master's level. However, there is still a lack of a concrete plan for developing intercultural

competence in both international and home students. Short-term training courses and the evaluation of the effect of such training courses are even fewer. These issues lead to the ICC development or the goal of creating “international, intercultural or global dimensions” universities at surface level.

The evaluation of a short-term intercultural training course

Overview

To find out some answers to the above issues, I focused my PhD study (2018) on exploring the effectiveness of an existing intercultural training course at a university in the North of England. The course is called *Transcultural Communication*, which is a credit bearing course running every autumn and spring term since 2015. Here it is defined as “short-term” as compared to the one year-long taught master’s course on intercultural communication. In total, the course lasts 32 hours (4 hours per week × 8 weeks).

According to the course description, *Transcultural Communication* aims to help students understand factors and issues in transcultural communication. Key issues in transcultural communication were covered such as culture, identity, language and techniques for analysing transcultural communication data. It was hoped and expected that participation in this course would bring about cultural and identity shifts, as well as changes in perceptions of culture and language. The students were also required to construct the criteria for the assessment of transcultural competence and evaluate a range of intercultural assessment systems.

Process of evaluating the course *Transcultural Communication*

Adopting the relational model of ICC (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989), a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to assess participants’ ICC in the four aspects of motivation, knowledge, skills and awareness.

Firstly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 participants who took the TC course from the 2015 autumn term to the 2017 spring term. Interviews

took place at the end of each term, mainly asking questions about what they had learnt from the TC course. Interviewees were also required to engage in self-reflection and evaluation of their own UK life and intercultural competence. Thematic analysis was carried out to analyse the interview data.

Secondly, a quantitative approach was used to examine verbal behaviour (amount of talk) and non-verbal behaviour (eye contact). Videotapes of participants' group discussions were analysed in terms of the duration, frequency, and methods of each variable. T-tests were used to look at differences between the participants who took the TC course and those not.

The effect of the TC course—key findings

In total, 28 students (20 international students and 8 home students) who took the TC course participated in interviews. On the whole all the participants reported their intercultural competence had developed as a result of the TC course. When asked what they had learnt from the TC course, 25 participants (89.2%) reported they were more motivated to communicate after the course. All of the participants (100%) reported they learnt some knowledge about intercultural communication. 27 participants (96.4%) reported they had gained some skills and put them into practice in their daily life. 24 participants (85.7%) mentioned and also demonstrated a development of self-awareness.

As the interviews were carried out at the end of the course, apart from asking what they learnt, the participants were also asked to evaluate the course. Overall, the course was evaluated positively. The participants evaluated the TC course as helpful in their own study (e.g., education and linguistic), future career and communication with people in general. For example, one participant said *“maybe this experience (taking the course) gave me more curiosity to know other things and I think I will be like this forever throughout my life—curious, open-minded, and yes, aware of the problems that internationals or foreign people have in my country”*. Another interviewee said *“I took a lot from the course—the experience and knowledge and some feelings that maybe it will take me a year here to understand. But I have understood them in 8 weeks, so it is good I took this course”*. For the

home students, they also reported that, *“I would maybe like to be involved with in the future as well as working in educational issues—in a multicultural setting. I think that in this kind of context this course would really help. Britain is full of different cultures especially since I live in London. So, I think it is something that’s very important for me just as a person who I meet through my life rather than necessarily important for my job”*.

Apart from being helpful in the above aspects, 15 participants (54%) also pointed out that the atmosphere of the course was friendly, relaxing, encouraging and diverse. Some international participants said, *“I didn’t have much confidence, but the teacher encouraged me and they were all nice and friendly”*. It was also mentioned by the interviewees that the course provided a platform for them to meet people from different cultures so that they could learn from each other. For example, one participant said, *“We had diversity. We had native speakers. And I think it is good to know native speakers’ ideas and opinions. I haven’t heard their opinions before so it’s a very good experience and also I could exchange my opinions as well”*. For the home students who took the course, they reported that, *“I am meeting people every week that I wouldn’t have met. It gives me the chance to experience different people and everybody wants to learn a bit from each other”*.

In order to find out the how the TC course affected participants’ intercultural competence, especially in their behaviour, quantitative studies were conducted to compare the differences between the participants who took the TC course (interculturally trained) and who did not (untrained). Their group discussion performances were analysed through recorded videos from two aspects: eye contact and amount of talk. The results showed that trained students had more and longer eye contact with group members than the untrained students during the group discussion. As suggested by the literature, greater eye contact is seen as a sign of approval and friendliness (especially in British culture). With more and longer eye contact, the trained students might give the impression of more involvement and friendliness towards other group members than the untrained students. More and longer eye contact could also indicate that the trained students were more confident or comfortable in communicating during the group discussion. As being friendly and

confident are important factors in motivation, such results suggest trained home students had higher motivation than the untrained.

Besides, the trained students used more other-oriented speech than the untrained. Here other-oriented speech refers to the talk focusing on the other group members rather than just talking about their own opinion. For example, they showed interest in the other participants by asking “where are you from?”, acknowledged them by explicitly asking their opinion, gave positive feedback when they tried to contribute to the discussion, and paraphrased whenever needed. Being other-oriented is not a single skill but a package or collection including essential communication skills, being self-aware, being aware of others, using and interpreting verbal and nonverbal messages, and listening and responding to others (Argyle, 1994).

Implication and future direction of ICC training at universities

In general, the results suggest that 1) the participants' intercultural competence have been developed after the course; 2) the course is evaluated positively; 3) the course also provided a platform which enables students to communicate and build relationships. It seems that having a term-long intercultural training course could be a good solution to the existing problem in the UK higher education system as mentioned at the beginning. However, it should be pointed out that the *Transcultural Communication* course had a positive effect on the intercultural competence development on the students, but only on those who chose the course. Its wider effectiveness for students at the university in general is still unclear. As the course was self-selecting, the willingness to choose the course indicates a level of motivation. It is possible that the students who took the course were more interculturally competent than those who did not at the beginning. Thus, what the course did was “making the good into better”. However, it is the students who did not take the course who really need the training, especially the ones who are more ethnocentric. Considering only a few students took the course willingly (only 8 in total for four academic terms), there is a greater need to involve home students in intercultural training.

If a term-long training course works, in the sense of contributing positively to the integrity of students and internationalisation of the university, then this seems an important reason to build it into higher education programmes in general. The training course should not only be self-selecting, but also encouraged to be taken by all the students, or even become a compulsory course. Now the questions waiting to be answered are: 1) how to apply intercultural training for the students and staff at the university as much as possible and 2) how to involve intercultural training in daily teaching and learning within the university.

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Does Language Teacher Training Need to Change?

Ozlem Yuges
Co-ordinator ICC-Languages

In the past 20 years of my experience in the United Kingdom, I have worked as an English Language Teacher, and Business English Trainer, training individuals from all around the world including university students, business clients, refugees, and other general English students and I am aware of a common complaint. Like all my colleagues, I have been through the standard CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) and DELTA (Diploma etc.) and completed my MA. I have also worked with a lot of language students and business clients, both in language schools and university. Foreign students' needs are often not being met in spite of the fact that they are dedicated to improving their language levels in the target language to communicate effectively or represent themselves in their working environments competently. What's the reason? Is it the teacher? Is it the teacher training programme? Is it the school rules? Or perhaps, is it the student's failure to express her or his needs clearly?

My experience and that of the research I have undertaken shows that teacher training courses need to pay much more attention to cultural sensitivity, to the student's personal needs and cultural orientation. Sensitivity will help teachers to understand each student's barriers to learning and the emotions that they go through throughout their journey. Focus on language and language teaching methodology with a short session on cultural principles (Hofstede et al) is insufficient to prepare teachers to be aware of and responsive to students' issues.

In training classes, depending on the individual's personal character and cultural background, they are not always confident to approach a trainer and say that "*I cannot follow you because of this reason and that reason*". They end up finishing the course with a lot of questions and complete the course with barely a pass grade. One example is a class of refugee teacher trainees I sat in on. The teacher trainer asked the trainees to write about their journey to the UK. After a while, the trainer realised that one of the participants was not writing. The trainer approached the non-writer and insisted she

write. After a short confrontation, the trainee started to cry and said, *“I do not want to remember my journey and do not want to remember that experience”*. The trainer was not sensitive to the difficulties the trainees might have experienced and had chosen an inappropriate and very personal subject. As a result, the trainee’s approach to language, and thus possibly her training in other areas, was hampered by the experience.

As a non-native speaker teacher of English coming from a different national background, I have been made deeply aware of disappointments by students due to the failure of teachers to understand their situation and their needs both emotional and organisational.

