

Teaching-Learning Anglophone Cultures at the University of Pedagogical Sciences of Holguín and at the ELC of Shantou University: A Comparative Study

Yunier Pérez Sarduy¹, John Harper^{1*} & Manuel de Jesús Velázquez León²

¹ English Language Centre, Shantou University, Guangdong, China

² Department of Foreign Language Education, Universidad de Holguín, Cuba

* John Harper, E-mail: johnh@stu.edu.cn

Abstract

This paper presents a comparative study of the teaching-learning process of Anglophone cultures through the English as a foreign language programs of Shantou University, Guangdong, China, and Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas “José de la Luz y Caballero”, Holguín, Cuba. As criteria for the comparison, the authors have selected the objectives, teaching methods, and resources of the two institutions. The comparative analysis allowed for the determination of the main trends common to both universities: the teaching of language as a means to an end, the active participation of faculties in the elaboration of teaching materials and textbooks for the specific courses they teach, the validity of research work aimed at improving the teaching resources for the EFL courses offered at both universities, the use of the communicative approach as a general method for the teaching-learning process, and the development of co-curricular activities to enhance the teaching-learning of cultural elements. The analysis also allowed for a reflection on how the distinct departmental/institutional structures of the two schools may lead to some significant differences in terms of educational focus. Finally, the analysis provoked questions concerning the balance between culture teaching-learning and intercultural communication training.

Keywords

Anglophone culture, foreign language teaching, culture teaching, intercultural communication

1. Introduction

As globalization is both a cause and a result of contemporary society's development, intercultural communication now stands out as one of the most relevant forms of interaction. The term *intercultural communication* normally refers to a wide variety of situations that often appear during interaction between groups or individuals from different cultural backgrounds, especially when such differences are manifested between people from different countries. Even when communication occurs between people who share a common first language but are from different countries or different cultural and

educational backgrounds, language will certainly influence the quality and the result of the encounter. Hence, effective tools for intercultural communication are necessary in numerous communicative situations within the present globalized society.

Language and culture should never be separated in the teaching-learning process of foreign languages. This bold statement is especially true for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses taught in universities worldwide. The fact that English has evolved into a *lingua franca* makes it a must for higher-level educational systems to administer effective, culture-oriented EFL courses.

This paper is based on the main postulates of comparative education, language pedagogy, and intercultural communication. Its goal is to compare the teaching-learning process of elements of Anglophone cultures in the EFL programs of two geographically and culturally distant universities: Shantou University in Guangdong, China (STU-China) and Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas “José de la Luz y Caballero” in Holguín, Cuba (UCP-Hg). The authors also wish to speculate as to how the two programs under consideration might benefit from each other, and in doing so, they wish to raise questions concerning the appropriate balance between culture teaching-learning and intercultural communication training.

In the undertaking of this project, three research questions were posited:

- 1) What tendencies of culture teaching-learning might be shared by the two universities under comparison?
- 2) How might the different departmental/institutional structures of the two universities influence methods of culture teaching-learning?
- 3) How might the two universities benefit from each other's methods?

2. Procedures and Methodology

With the goal of identifying common tendencies, the authors have chosen the following components of the teaching-learning process as elements of comparison:

- 1) Objectives of the EFL courses as related to culture teaching-learning
- 2) Teaching methods and techniques implemented through the teaching-learning process
- 3) Resources used

The paper is based on data collected primarily through observation, document revision, and the authors' actual experience in teaching EFL both at STU-China and UCP-Hg. Some of the theoretical references and empirical data used are the result of previous research conducted by the authors. This research has been included in two Ph.D theses (Pérez Sarduy, 2006; Velázquez León, 2010) and in several other articles published in academic journals.

The empirical method of participatory observation was used to determine the main characteristics and tendencies of culture teaching-learning in EFL courses at the two institutions. Specifically, data were collected by the following means:

- 1) In-house and peer observations carried out at both institutions,

- 2) Participation in and observation of level and faculty meetings at both institutions,
- 3) Analysis of lesson plans, course syllabi, and curriculum designs at both institutions,
- 4) Analysis of students' written materials reflective of culture learning through their language courses.

