

INCORPORATING CULTURE IN TEACHERS' TRAINING

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Abstract:

The present paper addresses the question of how one should include culture in language teacher training to increase awareness of the target culture. Admittedly, language teachers are themselves learners, constantly improving their own cultural competence. Teachers must be made aware of the fact that there are no higher and lower cultures, and that there exist differences between groups within the target culture. This means that language does not only represent how we describe culture, it also mirrors cultural aspects. Thus, the culture associated with a particular language cannot be learned while referring to a few aspects about celebrations, customs or traditions of the zone in which a language is used. Culture is a much larger concept. This is inherently bound to countless linguistic aspects. The latter are to be introduced in second/foreign language education. Language teaching aids may not be enough for the target language culture teaching, so it ought to be the language teachers' responsibility to find practical solutions to this issue. Thus, language educators ought to find a way to assimilate culture into their teaching approaches. Moreover, it may not be realistic to consider that language learners will later be faced with cultural situations after they achieve mastery of the linguistic structures of the language. The imaginative classroom teacher can bring forward countless ideas about how to insert culture into his/her textbooks and classroom events. Some of the approaches I want to suggest are the use of movies, dialogues from genuine speakers of the target culture, talks with native speakers, video-taped materials of the target language community, and genuine readings and realia. In addition to this, it ought to be noted that the possible activities and approaches are countless, and that each teacher ought to evaluate his/her own context to assess the success of any potential activity. He/she should adapt any activity or material at his/her disposal to suit his/her students' needs.

Keywords: Culture; Teacher's training; Target culture; Language learner.