Students in group classrooms are usually disappointed with unrelated topics which are chosen by their teachers. The following comments are made by a lot of students. *“Today, my teacher focused on animal and colour idioms which I really do not need in my daily life and at work”*. *“Our teacher has been going through one language book and does not prepare lessons where we could learn sentences which are related to our own experiences, it is very artificial”*. Many Asian students have the following comment. *“My teacher speaks very little, S/he usually gives speaking activities in pairs and groups and mostly European background students (they are very dominant and talk non-stop) talk and I do not have the opportunity to learn the language”*. The teacher should realise how some certain backgrounds need to be encouraged to engage in activities. Listening to these learners and their frustrations, when teachers are trained, trainers must put emphasis on how teachers should consider their students’ cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and what their expectations are. Culturally, some students find it difficult to be active in their conversations and to express themselves, or it takes time for them to interrupt others and to be involved in conversations at the right turn-taking moments. Students should be given equal opportunities to produce the language with enough input and examples of language offered by the teacher, on the board or in useful handouts.

In England, watching an adult trainee classroom activity, I noticed that one trainee was constantly chosen last when groups were asked to work together. She was a foreign trainee student, with good but not perfect English, and not well-known to the others.

It was clear to me that sensitivity was in short supply here, both on the part of the adult trainees and on the part of the trainers. I wanted to suggest that they ask HER to choose but did not have the courage to do so. I also realised, by watching her body language and facial expression, that being kept out of the groups was very hurtful to her. I spoke to her after the training session and she wondered whether it was because she was a foreigner and the native English trainees were prejudiced against her because of that.

Both in my studies and as a trainer specialising in the teaching of business English and British business culture, I have realised that behaviour and sensitivity are important aspects of all teaching including teacher training, university teaching and language training. It is often more difficult in training sessions because you often have trainees from various backgrounds where training may take on different forms depending where individuals come from. Two citations bring out the importance of recognising students' cultural differences and adapting to them.

“Competent intercultural communication is contextual; it produces behaviours that are both appropriate and effective; and it requires sufficient knowledge, suitable motivations, and skill action” (Lustig and Koester, 2003 cited in Chen and Dai, 2014 p265).

“In the study of the development of intercultural sensitivity over the life span, Mahon (2003) found that teachers with higher levels of sensitivity engaged in complex internal and external conversations. They did not shy away from reflecting on challenges to their own taken-for-granted assumptions regarding complex cultural issues or from engaging in conversations where those assumptions were challenged. Rather, they recognised the importance of engagement to understanding the other person’s perspective” (Deardorff and Bok, 2009, p314).

A further justification is the importance of reactions of both students and teachers to the issues raised by living and studying in a foreign (in this case English language speaking) environment and how to manage them successfully by engaging students (and teachers actively in the process). An important development in both university and language school education is the opportunity to engage students in the mode of assessment of results through the process of co-creation. As Cook-Sather explains,

“Co-creation involves developing deeper relationships between student and teacher, and between students and other students. Education is perceived as a shared endeavour where learning and teaching are done with students not to them” (Cook-Sather et al. 2014).

Engaging students at all levels of the teaching and training wherever possible will have positive results, as Race states, referring to assessment procedures, *“The more that students are engaged in assessment design, the greater the level of understanding of assessment principles and processes, and the higher their motivation and results”* (Race, 2020).

Finally, alongside face-to-face teaching and training, online teaching as a result of the pandemic has already subjected students and teachers to unexpected pressures linguistically, culturally and technologically. It is important to research issues and present strategies that will empower both students and teachers working in a digital environment. Part of the answer to this is deeper and regular training in intercultural empathy.

Hua (2011:117) states that intercultural empathy helps individuals become conscious of the problems that may hinder [a student's] development. However, she also asserts that, *“There are several barriers to developing intercultural empathy including, 1) stereotypes and prejudices that may lead to negative inferences towards others; 2) overreliance on human universals without paying attention to cultural differences; 3) lack of awareness of cultural differences, especially in underlying values patterns of thinking; and 4) indiscriminate application of one's own cultural practices”* (Hua, 2011, p. 117). Finally, *“When people engage in an intercultural dialogue or intercultural trade, they are inevitably facing the challenge from communication barriers such as cultural stereotype and prejudice, identity conflict, language deficiency, and lack of interaction skills. Only through the acquisition of ICC can these problems be solved in the process of global interaction”* (Dai and Chen, 2014, p. 1).

One more example comes from a student who felt totally out of place in the English class. They appeared demotivated and uninterested. They did not look up and joined group activities only reluctantly. Their facial expression and body language suggested

they really did not want to be in the classroom. In that case, the teacher needed to be able to have good observational skills and read the body language, in other words '*read the air*' in order to make the right move with the right decision. '*Read the air*', cited by Meyer (2014), means, '*try seeing the feelings*'. From my personal experience, I suggest invisible boundaries matter and need more attention in teaching and learning environments. For example, in Japanese the phrase '*kuuki yomenai*' translates as '*someone who cannot read the air*', essentially meaning a person who can't understand what is being said or felt '*between-the-lines*'. (Meyer, 2014)

What is going wrong?

The problem is that some students feel unrecognised and their needs ignored. This reduces massively their motivation and willingness to take part actively in the learning process. As a result, their teachers often ignore them, thus reducing motivation even more and leading to poor results in tests and classroom assessments that don't reflect their true ability or talent.

Is it the fault of the teachers?

Language teachers are busy people. A twenty-five hour a week teaching schedule, preparing, delivering and following up language lessons, marking homework, setting and running tests as well as attending regular teachers' meetings and, in many cases, taking other courses part time to improve their career prospects doesn't leave much time for personal care.

In addition, their focus and the focus of their teacher training course is how to make the language they are teaching accessible and how to develop and implement a methodology which enables students to absorb, practise interactively and become proficient at the level at which they are studying.

How does language teacher training need to change?

Language teacher training courses need to put more emphasis on developing empathy and intercultural sensitivity. As Janet Bennett et al put it in 2003, "*The person*

who learns a language without learning a culture risks becoming a fluent fool. And yet the pedagogy for infusing culture into the language curriculum remains elusive and we continue to debate the particulars of this complex learning and teaching task” (J. Bennett, M. Bennett, & Allen, 2003:237).

What can teacher trainers do?

There are a number of techniques and ideas that can be incorporated in teacher training courses which will help teachers be sensitive to their students’ needs and issues. Here are three.

1. Insert intercultural sensitivity in every teacher training session.

You don’t need a single three-hour session on the theory of intercultural sensitivity. What you need is a regular 10-15 minute session which takes a look at a specific case or experience and invites teacher trainees to identify the problem and suggest solutions. The experience may come from the trainer’s own experience or the experience of the trainees. Take just one example per session, told by you or by one of your trainees, and get the group to discuss the following questions.

Question 1: What’s the problem?

Question 2: How does the person feel?

Question 3: What would you advise?

In this way the trainees will become aware of the issues that can arise and learn how to apply solutions. They will also learn to build empathy with students and build a repertoire of experience and understanding of how to resolve problems.

There is a theoretical framework we can apply which will help trainees remember the three questions and apply them. The theoretical framework is called MBI, the Map, Bridge and Integrate model and here’s how it relates to our three questions.

Question 1	MAP	Identify the problem.
Question 2	BRIDGE	Share feelings.
Question 3	INTEGRATE	Advise how to adapt.

Source: The MBI Model, Distefano & Maznevski, (2000).

2. Active Listening

A Moroccan student once told me, *“Our teachers hear what we say but they don’t know how to listen to our feelings”*. We need as teachers to listen to our students more and to listen to their feelings, not just what they say. This is a process called active listening. It involves listening silently and paying attention to the speaker without jumping in and talking over them and expressing your opinion or giving advice. An active listening exercise on a teacher training course can really change the way teachers co-operate with students. Here’s how it works.

Step 1: Divide your class into pairs.

Step 2: Set the task. One trainee is the speaker and the other is the listener. The speaker chooses a topic and talks about it for 1 minute. The other listens.

Step 3: Stop everybody after a minute and get feedback. How did the speaker feel? How did the listener feel?

Step 4: Teach the F.A.C.E. method. F.A.C.E is an acronym and it stands for

F: Focus (on the speaker)

A: Acknowledge (Show you’re listening by nodding and smiling and even going ‘uh,uh’.)

C: Clarify. (This doesn’t mean interrupting with *“Can you explain..?”* but encouraging the speaker to continue, *“Tell me more”*, *“What happened next?”* etc.)