3. Analysis

Let us assume by the term culture the various beliefs and behaviors of a human group, including religious and spiritual practices and political leanings as well as the most common moral and ethical values and perceptions of the world common to its members (Pérez Sarduy & Velázquez León, 2010). Though the definition is simple and debatable, the authors of this paper will hold on to it as a reference for the comparative exercise between the EFL courses developed at UCP-Hg and STU.

The very notion of Anglophone cultures in the current global state of society is constantly modified by the interaction between Anglophone and non-Anglophone cultures. It would be, therefore, inexact to refer to a “purely” Anglophone culture. Nevertheless, the relevance for non-Anglophone universities to teach elements of Anglophone cultures through their EFL courses is linked to the preponderance of Anglophone cultural products worldwide. The challenge for contemporary universities is to develop effective EFL courses based on culture teaching-learning without missing the focus on their national culture(s).

3.1 Introduction to STU-China and UCP-Hg and Their Respective EFL Courses

3.1.1 STU-China

All non-English major undergraduates in China are required to take university English courses. The stated objectives of these courses are “to develop students’ ability to use English in an all-around way, especially in listening and speaking; to enhance students’ ability to study independently and improve their cultural quality” (Gao, 2010, p. 35). In 2004, intercultural communication was added to the national curriculum—though, in some cases, “the teaching of [intercultural communicative competence] is hardly addressed” (Song, 2008; as cited in Han & Song, 2011, p. 175).

Within this national context, the English Language Center (ELC) of Shantou University aims to provide its students with a well-rounded, four-level (i.e., four-semester) curriculum in which matters of culture are far from being forgotten or overlooked. The matter of intercultural competence, not entirely by coincidence, is included in the “Five Golden Rules of English Learning”, which are as follows: proficiency, autonomy, sustainability, intercultural competence, and critical thinking.

Though this analysis will focus primarily on Level 3 (Interacting with People from Other Cultures), some discussion of how culture is included in the other levels should help to put Level 3 into proper perspective.

The first two levels of the ELC curriculum take an integrated skills approach, with culture learning and analysis being among those skills. The most obvious goal in the teaching of culture in these levels is, of course, to familiarize students with issues of the target cultures (most commonly the cultures of the US and Great Britain), for “no language can be truly learned and appreciated without some knowledge

about the people who speak that language” (Rowan, 2001, p. 238). Nevertheless, a higher-level goal of culture learning is to lead students to empathize with the target culture and at the same time to reflect on their own culture. As Kuwamura (2009; as cited in Li, 2013, p. 103) points out, empathy is obtained when people use their own “internal frame of reference” to consider the other.

The fourth level of the program, coming after a course in intercultural communication, strives to provoke a careful analysis of the PROs and CONs of various social issues. Byram (1977; as cited in Han & Song, 2011, p. 181) has noted that critical culture awareness refers to “an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries”. This comment goes a long way toward defining Level 4 of the ELC, a course with the overall objective of building “comfort and willingness to listen to, read, discuss, evaluate and analyze articles and arguments dealing with global and domestic issues”.

3.1.2 CUCP-Hg

The former Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas “José de la Luz y Caballero” de Holguín is now part of a much more comprehensive, new university in Holguín, Cuba. As a result of an innovative initiative by the Ministry of Higher Education in Cuba, small independent universities in every province are being integrated into solid and new-type bigger universities. At the moment this paper is being drafted, the Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas “José de la Luz y Caballero” de Holguín no longer officially exists as an independent university. But since the experience that is being described here took place during more than fifteen years of two of the authors’ teaching there, and since the EFL courses taken as reference still keep their main characteristics (at least in the “JLC” campus), we shall take the liberty to continue to refer to it at UCP-Hg for the purposes of comparison with the ELC of STU.

There are basically two types of EFL courses at UCP-Hg: those offered to English majors (which vary from Integrated English Practice to History of the English Speaking Cultures) and those offered to non-English majors (essentially a unique EFL course, called English Language, adapted to the needs of each major). The focus here will be on the EFL courses for English majors.

