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Learning by creating videos: How to make sense of concepts related to intercultural communication

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Abstract:

The proposed project will offer a locus for students to visualize their understandings of key concepts found in intercultural communication and communicative practices and promote active learning through the use of multimedia. In globalized and technologically developed environments, the ability to successfully function in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts has gained importance in foreign language curricula as a prerequisite skill (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003; Sercu, 2002).

Such ability to strategically mediate cultures and relate to other cultures is closely connected to intercultural and global citizenship as it encompasses awareness, participation, engagement, cross-cultural empathy, and personal achievement (Byram, 2012; Davies & Pike, 2009; Myers, 2012). The intercultural communication course offered by the English department is offered to students as one of the core courses, highlighting the importance of equipping students with the essential skills, knowledge, attitude, and awareness needed to prepare students as interculturally competent citizens for the global market. This course usually enrolls 60 students. In such content-heavy courses, students are introduced to various theories and concepts through lectures frequently. Though students often participate in discussion, it is difficult to grasp whether they have fully captured the meaning in the right way.

The study would first undertake several semi-structured interviews with students to explore the challenges students face in intercultural communication. Upon the completion of the first interview, the students' responses would be gathered to determine which concepts and theories deserve further exploration through the creation of videos. The students will be guided in the process of making the videos, using a particular software, but the design of the videos including the plotline to capture the meaning of the concept will be driven by the students. The students will apply their knowledge and use



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creativity in producing the videos, which will be shared with and critiqued by other students. Another round of interviews will be conducted toward the end of the project to understand how the students find the effectiveness of creating and sharing the video materials for better comprehension of concepts. Their exploration of concepts will be presented and shared with other students in the form of a video presentation. Through their participation in the project, students will examine various intercultural concepts and construct their understandings around the concepts. The creation of video materials would not only facilitate their understanding, but also critically examine how the concepts have been interpreted and approached similarly and/or differently by other students. Such a reflective process will help students to expand their knowledge of various key concepts. Moreover, whilst students' confusion or anxiety in understanding concepts or theory could be unofficially observed by the instructors in teaching, the project aims to make explicit what common difficulties students share in learning about intercultural communication. Further, as these students will be invited to participate in a post-study interview, the effectiveness of creating such videos will be evaluated for improvement and development. The project seeks to create several video teaching materials that demonstrate various concepts related to language, culture, and intercultural communication. As such concepts are critical in the preparation of global citizens, various courses in higher education have underscored such concepts both explicitly and implicitly in the course design. Thus, the production of such videos can function as teaching materials for other courses. Overall, the significance of the project lies in uncovering students' challenges while understanding various key concepts in intercultural communication, providing students with opportunities to learn actively through multimedia, and developing effective teaching methods to be implemented in other content courses.