E. Empathise. (Show your appreciation and empathy with *“Great!”*, *“Amazing!”*, *“How awful!”* etc.)

Step 5: Trainees work in the same pairs but this time the listener in Step 2 becomes the speaker. The new speaker chooses a topic and speaks for a minute.

Step 6: After a minute, stop the conversation and ask the speaker and the listener how they felt. The invariable response is positive.

Step 7: Encourage the trainees to use the F.A.C.E. technique in their own teaching and in their own lives. It will mean they feel more appreciated and valued.

3. Use the break for personal conversations.

Every class or training session has a short break. If you notice that a student in your group seems pre-occupied or not involved in the lesson use the break to take them aside and ask them. Don’t ask, *“What’s wrong?”* but ask, *“Are things going Ok?”* or, *“Is this working for you?”* If you do it like this and listen you will find that the trainee will share with you their feelings and their problems.

One example was a teacher who had a bad headache and couldn't concentrate on the lesson. I told him it was better to go and rest and come back when he felt better. To my astonishment, he took a pill and decided to stay in the class. Just by talking to him and showing empathy with his situation and telling him he could leave the class if he wished gave him the support he needed to stay in the class.

So, if a trainee appears under pressure or withdrawn in the lesson use the break to show empathy and support. If the problem is more deep-seated, then you can talk to them at greater length after class and maybe refer them to where they can get help.

These are three techniques teacher trainers can introduce into their training programmes, without taking up too much time. If the trainer can do this, the trainees will learn the lesson and do the same with their own classes. If they do this they will have happier classes with more fulfilled students feeling their needs are being met.

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Why is it important to integrate games technologies into the process of teaching?

Svetlana Popova

Introduction

The sphere of education, the methodology of teaching and tools for introducing new material are changing all the time. To be honest, this area seems to be the most sensitive and responsive to changes in the economy, politics and demand of the society. Scholars regularly come up with new ideas for how to improve the process of teaching so that it helps to develop a harmonious and self-sufficient personality. Times are changing but some elements of the teaching process still remain topical. They may transform and adapt to the new reality but the essence and the value of them remain.

One of the essential mechanisms of teaching is a game. It could be a role-play or some elements of competition and challenge that are woven into the canvas of a lesson. Some methods are based on playing and, therefore, approve of various elements of gamification at different stages of the lesson and various steps introducing the teaching material. However, there are those who usually disapprove of such tools, considering games and the process of playing destructive and distracting for the learner. Hereafter we are going to consider some of the important characteristics of a game that make it so popular and appealing among those who are keen on teaching and updating processes.

Findings

To start with, we should remember what the purposes of education are. Gilbert Keith Chesterton, (G.K.Chesterton), an English writer and philosopher of the twentieth century once wrote, that *“education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another”*.¹ The “soul” is nothing else but the life experience of thousands and millions of people who were living before or are our contemporaries. To make the process of skills and knowledge transition more effective and pleasant

1 13 Inspiring Educational Quotes for Students to Help Them Thrive. <https://www.uopeople.edu/blog/13-inspiring-educational-quotes-for-students-to-help-them-thrive/>

for the learners the teachers should create a favourable classroom atmosphere which *“yields positive students who are motivated to learn”*.²

Motivated learners are becoming a rare phenomenon in modern times. The vast majority of the youth of today find the process of learning and the methods of teachers conservative, out of date and boring. They often skip classes or simply try to ‘*do a stint*’ in the school day and leave as soon as possible to involve themselves in a more vigorous and pleasant free-time activity of any kind.

To support interest and encourage the students teachers are trying to create a real or a make-believe game situation where the learners will be able to feel “safe”, that is, free of immediate assessment and punishment if they fail. To be exact, teachers or tutors should let the learners try first, allow them to play at least ‘a round of the game’ without giving marks and without criticising. The same mechanisms for raising someone’s interest are widely used in daily life and are quite familiar to the masses. That is how marketing managers attract their potential clients, offering them a sample of a product or a trial period of a service for free. When a person makes the first step and enjoys it, then she/he is likely to continue. That is how, being given a chance to participate in a game or a quiz, or a role play without being assessed, the learner is likely to continue the game even if the rules later change to a more serious mode.

After having attracted the learner we are to retain their interest in the subject for as long as possible. That is where gamification tools will help to reach the goal. Nowadays the trend is becoming more and more popular. Among the most commonly used elements of motivation are quizzes, badgers, challenges, progress bars, levelling and leader-boards.³

The most important part is not to trespass over the ‘threshold of action’, avoid the moment of over-saturation. The fact of the matter is that the mode of positive reinforcement is the basic behavioristic mechanism of a reward, granted to the learner after a degree of achievement in the lesson. If the students get it every time they

2 Hester Zhang, Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere. <https://goldstarteachers.com/creating-positive-classroom-atmosphere/>

3 Gamification Tools – What Is Gamification & Why It Matters? <https://woofresh.com/gamification-tools/>

perform a required action, the emotional effect of the 'victory' and 'achievement' will reduce and in the near future will destroy the genuine interest in the subject. The further process of successful interest maintenance depends on a teacher and their ability to guide and manipulate the working mood of the class. The reward for a successful performance should become desirable but not permanent to foster the feeling of anticipation and sporting interest among the learners.

Conclusion

Games have been used for centuries by people and even animals to teach the youngsters the main principals of adult life. Wolves have been teaching their cubs to hunt and catch the prey with the help of a picked bone. Children learn how to collaborate, compete, win and lose with the help of a game, a role play. If there is such an ancient mechanism that has been used effectively for thousands of years, it will be faulty to ignore the mechanism in teaching the youth of the present day. *"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation"*.

Cognitive Stimulation and Virtual Reality

Some Implications for Teaching and Training in Defence and Security

Jean Langlois-Berthelot and Nicolas Giraudet de Boudemange

Both military and police officers operate in environments that are increasingly complex to understand. First, it must henceforth take into account all the capacities in the intangible and even spatial fields. Secondly, it is confronted with the arrival of scientific techniques much more advanced than the first anthropometric files of Alphonse Bertillon, with the DNA revolution as well as the development of artificial intelligence. In this context of possible cognitive saturation, it is essential that officers in these fields as well as their subordinates benefit from innovative scenarios, based in particular on the development of cognitive science, in order to prepare them for the situations of tomorrow.

In a famous article in *Nature Neuroscience*, Rao and Ballard (1999) [1] highlighted the phenomenon of *"predictive coding"* at the level of the visual cortex. They drew in particular on the work of Mumford and in particular on his 1992 article on the computational architecture of the neocortex, which revolutionised neuroscience. [2] Predictive coding has had the effect of revolutionising both human cognition and artificial cognition.

The *"predictive coding"* hypothesis belongs to a stream in cognitive science, called the *"Bayesian brain"*. Proponents of this approach explain that the human brain relies on sensory inputs to infer an internal model of the world in which we operate. According to the phenomenon of predictive coding, this internal model would be used by the brain to develop anticipations based on the perception of reality that we make relying on our senses. As Stanislas Dehaene explains, the phenomenon of predictive coding, *"assumes that the brain constantly generates such anticipations, and generates a signal of surprise or error when these predictions are violated by unexpected sensory inputs"*. [3]

The brain cannot be reduced to an inactive system of inputs and outputs. It is an active system that develops skills in terms of anticipation. The unexpected and the new are cognitively expensive and the brain develops strategies to minimise unnecessary cognitive expense. The brain's ability to use past sensory experiences to cope with present elements allows it to interpret the signals given to it by its senses, even if they are partial or similar. The brain therefore learns and refines its responses based on past sensory experiences.

Recent research into psychedelics has offered one of the best confirmations of predictive coding theory. Substances like psilocybin and LSD suppress the impact of the predictive filter that normally influences our perception of daily life. What allows us to recognise such and such an object and such or such a situation is annihilated by the substance. The brain then begins to consider and see, literally, other possibilities of apprehending reality which are, to a certain extent, just as real.

A fundamental property of a biological system is that it must be able to differentiate itself from its environment. Karl Friston became known for his work on the principle of free energy (2006, 2010) [4], [5]). The principle of free energy can be summarised as follows. Any system that sustains itself conforms to the imperative of minimising the surprise associated with the states it encounters. Applied to neuroscience, this means that the brain relies on a representation of the world that allows it to assess known phenomena and dynamically integrate new phenomena. The human brain makes internal predictions not only with sensory signals that allow it to designate and discriminate objects but also with regard to the interactions it has with objects (fire burns, water wets, etc.) but also with living beings (my sister screams when she is tired, my dog licks my feet in the morning, etc.).

The brain therefore does not reason from abstract rules and disembodied rationality, but rather from a sum of constantly readjusted experiences.