3.2 STU-China Level 3 (*Interacting with People from Other Cultures*) Compared to UCP-HG History of the English-Speaking Cultures

3.2.1 STU-China

As mentioned above, the core ELC course for teaching culture and intercultural communication at the ELC of STU-China is undoubtedly Level 3, *Interacting with People from Other Cultures*. The course was originally envisioned some three years ago by Professor Don Snow, former executive director of the ELC and author of the core textbook, *Encounters with Westerners: Improving Skills in English and Intercultural Communication* (Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press). At that time and still now, the basic assumption has been the following: “[T]he ultimate goal of English learning is not just to learn a language for its own sake. Rather, the goal is to learn how to understand and effectively communicate with people from other nations and cultures” (Snow, 2014, p. xiii).

3.2.2 UCP-Hg

While UCP-Hg has developed a wide variety of courses that address culture teaching-learning in different ways, the one course that has been acknowledged as focusing on Anglophone cultural phenomena is History of the English-Speaking Cultures. In its entirety, the course is taught over a three-year period to students in their third, fourth, and fifth years of university study. Its antecedents are rooted in a series of separate courses related to the literature and history of the English-speaking countries that were taught in Cuban pedagogical universities back in the 1980's. With the new curriculum design introduced at the beginning of the 1990's, the so-called *Plan C*, all these different courses were integrated into a comprehensive discipline, which evolved into the current course discussed in this paper.

3.3 *A Comparison of STU-China and UCP-Hg Course Objectives as Related to the Teaching of Anglophone Cultures*

3.3.1 STU-China

The overall objective of Level 3 lies in the basic assumption that language learning should be oriented toward learning how to understand and effectively communicate with people from other nations and cultures. Needless to say, such a broad assumption needs to be broken down into various, much more concrete goals. These goals may be stated as follows: to “help students improve their English language skills”, to “help students develop good intercultural communication habits and skills”, to “familiarize students with basic concepts of intercultural communication”, to “teach students basic aspects of Western culture”, and to “help teachers learn more about culture and intercultural communication” (Snow, 2014, pp. xiii-xiv).

Clearly, these goals are overlapping and complementary. Without a developed set of English language skills, students cannot be expected to develop “good intercultural communication habits and skills” in English and cannot be expected to understand, in English, “basic concepts of intercultural communication” or “basic aspects of Western culture”. And since it has been observed that most EFL teachers in China are in need of furthering their knowledge of the relationship between the teaching of culture and intercultural communication on the one hand and the teaching of language skills on the other (Han & Song, 2011), one must assume that increased teacher knowledge of this relationship will lead to increased student knowledge.

3.3.2 UCP-Hg

At UCP-Hg, the system of objectives of History of the English-Speaking cultures is based on the notion that a general understanding and ability to appreciate important expressions of the English-speaking cultures should lead students to more efficient outcomes in language learning. The course is also based on the assumption that there are specific similarities and differences between Anglophone and Latin cultures—differences that may prompt students to reflect on and realize values and to develop professional abilities. The specific goals may be summarized as follows: to describe the geographical and cultural traits of the English-speaking countries, to value important expressions of the

English-speaking cultures, to communicate in the foreign language with an advanced level of communicative competence, to realize values through working with formative historical-literary texts so as to learn to make responsible judgments and decisions (mainly vis-à-vis moral dilemmas), and to illustrate, narrate, argue, and explain in the foreign language.

The objectives of the course have led to the selection of a wide variety of contents, mainly related to the literature and history of the English-speaking cultures. As the syllabus is organized into three sections according to geographical areas, students usually begin by studying the history and culture of the United Kingdom, then of the United States of America, and finally of what has been labeled postcolonial cultures (i.e., the English-speaking Caribbean, Canada, Australia, and some Asian countries) (see Velázquez León & Pérez Sarduy, 2014).

3.4 A Comparison of STU-China and UCP-Hg Course Resources as Related to the Teaching of Anglophone Cultures

3.4.1 STU-China

Objectives can only be reached with teaching resources that are adequate for their attainment. In order to reach stated goals, Level 3 makes use of the following resources: a core textbook (mentioned above), *New Standard College English 3* (Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing, in conjunction with MacMillan Publishers 2009), a TV series (*Parenthood*, Season 1), culture interviews (conducted on campus with local and international teachers), and co-curricular activities.

