

BOOK REVIEW

Designing World Language Curriculum for Intercultural Communicative Competence. By Jennifer Eddy (2022), 376 pages. ISBN: 978-1-3501-8066-6. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

“Learning is creativity by design” is the thesis of this resource by Jennifer Eddy on language teaching (p. xiv). In this book, the author establishes the central idea of teachers as “designers of creative, novel performance tasks along a spiral, articulated curriculum for transfer and language learner autonomy”(p. xiv). Given the unpredictable nature of language settings and contexts, teachers must be creative with strategies that facilitate the learners’ ability to adapt and respond to different cultural language situations. Eddy argues that the fundamental aim of modern language teaching is Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) where learning a language requires an understanding and responsiveness to the culture and context where the language is used. The language curriculum thus, requires an understanding of the products, practices and perspectives of cultures that can unfold through cultural stories, images, and works of art. All these have the potential to evoke learners’ cultural language experiences and interpretations.

The book departs from the traditional banking model followed in language teaching where learners are passive and where grammar rules and scripted learning take precedence. Instead, the author asserts the need for “exploration, participation, creation, and reflection, via varied and novel interactions of intercultural experience” (p. 7). Language learners are to be encouraged to ask questions, evaluate, and use authentic text evidence in communication and consensus-building. Throughout the book, the theory and evidence-based research on the value of re-creating and re-designing the spiral and bespoke language curricula are reiterated. More so, Eddy’s work is a valuable resource for language teachers who may be in search of a learner-centered, culturally-appropriate, and practice-based teaching framework.

At the outset, the author proposes the Intercultural Curriculum Aligns Novel Assessment Design Articulated Performance and Transfer (ICANADAPT) framework. The alternative and articulated curriculum highlights an inquiry-based and learner-centered approach. Teachers and learners act as co-investigators to discover more about themselves and other cultures within interdisciplinary units. The ICANADAPT is grounded on the work of Wiggins and McTighe (2004, 2005, 2006, 2011) on curriculum development referred to as Understanding by Design (UBD). Therefore, to better grasp Eddy’s framework and its jargon, it is suggested that the reader revisit the principles of UBD as well.

The ICANADAPT also follows a specific instructional template similar to UBD that requires language teachers to develop classroom assessments that allow for transfer of concepts within varied contexts and for varied audiences. In these assessment tasks, language learners are expected to solve problems and create products that are culturally-meaningful. Aesthetic education and drama pedagogy are central instructional strategies to the ICANADAPT model.

Throughout the chapters, the author methodically scaffolds language teachers through the instructional design process made up of three stages. Stage 1 begins with planning for Essential Understandings (EUs) and Essential Questions (EQs) and transferable goals relevant to a chosen intercultural concept and consider intercultural transfer goals and tasks. Stage 2 focuses on the Articulated Assessment Transfer Task (AATT) or Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs). Through performance tasks that call for problem-solving and creating products of novelty over time, language learners then attain levels of proficiency and performances for transfer. Practice in deliberate, classroom-based, authentic, culturally-relevant transfer tasks is requisite for learners to adapt to varied language contexts. Meanwhile, Stage 3 emphasises formative assessments for transfer.

The performance assessments involve learners working with authentic texts and demonstrating learning via three productive modalities, specifically, the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes. Citing the work of Vygotsky (1986), the learner must first organize and construct meaning via intrapersonal or inner dialogue with and from the authentic text as a means of social interaction or mediation. Later on, in the Interpersonal mode, learners engage in unrehearsed, communicative situations that involve interaction and negotiation of meaning. Finally, the Presentational mode involves learners performing productive, creative, rehearsed or refined oral or written pieces for a target cultural community.

Parallel to the adoption of UBD as an instructional framework, the book's organization follows the UBD sequence as well. Each chapter is introduced by EUs and EQs to guide the reader. Reflections and formative assessment activities are likewise provided across all chapters. Each chapter also features a research-to-practice summary chart of relevant studies in support of the different components of the curriculum. This feature proves to be a useful tool for readers who may choose to extend classroom practice to action research. Lesson exemplars throughout the book are then provided to illustrate the different stages of the ICANADAPT template. From teaching the Japanese concept of *uchi* (inside) vs. *soto* (outside) space distinction to the Portuguese art form and symbol of resistance called *Capoeira*, each lesson exemplar is laudable in its illustration of how a cultural concept becomes a unifying idea for classroom-based language activities. By the end of each chapter, readers are then guided to reflect on issues, check for learning, and even develop performance assessments of their own.

Overall, the book is a creative and recommended resource for facilitating teacher training, professional learning communities, and higher-level courses on language teaching. Nonetheless, as the text tends to be theoretical with very detailed and lengthy discussions, some novice teachers or students may find the concepts quite conceptual and perplexing. Perhaps in the future, to expand the reach of this work, a corresponding simplified teaching resource for K-12 classrooms may be considered.

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