

B1 expert mission to Zagreb
A report on two teacher training events
Intercultural Communication in Teacher Education

Workshop 1

Venue: Faculty of philosophy, Zagreb, Croatia

Travelling expert: Ildikó Lázár

Local organiser: Milica Bilic-Štefan

Date: 9 December 2005

Participants: 35

Workshop description:

Topic: Intercultural Communication in Teacher Education

Objectives: 1. to raise awareness of ICC
2. to link theory to practice by trying out a selection of ICC activities to be used in the classroom

Participant profile: pre-service EFL teachers

Duration: two and a half hours

Description:

1. A brief introduction to the theory of ICC
2. An overview of the ECML projects
3. Introduction to *Mirrors and Windows*
4. Description of a language course incorporating ICC
5. ICC activities to raise awareness of the importance of the cultural element in language teaching, to simulate phases of the acculturation process, to understand the significance of differences in values, behavior and perceptions and to practice skills of observation and interpretation and to discuss the importance of acceptance, empathy and non-judgmental attitudes.

Workshop 2

Venue: Teacher Education Academy, Zagreb, Croatia

Travelling expert: Ildikó Lázár

Local organiser: Milica Bilic-Štefan

Date: 9 December 2005

Participants: 25

Workshop description:

Topic: Intercultural Communication in Teacher Education

Objectives: 1. to raise awareness of ICC
2. to link theory to practice by trying out a selection of ICC activities to be used in the classroom

Participant profile: pre-service EFL teachers at the primary level

Duration: two and a half hours

Description:

1. A brief introduction to the theory of ICC
2. An overview of the ECML projects
3. Introduction to *Mirrors and Windows*
4. Description of a language course incorporating ICC
5. ICC activities to raise awareness of the importance of the cultural element in language teaching, to simulate phases of the acculturation process, to understand the significance of differences in values, behavior and perceptions and to practice skills of observation and interpretation and to discuss the importance of acceptance, empathy and non-judgmental attitudes.

The workshops were well received by the Croatian pre-service English teachers. They seemed to have benefited from both the theory and the practical activities. They actively participated and contributed to the discussions. See excerpts from their feedback on the next page.

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Excerpts from the students' feedback:

1. A very interesting topic. I learned a lot. It certainly raised my awareness of the need to involve more culture-related topics in our lessons and the benefits of this. I especially liked the role playing and the game with the scissors in the end.
2. I think the class was good, we learnt some useful things, but we also had fun while learning, which is very good because learning is not usually fun.
3. I have nothing negative to say – the lecture was interesting, fun and useful, especially the activities and thanks for the really good book.
4. Very interesting. I told all people I know and met on Friday about the lesson and the games.
5. It was fun, at least the second part of the class (the beginning was perhaps slightly boring). I liked the games and appreciate the books.
6. I did not know many of the points you made, so the workshop was quite useful.
7. The teacher and the lecture were fun, interesting, motivating. There were a lot of activities which were very good.
8. I think you had a very sophisticated workshop, kind approach, and I have only one remark, your approach should be a bit more persuasive, but I think you have the itch for this job, you were very friendly.
9. It was concise, entertaining and educational.
10. I thought she was very interesting, or should I say the cultural differences between nations. I thought the lesson was presented in an excellent manner. I thoroughly enjoyed it.
11. I can't decide how to start: the praising or the criticism. So I'll put down things as they come to mind. Though I liked the tasks and exercises I had a feeling that the lack of detailed explanation of what we were supposed to do resulted in somewhat poor response from our side. /.../ I liked the picture-guessing-part. Though we gave a sort of prejudiced ideas and answers, we „nailed“ it right, with your help, of course. I'm still not sure what to think of the „tool guessing“. Maybe the explanation of the activity should have been more detailed, but at least I had fun making up the usage and the name of the tool. (A little disappointed in the end – it was only a ruler). All in all, the active participation of the attendants speaks for itself. When we defrosted the workshop went on smooth. I found (well, I still do) that workshop interesting, educational and well lead. Those two hours of my life I find not lost in vain. Thank you. Oh & thanx for the books.
12. I really like the games you showed, especially the one with British and American eating habits, which in not such a direct way showed us how we take every for granted and are surprised by a fact we didn't expect. Besides the game of guessing what people in the picture do (Inuit boy, Indian jazz composer etc.) and guessing what the strange thing was, I very much liked the game with different lands and their rules. I even tried it with fifth-grade student and they could directly see the impact that somebody's behavior has an effect on them without them understanding and without knowing the whole truth.
13. I think that Croatia is still quite narrow-minded, but through teaching similar to yours, we as teachers can incorporate intercultural differences into our daily classes and break some of the stereotypes in our society. Teachers are still not

aware of the influence that they have on their pupils and methods you showed us are definitively the most effective ones. Thank you for teaching us and broadening our ability for communication.

14. The information I learned made me aware of the differences in cultures. There are some things I never thought are of great importance, for example: not bringing wine to somebody in France, or paying attention what flowers to give someone. The lecture reminded me of stereotypes. I always try to be open-minded, and not to label people; but that is something that is in our nature probably, and can not fight against it. That is why I particularly liked the exercise with the pictures. The lecture also made me aware of how nonverbal communication is important - I learned that the hard way (the scissors, I mean). All in all, I really enjoyed myself!