With *New Standard College English 3* as an aid for writing skills and additional culture learning, the text *Encounters with Westerners* serves two main functions in the Level 3 course: to provide students with concepts necessary for the study of the target cultures (e.g., *individualism*, *projected cultural similarity*) and to provide students practice with “critical incidents”, essentially case studies of intercultural communication problems that students may encounter in real-life contact with members of the target cultures.

The use of a television series in the Level 3 course serves to allow students to add their perspectives to culture learning and intercultural communication. As Tognozzi (2010, p. 72) points out, the use of visual images lets us “experience, reflect, and add our subjective experience to them in order to understand their meaning”. And the inclusion of sound and speech “further enhances the emotional connection that springs up between spectator and subject” (Tognozzi, 2010, p. 72). Incidentally, the use of a television series in Level 3 stems precisely from the goal of letting students add their “subjective experience” to the culture-learning process.

Granted, not all students can study abroad, and not all students have frequent contact with people from the target cultures. Alas, culture interviews conducted on campus provide an imperfect alternative. During the recorded interviews, the local interviewees (most of whom have studied or worked abroad) and the international teachers offer their insights concerning various cultural issues (e.g., *culture shock*, *ethnocentrism*). Students listen to and analyze the interviews and relate the issues discussed therein to their own culture.

A study of the program would not be complete without some mention of co-curricular activities, which are given almost as much weight in the ELC curriculum as are the different courses. The ELC co-curricular activities are available to all students of Shantou University. But two activities—Art & Culture and Media Mania—are specifically designed to complement the Level 3 course.

Art & Culture, an activity conducted by two Chinese teachers with Western educations in art and literature, seeks to lead students to analyze Western art through a Chinese lens. Media Mania, meanwhile, takes the view, previously mentioned, that visual images let us “experience, reflect, and add our subjective experience to them in order to understand their meaning”. Ultimately, the two activities seek to create a type of “cultural synergy” in which “both sides will gain and neither will lose, culturally” (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996, p. 202).

3.4.2 UCP-Hg

In the case of UCP-Hg, the resources used for teaching cultural aspects of Anglophone countries have undergone a profound process of change in the last few years. The basic textbooks used until 2013 were *A Short History of the British People* (Morgan, Dave. Lipzig: Veb Leipzig, 1974), *A People's History of England* (Morton, A. Habana: Edición Revolucionaria, 1987) and the textbook *A People's History of the USA up to World War I* (Velázquez León et al., Avila, Editorial Pueblo y Educación C. de la Habana, 1989). A compilation of literary texts in two volumes, *The Literature of the USA* and *The Literature of England*, were used as supplementary textbooks.

A research project carried out by Velázquez León and Pérez Sarduy between 2001 and 2012 demonstrated the out-datedness of such resources and introduced a new series of textbooks and other referential materials both for the students and for the teachers. The basic bibliography currently in use includes a trilogy of textbooks under the titles *The English Saga* (Velázquez León, Pérez Sarduy, & Thieme, 2015), *The American Saga* (Velázquez León, Perez Luengo, & Pérez Sarduy, 2015), and *The Postcolonial Saga* (Velázquez León & Pérez Sarduy, in preparation). The new books include literary texts and their contexts, historical elements, and exercises to aid the students' learning. The advantage of the new series of texts is that they are closely related to the course syllabus and have been adapted to the students' needs as determined from the research project mentioned above.

Other resources such as video collections and a selection of CDs of music representative of the Anglophone cultures are also used in class according to the objectives determined for each unit. Noteworthy among them are two television series: *America, the Story of Us* and *The Untold History of the USA* (the last by Oliver Stone). Popular and classical music are also frequently introduced to the students, who especially appreciate Bob Marley, The Beatles, Leonard Cohen, and a collection of jazz and blues.

Although less diversified than STU-China, UCP-Hg has managed to develop its own co-curricular program for Anglophone culture learning. The “William Shakespeare” Study Center was founded by and is currently run by one of the authors of this paper. Its aim is to foster the study of the English language and the English-speaking cultures. The Center encourages expressions of the

English-speaking cultures that may contribute to the humanist and universalistic formation of the university community and the province by means of the students' reflexive and creative participation in cultural spaces with the English-speaking cultures as a reference. The members of the Center celebrate anniversaries of important moments of English-speaking cultures; they develop book launches, poetry readings, theatrical plays, and musical performances; they organize cultural exchanges with other educational and cultural institutions; and they develop relationships of cultural and academic cooperation with similar institutions in Cuba and in other countries.

