The Educational Value of Foreign Language Learning

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Overview

1. Purposes, aims and objectives of language teaching
2. The CEFR and language teaching purposes
3. An example
4. Theory behind the example – practice from theory
5. Assessment – some reference points
6. Language teaching in society
7. Conclusion
1 Purposes, aims, objectives

1. Purposes/Aspirations – e.g. ‘liberate from insularity’

2. Aims – e.g. understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources

3. Objectives – e.g. ‘by the end of this unit learners will know that in English [3rd person ‘s’] AND know how to use [3rd person ‘s’] (‘can do’)."
Purposes/Aspirations
Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils’ curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world.

Aims
The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing.

It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language.
1. **Norway Aims for Language teaching**

**Purposes [and Aims]**

1. Foreign languages are both an *educational subject and a humanistic subject*. This area of study shall give opportunity for experiences, joy and personal development, at the same time as it opens greater possibilities in the world of work and for study in many language regions.

2. Competences in language and culture shall give the individual the possibility to understand, to ‘live into’ and value other cultures’ social life and life at work, their modes and conditions of living, their way of thinking, their history, art and literature.

3. The area of study (languages) can also contribute to developing interest and tolerance, develop insight in one’s own conditions of life and own identity, and contribute to a joy in reading, creativity, experience and personal development.

4. Good competence in languages will also lay the ground for participation in activities which build democracy beyond country borders and differences in culture.  

   (My (literal) translation – emphasis and numbering added)

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• //www.udir.no/kl06/PSP1-01/Hele/Formaal - accessed March 2018
2. The CEFR and purposes

- Introduced competence (not content) as aim → levels of competence

**BUT** also educational/political purposes in origins – John Trim (main author):

- as a Council of Europe project, [the] aim was to promote language learning not as an end in itself (...) but rather as a contribution to the over-arching political aims of the Council.

- It should serve to improve international understanding and cooperation, promote methods that strengthen democratic practices and develop the learner’s independence of thought and action combined with social responsibility.

  Trim in Byram and Parmenter 2012 p. 23

**BUT** NOT FULLY REALISED IN CEFR
2. Realising educational/political purposes

Language Teaching and Citizenship

• Combining Foreign Language Education with Education for Citizenship

• Norway:

• Good competence in languages will also lay the ground for participation in activities which build democracy beyond country borders and differences in culture.
3 An example

Green Kidz: Young learners engage in intercultural environmental citizenship in English language classroom in Argentina and Denmark.

Melina Porto, Petra Daryai-Hansen, María Emilia Arcuri and Kira Schifler

Participants and aims

Learners in Argentina and in Denmark – learning English (ages 10-12) – connected by internet

Aims:

THINKING

• encouraging children to explore and reflect on environmental issues - globally and locally
• understand environmental issues and how to recognize them in their own surroundings,
• challenge taken-for-granted representations of the environment,

ACTING

• engage in trash sorting and recycling practices,
• contribute to improving the environment in their local communities = ACTION IN THE COMMUNITY
Activities in school

STAGE 1 – DISCOVER ABOUT ‘US’ AND PREPARE FOR ‘THEM’

• Pupils identified green crimes in their schools and in their communities and drew or video-taped these crimes.

• trash analysis listing, classifying and sorting trash in waste bins in schools
Activities in school and internet

STAGE 2 – PRESENT ‘US’ TO ‘THEM’ AND COMPARE

- compared and discussed results using a wiki.
- survey among family members, friends, etc. about their environmental habits - compared on wiki
- analyzed critically (audio) visual media images and texts, produced in Argentina and in Denmark,
Activities in school and internet

STAGE 3 – WORK TOGETHER – IN ‘US AND THEM’ GROUP

• collaboratively online using skype and wiki (ie Argentinean and Danish pupils in mixed groups) designed advertisements to raise awareness of environmental issues
Using the internet to share understanding

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uysvpqx2vN0
- https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-Planet-Argentina/603179783054514
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uysvpqx2vN0
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zTlOCskmo8
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjgTR6QeetQ
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGE9oq3hTdo
Action in the community

STAGE 4 – FOCUS AGAIN ON ‘US’ AND ACTING ...