More broadly, cognitive psychology can use work on predictive coding and on free energy to show that the theoretical lessons provided by education are confronted, in complementary or contradictory ways, with accumulated experience.

Reasoning and beliefs are the object of permanent construction / deconstruction based on experience. The following hypothesis can be made: a greater capacity to embellish and modify reasoning patterns and beliefs is linked to age and the plasticity of neural systems.

Several direct implications

Predictive coding has important implications for learning and memory. Unexpected sensory inputs cause signals of surprise or error. The brain is likely to learn to recognise these new signals through habituation. These lessons naturally lead us to think of applications in terms of training. Physically reproducing an interaction of a sensory nature is a complex challenge, even more so if one sets out to reproduce the 'sensory challenges' that are associated with a military operation. The brain's ability to visualise certain environments can be trained and getting used to these environments would be an undeniable added value before arriving in a theatre of operation.

Based on a precise list of elements of a sensory nature that would be likely to cause unexpected reactions in a soldier or officer (shrill sounds, smells of fluids and blood, etc.), it is possible to set up a virtual reality system reproducing these sensory challenges. This allows for habituation which would be of great benefit in a 'real' military operation. Group cohesion is a major factor in the psychological strength of a soldier, but this resilience can also be increased through targeted scenarios.

Decision making is engendered by the declination of beliefs and reasoning patterns. Advances in cognitive science no longer make acceptable the possibility of considering these mechanisms to be mysterious results. Knowledge of its cognitive functioning, with its strengths and weaknesses, must be taught to the officers of tomorrow. In the case studies of battles as in police investigations, it is very likely that cognitive biases are one of the main causes leading to making the biggest mistakes.

Through rehearsal, using targeted exercises and self-analysis of performance results in a virtual interface, a soldier or officer can improve their performance in a 'live operation'. For a soldier, virtual reality allows, in a fictitious way, to put her/him in situations impossible to recreate otherwise, such as high-intensity combat or

potentially traumatic visions (for example, being opposed to a child soldier or discovering the massacre of people). For an officer, situations in a complex and stressful environment could allow her/him to detect cognitive biases as well as character weaknesses. Of course, these scenarios will require an in-depth debriefing in order for them to remain constructive. On the other hand, they will be essential to the focus and concentration of soldiers.

Rehearsal and training can also help to deconstruct reasoning and beliefs that can have deleterious effects in terms of the efficiency of an operation as well as in a judicial investigation. It is essential to take into account the specificities of each physical environment as well as the functioning inherent to each subgroup of the population in order to avoid errors. The experience gained in the field provides part of the solution, but the initial training, after detection, should allow some of the preconceived ideas to be deconstructed. This will immediately improve the qualities and effectiveness of young officers in the field.

The battles and security challenges of tomorrow must take into account new knowledge of the functioning of our brain. With virtual reality, security forces now have a formidable tool to increase the quality of their training and prepare the armed forces for the terrain of today and tomorrow.

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WEBINARS

Peacebuilding Activities in the Language Classroom

Rebecca Oxford and Matilde Olivero

Webinar delivered on ICC-Languages Webinars, May 27th 2021. Visit www.icc-languages.eu/Webinars

Theme

Language teachers become peacebuilders when they weave flexible peace activities into the current curriculum, thus increasing students' competencies in both language and peace. In the webinar, language teacher educators and book co-editors Rebecca L. Oxford and M. Matilde (Mati) Olivero encourage language teachers to become peacebuilders in their own classrooms. In doing so, they describe crucial peace dimensions from their new book, *Peacebuilding in Language Education* and lead a number of brief, experiential peace activities designed for language teachers and learners. Oxford and Olivero demonstrate the simplicity and importance of integrating the activities into language instruction. Session participants receive ideas, suggestions, recommended bibliography, more sample activities, and contacts.

Bios

Rebecca L. Oxford, PhD., Distinguished Scholar-Teacher and Professor Emerita, University of Maryland, holds two degrees in Russian language (B.A., Vanderbilt; M.A., Yale) and two in educational psychology (M.Ed., Boston University; PhD., University of North Carolina). She loves to teach – it is her personal and professional passion – and has received several teaching awards. More important than any academic prize or publication are the facts that a dear Korean doctoral graduate in Seoul named her first child “Becky” and that some additional students have also become “family” to Rebecca and her husband, Cliff Stocking. Compassion and caring propel her work.

A prolific writer and editor, Rebecca has published 15 books, including seven in the area of transformative education, spirituality, and peace, the latest being *Peacebuilding in Language Education: Innovations in Theory and Practice* (Oxford, Olivero, Harrison, & Gregersen, 2021, Multilingual Matters, UK). She has published eight other books, largely focusing on language learning strategies, a field she helped pioneer. This resulted in a Lifetime Achievement Award that stated, “Rebecca Oxford’s learning strategy research has changed the way the world teaches languages.” She currently co-edits two book series: *Spirituality, Religion, and Education* (Palgrave) and *Transforming Education for the Future* (Information Age Publishing). During 1993-2003, she co-edited the 69-volume *Tapestry* ESL/EFL book series with North American, Middle Eastern, Chinese, and Japanese editions. She has published 270+ articles and chapters and has presented talks, plenaries, and workshops in 43 countries.

Rebecca has led graduate programs in both language teacher education and psychology and has directed numerous dissertations. She is a part-time poet and photographer, as well as avid Netflix fan, waiting impatiently for the next seasons of “Outlander” and “The Crown” and catching up on “Grey’s Anatomy.”

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Maria Matilde Olivero holds a PhD., in Second Language Acquisition from the University of South Florida, U.S.A. She is a second language teacher educator and researcher at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, Argentina. She teaches second language teaching methodology, practicum, and foreign language education. For the past 6 years, she has worked intensively on theoretical frameworks, pedagogical interventions, and teaching materials to help language teachers build peace through the teaching of EFL. Her main research interests include affective factors and peacebuilding approaches in second language education. She has recently coedited the book *Peacebuilding in language education: Innovations in theory and practice*.

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Presentation

Rebecca Oxford began the session by inviting participants to enter their answers to the question, *'What is Peace?'* in the chatbox. In Oxford's and Olivero's definition, *'peace is positive'*. Most definitions include words like *'harmony'* and *'respect'* and *'tolerance'*. These are all positive. Conflict just means different views, different desires and different hopes. Conflicts are normal and can be resolved or transformed using creative discussion and peacebuilding. Violence, on the other hand involves causing intentional physical or social harm to someone. Conflict can have a positive outcome. When it is resolved or transformed it can lead to peace. Violence has a negative outcome.

A key to transforming conflict is creating peace through respect, listening and caring even though we have differences of opinion. As Martin Luther King Jnr. said, *"True peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of justice,"* and as the humanitarian Mother Theresa said, *"Peace begins with a smile."* Peace is the harmony of working effectively with conflict. Nelson Mandela wrote, *"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner."* This is what we need to cultivate as teachers and find ways of passing on the language of peace to our students. Jing Lin is a peace educator and researcher who made the essential point that we are all family members living together on Earth. She believes that peace is about recognising solidarity despite diversity and she recognises peace is positive and we should work to harmonise difference. Work paradoxically with differences to achieve peace.

Peace has several dimensions which can be divided into three interlocking spheres. First, is inner peace (harmony within oneself). Second, is social peace, including the areas of interpersonal, intergroup, international and intercultural peace. Third, is ecological peace (building and fostering our contact with nature). All these dimensions interact with each other.

How does the Language of Peace approach teach language and peace at the same time?

The secret is to use funds of knowledge as topics of lessons and to teach language and culture through those topics. The funds of knowledge are the students' talents, their knowledge, their skills and cultural backgrounds. Students bring many gifts to the language classroom and recognising your students' values, skills and experiences is a key to success. The Language for Peace approach offers peace activities for language and intercultural teaching, which can also be used in teacher education. These activities can be woven into a regular class curriculum. You don't have to abandon your curriculum. You just include peace activities as and when you think they are relevant.

It is quite similar to UDL (Universal Design for Learning). UDL offers teaching for the whole person but Language for Peace looks at how to make the teaching relevant to the inner person and to achieving social and ecological harmony.

The Language of Peace approach aims to achieve the 6 C's of global expertise for learners. The six C's are:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Cultural understanding
- Critical thinking
- Commitment

(Oxford and Gregersen, forthcoming)

Samples of peace building activities

Activity 1 The Rainbow Walk

This can be done as a classroom or as a homework task. It tells students to take a 'mindful' walk. You don't need an actual rainbow. Go for a walk, feeling your body and how you are walking and breathing deeply as you do so. While you walk, observe and note the environment and plants and shrubs and objects that show the colours of the rainbow. (Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet). Take photos

or jot down what you see in the order in which the rainbow colours appear in the rainbow itself from the top of the arc to the bottom.