3.5 A Comparison of STU-China and UCP-Hg Teaching Methods as Related to the Teaching of Anglophone Cultures

3.5.1 STU-China

To say that the Level 3 course of STU-China adopts a communicative approach to language and culture learning and intercultural communication training is probably to overstate the obvious. After all, most ELT programs nowadays implement components of a communicative approach. Nevertheless, the term does come in handy to describe the big umbrella under which the Level 3 course falls. The teaching of issues of culture and of intercultural communication requires a classroom in which there is a great deal of tolerance for disagreement and opposing ideas. As Bowman (2007, p. 85) points out, "In a classroom that embraces and cultivates alternative perspectives, students are intrinsically motivated to open up to various points of view in preparation for a world that is endlessly multifaceted". Hence, the Level 3 course strives to create an open, communicative atmosphere in which students feel free to express opinions with no risk of being shamed.

The Level 3 course focuses a great deal on group discussion skills such as turn-taking, expressing agreement and disagreement, and asking for clarification. Hence, specific teaching methods that lend themselves well to course are the following: critical incident exercises, cooperative learning tasks, debate, and peer teaching.

Critical incident exercises, by asking students to put themselves into the position of one who faces an intercultural dilemma, are intended to raise students' consciousness and to lead them to look for various logical explanations concerning why people from other cultures might act as they do. Given the context, students need to consider different alternatives and, as much as possible, postpone negative judgment: They need to "manage cultural knowledge within times, places, and communities" (Arens, 2010, p. 322).

Though cooperative learning tasks have been defined in various ways, they may be considered, essentially, as tasks in which all students in a group are individually held accountable for their contribution to the success of the group. Aside from the results that are expected, this type of activity has the benefit of "promoting intrinsic motivation and task achievement, generating higher order thinking skills, improving attitudes toward the subject, developing academic peer norms, heightening self-esteem, increasing time on task, creating caring and altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice" (Oxford, 1997, p. 445).

Debates stand out as a time-honored tradition in the ELT profession—and for good reasons. In debates, “students are asked to develop a position, explore beliefs and theories, analyze arguments, evaluate the credibility or bias of a source, and distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information” (Iberri-Shea, 2009, p. 19). Such skills are prerequisites for any study of culture or of intercultural communication, and the use of these skills leads students to avoid jumping to rash conclusions concerning the target cultures. Curiously enough, the assigning of a particular position in a debate often ends up helping students clearly define their own opinions.

Peer teaching (i.e., the practice of allowing students to act as teachers of a lesson) stands out as a technique that will only be effective if used occasionally. Not a lot of research has been done on peer teaching in the language classroom—though research in other disciplines has found that it aids students in terms of “ability to express their ideas, mastery of different concepts, time management, sense of responsibility, sharing, self-discipline, self-reliance, self-confidence, resourcefulness, [and] cooperation” (Vasay, 2010, p. 167). In the Level 3 course, peer teaching has proven to be effective in motivating students to analyze carefully the television series *Parenthood* and to evaluate more critically their own positions on culture-related issues.

3.5.2 UCP-Hg

UCP-Hg takes its teaching methods from the Didactical Procedures for Moral Education, proposed by Velázquez León in 2008. According to these procedures, teaching methods are based on the concept of *moral education situation*, which is understood as the classroom process in which conditions are created for the student to realize values that contribute to the satisfaction of radical needs (Velázquez León, 2008). Moral education situation is developed through three interrelated procedures:

(1) *Procedure of Textual and Contextual Significance:*

- a) Choosing texts on Anglophone cultures demands creativity, sensitivity, and students’ participation. Brief texts are preferable.
- b) Students explain the essential meanings of the text and its context. This is a proper moment for the realization of experiential values.

(2) *Procedure of Unfolding Inter-Textual Relationships*

Students unveil the essential relationships among the elements of an event in the learning process and the actual tasks that give sense to their lives. The teacher helps find parallelisms, similarities, and differences between their reality and the (usually distant) event. Relationships must be logically developed.

