How to foster students’ intercultural competence?

Experiences of an education innovation project

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Teachers Day 12 December 2017
Inventory among the audience
Your international classroom includes among others German, Chinese, Dutch, Indian, Ukrainian and Belgian students. You regularly ask questions to the group to make your lecture more interactive. The same 3 Dutch students answer all the time. What do you do?

A. You want to hear someone else now
B. You give a few moments to think and expect a few answers
C. Point at a quiet student and ask: “what is your answer?”
D. Continue teaching as you did
E. Discuss among the three of you and then give a group answer
When you receive the task division: you see that the Dutch student will write the report. You also received an email from the Slovakian student, mentioning that she wanted to contribute to the report, but that she was overruled by the Dutch student. What do you do?

A. Nothing
B. Plan a group meeting to discuss the tasks division
C. Address the tasks division in a plenary meeting
D. Adjust the assessment procedure
You taught a course and when you have the final grades you realize that a lot of the international students failed your course. What do you do?

A. Nothing
B. Discuss the low level of international students
C. Discuss entrance requirements with the program director
D. Investigate the reasons
E. Adapt the course

![Statistical chart showing the percentage of responses for each option.]

- Nothing: 25%
- Discuss the low level of international students: 50%
- Discuss entrance requirements with the program director: 0%
- Investigate the reasons: 0%
- Adapt the course: 25%
International study visit Kiev – Wageningen

bachelor course Environmental Studies

Two weeks collaboration on nuclear energy and waste
The education innovation project

Aim:

- accommodate a fluctuating number of students and still adequately train their intercultural competence while collaborating on a relevant environmental issue

By developing:

- course module to enhance students’ cultural awareness
- teamwork reflection assignment
- self-assessment tool to measure intercultural competence
Tools to foster Intercultural Competence development

1. Online tool: Cultural Detective

2. Guided reflection tool for teamwork

3. Intercultural competence development rubric
Online tool: Cultural Detective

https://www.culturaldetective.com/cdonline/
Packages

- African American
- Arab Gulf
- Argentina
- Australia
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Blended Culture
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
Values lenses

German Values Lense

Dutch Values Lense
PhD Research

Alena Majerská, a Slovak PhD student, is visiting a university in the Netherlands to conduct research. One day her Dutch colleagues invite her to give a short presentation about her research. She prepares diligently because she doesn’t have much public-speaking experience.

The day before the presentation she meets Gert Visser, a Dutch PhD student from her department. They talk about the forthcoming presentation, and Alena confesses that this will be her first experience giving such a talk.

The Dutch colleagues find Alena’s topic interesting, and discuss it after her presentation. Some of them do not agree with Alena’s assumptions and suggest different solutions.

Alena does not expect such an open and public discussion, and takes their critical comments personally. What troubles her most is that Gert, the PhD student to whom she confessed her doubts the day before, is among those expressing the most disagreement.
Worksheets
Evaluation Cultural Detective

**Students:**
- very diverse opinions via digital evaluation; after course not used anymore (Lonely Planet is alternative)

**Teachers:**
- Not suitable for short course and more focussed on international business than education
- No package on Ukraine
- Not flexible for teachers
- Slow when used by many students
- **Positive:** the critical incidents method
Guided reflection tool for teamwork

Speed dating

Preparing golden rules poster

Presentation of golden rules
Guided reflection tool for team work

List with statements about team work on first day and 10th day

A few examples:

- A team needs a strong leader; in the end the leader should take the decisions
- Team members are allowed to talk in their own native language during team meetings
- During a team meeting there should be room for social talk, business talk and checking private issues (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.)
The golden rules

By Royal Decree
we group 8 declare:
3 Golden Rules

1. Avoid misunderstandings by indicating when someone does not understand something
2. Actively participate in group work by coming up with ideas and asking questions
3. Helping each other at all times

signed
- Group 8
Evaluation of guided reflection tool on teamwork

Students:
- Again very varied opinions about the use of the statements and creating golden rules

Teachers:
- We keep these statements; important to make expectations explicit
- Easy to implement
Rubric to assess your intercultural competence development

6 competencies; 3 levels of performance; 2 open questions

1. Interaction with host culture
2. Take action to explore host culture
3. Awareness of own culture
4. Describe cultures without value judgements
5. Perspective taking
6. Explores own personal convictions and knows where to draw the line
Rubric intercultural competence development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigates own and other cultures</td>
<td>I only have the minimum required</td>
<td>I actively try to contact people from the host culture, at the</td>
<td>I am actively engaged in study-related meetings and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contact with people of the host culture in order to complement the course abroad as successful as possible.</td>
<td>university as well as (sometimes) at social events.</td>
<td>(by own initiative and by initiative of fellow students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only when it is necessary I talk to other people in the language we can share.</td>
<td>I can sufficiently communicate with my fellow students in a shared language (for example English, German)</td>
<td>I am engaged in social activities with people from the host culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I can sufficiently communicate with people from the host culture in a shared language (for example English, German)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I try to express myself in the language of the host country (few words like hello, thank you, yes/no, etc.) and I know the most important gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples and arguments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Take action to investigate and explore the host culture**

|                                                      | The new culture: I take it as it comes | I have taken action to get to know the characteristics of the host culture, for example by trying local dishes, going to the local pub, etc. And I have tried to make friends with people from the host country | I have discovered a lot about my host culture in very diverse situations and I can explain these different culture specific situations (why do people behave like they do? What is this behaviour based on?) |
|                                                      |                                        |                                                                   |                                                                   |
| Examples and arguments:                              |                                        |                                                                   |                                                                   |
Analysis of the rubric answers at 3 levels

- Specific
- Profound
- Ethnorelative / Active
Increase in intercultural competence?

Results of comparison of 20 reflection papers (2015 and 2016) with 20 rubrics (2017)
Evaluation of rubric

Students:
- Relatively positive about the rubric; could be shorter

Teachers:
- Less time needed to assess all reflection assignments
- Far more specific reflection

Conclusion: keep the rubric, make it a bit shorter
It can be used as a coach tool
Overall conclusion

- The innovation project improved the training of the intercultural competence of students
- Keep the cultural incident method, skip the online tool
- Keep the statements and reflection assignment about team work
- Keep the assessment rubric in a shorter version
The Cultural Detective is useful for my own education

A. Agree
B. Disagree
The guided reflection tool (statements) for team work is useful for my own education

A. Agree
B. Disagree

45% Agree
55% Disagree
The IC development rubric is useful for my own education

A. Agree
B. Disagree

54% Agree
46% Disagree
How to train students’ IC?

A. In a separate course
B. Integrated in a curriculum
C. No specific training, rather “learning by doing”
Thank you and enjoy your multicultural classroom!

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