Back in the classroom or at home write a brief journal entry about what you noticed and what colour it was. Also write how that type of mindful walk made you feel. Experience your activity but also reflect on your experience.

The activity can be used to describe colours, shades of colours, feelings and also the use of descriptive adjectives. (Seligson Positive Psychology)

Activity 2 Stand by Me

Music is a great tool for reflecting on peace. '*Stand by Me*' is a good example but you can also choose a song in the language you are teaching. Students listen to the song and answer one of these questions.

- How does this song make you feel?
- Who do you think of when you listen to this song?

Also as teachers, consider:

- What peace dimensions did you notice in the song, '*Stand by Me*'?
- What could be the language focus in this activity?

Activity 3 The 'Three good things' exercise

In this exercise students think of three good things that happen to them each day. Then they write them down or draw them.

Finally, they say what each good thing means to them and how they make them feel. This is a very good exercise for promoting optimism.

Once again, if you use this with teachers, ask these questions.

- What peace dimensions did you notice in the 'three good things' exercise?
- What could be the language focus in this activity?

Activity 4 What would you do in this situation?

Another approach with learners or future language teachers in training is to give them a situation which might pose difficulties and ask these questions.

Give them a hypothetical situation (e.g. missing a train).

- What difficulties would you encounter?
- What would you do to overcome them?

Summary

In summary, you are a peacebuilder when you do these things.

- Communicate in the target language.
- Encourage communication in the target language.
- Teach culture and language.
- Deal harmoniously with conflict or stress.
- Show compassion to others and to yourself.

If you do these things intentionally with the idea of teaching you will be a peacebuilder. If you do this you will create ripples of peace in your classroom which will become mighty waves in time. We can change hearts and minds, including our own. The important thing is your own inner work. As Gandhi said, *“Be the change we want to see in the world”*.

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Stand By Me | Song Around The World - Playing For Change

playingforchange.com/videos/stand-by-me-song...

NOTE: You can access a review of *Peacebuilding in Language Education* in TLC Journal Volume 4 Issue 4 accessible at TLCjournal.org/archive

Why Study Languages?

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun

Webinar delivered on ICC-Languages Webinars, June 24th 2021. Visit www.icc-languages.eu/Webinars

Theme

Why Study Languages?

Bio

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun is currently a visiting professor and senior researcher at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, having previously taught at the Universities of Bristol and Basel. She lectures widely on language attitudes, policies and practices in multilingual settings, and on the economic aspects of multilingualism. She serves on several international journal editorial boards and has worked with various European organisations on matters of language diversity.

A Salzburg Global Fellow, she is a co-author of the *Salzburg Statement for a Multilingual World*. She is the founding book series editor of *Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities*, and co-editor of *The Palgrave Handbook of Minority Languages and Communities* (2019), which won the BAAL book prize (in 2020). Among her other recent publications is *Linguanomics: What Is the Market Potential of Multilingualism?* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

Presentation

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun sometimes hears people say, 'I'm no good at languages' but, having grown up in multilingual Switzerland, she concluded that the real reason people feel they are not good at languages is lack of motivation. In *Why Study Languages*, she set out to explain what languages really are all about, the excitement, the challenges, the skills they provide and what we can achieve with them. If you take the long view of languages, you can see that languages have always been important, and a key for successful international trade. For example, itinerant traders needed a working knowledge of several languages when exchanging their goods with people from many different cultures along the ancient silk road (from China to the Mediterranean). Marco Polo, a travelling entrepreneur

who visited China twice in the 14th century, is known to have deployed his multilingual skills for profit. Today as then, international trade involves goods passing through different territories with a variety of different languages spoken. Languages are just as highly valued as the commodities and services that are acquired from around the globe. Willy Brandt, German Chancellor from 1969-74, said, *“If I’m selling to you, I speak your language...but if I’m buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen”* (then you have to *speak German*). So, language has always been an important tool to get resources.

However, some may ask, “Do we really need to learn languages nowadays?” Gabrielle Hogan-Brun’s answer is yes. To quote Richard Hardie of UBS, *“A deep understanding of foreign languages is often essential to the combination of cajolery and seduction many companies require in their international negotiations”*. Nor is machine translation apt to replace knowing languages. Gabrielle Hogan-Brun used the example of Google translate to illustrate how instructions in one language (English) might appear differently in others. In her fictitious example, the sign inside a Swiss funicular railway carriage warns passengers, *‘Do not lean out of the window’*. The same instruction, however, translated into Chinese and back to English by Google translate reads, *‘Do not sit outside the window’*. In a real-life example in Wales, the sign *‘Alcohol free’* (i.e. *‘No alcohol’*) in a Welsh supermarket was translated into Welsh as *‘free alcohol’*, in other words, ‘no charge’! So electronic translation can be misleading. Machine translation is simply a decoder. You need humans to understand the context.

Another myth is that everyone speaks English. The facts are that Chinese and Spanish have more native speakers than English. Two thirds of the world’s population speak no English but most people in the world are at least bilingual and many are multilingual although English may not be one of the languages they use. In London, for example, there are over 300 different language communities. Multilingualism is normal in all urban environments. In communities around the globe, we can witness a kaleidoscope of languages.

Knowing another language brings benefits. In employment, especially in research, design, production and marketing, languages are a practical resource. As has been shown, multilingual work teams mean more innovation and hence more profit.

Bilingual employees are valued as enablers in all international organisations, to break language barriers in industries such as tourism, transport, logistics and public relations and to reach consumers from different language backgrounds through advertising and marketing. Also, in public service or emergency services it can make a big difference if the person offering the service can say, *“Hello, I can speak your language”*.

Students need re-assurance that their skills in languages will always be in demand, across a whole range of sectors, public and private. There is statistical evidence of the economic benefits of having skills in languages. A UK 2020 study shows that, 5 years after completion of a university degree, language studies graduates earned more than graduates in law, the biosciences, history, or archaeology. In Switzerland, as another example, the multilingual workforce is estimated to account for 10% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

What are the personal benefits of language learning? There is evidence of cognitive and emotional gains among bilinguals, including greater empathy and understanding of the ways of the world. The bilingual brain has been shown to be structurally more elaborate and more pliable. Two or more languages constantly competing for attention gives our grey matter a good workout! Being bilingual can lead to greater executive control, better attention span, greater mental flexibility, enhanced working memory and better problem-solving skills. The benefits grow with frequent and long-term language practice.

Gabrielle gives examples of individuals, including celebrities, who feel they have benefited from learning languages. Tommi Miers, the founder of the Wahaca Mexican restaurant chain, credited the decision to learn Spanish as having shaped her whole life and successful career as a chef and restaurateur. The Czech grand-slam winning tennis player, Martina Navratilova, said that two passports had opened up her world, the game of tennis and learning languages. She also felt that speaking more than one language helped her become a better person. In journalism, the BBC foreign correspondent, Frank Gardner, said it is difficult to get close to understanding a country if you can't speak at least a bit of its language.

We can witness students saying that learning another language enhanced their cultural awareness and communication skills, extended their critical thinking skills and social competence and even deepened their insight into their own first language, all of which aid personal growth. Gabrielle Hogan-Brun remembers teaching technical students who said that learning a language had improved their writing skills which had somewhat dried up through pursuing a STEM technical subject. Other students state that studying for a year abroad as part of their programme has made them more resilient.

We also hear from young professionals confirming how for them, having skills in different languages was a gateway into a rich and varied career. They attest that learning another language had augmented their ability to communicate effectively and precisely and write better proposals both in their first and additional language(s).

Drs Thomas Bak and Dina Mehmedbegovic-Smith, co-founders of the Healthy Linguistic Diet (HLD), say that learning and using another language can lead to an increase in 'cognitive reserve', resulting in later onset of dementia and improved cognitive outcome after a stroke. So, having another language active in our brain is one way of helping us to keep mentally fit well into old age by developing alternative neural pathways. To sum up, knowing another language is healthy, empowering, and it helps us connect with a wider world.

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NOTE: For a review of *Why Study Languages?* Visit ICC-Journal Volume 3 Issue 1 (Spring 2021).

STRATEGIC COMPETENCE – A NEGLECTED SKILL

Geoff Tranter

Technical University of Dortmund, Germany

Webinar broadcast on November 25th 2021. Watch the recording on www.icc-languages.eu/webinars.

