

MULTICULTURAL WHAT?

A. CONTEXT.

- Newsweek article 7/3/2005: “NNS now outnumber NS 3 to 1”.
- New IATEFL SIG for April 2005: “for teachers working outside English-speaking countries & for teachers whose native language is not English”.
- Common European Framework ‘plurilingualism’: “...the aim of language education is profoundly modified. It is no longer seen as simply to achieve ‘mastery’ of one or two, or even three languages.... with the ‘ideal native speaker’ as the ultimate model. **Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory in which all linguistic abilities have a place.**” (CEF, p.5)
- Council of Europe language policy: “.... It is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and cooperation, and **overcome prejudice and discrimination.**” (CEF, p.2)

(emphasis added is mine)

So, one of the aims of multiculturalism will be to help dissipate cultural stereotypes, and an important facet will be to work on what happens at the cultural interface.

B. FOUR ACTIVITIES:

1. Geographical (eg. international examples of rivers/ lakes/ bays/ seas etc. for labelling: Nile, Amazon, Ganges, Rhine _____)
2. Travel & tourism > itineraries. (ie. different possible activities; sts identify corresponding country: visit Taj Mahal / _____)
3. Identity debates > reading research/ projects. (explore the components of ‘culture’: food/ drink/ music/ language(s)/ traditions etc. Compare with others’ versions of the same).
4. ‘*Temas transversales*’: one topic across different locations/ cultures. (eg. selection of 3-4 articles related to same topic but set in different countries. Sample options: women’s situation; environment; children; conflicts etc).

C. REFERENCES/ OTHER SOURCES:

- Explore foreign press texts re Spain, for example – different perspectives.
- Bicultural/ cross-cultural readers for upper intermediate/ advanced learners:

Amy Tan (American/Chinese) – Joy Luck Club, Kitchen God’s Wife etc.

A. McCall Smith (African/ ex-colonial) – The N° 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency series.

Carmen bin Laden (Western/ Arabian) – The Veiled Kingdom.

Kazuo Ishiguro (English/ Japanese) – An Artist of the Floating World.

Dubravka Ugresic (mindboggling cultural crucible in Berlin) – The Museum of Unconditional Surrender.

Xinran (Chinese in English translation) – The Good Women of China.

- Cross-cultural films/videos:

Lost in Translation (rather than, for example, Black Rain)

French Kiss

My Big Fat Greek Wedding
Monsoon Wedding
Ae Fond Kiss (Ken Loach)