



Pestalozzi

Training Resources

Education for Linguistic and Cultural Diversity (DIV) Living through a storm

by

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Editor: Ildikó Lázár



The Pestalozzi Programme
Council of Europe Training Programme for education professionals

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Theme: Learning about differences in perception and expression

Expected outcome

- to benefit from cultural and social diversity in the classroom and school;
- to raise teachers' awareness of different reactions to the same experience
- to try to find the sources/origins of the differences in perception and expression

Target group

Type of training	School level	Subject area
Initial training and in-service training	Primary and secondary level	Foreign languages, visual arts, civic education

Brief description of the unit

These didactic materials are designed to raise the participants' (i.e. teachers') awareness of the existing differences between people – depending on their respective personalities and the cultures (in all senses of the word) that they belong to. The materials are based on the participants' reactions to the footage of a sea storm. The expected goal is that the participants will better understand differences between various types of personalities, as well as cultural and linguistic differences, and, last but not least, the interdependence of language and culture (Wierzbicka 1992, Sapir 1949, Whorf 1956).

Methods/techniques used

Individual work followed by a comparison of associations in response to visual input in pair work, group work, and as a whole class discussion

Time 120 minutes

Resources

A short video scene (pictures for the additional activity).

Tips to trainers on the overall unit

- During the initial sub-activity the participants should react spontaneously, and should not be distracted by anything.
- If you conduct this activity with pre- or in-service language teachers, you may spend more time discussing the linguistic manifestations of differences in perceptions.

Activity 1 How we feel about a sea storm

 120 minutes
(with a group of 15 or
16 student teachers)

	Notes
<p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ to raise awareness about differences between individuals; ➤ to enhance open-mindedness and foster the development of multiple perspectives. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the footage of a sea storm found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzAL2T2KDqc&feature=related ➤ pictures for the additional activity (see variation below) 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The activity may be divided into two parts, the break taking place after step 7. 	
<p>▶ Procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual work: Watch the footage of the sea storm and do not communicate with anyone in the group (2 minutes). 2. Individual work: Describe the feelings you had watching the footage in writing (3 minutes). 3. Group work: Read out loud, one by one, what you have written down. Take notes of your peers' reports so that you can later comment on them and discuss them (10 minutes). 	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Group work: Have a look at your notes. Compare your colleagues' reactions to the footage to your own and comment on the similarities and differences. Think of possible reasons for those reactions. Comment on your peers' oral expression (i.e. the language they used) (10 minutes). 5. The small groups prepare to give a report on their discussions to the whole class (10 minutes). 6. Whole class: Each group reports on their discussions. The others take notes (10 minutes). 7. Whole class: Discussion (15 minutes). 8. Individual work: Imagine how different people would react to the same footage. The people in question are as follows: a sailor, a poet, an ecologist, a physicist, a child of 8, a teenager, a nomad from a desert, a person living in a big city. Write down how you think they would react (10 minutes). 9. Pair work: Compare your notes. Try to justify why a certain person would react in the way you envisaged (5 minutes). 10. Group work: Every pair reports on their discussions to the whole group (10 minutes). 11. Group discussion: Conclusions (10 minutes). 12. Every group reports on their discussions and conclusions to the whole class (10 minutes). 13. Discussion and debriefing (15 minutes). 	
<p>► Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When you were asked to imagine you were a sailor, a child of 8, or a nomad from the desert, did you manage to discard clichés and stereotypes? ➤ Were your guesses about people's reactions relying on stereotypes based on superficial information or on extensive in-depth knowledge of the world? ➤ Do you think that this type of activity would raise your students' awareness regarding differences in people's perceptions, opinions, behaviour and emotions? ➤ Can you think of any adaptations of this activity for students at different age and proficiency levels? 	
<p>► Tips to trainers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is important that the participants do not communicate with one another while watching the footage and writing their own comments. ➤ Try to pair up students so that they work with partners that they are not necessarily best friends with. You may also want to re-group trainees for the second part of the activity. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is also very important to maintain peace and order and a friendly and tolerant atmosphere during discussions ☺. Consequently, the trainer's facilitating and time-keeping skills play an important role. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A variation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A simpler and shorter version of this activity could be conducted with the help of photographs. Show a large picture of an overcast sky with dark clouds and see what this might mean to your trainees. Ask them to imagine what the same sight may mean to a farmer, a homeless person, a couple on the beach, a bus driver, etc. Then proceed the same way as above. (Other good conversation starters include photographs of a family at home, people "in action" in the street or at work, or children at a school.) 	

References

- Sapir, E. (1921). *Language*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Inc. &World.
- Whorf, B. L. (1989). *Language, Thought, and Reality – Selected Writings of B. Lee Whorf* – ed. by John B. Carroll. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press.
- *Wierzbicka, A. (1992). Semantics, Culture, and Cognition (Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations). New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.*