

SOME TIPS OF TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

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Abstract: *Learning the cultural heritage of the language allows learners to build better relationships with its native speakers as well as peers who learn the language. Taking culture into consideration lessens the impact of a culture shock when learners visit the target country.*

Key words: *language learning, cultural heritage,*

Each culture has distinctive rules and social courtesies that are irrelevant in other cultures. In order to minimise possible misunderstandings, teaching culture along with language can provide students with greater cultural sensitivity and can help them to adjust to other cultures when necessary. By sharing stories about what is important enough to put on the country's currency, students will gain another level of cultural understanding from their classmates. Traditional stories such as folk tales or tall tales are another way to bring culture and history into the classroom. Culture significantly influences English language learning, shaping learners' motivation, perception, and communication strategies. The integration of culture enhances communicative competence, fosters cross-cultural understanding, and promotes inclusivity and respect in language learning environments. Language is not only words but also pronunciations, tone, and particular dialects. All of these parts of a language are shaped by culture. Culture, meanwhile, is influenced by shared experiences, environment, and history. Language is created and shaped by the needs of a culture as it changes.

There are five exciting ways to bring cultural diversity into your classroom using maps, reading materials, and images.

1. Using a world map. World maps are excellent classroom resources.
2. Building a background;
3. Highlighting similarities;
4. Sharing a story;
5. Use culturally diverse reading materials.






Bringing cultural diversity into the classroom is becoming increasingly important. Our young learner and teen students are exposed to different ideas, traditions and voices from all over the world. This is thanks to social media platforms like YouTube, SnapChat, TikTok, and Instagram – among others. This is a hugely positive advance because greater cultural understanding increases opportunities for studying and working abroad. However, with so many online contradictions, the world can also seem confusing. It's our job as teachers to show students how to navigate and cope with the information they find. By talking about cultural similarities and differences – and rejecting stereotypes – we help our students understand that the world is an extremely diverse and exciting place. In turn, this will encourage them to be more understanding and tolerant of others in the classroom, helping them to thrive in the future, if they enter an international working environment.

1. Using a world map. World maps are excellent classroom resources. You can use an online version projected on the whiteboard, a poster-sized one from a school supplier, or one that you build on a bulletin board with A4 printed sheets. Having the world at your fingertips suddenly makes a huge planet seem much more inviting and exciting. It's not just the places themselves but the distances, geography and diversity that can be displayed on a world map bringing new information and connections to the learners' attention.

2. Building on map throughout the year. Encourage students to add information to the map to increase their knowledge of the world as you cover different themes. Add cultural details relevant to where you teach and new places students are learning about in class. If creating a yearbook, add a snap of the final map to show students the world they have discovered over the past year.

3. Build a background. Build on a theme or topic covered in your coursebook by including photographs and/or commentary from students of a similar age from around the world. You can find authentic materials online using resources like Teacher Tube (a school-friendly video platform), or search for images or articles online. Themes you could cover include; musical instruments, animals, festivals, places of interest and sports. Then it can be encouraged students to share their traditions or thoughts on how their experiences relate to those you have introduced. It's also a good idea to bring in items related to the theme that they recognize and talk through why they are important in their culture. For example, if your theme is related to music, find a video or a set of images of children around the world playing (or talking about) traditional instruments. Bring in an instrument or two that your students would easily recognize. Ask them to share how the instruments are played





and their cultural significance. They can then add their ideas to the map in the form of stories, photos or drawings.

4. Highlighting similarities. Sometimes when we mention culture, the outcome can be to highlight differences, but we can highlight similarities too. Students can often be interested and even amazed at how similar lives across the world can be. Below are some example activities: Who are the people who help in your community? Possible answers could include nurses/doctors, the police or fire service, teachers, bus drivers, etc. Compare images of these occupations from around the world and have students identify/discuss why they are similar. Use string to link the countries to an image or word-list of similarities and add to this, as topics increase. Note that while it's also important to show there are differences, you should be wary of stereotypes. If you are using a coursebook, look and see how many stereotypes are included – you might be surprised. Are the Inuit only shown living in igloos? Does everyone in Mexico have a sombrero? Is the most pasta eaten per person in Italy? (No, it's the USA).

5. Share a story. Most cultures are rich in storytelling tradition. This means asking students to share a story should be stress-free. Nevertheless, they may need help with the English words, so how do we prepare children to share their stories? This can be an excellent opportunity to build a home/school link. Help students to think about a story they want to share: What words do they need to tell that story? Can they act out parts of the story? Could a picture, a clip of video, a piece of music help tell the story? Give the students time to prepare so they can bring in photos, realia etc. from home. In some situations, it might be an opportunity to invite in parents/grandparents to help with the story. If you have tablet computers in your class let a small group of students take turns to record the stories. Have other groups create a poster for each story to add to the world map.

6. Use culturally diverse reading materials Providing diverse reading materials is an excellent way to introduce your students to cultures, ideas and traditions from all over the world. So perhaps it's time to review your class library. If you can't find authors from every continent, it might be time to update it. While printed books are a nice resource to have, you are restricted by your shelf space. Digital readers, on the other hand, can help you solve that problem. With so many great titles available, there's no need to limit what you have available for your students to read. Focus on one area of the world at a time and read adapted versions of books by authors from this region. Then ask students if they have a similar story in their culture.



Conclusion. Language plays a crucial role not only in the construction of culture but also in the emergence of cultural changes. The possibility of changing the attitudes of people by giving them a new vocabulary to build social realities whether national, gender or racial realities that allow them to access to opportunities to develop and use language to communicate and create relationships. This article presents a literature review about the role of culture in teaching a foreign language taking into account some pedagogical and didactic aspects involved in the teaching process.

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