

Newsletter No. 8

Workshop in January

“Developing Intercultural Competence in the Language Classroom”

Date: January 14th, 2023 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30

Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya) 6F

Presenter: Kevin Ottoson (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)



Abstract:

For most students, intercultural competence does not just happen; it must be addressed intentionally. Unfortunately, many foreign language classes do not consciously focus on developing students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately across cultures. This workshop will introduce some helpful frameworks for language educators to use in developing and assessing intercultural competence in the classroom. Additionally, participants will be given an opportunity to experience several activities that can be used in their classrooms to build intercultural competence.

The number of participants: 27

1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?

- An activity in which we made lines asking each other about ‘wake-up time’ and ‘commuting time’. Students have to ask the same questions many times. It’s easy and a lot of fun.
- I want to use ‘little c culture’ activity. I learned that there are so many things around us to talk about in a language classroom. In our group, we talked about ‘bathroom’ today, and it was very exciting to learn that you start with similarities and differences and talk about different perspectives at the end.
- ‘Framework 1’: Cultural elements framework. I’ll use this framework before making lesson plans. ‘Survey questions’ I realized questions are the key. We can develop intercultural attitudes by asking effective questions.
- I would like to incorporate reflections on reactions-inducing pictures. It is interesting to share different views on the same image, similar to experiencing and connecting on visual art.
- I want to use ‘fruit drawing activity’ and ‘in line activity’ in my



classes. They are good and useful for junior high school students because they can practice speaking English many times with fun.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I learned that it's important to go beyond 'language practice'. Students need to learn different perspectives, not just a language.
- I learned potential definitions of inter cultural competence and how fascinating this field is. I would like to investigate further.
- I think English is the subject in which we can teach how to communicate with others and to accept differences. So I would like to introduce the activities I learned today.
- To understand a person – it is necessary to know or imagine his/her background and so on. And we must always respect each other. These things are important to develop inter cultural competence.
- How deep each culture is! I should handle about cultural things in my English class.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): Do student talk about Developing Intercultural Competence in the language classroom? Do they find it difficult to talk about?

A: In my classes (depending on the focus of the class), I introduce one or multiple models of intercultural competence (e.g., Deardoff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence and Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. These models are in their learning portfolio, and I ask the students to gather evidence to demonstrate their intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills to demonstrate their intercultural development. For most of them, they can gather evidence of their attitudes (curiosity, openness, respect) and knowledge (knowledge of one's own culture and the cultures of others).

I will give you a breakdown of how I use Deardoff's model to talk about developing intercultural competence. This breakdown is taken from Deardoff (2012)

Step 1-Ask students to define intercultural competence or I ask, "What is necessary to be successful in intercultural interactions with those from different backgrounds?"

Step 2-Introduce Deardoff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence. Give a printout to each student.

Step 3-Have the students circle two or three key elements that they feel are most important. Encourage students to create Specific Measurable Acceptable Realistic Time-based (SMART) goals based on these elements

Step 4-

Part 1. Use a self-reflection tool that asks students to assess themselves based on the following items that are essential in interacting with others from different backgrounds.

5=very high, 4=high, 3=average, 2=below average, 1=poor

	5	4	3	2	1
1. respect (valuing other cultures)					
2. openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures)					
3. tolerance for ambiguity					
4. flexibility (in using appropriate communication styles and behaviors in intercultural situations)					
5. curiosity and discovery					
6. withholding judgement					
7. cultural self-awareness (awareness of using language in social contexts)					
8. understanding others' worldviews					
9. culture-specific knowledge					
10. sociolinguistic awareness (awareness of using other languages in social contexts)					
11. skills to listen, observe, and interpret					
12. skills to analyze, evaluate, and relate					
13. empathy (do unto others as you would have others do unto you)					
14. adaptability (to different communication styles/ behaviors, to new cultural environments)					
15. communication skills (appropriate and effective communication in intercultural settings.)					

Part 2. Reflect on situations requiring intercultural competence-what helped make you more appropriate and effective in your interactions? Now reflect on how you can continue to develop your intercultural competence, especially in areas where you rated as lower.

