

Session Title: Teaching multilingual students: perspectives and strategies

Summary: In this session, we will discuss the process of intercultural learning that both students and teachers who teach multilingual students go through. We will learn about ways to reach out to and use the strengths of multilingual students and share ways of promoting intercultural learning in a diverse classroom. We will end by examining several case studies involving multilingual students in your classroom and brainstorm the best strategies to respond to them.

Theoretical perspectives discussed in this session¹:

1. Sociocultural perspectives on intercultural learning
 - All learning is social (activity, social relations, tools)
 - Dialectic unity of human mind and emotions
 - Learning in communities of practice
 - Often learning is informal
 - Importance of informal social networks

2. An experiential perspective on intercultural learning
 - Learning by daily experiences
 - To become meaningful, reflection is necessary
 - Often unconscious, haphazard, and linked to the learning of others
 - Can be self-directed/goal-oriented

Case Studies

Case study 1: Plagiarism

- a) An international graduate student submits a paper on Canvas. Turn-it-in detects several plagiarized excerpts from other students' papers. In a face-to-face meeting with the instructor, s/he denies copying from online students' papers.

¹ Adapted from Jokikokko (2010).

- b) An international graduate student uses PowerPoint slides from a student from previous years for his/her in-class presentation. In a face-to-face meeting with the instructor, s/he denies copying.

Case study 2: Unprepared students

An undergraduate student doesn't know how to access Canvas and email. S/he also doesn't prepare homework and if s/he ever submits homework, doesn't fully follow the instructions/guidelines.

Case study 3: Academic haggling

Several undergraduate students in your class attempt to negotiate homework guidelines and deadlines. In addition, they negotiate grades and ask to cancel classes due to personal reasons.

Case study 4: Questioning teacher authority

A graduate student (older than you) appears very reserved and somewhat dissatisfied with your class. S/he also usually questions your rationale for certain class activities and answers to class assignments. When asked in class, s/he doesn't want to explain why s/he behaves in this manner.

Reference

Jokikokko, K. (2010). Teachers' intercultural learning and competence. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Acta Universitatis Ouluensis 114.