

National Training Event – Prague
Teaching language and culture
A teacher training seminar

ECML Project B.1
ICcinTE

Report

An overview of the status of intercultural communication training in language teaching

A quick assessment of English teacher training in the Czech Republic (and quite a few other European countries) yielded the following results:

- 1) ICC training is not (or at least not systematically and institutionally) incorporated in the syllabus of any language practice or methodology courses in teacher training programs.
- 2) British (American, etc.) Culture Studies are only focussing on Civilization (Literature, History, Politics, etc.)
- 3) Cultural awareness and ICC courses are at best elective (optional) courses at some of the universities.
- 4) Trainees only accidentally encounter traces of cultural awareness and ICC training during their 5 years of undergraduate studies if they encounter them at all.
- 5) There are very few ICC training seminars for in-service teachers.

The results above made us design and facilitate 12 National Training Events (NTEs) in 12 different countries with the help of our central workshop participants. The first of these events was held in Prague in April 2005.

Teaching Language and Culture (Teacher Training Seminars)

The seminars were held by Misa Cankova (Czech Republic) and Ildikó Lázár (Hungary) on 21 and 22 April 2005.

Seminar 1

The venue was the Pedagogical Centre (Prague 5, Staropramenna 17) on 21st April 2005. The number of teachers present was 22, most of them from secondary schools, the rest from upper primary classes of basic schools.

The seminar consisted of six 45-minute lessons with two short breaks. We started with the introduction to the topic by doing a warm-up activity based on the teachers' personal experience with meeting "the other". Then, the definition of the term "culture" was elicited and discussed, including the "iceberg" metaphor.

A number of practical activities followed. They were largely based on Tomalin/Stempleski *Cultural Awareness* (OUP 1993), Huber-Kriegler/Lazar/Strange *Mirrors and Windows* (ECML 2003) and Cankova/Gill *Intercultural Activities* (OUP 2002). Each activity was tried

out and then analyzed from the perspective of cultural content, awareness raising capacity and adaptability.

To conclude the session, a short round up followed, then an OHP presentation of ICC ingredients, methods and content areas to be used in ELT served as a summary to the seminar.

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Seminar 2

The venue was a seminar room of Oxford University Press in Prague (Jungmannova 3, Prague 1) on 22nd April 2005.

The number of teachers present was 27, most of them from secondary schools, a few from upper primary classes of basic schools. The seminar consisted of six 45 minute sessions with two short breaks. The content was similar to Seminar 1 with an informal discussion after the official seminar on the local teaching conditions and teaching experience of the participants.

The participants in both seminars have been given a number of handouts which were used during the sessions and which the teachers can modify and use in their teaching. They have also been given a bibliography of recommended theoretical and practical works and a copy of each of the ECML publications of *Mirrors and Windows* and *Incorporating Intercultural Communicative Competence in Language Teacher Education* as well as information brochures on the activities of the ECML.

The feedback was very positive on both days, clearly showing the novelty and the perceived usefulness of the theoretical and practical input of the seminars. In fact, as a result of this NTE the local organizer and facilitator has received several invitations to hold similar workshops in other educational establishments in Prague since then.

Schedule of the teacher training workshops in Prague

Time	Topic	Aims	Facilitated by
9-9:45a.m	Introduction+ icebreaker Defining key terms	Icebreaking To introduce topic To reach common understanding of the most important terminology	Ildikó Lázár Misa Cankova
10– 11:30a.m	Intercultural activities based on <i>Mirrors and Windows</i> Culture in coursebooks	To link theory to practice (to discuss notions like ethnocentrism, acculturation, stereotypes, thick definitions, useful task types) To provide participants with techniques to incorporate ICC	Ildikó Lázár
12- 1:30p.m	Intercultural activities OUP	To link theory to practice To provide participants with techniques to incorporate ICC	Misa Cankova
1:45 – 3p.m	Needs and difficulties Basic ingredients, content areas and methods of ICC Evaluation	Recommending solutions to difficulties of incorporating ICC Summary	Ildikó Lázár