This is fairly appropriate for students from high schools and universities. For younger learners, you can adapt this. And if anyone is interested in assessing or self-assessing intercultural competence at a younger level, please contact me <oKevin@nufs.ac.jp>

I also use something similar to Byram's (2000) self-assessment frameworks. You can find them on pages 18-21 at the following site:

[https://library.au.dk/fileadmin/www.bibliotek.au.dk/Campus_Emdrup/Sprogforum_arkiv/SPROGFORUM NO. 18 Interkulturel kompetence.pdf](https://library.au.dk/fileadmin/www.bibliotek.au.dk/Campus_Emdrup/Sprogforum_arkiv/SPROGFORUM_NO.18_Interkulturel_kompetence.pdf)

Some students find it easier than others to talk about. Particularly, my students who have experience living or studying abroad have an easier time talking about their development.



Q (2): I think it is difficult to separate the self and a person's culture. I think the line is blurred. What do you think?

A: Yes, our identities are derived from the environment we are raised in. I often ask my students to make a list of ten "I am..." statements. We look at these statements and analyze them based on whether they are individual or relational. My Japanese students typically have more statements that are more relational in nature (e.g., *I am a member of the soccer club, I am the oldest son*), whereas my students from North America and Western Europe will have more statements that are individual in nature (e.g., *I am athletic, I am a foodie*). I don't think it is necessary to try to separate oneself from their culture. I encourage my students to think about how their culture influences their thoughts, behaviors, values, and attitudes. Doing this will enable them to consider how others thoughts, behaviors, values, and attitudes are shaped by their own culture and experiences.

Q (3): Sometimes I just think about how well my students understand the grammar or how I can design my lesson so that they can do better at school. But I think understanding cultures is one of the crucial parts of communicating with others (both Japanese and other people).

A: Yes. I am reminded of the famous quote, "The person who learns a language without learning culture risks becoming a fluent fool" (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen, 2003). As language teachers, we have the great opportunity to introduce different ideas and ways of life to our students through our language classes. I know teachers (especially in Japan) feel pressured to keep up with the schedule and they don't feel they

have time to incorporate activities that can both promote language and cultural learning, but I do believe it is possible, we just have to be intentional about it.



I am not sure if this helps, but if a lesson involves colors, you can introduce the meaning of colors and perceptions of colors differs across cultures (e.g., blue and green in Western, Russian, and Japanese contexts) or if a lesson involves writing an address or introducing oneself, you can highlight the differences in writing an address or introducing oneself can differ among individualistic cultures and collectivist cultures. (e.g., American addresses start with a name, house number, street, state, zip code, and country; American introductions start with a name and then your position, and then your affiliation). These are small but adding these in your lessons can help your students realize that things are done differently across cultures.

Q (4): Many students are interested in other cultures. But quite a few students have no confidence to speak and write English. We have to cheer these students up.

A: Yes, as I mentioned before, as language teachers we have a great opportunity to introduce different ways of life to our students. I hope we can take that excitement for other cultures and use it as a motivation to learn English. I remember taking Spanish in junior high and high school. I was always fascinated by life and customs in countries like Spain, Columbia, Ecuador, and Argentina. My Spanish teachers would constantly share their experiences living and traveling around the Spanish-speaking world. They would bring realia into the classroom. Additionally, they would play commercials and music videos in Spanish. This then got me interested in watching Spanish TV shows at home. All these actions by my teachers got me interested in learning more Spanish. So, yes I agree we have to cheer these students up, foster a positive environment, and try our best to introduce other cultures through language learning,

AR Discussion

Date: January 14th, 2023, 14:45-17:30

Venue: Meieki Campus, MW 10, 11

Title: Group discussion on action research



Advisers: Kazuyoshi Sato, Duane Kindt, Kevin Ottoson (NUFS)

The number of participants: 9

Next workshop will be held on February 25th at Meieki Campus.

Please check our website for the detail.

<https://www.nufs.ac.jp/workshop/news/>