(3) *Procedure of Assumption*

Responsible assumption of morally oriented tasks tends to take place when students deal with topics related to their intimate reality—that is, when they reflect on situations related to the violation of the rights and the wellbeing of others in the true context. The realization of values that satisfy students’ needs must be directly related to the tasks that their lives demand. Consequently, real cases in their real contexts must be discussed openly and honestly and compared to the situations presented through Anglophone cultural elements.

The methods used in UCP-Hg also include interdisciplinary learning tasks as proposed by Pérez Sarduy in 2006. Students are assigned learning tasks relating the learning of elements of Anglophone cultures to certain knowledge elements of other disciplines in their curriculum. While interdisciplinary learning tasks are not considered a method as such, the complex procedures required to carry them out make them a very effective tool in developing critical thinking abilities. At the same time, such tasks help students develop the skills necessary to relate cultural topics to the general learning tied to their major curriculum. These procedures and tasks are put into practice by means of active debates, which are used as the most common instructional method throughout the course.

4. Conclusions

The study presented through the current paper has allowed its authors to draw conclusions based on the similarities and differences in the teaching-learning of Anglophone cultures through the EFL courses offered at STU-China and UCP-Hg, mainly in regards to the objectives, teaching methods and resources used. While the results presented do not make it possible to reveal actual tendencies at a national level, they do allow for the exposure of specific trends in both universities and, at the same time, allow for a consideration of departmental/institutional factors that might influence teaching-learning practices. Finally, they also permit some tentative suggestions concerning how the different institutions might benefit from each other.

4.1 What Tendencies of Culture Teaching-Learning Might be Shared by the Two Universities under Comparison?

One of the main trends that can be revealed from this study is that the EFL courses offered by both STU-China and UCP-Hg assume the teaching of language as a means to an end. While STU-China seeks to deliver high quality EFL courses aimed at helping the students develop the abilities “to understand and effectively communicate with people from other nations and cultures”, UCP-Hg focuses its attention on the development of language as a tool to further enhance pedagogical professional abilities and the realization of values.

Both universities count on a wide variety of resources, mainly textbooks written by their own faculties and resulting from profound research work related to the teaching-learning of cultures through their EFL courses. This trend reveals the validity of research work aimed at improving the teaching resources for the EFL courses offered at both schools.

It is also important to reveal as a tendency common to both institutions the use of the *communicative approach* as a general method for the teaching-learning process—while active research work carried out by the faculties of both universities has led to the implementation of specific teaching-learning methods that serve particular needs. Thus, the combination of both generalized methods such as debates and very singular methods such as critical incident exercises—in the case of STU-China—and moral education situations and interdisciplinary learning tasks—in the case of UCP-Hg—could be revealed as another trend in the teaching-learning of Anglophone cultural elements at both universities.

The trend toward the development of co-curricular activities to enhance the teaching-learning process is well rooted in both universities. Considering the wide variety and number of activities included at STU-China, one might conclude that such a teaching-learning method is more completely implemented in that program.

4.2 How Might the Different Departmental/Institutional Structures of the Two Universities Influence Methods of Culture Teaching-Learning?

Perhaps the most significant difference between the programs of STU-China and UCP-Hg would seem to result from an equally significant difference in the way in which the programs are organized. As noted previously, all undergraduate students in China are required to take college English classes. Given this national norm, the ELC of STU-China offers classes to students of various majors, with any given classroom featuring representatives of several academic disciplines. Hence, with the exception of a few remedial cases, all undergraduate, non-English majors participate in roughly the same process of culture learning and intercultural communication training, a process that includes Level 3 (Interacting with People from Other Cultures). UCP-Hg, on the other hand, offers a slightly different curriculum to students of different majors, with the culture-teaching methods discussed in this paper being oriented specifically toward English majors.

The different student populations of the two programs (i.e., students of various majors in one case, English majors in the other) naturally lead to distinct focuses. STU-China concentrates on giving students of all majors the tools to “understand and effectively communicate with people from other nations and cultures”. In other words, STU-China strives to provide students with intercultural competence. UCP-Hg, without overlooking intercultural competence, logically places a greater emphasis on the learning of Anglophone culture through the study of literature and the historical contexts of that literature. Ultimately, it is safe to say that both institutions target their programs around the needs of their respective student populations.