Theme

We teach words, phrases, idioms; we teach morphology and syntax; we train reading, listening, speaking and writing skills. Is that enough? Is there more to effective communicative skills? Effective communication, in the sense of choosing from the various language options you have at your disposal the exponents that you believe will allow you to be as successful as possible in achieving your communicative aim, i.e. the end-product of the interaction you have embarked upon, is a key concept in many of the definitions of language proficiency in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The concept is mentioned almost exclusively in skill-based descriptors from B2 level upwards, which, on due thought, should not be all that surprising, as it is only as from B1 onwards that learners actually have sufficient linguistic elements to choose from. However, it is worth considering the inclusion of communicative strategies at lower levels.

This webinar discusses ways to enable students to enhance their communication strategies, particularly when communicating in a second language and shows how to build strategic competence.

Bio

Geoff Tranter is a Teacher, Teacher Trainer and Consultant at the Technical University of Dortmund, Germany, specialising in English for Specific Purposes, including Engineering, Social Sciences, Business Communication Skills and English for Urban Planning. He is also a member of the IATEFL Poland Executive Committee, as a consultant on international PR matters, and co-ordinator for the IATEFL Poland Business English Special Interest Group.

Presentation

What do we mean by strategic competence? A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal. A sentence might be grammatically and lexically correct and its functional content may also be correct but often the context for the language used in communication is inappropriate and therefore although the language is correct it needs changing to meet the communicative aims of the speakers and the situation. The strategy used by the speaker to achieve their communicative aim as easily and effectively as possible is flawed.

Also, the short dialogues presented in coursebooks are sometimes inauthentic if the context is not made clear. In a dialogue the cue and response is part of the communication but only a part and the more responses we are able to add the more authentic the communication becomes.

The conclusion is that, according to the level of language, exchanges should be more than simple question and answer but establish a context in which the dialogue becomes more authentic.

Here's an example. Two people are sitting in a bus shelter, a man and a woman. The man is leaning towards the woman and saying, "*Nice day today, isn't it?*" The woman replies, "*Yes, it is*". It's possible that by simply saying "*Yes, it is*" she is signalling that she doesn't want to have a conversation. But if she also used a question tag and replied, "*Yes, it is, isn't it?*" it suggests that she is more open to taking part in a conversation. So, the use of the question tag can be seen as a strategy for showing you are willing to continue a conversation.

The appropriacy of giving short Yes/No answers may vary according to the context. Here are two contexts where this exchange takes place.

QUESTION	ANSWER	QUESTION	ANSWER
MEETING SOMEONE AT THE AIRPORT		JOB INTERVIEWER	
You're Mr Thomson, aren't you?	Yes.	You're Jill, aren't you?	Yes.
Have you had to wait a long time?	No.	Have you had to wait a long time?	No.
Where do you live?	London.	Where do you live?	London.
Is English your first language?	Yes.	Is English your first language?	Yes, it is.

What might seem unfriendly in a casual conversation may feel exactly right in the context of a job interview. Once again, we can see clearly the importance of context and its influence on the interpretation of anything you say or any statement you make. Short answers are not necessarily wrong but, depending on the context, may simply be the most efficient way of getting something done, for example, phoning for a taxi.

Another example is asking the time. If you just say, *"What's the time?"*, you may get a short sharp answer, *"Half-past five"*. However, a more strategic approach might be, *"Do you know what time it is?"* or *"Can you tell me the time?"*, which gets a more strategically friendly response, *"I think it's half past five"*. Then it may be helpful to explain your reason for asking, as in, *"What? In that case I'd better get a move on"*.

To produce successful natural communication you can use not just transactional but the interactional strategy of responding, which is equally if not more important in creating meaningful communication. This is something that is often missing in the classroom. The teacher takes the filter out, the interactional things, and concentrates on the transactional things. This happens at CEFR A1 and A2 levels as well as at more advanced levels.

So, strategic competence is the ability to choose from the various alternative exponents in your linguistic repertoire the option that will help you achieve your communication aim in the most effective and successful way, based on:

- The topic
- The situation
- Your motivation
- The need and urgency of that need
- Your relationship with your interlocutor
- The cultural context (national, regional, local, company etc.)

In their own languages most people have ways of responding to the strategic needs of the situation they are in.

Strategic competence needs to play a stronger role in the language classroom. Students tend to concentrate on grammar, on vocabulary and pronunciation and intonation and they tend to leave their strategic competence 'in the cloakroom'. They fail to associate it with foreign language teaching. They need also to concentrate on the context of communication, choosing the right language to suit the situation. Students may be aware of it in their own language environment but in foreign language teaching it is something students may need to be made aware of.

This is not teaching something new. It is awareness raising and it's done using different language techniques.

1. Avoidance strategies

Speakers use phrases such as *and that, that kind of thing, whatever, or something* as a way of avoiding having to go into detail and this is not usually taught in the classroom although it is a common feature of communication. Examples in English are, "*I don't particularly like that kind of thing*", or "*She can have a diet coke or something*".

Another common avoidance strategy when you don't know a word is to use a word like *Thingamajig*, as in, "*I need a thingamajig*", meaning "*I need something but I can't think of the word*". We expect precision but avoidance strategies are everywhere, even in weather forecasts, as in "*In most places it will be dry*". Does that help people? In classrooms teachers use avoidance strategies as in, "*The passive is often used when . . .*". The use of frequency adverbs such as *often*, *sometimes* or *usually* is often a way of avoiding being precise.

2. Politeness strategies

Politeness strategies may achieve the same end, avoiding giving a precise answer. For example, imagine a guest in a restaurant saying, "*Bring me the menu*" and the waiter replying, "*I'll try and find one*". That can be a polite way of saying "*No*", as "*I'll try*" can be seen as an excuse for failure.

Politeness strategies exercise

You can give the students a group of short dialogues of about six lines which include politeness strategies designed to get cooperation from the interlocutor. Give the students some basic phrases and ask them to find the strategic phrases in the text that match the basic phrases you have given them. The example below compares the two kinds of phrases.

Basic phrase	Strategic polite phrase
Have you got ...?	I was wondering whether you...
I want something cheap.	The main thing is it's not too expensive.
This is not what we wanted.	Actually, we were expecting something else.
No, you can't.	Well, I quite understand but I'm afraid....

The job of the students is to read the dialogue and find the strategic exponent of the 'basic phrase' you have provided. Many of them have similar strategies in their own languages and an exercise like this relates to possible similar situations in their own language.

3. Storytelling strategies

Storytelling strategies are also important as they present ways of getting people involved immediately, keeping their attention and making them want to continue reading a text and not stop. The teacher can use a short story or an anecdote in the classroom (say 12 lines). She/he can get students to read the story and identify the language which attracts their attention and makes them want to keep listening or reading right to the end.

The story can be presented as a jigsaw reading activity with the paragraphs mixed up. The students put the story in order and identify the phrases or words which advance the story to the next step and make it more interesting.

An oral version can go like this. Imagine you give your students the task of presenting a short presentation on a topic such as junk food. They have three minutes. Then ask them to prepare a five-minute presentation on the same topic but to a specific audience. E.g:

- a group of sixth formers
- a group of primary school teachers
- a group of parents
- a group of supermarket owners
- a group of journalists

The students decide what content they want to include, what aim they have and what strategy they would adopt. Then they decide on a structure. By having to move from a general presentation to a presentation for a specific audience they learn how to define a presentation.

Strategic competence exercise.

There are a number of ways that we can get students using texts to identify and learn strategic competence examples. They include:

- Raising awareness by using speech bubble examples in different contexts.
 - Comparing dialogues
 - Gap-filling
 - Writing dialogues and comparing with authentic texts
- And
- Short roleplays

As a presentation technique, putting conversations in speech bubbles rather than in narrative texts can help them transfer their strategic competence from their first language to their second language and makes it much easier to see the language exchange in action and how strategic competence is used. (See the recording of the webinar at www.icc-languages.eu/webinars).

4. Mediation strategies

This is receiving much greater attention in language learning than it used to and in the new *CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors* it is gaining influence. The mediation strategies described in the CEFR Companion are ‘*Strategies to explain a new concept*’ and ‘*Strategies to simplify a text*’. The kinds of strategies include:

Explaining a new concept:

- Linking to previous knowledge
- Breaking down complicated information
- Amplifying language

Simplifying a text:

- Amplifying a dense text
- Streamlining a text (by leaving things out)

This might involve translation of some phrases or expressions or terminology, amplifying the context, or using information about the background of the interlocutor (e.g. referring to the country they come from). For example, mention of a *'traffic light coalition'* refers to government or political coalitions involving different political parties identified by their colours (e.g. in the UK, Conservatives – blue, Labour – red and Liberal Democrats – yellow). So, using mediation strategies is very important in giving explanations, especially referring to things your interlocutor is already familiar with in their own culture.

