

Title of example of practice: Professional intercultural communication

Author

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Institution and initiating department/faculty

(i.e. where example of practice takes/took place):

Universidad Europea de Madrid (UEM), Faculty of Communication and Humanities

Departments/faculties in which initiative implemented/to be implemented:

Department of Audiovisual Communication and Publicity and Literature, Faculty of Communication, Universidad de Sevilla

Abstract

(QA question: What are/were you trying to do?)

The subject is taught to future translators and intercultural communicators, in their first year of studies. It will be taught alternatively in Spanish and English and aims to raise consciousness of cultural differences and how these can affect verbal and non-verbal communication. Students will be encouraged to reflect on intercultural issues, culture shock and communication between cultures. Oral and written production skills will be practised with special attention to cultural differences between text types, styles and format.

Background – contextual issues giving rise to the initiative

(QA questions: Why are/were you trying to do it? / What are/were the aims and objectives?)

We consider that the profession of translator or interpreter (and any profession in any global environment) demands more than purely linguistic skills but rather the knowledge and competence of transmitting explicit and implicit messages to a receiver who might share only a small amount of the language, values, behaviours, norms of the sender.

The objectives of the course are:

- ✓ To raise consciousness
- ✓ To transmit knowledge of different cultures
- ✓ To present models of intercultural communication (Hofstede, All & Hall, Trompenaars etc.)
- ✓ To help students acquire intercultural communication skills
- ✓ To improve general and specific skills such as responsibility, self-confidence, ethical values, communicative skills, time management, professional and managerial skills

Description of activity or initiative**(QA question: How is/was the activity/initiative implemented?)**

The course is a 6 ECTS, compulsory first year subject in the *Grado en Traducción y comunicación intercultural*. It is co-taught by a native Spanish and native German teacher, in order to recreate a realistic intercultural communication situation in the classroom. The student group is composed of 14 Spaniards and 15 students from various European nationalities (English is our common language, Spanish to a varying degree).

Teachers present basic models and concepts, as well as foment student participation and interaction based on case studies, critical incidents, problem solution, self-evaluation etc.

Evaluative comments**(QA questions: What are/were the outcomes? What is/was the impact? Is/was the activity/initiative successful? How do you know whether or not it works/worked?)**

Student responses both in questionnaires and orally after class were positive: they found the experience enriching. Student interaction across different nationalities inside and outside the classroom was enhanced. Students worked in multicultural groups, helped each other with preparations, a collaborative and constructive atmosphere in the classroom was raised. Students expressed interest in collaboration in the International Club.

Advice to others

- ✓ Intercultural communication should be included in all course syllabi, whether as a full subject in its own right, or as a short module integrated into other subjects.
- ✓ Teachers need to be trained in intercultural communication.
- ✓ Teachers need to adapt their evaluation criteria to this diversity in the classroom. The Bologna philosophy will help this along.

Reflection/any other comments**QA question: Is/was that the best way to do it? Why/why not? What improvements or adjustments are needed?**

We feel that co-teaching was an enriching element in the class, as personal experience from the teachers' point of view will often break the ice. After finishing the course, our impression is that overly theoretical aspects of the course need to be reduced and be presented in a more inductive way. Simulations present themselves as a very effective way of emotionally engaging the student.

Further details**e.g. web links; relevant references/publications; alternative contact names****1. Web pages of interest:**

"Merkel no quiere que Sarkozy "las manosee". Disponible en:

<http://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-merkel-no-quiere-sarkozy-le-manosee-20081021130952.html> [20/6/2009]

Blog de Mónica, "Choque cultural con el mundo anglosajón". Disponible en:

<http://elblogdelingles.blogspot.com/2009/03/choque-cultural-con-el-mundo-anglosajon.html> [20/6/2009]

Cortés, Gabriela (2002). "El Choque Cultural". Disponible en:

<http://www.azc.uam.mx/publicaciones/tye/elchoquecultural.htm> [20/6/2009]

Cotton, Ben (2008). "Ocho choques culturales de España". Disponible en:

<http://bencotton.lacoctelera.net/post/2008/11/16/ocho-choques-culturales-espana-actualizado-la-clase> .

Guía de descripción y análisis de incidentes críticos. Disponible en:

<http://personal.us.es/isidromj/php/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/plantilla-incidentes.doc>
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http://www.soros.org/initiatives/osji/articles_publications/publications/profiling_20090526 [20/06/2009]

Interculture Map. Disponible en: <http://www.interculturemap.org/EN/interculturemap.php>

Margalit Cohen-Emerique. “Análisis de incidentes críticos: un modelo para la comunicación intercultural “. Disponible en: <http://www.fuhem.es/cip-ecosocial/dossier-intercultural/contenido/10%20INCIDENTES%20CR%20CDTICOS.pdf> [20/6/2009]

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Vazquez, Laura. “El choque cultural y los malentendidos”. Disponible en: http://elenet.org/revista/espanol/lengua-extranjera/revista3/llegada_a_una_nueva_cultura.asp [16/07/2009]

Video: One semestre Spanish Love song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngRq82c8Baw&feature=PlayList&p=F757340086909D51&index=0> (estereotipo mujer española)

2. Print sources

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Kohls, L.R. y Knight, J.M. (1994). *Developing Intercultural Awareness – a cross-cultural training handbook*. Yarmouth/London: Intercultural Press/Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Schmidt, Patrick L. (2007). *In Search of Intercultural Understanding*. Meridian World Press.

Ting-Toomey, Stella y Chung, L.C. (2005) *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing.

Utley, Derek (2004). *Intercultural Resource Pack*. Cambridge: CUP.

ADAIR, J.: *Effective Communication*, Trans-Atlantic Publications; 1997.

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