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HOW TO INCORPORATE THE STUDY OF CULTURE INTO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

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Взаємопов'язане навчання мові та культурі

Мова та культура є взаємопов'язаними, і тому навчанню, як мові, так і культурі повинно приділятися багато уваги. З питань методики навчання іноземних мов існує багато досліджень та публікацій, а проблема, пов'язана з навчанням культури, досліджена недостатньо. Стаття розглядає проблема взаємопов'язаного навчання культури та англійської мови як іноземної. В статті наводяться приклади видів роботи, які можуть бути використані на заняттях. Даються рекомендації щодо використання гумористичного матеріалу.

Ключові слова: теми, контексти, види робіт, артефакти, гумор.

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Взаимосвязанное обучение языку и культуре

Язык и культура тесно переплетены, и поэтому взаимосвязанному обучению, как языку, так и культуре должно уделяться большое внимание. По вопросам методики обучения иностранному языку существует множество исследований и публикаций, а проблемы, связанные с обучением культуры, исследованы недостаточно. Статья рассматривает проблему взаимосвязанного обучения культуре и английскому языку как иностранному. В статье приводятся примеры видов работы, которые могут использоваться на занятиях. Даются рекомендации по использованию юмористического материала.

Ключевые слова: темы, контексты, виды работ, артефакты, юмор.

The most important issue in teaching for cultural understanding is the degree to which the two – language and culture – are integrated V.Galloway, H.Brown, A.Mollica. Having analyzed studies conducted by such Ukrainian, Russian and American researchers as: R.Borisko, M.Galskova, N.Elukhina, O.Tarnopolsky, T.Khokhlova, V.Miloserdova, C.Morain, C.Mantle-Bromley, V.Galloway, A.Mollica, H.Brown we managed to formulate several suggestions for achieving the integration of culture into foreign language teaching. They are the following:

- A „facts only” approach should be avoided
- Cultural topics should be presented in conjunction with units' themes
- Cultural contexts should be used for a number of oral communicative activities
- Cultural activities should be planned and prepared very carefully
- A variety of techniques for teaching culture that involve listening, speaking, reading and writing skills should be used
 - Photos, picture, textbook illustrations, newspapers advertisements, cartoons, objects, and other cultural materials should be used
 - Small-group techniques, such as role-plays, dramas, discussions, etc should be used
 - While teaching vocabulary cultural information should be used

The techniques given below are meant to provide a sampling of ideas for those university instructors and school teachers who want to integrate culture in language teaching.

Activities that **decrease stereotypic perceptions** help students realize the dangers of making fast generalizations about the people of another culture. Stereotypes can be very harmful if they create barriers to understanding. How many of us have the strong impression that all British eat fish and chips? How many of us believe that all Arabic-speaking people do not value time and are often late? How many of us have returned from a tour to a foreign country to say that the country was beautiful, but the people were strange? These and other stereotypes can be analyzed and scrutinized with the help of well-designed activities.

American methodologist C. Mantle-Bromley suggests teachers to help students look at their own culturally conditioned behavior more closely, recognize the pluralism that exists in every culture, and understand the risk of overgeneralization which leads to stereotypic thinking. She advocates the following activity: an object that can be dismantled into its various pieces is put into a bag. Students are trying to guess what the object is from handling the smaller pieces. They begin to understand how difficult it is to understand another culture by approaching it in „a piece-meal

fashion''. C. Mantle-Bromley also suggests that teachers encourage students to collect items that reinforce stereotypes in their own cultures, for example advertisements. Students can discuss how well advertisements represent the people of the culture and thus begin to understand how stereotypes originate. Another suggestion she makes is to ask students to read articles (in the foreign language they study) that present counter-examples to specific stereotypes.

Artifact study activities designed by Galloway help students discern the cultural significance of some unfamiliar objects from the target language culture.

Students are supposed to form hypotheses about the function of the unknown object. We have tried this activity in our classroom at Lugansk Taras Shevchenko National University using a Welsh love-spoon as an unknown object. We formed groups of students, gave each group an object, and asked them to answer the following questions:

- How was this object made, by machine or by hand?
- What do you think its purpose is?
- Do you think it is supposed to be a decoration?
- If this object were yours, in what way would you use it?
- What role do you think this object plays in the culture of the Welsh people?
- Can we learn any facts about the culture of Wales from this object?

After students have reported their answers we gave them an explanation of the artifact and encouraged them to think of how closely their own hypotheses conformed to our explanation.

Using **humor** as a component of culture has been advocated by many Ukrainian and foreign language methodologists. Among them V.Plakhotnik, N.Sklyarenko, H.Brown, A.Mollika. The language teachers who have ever acted as interpreters know how hard it is to translate or interpret an anecdote or a pun or even a simple joke. Those teachers who have been to UK or the USA or any other English-speaking country must have found that sometimes humor is difficult to understand.

American language educator G.Morain makes several suggestions for incorporating the study of humor into the foreign language curriculum. She recommends teachers the following things:

- provide students with authentic examples of cartoons, jokes, puns, and other forms of humor;
- make use of students' own experiences;
- teach students about the conventions of humor in the target culture;
- help students explore the scripts of cartoons and jokes so that they are able to analyze humor;
- give students a chance to experience the humor of the target culture;
- give students an opportunity to share humor from the target culture with one another.

We have looked at three simple techniques that integrate the teaching of language and culture. As our knowledge about teaching language through culture and teaching culture through language grows we hope to find some new teaching ideas and design new technique and activities.

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How to incorporate the study of culture into the foreign language curriculum

Language and culture offer greater insights when looked at together rather than separately because of how intertwined they are. However, while teaching English as a foreign language is a well-researched area in Ukraine, few studies have been done to investigate the effectiveness of teaching cultural understanding. The article deals with the issue of incorporating culture into English language teaching. Examples of cultural techniques and activities are given in the article. Some suggestions for incorporating the study of humor into the foreign language curriculum have been given.

Key words: cultural topics, cultural contexts, techniques, artifacts, humor.

Відомості про автора

Федічева Наталія Володимирівна – кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент, завідувач кафедри практики мовлення Луганського національного педагогічного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Основні наукові інтереси зосереджено навколо методики викладання іноземних мов та культури спілкування.

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