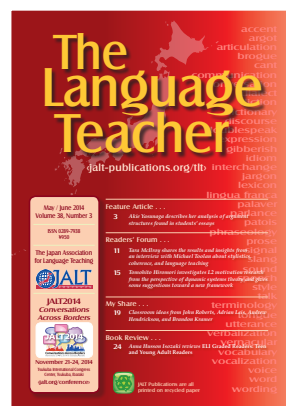


The Language Teacher

The Language Teacher (TLT) is the bimonthly publication of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). It publishes articles and other material related to language teaching, particularly in an Asian context. *TLT* also serves the important role of publicizing information about the organization and its many events.. As a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting excellence in language learning, teaching, and research, JALT has a rich tradition of publishing relevant material in its many publications.



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The content integration project: “Bringing English teachers together to promote tolerance in the language classroom”

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This article describes a content-integrated EFL research project designed to promote tolerance among English language learners. The project involved 260 students studying English at five high schools in Russia. It consisted of (1) a pre-teaching survey of student attitudes towards other ethnic groups, (2) a content-based tolerance education program using specially-designed EFL teaching materials, and (3) a post-teaching survey of attitude changes among students. The article emphasizes the role that foreign language teaching can play in reducing prejudice and reports on the results that the project achieved in reducing xenophobia among students.

本論では、英語学習者の寛容度を高めることを目的とした、内容統合型のEFL研究プロジェクトを考察する。プロジェクトはロシアの5つの高校の260人の英語学習者を対象とし、以下の3部構成とする。(1)他の民族集団に対する態度の事前調査、(2)特別設計されたEFL教材を用いた寛容度教育プログラム、(3)プログラム実施後の態度の変化をみる調査である。本論で、外国語教育が偏見を減らすために果たした重要な役割と、実施されたプログラムが外国人嫌いを減らしたという成果を報告する。

The project involved research and a series of training, networking, and public outreach events aimed to develop and introduce tolerance-related issues in teaching English. The goal of the project was to define successful ways of overcoming nationalism through teaching tolerance in the language classroom.

Teaching a foreign language brings us in indirect contact with another culture. That is why it is most logical to use foreign language instruction to teach tolerance. According to

SIG Spotlight: GILE SIG

JALT's Global Issues in Language Education Special Interest Group (GILE SIG) aims to promote global awareness, international understanding, and action to solve world problems through content-based language teaching, drawing from fields such as global education, peace education, environmental education, and human rights education.



The SIG produces a quarterly newsletter, organizes presentations for local, national, and international conferences, and maintains contacts with groups ranging from Amnesty International to Educators for Social Responsibility to UNESCO. Contact us for a sample newsletter, or for more information about the SIG and its work in teaching for a better world.

Svetlana Ter-Minasova, “Language is a powerful social tool that forms a stream of people into an ethnos and constitutes a nation through preservation and transfer of culture, traditions, social awareness of a given speech community” (Ter-Minasova, 2000, p. 15). In other words, the goal is to teach English teachers how to use such a ‘tool’ against nationalism and xenophobia.

The importance of teaching tolerance through foreign language instruction is emphasised by Doctor Kaganovich, doctor of philological sciences, head of the Department of theory and methodology of general education in the Novgorod regional center of education development: “Content of different subjects, especially foreign language, as well as literature and art where esthetical image system influences the values and the emotional side of personality directly and strongly, provides multiple opportunities for addressing the problem of tolerance” (Kaganovich, 2006).

The objectives of the project were (1) to define the cases of intolerance among school children, their reasons and general attitude to representatives of other cultures and minorities by means of survey and analysis; (2) to develop and publish study materials based on tolerance-related issues and to use them in experimental classes; (3) to evaluate the changes in students' perception of other cultures and minorities after English lessons utilizing tolerance-related study materials; (4) to develop recommendations for teaching tolerance in the language classroom, and to incorporate the recommendations into the curriculum for teacher-training programs in the Tula region; (5) to conduct teacher-training and advocacy activities; (6) to conduct cultural awareness seminars in the Tula regional boarding school and rehabilitation center for orphans.

Major steps to achieve the goals encompassed a series of research, grassroots activity, advocacy and publicising activities.