Mediation strategies exercise

You can give your class a short text and identify a number of terms or phrases the class might find confusing or difficult to understand. Divide your class into small groups, allocate each group a phrase or term, and ask them to discuss how best to explain it. Then they share their explanations with the whole class and discuss any misunderstandings. In this way they learn how to practise mediation strategies in explaining a text.

Another mediation strategy exercise is where a class has to produce a short summary of a text for someone of a different nationality. In groups, they prepare their summaries and discuss their mediation strategy, how they did it, with the rest of the class.

Conclusion

Strategic competence is important but will depend on the linguistic repertoire of the speaker. For example, at A1 level learners will have very little flexibility due to their minimal linguistic range. So, they are likely to be limited to functional statements or adjacency pairs. A2 learners will have greater flexibility. At B1 level learners should be able to discuss interaction patterns found in everyday conversation. At B2 level users should have a repertoire of interaction patterns enabling them to be able to deal with most situations they are likely to face.

Comments

Coming from a culture where how to express politeness is a strategic competence it can be difficult to live and work in a country where directness is more important than politeness. This is an important part of classwork. The teacher should be able to help learners differentiate between the strategic competence used in one country and in another. If you are not taught how to transfer from one to the other you can be in a difficult situation.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is worth going to [ICC-Languages.eu/webinars](https://www.icc-languages.eu/webinars) to see Geoff's presentation and slides, where he talks you through how to use the tools mentioned above and shows how to use them visually.

Developing Materials for the Remote and Hybrid Classroom

Nik Peachey

Pedagogic Director

Peachey Publications

Webinar broadcast on December 9th 2021. Watch the recording on www.icc-languages.eu/webinars.

Theme

In this session Nik Peachey – Pedagogical Director at Peachey Publications presents some simple tools and techniques that can make materials more accessible in the hybrid context. These tools and techniques have been used extensively in the design of the materials produced by Peachey Publications.

Nik Peachey explains the challenges of designing materials for remote and hybrid classrooms and presents some simple tools to make your materials more accessible and easier to use in this environment.

Bio

Nik Peachey wears four professional hats. First, he is pedagogic director of Peachey Publications but he also designs and runs online and face to face courses for organisations, including the British Council. He also writes for other companies and offers consultancy to companies, mainly on technology. He has won the British Council ELTONS award for innovation twice and been shortlisted six times.

Presentation

This presentation shows the tools Nik uses to create his online lesson plans and make the illustrations, hopefully enabling other teachers to do the same.

Challenges

One of the main challenges of producing online lessons is making them accessible. If you have some students in the classroom and some studying at home on their computers how do you make everything accessible to everybody? One of the big challenges is how you assure equal quality of accessibility whether students are gaining access via their laptop or on a mobile phone? Linked to this is the problem of synchronising materials. You want to make sure that your students at home are seeing and working with the same materials as the students in your class are working with. You don't want them on different pages of the course or different slides of the presentation. So, you have to be able to synchronise those.

Another problem is finding visually attractive materials in a landscape format. Most coursebooks are produced in a vertical portrait format whereas computer screens are horizontal. Another issue is how to we make the materials interactive so that teachers and students can interact with the materials and not just with each other? Another challenge is pair and groupwork in breakout rooms. How do students in the classroom and students at home see the same materials online if they are working in a breakout room together? The other challenge is how to develop all four skills. Reading and speaking are reasonably easy but listening and writing turn out to be much more difficult. Nowadays, Zoom allows you to project your materials into breakout rooms but what if you want to use different materials in different breakout rooms for things like split reading or split listening activities?

Tools and techniques

1. QR generator

All the slides Nik Peachey produces have a QR code at the bottom left hand corner of the screen to allow his students wherever they are to download the slides onto their mobile phones. You can generate a QR code in a few seconds using a free site. Enter this into Google to get access to a range of options. One example is the free QR code generator. *Copy* a URL and go into the code generator. *Paste* the URL and it creates a code generator. Next, click on *download* and give the file a name. Then click on open and it can

scan the file onto the student's device. If you watch the presentation there is a short video which shows you how to do it very quickly. (www.icc-languages.eu/webinars)

2. Use 'Genially' to create presentations

One of the problems for teachers is how to transfer an audio synchronistically to students working online. A lot of teachers used to hold their microphone up to the audio but using 'Genially' it can be done automatically or you can download the audio using a QR generator.

'Genially' uses HTML5. It's a version of HTML which allows you to create interaction and dynamic movement in web pages. The materials produced in 'Genially' will work on any web browser. 'Genially' also allows you to embed a video in the presentation. Students can either scan the video on to a QR code and go into a breakout room and discuss or they can watch it direct on screen or on their computers as a whole class.

Another useful technique using 'Genially' is to have three recordings with a QR code link under each one. Divide the class into groups of three. Each student downloads one recording and listens to it and then in breakout rooms they discuss the different views they have heard. Working with split dialogues – three different audios in a face-to-face classroom – is quite difficult to do but in a hybrid or remote classroom it's much easier. Different students can listen to different audios on their phones and then you can bring them back and play through the dialogues all together.

'Genially' is free to use. If you want to work on something, you can put it up on your desktop and press on 'Genially' and create presentations or infographics. There are some games you can create and video presentations, lots of different things. If, for example, you go to *Presentations* and click on *Create* it gives you a variety of templates to choose from. You can scroll through the templates and if you see one that you like you can click on the *plus (+)* button, open it and see the different slides it contains and choose which slides you want to use. When you've made the selection you click *add* and that will generate your basic template. If you want to change the images in the template you can do that too and you can animate it in different ways. Then to see how it all works you just click on *Preview*. Very easy to use. Using 'Genially' you can also embed interactive activities into the template,

for example dictation and pronunciation. You can do the activity as a whole class or, using the QR code, the students can scan the activity on their phones and do it in breakout rooms. You can also do reading activities in the same way.

Other tools which are like 'Genially' such as 'Canva' and 'Visme' are also worth investigating.

3.Using H5P to create interactive activities

Developed originally by the Norwegian army, H5P is an open-source technology. You can get it through Wordpress and as a plug-in on Moodle as well. H5P enables you to create a huge collection of interactive activities. You can embed a video and add quizzes, comprehension activities and games into 'Genially', using H5P. It's really worth checking out. Another great advantage of H5P is that it uses HTML, so it works on the phone as well as on the computer.

It can be used for gap-fill or writing exercises and once a writing exercise is completed the computer will evaluate the correctness of your writing and give you a score. It compares your work to a model and will give points accordingly. As well as listening and structured writing activities H5P can help with lexical development, reading and summarising, vocabulary building, grammar and checking pronunciation (in Google Chrome). A great tool, creating lots of different activity types.

You can open an H5P account at [H5P.com](https://www.h5p.com) which makes using the tool much more flexible but if you have Wordpress or Moodle, H5P is available as a free plug-in.

4.Creating apps for students using 'Glide'

When you have produced the lesson books you can create workbook apps for students so they can actually have the app on their phone and that makes the process of co-ordinating the different materials much easier. When the app is on the phone it is very simple to download using the QR code. Students can go through the different units and tasks and can access the slides and the audio. They can also make notes, which are stored on their phone, and then go on to the next activity. They can also do the activities as self-study.

There is a simple and easy to use tool for creating apps, called 'Glide'. You build a spreadsheet containing your content titles and links to the different materials and lessons and when you link that spreadsheet to 'Glide' it automatically creates an interface to form the app. You can edit the interface and add new materials if you wish.

'Glide' is free on a phone but if you want to use it on a PC you might have to pay a subscription.

4. 'Vokaroo' for instant audio recording

If you want to record an audio for your students or give them examples of pronunciation, you can use a tool called 'Vokaroo'. 'Vokaroo' enables you to record audio instantly and then, when you stop recording, press the playback button to listen.

5. Collaborative writing practice using 'Cryptpad'

Writing practice is difficult to manage in a hybrid teaching environment but 'Cryptpad' makes it a lot easier. It works a bit like Google docs. You can instantly create a virtual writing activity that students can work on collectively in real time. For example, you can create a text with mistakes in and the students have to find and correct the mistakes. They can do this at the same time. In a large class. If you create one text for each group of four students then they can work on it together. Another activity is to provide a virtual blank page that students write on and, using the instruction *share*, pass virtually to another student to peer edit or evaluate. The advantage of 'Cryptpad' over Google docs is that it's very simple and quick. Students don't have to have an account or log in. You can create a link instantly share it with your students and get them writing. 'Cryptpad' also enables students to create spreadsheets together, as well as whiteboards and even 'Kanban'. If you don't want your students to edit the text they are evaluating, simply press *view only*, and the shared text can't be changed.

