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FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF B2 LEVEL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract. This article explores effective methods for fostering intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among B2-level university students. The development of ICC is critical for students who aim to become proficient communicators in multicultural contexts. The paper outlines teaching strategies, practical activities, and evaluation methods to enhance students' ability to navigate cultural differences in communication.

Keywords: intercultural competence, B2 level, university students, communication skills, teaching methods.

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются эффективные методы формирования межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции (МКК) у студентов университетов уровня B2. Развитие МКК имеет решающее значение для студентов, стремящихся стать компетентными коммуникаторами в мультикультурной среде. В работе представлены стратегии обучения, практические задания и методы оценки, способствующие повышению способности студентов преодолевать культурные различия в общении.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная компетенция, уровень B2, университетские студенты, коммуникативные навыки, методы обучения.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures is essential for future professionals, especially those pursuing careers in education [Kramsch, 1993]. Developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) at the B2 level in university settings prepares students to navigate diverse cultural environments and enhance their teaching practices. As Byram [1997] suggests, the integration of intercultural learning into language education can significantly broaden students' understanding of cultural contexts, thus improving their communication skills.

Understanding Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural communicative competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It encompasses knowledge of cultural norms, communication strategies, and the development of empathy and openness towards cultural diversity [Fantini, 2006]. According to Deardorff [2009], ICC involves both cognitive and behavioral



components, which help individuals to adjust their behavior in intercultural settings while maintaining respect for other cultures.

Teaching Strategies for ICC Development

1. Incorporation of Cultural Content:

- Include authentic materials such as articles, videos, and literature that reflect diverse cultural perspectives [Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009].
- Conduct discussions on cultural differences and similarities, allowing students to engage with real-world scenarios.

2. Task-Based Learning:

- Design tasks that require students to collaborate with peers from different cultural backgrounds, such as role-plays, case studies, and intercultural problem-solving activities [Deardorff, 2009].
- These tasks enable students to practice applying ICC skills in realistic settings, preparing them for future professional interactions [Byram, 1997].

3. Reflective Practices:

- Encourage students to maintain journals where they reflect on their intercultural encounters, promoting self-awareness and deeper learning [Fantini, 2006].
- Use guided questions to prompt critical thinking about cultural norms and communication styles.

4. Language and Cultural Workshops:

- Organize workshops focusing on cultural norms, idiomatic expressions, and non-verbal communication [Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009]. These workshops provide students with practical knowledge that enhances their ability to navigate cultural differences.

Practical Activities

1. Cultural Interviews:

- Students interview individuals from different cultural backgrounds and present their findings. This activity fosters empathy and understanding of diverse perspectives [Kramsch, 1993].

2. Cross-Cultural Debates:

- Debates on culturally sensitive topics help students understand diverse viewpoints and practice expressing their own perspectives while considering others [Deardorff, 2009].

3. Virtual Exchange Programs:



- Partner with international institutions for virtual discussions and collaborative projects. Virtual exchanges offer students the opportunity to interact with peers from different cultures, allowing them to enhance their practical ICC skills [Byram, 1997].

Evaluation Methods

1. Performance Assessments:

- Evaluate role-plays, presentations, and group discussions based on ICC criteria, such as the ability to adjust communication styles according to cultural context [Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009].

2. Reflective Essays:

- Assess students' reflections on their intercultural learning experiences, encouraging critical self-assessment and growth [Fantini, 2006].

3. Self and Peer Assessments:

- Encourage students to evaluate their own and peers' intercultural communication skills, fostering collaborative learning and mutual understanding [Deardorff, 2009].

Conclusion

Fostering intercultural communicative competence among B2-level university students is essential for preparing them to be effective communicators and educators in multicultural settings. By integrating cultural content, employing task-based learning, and using reflective practices, educators can create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that promotes ICC development [Byram, 1997; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009].

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