Argentine pupils:

• created videos and songs and shared in facebook page
• were interviewed by a local journalist and got the collaborative posters published in local newspaper,
• designed a “pasacalles” (banner) and hung in the school street.
SEPARAR LA BASURA ES GUARDAR EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
NOSOTROS TE AYUDAMOS... VOS, ¿ NOS AYUDAS? 
ARGENTINA DINAMARCA 
6A-O'C-ESCUELA GRADUADA JOAQUIN V. GONZALEZ
University Example

• University – Argentinians and English learning other’s language
Falklands / Malvinas Project

Citizenship education for a culture of peace: The case of the Malvinas/Falklands project in language teaching in Higher Education

Melina Porto & Leticia Yulita

The Malvinas/Falklands War (1982): An opportunity for citizenship education in the foreign language classroom in Argentina and the UK

50 Argentinean university students of English (CEFR C1) AND 50 UK students of Spanish (Honours)

AIMS – THINKING
• encouraging STUDENTS to explore and reflect on historical issues – nationally and internationally
• understand historical issues and how to analyse them in national and international context,
• challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about history

AIMS – ACTING
• Research (historical documents – newspapers, interviews …)
• Communicate with people about historical issues – from international perspective

researched conflict and -- focus on interaction based on respect, mutual understanding and cooperative conflict resolution
Activities

STAGE 1 – DISCOVER ABOUT ‘US’ AND PREPARE FOR ’THEM’
• researched newspapers, talked with parents, created PPTs about the war

STAGE 2 – PRESENT ‘US’ TO ‘THEM’ AND COMPARE
• communicated synchronically and diachronically (wiki and Elluminate)
• interviewed Argentine and English war veteran
  - created blogs/facebook pages and noting reactions

STAGE 3 – WORK TOGETHER – IN ‘US AND THEM’ GROUP
• collaboratively created leaflets etc to show both national perspectives and reconciliation
During the Falklands/Malvinas conflict, the media and the government manipulated information in such an obvious way that it seemed as if it were a joke. The touch of humour of some of the front-pages of British magazines and newspapers makes one think that they did not take the Argentinians seriously, and this is probably the message they were trying to convey: “Relax people, this is a piece of cake”. At that time, people were not able to know the whole story since politicians controlled what the media could or could not say, but nowadays we can, and we HAVE TO, listen to many different points of view in order to draw our own conclusions.

Los medios argentinos también manipularon a su pueblo mediante la prensa haciéndole creer al pueblo que la tan mentada guerra iba sobre ruedas y que el ejército argentino estaba venciendo al enemigo británico, cuando la realidad de un ejército no preparado era más que evidente. Al estar los medios completamente controlados por el Gobierno, la gente no tenía otra información más que la errónea brindada por el gobierno, lo cual hace que veamos el panorama ahora desde una óptica muy diferente a la del pueblo en ese entonces.
Proyecto Malvinas UNLP

Somos estudiantes de Traductores de Inglés de la Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación. Hace un mes comenzamos un proyecto sobre la Guerra de las Malvinas para el cual buscamos información desde el punto de vista argentino e inglés. A partir de esta búsqueda nos dimos cuenta de que los modos de comunicación jugaron un papel sumamente importante en las distintas versiones que surgieron en ambos países. Ademáes, tuvimos la oportunidad de entrevistarn a un ex combatiente de Malvinas y de comunicarnos e intercambiar opiniones con estudiantes británicos. Estas experiencias nos aportaron a una representación más viva de lo sucedido.

Después de reflexionar sobre el material que obtuvimos, llegamos a las siguientes conclusiones: La Guerra de las Malvinas fue un medio para cubrir la crisis en la que Argentina se encontraba (desaparecidos en el gobierno militar, inflación, entre otras). Aunque muchas personas creen que fue un acto de patriotismo, creemos que la guerra en realidad fue un asunto de intereses de los gobiernos. Por un lado, Galtieri pretendía conseguir el apoyo y la confianza del pueblo para mandarle al poço. Por el otro, el gobierno de Thatcher estaba pasando por una situación similar (desempleo, inestabilidad en su contra, recesión). Ante esta crisis, necesitaba recuperar su popularidad con las nuevas generaciones.

Ambos gobiernos tenían el mismo objetivo: ambas querían las últimas esperanzas de seguir en el poço en esas pequeñas islas. Como consecuencia, aproximadamente 900 personas murieron en combate y muchas otras resultaron heridas. Sólo la peña perdida tanto por un gato como por otro.

Este documental fue realizado por los estudiantes de la Escuela Técnica Roggio (Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires) para el proyecto Jóvenes y Memoria.