6. Teaching literature

There are no specific online tools for teaching literature but a very good literature-based activity is to get students to build an infographic based on what they are reading or studying. For examples, they can create an infographic about characters or a timeline of what happens.

This is a really nice way of doing a comprehension check. Students can create their own infographic using 'Genially', if they open a free account.

Conclusion

Mastering the basics is reasonably easy, especially using 'Genially', if you just want to create a presentation and use one of their templates. It's not that different from using Powerpoint. If you want to use all the interactive activities and build your templates it takes a bit longer but it's not terribly difficult. H5P is surprisingly easy to use for creating interactive activities. Creating a full unit with lesson plans and interactive activities probably takes about a day if you want to produce your materials to a high standard. To keep your materials and lesson plans lively it's worth keeping your eyes open for current events in international news and seeing how you can exploit them.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is worth going to [ICC-Languages.eu/webinars](https://www.icc-languages.eu/webinars) to see Nik's presentation and slides where he talks you through how to use the tools mentioned above and shows how to use them visually. If you visit Nik's website at [peacheypublications.com](https://www.peacheypublications.com) you can see his video presentations on how to use 'Genially' and other tools described in this article.

Teaching Tips

Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin

Susan and Barry suggest some activities for motivating language learners by focusing on their own interests and cultures.

1. What do you identify with?

- Write up some words that you have taught the class. (e.g. tea, police, breakfast, sport)
- Ask the learners to write one or two words they associate with them (e.g. breakfast – croissant, coffee) They can refer to a dictionary if they need to.
- Divide the class into pairs. The learners compare their lists with each other.
- Each pair reports back to the class. They discuss with the class which words are personal preference and which are identified with their culture.
- Finally, if you can, write up the associations made by a native speaker of the language they are learning.

Outcome: Learners have the opportunity to talk about their personal preferences and also about their culture and improve their vocabulary.

Acknowledgement: Based on an activity designed by Simon Greenall

2. Real Interviews

- If you have a friend or colleague who is a native speaker of the language you are teaching invite her/him into your class. Don't tell the learners beforehand.
- Brief the visitor beforehand and ask them to answer questions but not to give extra information.
- Seat the visitor at the front of the class.
- Explain the task to the class. They have three minutes to find out as much as they can about the visitor.
- If they need help with the questions, prompt them. (e.g. Ask her/him about her/his job.)
- After three minutes, stop and ask the class to tell the visitor what they have learned.

- Ask the visitor to provide feedback on the accuracy and quantity of information the class have gathered.
- After the visitor has left, discuss the interview with the class. Elicit questions they might have asked and also possible follow-up questions.

Outcome: Real life and motivating fluency practice and an opportunity for the learners to engage with the language and culture they are learning and improve their listening skills and understanding.

3. Question wheel

- Make a cardboard circle (about 45 centimetres or 18 inches in diameter) and put a moveable dial in the middle. Divide the circle into 4 quarters.
- Stick it on the white board or on the classroom notice board where everyone can see it.
- Write a question on four pieces of card and stick one in each quarter. The questions are:
 1. What was your first contact with the language?
 2. What was your first contact with the culture?
 3. What do you like best about the language or the culture?
 4. What don't you like about the language or the culture?

Explain the game to the class. A learner spins the dial and when it stops, asks the question on the dial to another learner in the class. After each learner answers a question, invite the class to comment on her or his answer.

After all the learners have had the chance to spin the dial once, they can spin again for another question.

Outcome: Learners are motivated by being able to express what they like and don't like about the language and culture they are learning about. The teacher gets insights into what interests and what may motivate the learners.

4. Create a 'culture corner'

- Find out from your learners what their hobbies and interests are in their own countries. What kinds of place do they like to visit? What's their favourite activity?
- Make a list of places and activities.
- Find pictures of similar places and activities in the country of the language. You can find pictures online or the local travel agency or the country's Embassy or High Commission might have posters and other publicity you can use.
- Use the classroom noticeboard and get your class to choose and post pictures of places and activities they like on it.
- Encourage learners to present the places and activities they like to the class, explain why they like them and answer questions.
- Change the illustrations as you go through the term and encourage learners to provide their own materials and photos.

Outcome: A great way to motivate learners by encouraging them to actively discuss the places and activities they like.

Acknowledgements: Tomalin B and Stempleski S (1993), *Cultural Awareness*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS

Pervez Ghauri, Ursula Ott, Hussain Rammal

Published by: Edward Elgar Publications (2021)

Reviewed by: Barry Tomalin

This is a book for business language teachers and intercultural trainers who want to learn more about business negotiations and strategies and how they work in different countries. The book is divided into four parts, the importance of business negotiations, factors influencing international negotiations, the negotiation process and negotiating effectively. Each part concludes with a range of case studies involving, among other countries, the USA, Canada, China, India, Bangla Desh, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Russia. It concludes with a role-play activity based on negotiations to set up milk plant in Saudi. Each chapter ends with a summary, notes and a bibliography for further reference.

Chapter 4 examines the role of culture in international business negotiations. The authors begin by stressing that, *“Culture is one of the most influential factors in international business negotiations and define it as a system of values, norms and beliefs that a group of people share and identify with”*. (Ghauri et al. 2020 P69) In business terms they identify four areas of culture that influence international negotiations. They are national culture, the dominant culture practised in a country, business culture, the norms of how business activities are undertaken in a country, corporate/ organisation culture, a policy applied by a company throughout their network and professional/occupational culture, codes of ethics and professional practice that transcends national boundaries among people trained in and sharing the same professional and occupational values. (Ibid, pp. 72-73) As the authors state, *“Professional culture can be a useful way to achieve effective intra-organisational communication and knowledge flow within the company, and the use of shared knowledge and technical language can limit the problems associated with the interpretation of words and their meaning in cross-cultural communication.”* (Ibid p.73)

The authors go on to discuss how culture influences international relations, discussing the importance of relationship building and of treatments and time and culture. They describe different country cultures as past, present and future oriented. European countries they see as largely past oriented, dominated by history and they value museums and their old buildings. Many Asian countries, particularly China and Japan, are future oriented whereas many Middle Eastern and South Asian countries are faith based and focused on the present. The authors also describe Edward T Hall's distinction between monochronic (M-time) and polychronic (P-time) attitudes to time and explore their impact on negotiations. M-time negotiators tend to emphasise strict deadlines and adherence to a timetable, whereas P-time negotiators may criticise M-time negotiators as inflexible and rigid and be apprehensive about a negotiation when they have not had time to build a relationship with their M-time colleague. The authors go on to give some good advice on how to handle time efficiently and stress the importance of building cultural empathy, described as, "*the capacity to identify with the feelings, thoughts and behaviour of individuals from another culture*". (Ibid. p79) They go on to show the importance of learning about the negotiator and particularly her/his cultural background and stress the importance of managing motivation and maintaining flexibility.

A most valuable feature of the book is the inclusion of boxes containing mini-case studies of real-life international negotiations with a discussion point added at the end for learners to work on in class or online in breakout rooms. These are additional to the case studies provided at the end of each of the four parts.

Examining communication style differences in international communication the authors draw attention to high and low context styles of communication and the importance of non-verbal communication in order to better understand what is going and, above all, to avoid causing offence. They also examine the implications of Jung's and Myers Briggs personality types for negotiations and apply these to different types of negotiation and negotiators, such as sales, legal, technical and entrepreneurial. Then then describe with examples how different types of negotiations proceed, strategies and tactics used by international negotiators, the role of ethics in international negotiations and a useful commentary on different types of contracts from agents and distribution agreements and licensing and franchising

contracts to joint ventures and mergers and acquisitions and negotiating turnkey projects.

Chapter 12 explores the negotiating styles of four emerging leading world economies, China, India, The Arab world and Russia before concluding with a summary of guidelines for international negotiators.

In conclusion, International Business Negotiations is a very useful addition to the business English teacher's and cultural trainer's bookshelf. Although some of the theories and cultural examples may be familiar, the value for the book is that it is written from a business perspective and the critical incidents and case studies the authors include together with the questions and discussion are really useful for anyone working with international business.

NOTE: A very useful website for developing negotiation skills is the Harvard Law School pon@law.harvard.edu.

It publishes a range of papers and reports on negotiation skills both national and international which are reasonably brief, to the point and very useful. Oh, and free of charge!