4.3 How Might the Two Universities Benefit from Each Other's Methods?

The present study allows only for speculation concerning this research question. As pointed out above, the most significant difference between the programs of STU-China and UCP-Hg seems to lie in a difference of focus resulting from the need of targeting the respective student populations. A concentration on intercultural competence seems to come naturally for a program oriented toward students who may eventually conduct business or work on engineering projects with citizens from other cultures. Likewise, a concentration on literature and its context seems to come naturally for a program oriented toward students who may one day find themselves in front of a classroom as English teachers. Neither concentration excludes the other. Hence, the question of how STU-China and UCP-Hg might benefit from each other's methods seems to lead to another question—one dealing with balance. As Scarino (2010, p. 327) points out, language “brings with it cultural histories that structure the dialogue of learning among people and their personal engagement with the world”. Hence, literature and its historical

context play an important role in developing students' ability to "communicate with people from other nations and cultures".

The question, then, seems to deal with where to strike a balance between culture teaching-learning and intercultural communication training while at the same time honoring the needs of the target student population.

References

- Arens, K. (2010). The field of culture: The *standards* as a model for teaching culture. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 321-324.
- Bowman, R. F. Jr. (2007). How can students be motivated: A misplaced question? *The Clearing House*, 81(2), 81-86.
- Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1996). Cultures of learning: Language classrooms in China. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Society and the language classroom* (pp. 169-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gao, F. (2010). What's wrong with current Chinese college English assessment system? Reform or not? *International Education Studies*, 3(1), 34-37.
- Han, X., & Song, L. (2011). Teacher cognition of intercultural communicative competence in the Chinese ELT context. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 20(1), 175-192.
- Iberri-Shea, G. (2010). Using public speaking tasks in English language teaching. *English Teaching Forum*, 2, 18-23.
- Li, Q. (2013). Issues and solutions of international understanding education in China. *International Education Studies*, 6(11), 100-105.
- Oxford, R. L. (1997). Cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction: Three communicative strands in the language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 81(4), 443-456.
- Pérez Sarduy, Y. (2006). *El desarrollo de modos de actuación interdisciplinarios en la formación inicial de profesores de lenguas extranjeras* (doctoral dissertation). Holguín; Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas "José de la Luz y Caballero".
- Pérez Sarduy, Y., & Velázquez León, M. (2010). *La educación valoral desde la historia de los pueblos de habla inglesa*. *Revista Ciencias Holguín*. Revista trimestral, Año XVI, Octubre-diciembre, 2010, from <http://www.ciencias.holguin.cu/index.php/cienciasholguin/article/view/577/449>
- Rowan, S. (2001). Delving deeper: Teaching culture as an integral element of second-language learning. *The Clearing House*, 74(5), 238-241.
- Scarino, A. (2010). Assessing intercultural capability in learning languages: A renewed understanding of language, culture, learning, and the nature of assessment. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 324-329.

- Snow, D. (2014). *Encounters with westerners: Improving skills in English and intercultural communication*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Tognozzi, E. (2010). Teaching and evaluating language and culture through film. *Italica*, 87(1), 69-91.
- Vasay, E. T. (2010). The effects of peer teaching in the performance of students in mathematics. *E-International Scientific Research Journal*, 2(2), 161-171.
- Velázquez León, M. (2010). *La educación valoral en la disciplina Historia de la cultura de los pueblos de habla inglesa. Holguín (doctoral dissertation)*. Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas "José de la Luz y Caballero".
- Velázquez León, M., & Pérez Sarduy, Y. (2010). *Procedimientos didácticos para las situaciones de educación valoral. Revista Ciencias Holguín*. Revista trimestral, Año XVI, Octubre-diciembre, 2010, from <http://www.ciencias.holguin.cu/index.php/cienciasholguin/article/view/577/449>
- Velázquez León, M., & Pérez Sarduy, Y. (2010). Programa de la disciplina: historia de la cultura de los pueblos de habla inglesa. *Ciudad de la Habana: MINED*, 24, 11.
- Velázquez León, M., Pérez Sarduy, Y., & Thieme, J. A. (2015). *The English Saga*. History of the English-speaking cultures I. Editorial Pueblo y Educación. La Habana.