Malvinas

by antonman
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Best Glog performance with

22
‘Action in the Community’

STAGE 4

• Distributed leaflets
• taught special class in English language school
• taught class with NGO in poor neighbourhood [youtube]

• ETC

• Melina Porto (2014): Intercultural citizenship education in an EFL online project in Argentina, Language and Intercultural Communication, DOI:10.1080/14708477.2014.890625

• Melina Porto and Michael Byram 2015 A curriculum for action in the community and intercultural citizenship in higher education. Language Culture and Curriculum 28, 3, 226-242.
4. THEORY behind the example
Theory = systematic purposes and aims

• Combine theory of **model of intercultural competence (Byram 1997)** for language teaching - emphasis on INTERNATIONAL

With

• Aims of **education for citizenship** – emphasis on **ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY, ‘HERE AND NOW’**

[Byram 1997 Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence]
Intercultural Communicative Competence


Intercultural Competence

- skills of interpreting/relating (savoir comprendre)
- Knowledge (savoirs)
- Critical cultural awareness (savoir s’engager)
- Openness/curiosity (Savoir être)
- Skills of discovery/interaction (savoir apprendre/faire)
4. Citizenship education

Citizenship education has 3 related purposes:

1. **Social and moral responsibility:** Learning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour

2. **Community involvement:** Becoming involved in the life of neighbourhood and communities, including learning through *community involvement* and *service* to the [=our] community.

3. **Political literacy:** Learning about the institutions, problems and practices of our democracy (....) how to *make themselves effective in the life of the nation* - a concept wider than political knowledge alone.

Citizenship education in England  (from Ministry website in early days of Cit Ed in National Curriculum)

4. Green Kidz example – practice from theory

• Learners are critical
  → analyse what people do [in environment]
  → judge what they do according to criteria of (democratic) liberal societies

• Learners take action [after discussing with international partners; in their own community]
  → act as mediators (compare new CEFR Companion) between perspectives ['theirs’ and ‘ours’]
  → teachers encourage action – A NEW ROLE FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS
4. Practice from theory
The Meaning of the Experiment for ‘Ordinary’
Teaching/Learning

• DO YOUR OWN EXPERIMENT!

• Project work = 10-15% of time per year BUT effect is MUCH MORE!!
  • try to link with let in other countries learning Japanese

• Project combines (1) ‘teaching our culture’ with (2) ‘teaching intercultural competence’ and (3) ‘citizenship education’

• Use AJE to find a partner .... [use Japanese as lingua franca]

Once per year...
  10% of time 80% of effect!!
4. Practice from theory
The Meaning of the Experiment for ‘Ordinary’
Teaching/Learning

WITHOUT AN EXPERIMENT

1. Teaching our culture =
   ► Using texts in Japanese about our community and culture in ‘your’
country
     [culture = what we do and why]

• ALSO for reading skills, for speaking and listening
  skills
4. Practice from theory
The Meaning of the Experiment for ‘Ordinary’ Teaching/Learning

2. Teaching intercultural competence
► Telling people from other countries about ‘our country’ OR (better) our community

ALSO FOR
• writing/speaking skills – write a text in Japanese about (some aspect of) our village/city/region - avoid ‘our country’);
• prepare an oral presentation for foreigners about (some aspect of) village/city/region
4. Practice from theory
The Meaning of the Experiment for ‘Ordinary’ Teaching/Learning

3. Citizenship education
▶ connect the classroom to our community
- learners prepare exhibitions of work for other learners
- learners invite parents/ local journalists etc. to exhibitions
4. Practice from theory
Teachers’ question: Is this (still) language teaching?

• YES, because language learning is (still) ‘instrumental’
  • Languages learnt for use

• YES, because learners learn better and more quickly when language is used not studied
  • Because focus of attention is on content/doing not language/studying
    [Research results from Content Based Instruction [CBI]/Content and Language Integrated Learning [CLIL]]
5. Assessment – moving towards a solution

Teachers’ questions:

“How can I assess?”

“What is not tested is not taught”

• Examples for later consultation
5. Assessing Pluricultural/Intercultural Competence in Language Teaching

• CEFR Companion Volume 2018
• www.coe.int/lang-cefr
Building on a pluricultural competence
Highest level (C2)

• Can initiate and control his/her actions and forms of expression according to context, showing awareness of cultural differences and making subtle adjustments in order to prevent and/or repair misunderstandings and cultural incidents.