Methodology

The research was conducted in 5 high schools in the Tula region (Tula, Uzlovaya, Kimovsk). 260 schoolchildren (14-17 years old) were interviewed. We found out that half of the respondents felt hostile towards people of other nationalities (4% very often, 8% rather often, 38% rarely). More than a half (54%) said they witnessed conflicts involving people of different nationalities (5% very often, 15% often, 34% rarely). More than a third (36%) said they would expect peer rudeness or disdain in their city or town towards people of other nationalities. One fourth (25%) said they would expect such peer rudeness or disdain in their school, and the amount of peer support expected by students was 21% (in their town) and 24% (in their school).

Each experimental group included at least 10 middle teens (14-17 years old) who were learning English as a foreign language. They had content-integrated lessons on tolerance after which we conducted the survey again.

Experiment

An example of a content-integrated textbook is *State Exam: Preparation through Teaching Tolerance* <tuelta.ru>.

The textbook consists of 4 tests in state exam format, each of which is culturally focused and

has 5 sections: listening, reading, vocabulary and grammar, writing, and speaking. The topics include *Tolerance Snapshot*, *Stereotyping Traps*, *Diversity Corner*, and *Cultural Shake*.

The CD that accompanies the book has the materials for the listening comprehension section. All the sections are recorded by native speakers of English or those who speak English as a second language. The speakers have different accents and together comprise an international team from Canada, the USA, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. Thus, the students not only learn to understand the language in different situations but get used to the variety of dialects (through listening to authentic materials) while learning about cultural diversity, stereotyping, and tolerance.

Research (post-teaching survey)

After using tolerance-related materials for two terms with the experimental groups, we conducted another survey in May 2012 to measure changes in students' attitudes. A total of 104 teenagers, aged 14-17 answered five questions:

1. Do you think you are tolerant?
2. Do we need to speak about tolerance in schools?
3. Has your attitude to other nationalities changed after learning about them?
4. Do you agree that Russia is a multinational country?
5. Do you agree that learning a foreign language helps to get to know other cultures and makes us more tolerant?

Results showed that half think it's necessary to speak about tolerance in schools. At the same time the first question proved that they were a bit unsure of the notion of tolerance as the majority chose the "rather yes" answer. Altogether, after the lessons, about 80% considered themselves tolerant. More than half of the respondents said that learning a foreign language helps to understand other cultures and makes us more tolerant.

Given this, it's obvious that there's a need to develop and introduce new local materials on the theme of tolerance. An expansion of the project to a national level was recognized as a necessity by the Russian professional ELT community at a national conference in October 2012. Consequently, this initiative was developed

into a national project “Fostering Tolerance and Cultural Awareness Through English Language Teaching (ELT)” in 2013-2014.

The project is aimed at fostering tolerance through English language teaching (ELT) in Russia’s changing multicultural environment. The project focuses on the creation of guidelines for school teachers and teacher trainers, as well as on developing curriculums and digital teaching materials for elementary, middle and high school EFL students. The goal of the project is to introduce successful ways of teaching tolerance in 25 pilot regions in Russia. A resource page with existing materials has been created <toleranceefl.wikispaces.com/>, as well as Facebook group for sharing links and resources called “EFL&Tolerance”.

Language teaching is inseparable from teaching cultural awareness and foreign language teaching is inseparable from teaching tolerant attitudes towards other cultures. EFL environments are ideal for strengthening the appreciation of tolerance, non-violence, and for developing skills in resisting stereotypic attitudes. Choosing materials for lessons, EFL teachers should always keep in mind that they can shape students’ outlooks and mold students’ values.

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Disclaimer

This essay was originally published in #88 (2013) of the GILE-SIG newsletter (pp 14-15). There have been modifications and the last two paragraphs have been modified with recent developments.

Citation

Khodakova, A. (2013). Promoting tolerance in the language classroom. *Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter*, 88, 14-16.

Owning Inclusive Sexuality in the English Language Classroom

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Little empirical research has been done to quantify successful strategies for teachers who attempt to include a discussion of queer sexuality in their English language classroom. Increasingly, teachers in global contexts are sharing personal accounts that enumerate approaches undertaken in their own classrooms to encourage important dialogues with students and to problematize norms of human sexuality. These accounts depict challenges that ESL/EFL teachers face as they broach the topic

SIG Spotlight: GALE SIG

GALE works towards building a supportive community of educators and researchers interested in raising awareness and researching how gender plays an integral role in education and professional interaction. We also network and collaborate with JALT groups and the community at large to promote pedagogical and professional practices, language teaching materials, and research inclusive of gender and gender-related topics.