• Can identify differences in socio-linguistic/-pragmatic conventions, critically reflect on them, and adjust his/her communication accordingly.

• Can sensitively explain the background to, interpret and discuss aspects of cultural values and practices drawing on intercultural encounters, reading, film, etc.
As part of ‘Mediating communication’ – Facilitating pluricultural space (Companion p. 120)

B1

• Can support an intercultural exchange using a limited repertoire to introduce people from different cultural backgrounds and to ask and answer questions, showing awareness that some questions may be perceived differently in the cultures concerned.

• Can help to develop a shared communication culture, by exchanging information in a simple way about values and attitudes to language and culture.
5. ACTFL ‘can-do statements’
https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVICE PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INVESTIGATE</td>
<td>INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my own and other cultures I can identify products and practices to help me understand perspectives.</td>
<td>In my own and other cultures I can make comparisons between products and practices to help me understand perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERACT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can interact at a survival level in some familiar everyday contexts.</td>
<td>I can interact at a functional level in some familiar contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCED PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK</td>
<td>SUPERIOR PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my own and other cultures <em>I can</em> explain some diversity among products and practices and how it relates to perspectives.</td>
<td>In my own and other cultures <em>I can</em> suspend judgment while critically examining products, practices, and perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I can</em> interact at a competent level in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts.</td>
<td><em>I can</em> interact in complex situations to ensure a shared understanding of culture.</td>
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Next steps ....

• Use CEFR or ACTFL to assess learners in Green Kidz etc. projects

• In the meantime ....
6. Language Teaching in (European) Society

Current Developments – Council of Europe
ATTENTAT À CHARLIE HEBDO
LES FUGITIFS SONT ACTIVEMENT RECHERCHEÉS

Attaque meurtrière à Charlie Hebdo : Angela Merkel condamne un attentat abominable.
6. Language Teaching in Society

• The European situation – before and after ‘Charlie-Hebdo’


→ Conference theme: Dialogue for Peace

• After Charlie Hebdo → Education as a means to create change
  • Education for citizenship
  • Education for democratic citizenship [and intercultural dialogue]
  → Model of Competences for Democratic Culture [and intercultural dialogue]
  → how to plan ALL subjects to develop Competences ...

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/competences_en.asp
Values
- Valuing human dignity and human rights
- Valuing cultural diversity
- Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Attitudes
- Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices
- Respect
- Civic-mindedness
- Responsibility
- Self-efficacy
- Tolerance of ambiguity

Skills
- Autonomous learning skills
- Analytical and critical thinking skills
- Skills of listening and observing
- Empathy
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
- Cooperation skills
- Conflict-resolution skills

Knowledge and critical understanding
- Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
- Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
- Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

Competence
REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

• https://www.coe.int/en/web/education
Green Kidz (and others)

- Existed before CDC i.e. CDC is not ‘new’ but comprehensive

- Green Kidz - demonstrates CDC competences FOR EXAMPLE:

  *Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law*

- This set of values is based on the general belief that societies ought to operate and be governed through democratic processes which respect the principles of justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law.
Green Kidz

• **Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices**

  Openness is an attitude towards people (...) or towards beliefs, world views and practices which differ from one’s own. It involves (...) willingness to engage with other people and other perspectives on the world.

**Responsibility**

• Responsibility (...) involves being reflective about one’s actions, (...) about how to act in a morally appropriate way, (...) performing those actions and holding oneself accountable for the outcomes of those actions.
• Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
  
  (...) the skills required to communicate (...) with people who speak the same or another language, and to act as a mediator between speakers of different languages.

• Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
  
  (...) of the socially appropriate verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions that operate in the language(s) which one speaks, (...) of how every language expresses culturally shared meanings in a unique way.
And ....

- ‘action in the community’ = using competences in life (in education, and in society)

IN SHORT:

- Language teaching can/should influence and change society

  • The teacher’s dilemma – Shall I teach my learners to take ‘action in the community’ – Shall I become a different kind of language teacher?
Conclusion

• Educational purposes can be realised in specific aims and objectives

• Foreign language education can be combined with citizenship/democratic purposes and realised in project work
  • Internet projects can be adapted to ‘ordinary’ classroom

• Assessment: a problem with a solution in sight ....

• Language teaching has social purposes – with implications for teacher identities

[For copy of PPT - m.s.byram@dur.ac.uk]