

DEVELOPING CULTURAL VALUES THROUGH EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT ALL LEVELS

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Abstract

Culture consists not only of behaviors and practices, but also of deeply held beliefs about what is right, appropriate, and acceptable and what is wrong, inappropriate and unacceptable. It is important to recognize that culture is learned – it is neither something we are born with nor something that we create on our own. Culture is passed from generation to generation, in the words and actions of parents, teachers, and fellow community members. It is so deeply rooted inside our minds and hearts that we often cannot imagine a world in which our values, the way we define right and wrong, could possibly be thought of any other way. Conflict arises when two cultures with very different, or sometimes just mildly different, worldviews interact.

Rezumat

Cultura nu se compune doar din comportament și practici ale acestuia. Ea înglobează anumite stereotipuri ale binelui, acceptabilului și, invers, ale răului și non-acceptabilului. Cultura este ceea ce se învață de la persoanele mai în vârstă: părinți, dascăli, dar și de la societatea în ansamblu. Conflictul cultural apare atunci când, cel puțin, două culturi opuse vin în contact.

The connection between culture and language has been noted as far back as the classical period and probably long before. The ancient Greeks, for example, distinguished between civilized people and *bárbaros* "those who babble", i.e. those who speak unintelligible languages. [1] The fact that different groups speak different, unintelligible languages is often considered more tangible evidence for cultural differences than other less obvious cultural traits. The German romanticists of the 19th century such as Herder, Wundt and Humbolt often saw language not just as one cultural trait among many but rather as the direct expression of a people's national character, and as such as culture in a kind of condensed form. Herder for example suggests, "Denn jedes Volk ist Volk; es hat seine National Bildung wie seine Sprache" (Since every people is a People, it has its own national culture expressed through its own language)¹.

As a rule, a lot of definitions of culture refer to particular values and beliefs. It is worth mentioning that all aspects of culture influence our worldviews and the ways in which we view our relationships with the Earth and each other. It's not a secret that language, communication and culture are in close relationships. From my point of view, teaching and learning language is impossible without knowing its culture.² Culture and communication are inseparable because language is a part of the culture and culture is a part of the language. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge mentioned, "Language is the armory of the human mind and at once contains the trophies of its past and the weapons of its future conquests". So, it means that teaching language and communication are really important and certainly are connected with the culture of the language we are studying.

Culture is not only an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning. It is also an important concept in education for a sustainable future. That is why, teaching culture is based on the assertion that language and culture study are best brought together when the teacher is effective in the affective, cognitive and skills domains.³ At the same time teaching strategies and activities are presented that combine specific teaching techniques and ideas with other human and cultural resources in and out of the classroom.

Teaching culture provides some practical strategies for integrating language and culture study. Different activities, cultural mini-dramas and student performance objectives help teachers illustrate how the cultural context of communication is vital to understanding the message. There

¹apud Anderson, 1983.

²Bonvillain, 2007.

³Blum, 2008.

many ways of teaching culture, but first of all we should remember that our students need to recognize and understand how people in a given culture typically behave in common, everyday situations. In such a way organizing diverse extracurricular activities involving students of different ages is the best way to teach them language, communication and culture as well.

Finally, I would like to present you the scenario of one of the extra-curricular activities that I have already organized with my pupils. During such extra-curricular activities I always try to involve not only high level students, but also beginners those who have already begun to study English. To my mind, it is a good possibility to show them traditions and customs of the country whose language they are learning:

“Thanksgiving Day”

The melody sounds.

Throughout the party Power Point presentations are used.

A group of pupils comes to the scene with letters in their hands. They recite the poem:

T is for the trust the pilgrims had so many years ago
H is for the harvest the settlers learnt to grow
A is for America, the land in which we live
N is for nature and beauty which she gives
K is for kindness, gentle words, thoughtful deeds
S is for smiles, the sunshine everyone needs
G is for gratitude... our blessings big and small
I is for ideas, letting wisdom grow tall
V is for voices, singing, laughing, always caring
I is for Indians, who taught them about sharing
N is for neighbours, across the street, over the sea
G is for giving of myself to make a better me.

The girls sing the song “Waving Flag”.

Two leading pupils, a girl and a boy begin to tell about Thanksgiving Day:

The girl says: There is one day a year when all Americans stay home with their families and eat a big dinner. This is Thanksgiving Day.

The girl recites the poem “Thanksgiving”:

The year has turned its circle
The seasons come and go.
The harvest all is gathered in
And chilly north winds blow.
Orchards have shared their treasures
The fields, their yellow grain,
So open wide the doorway –
Thanksgiving comes again!

The boy says:

The pilgrims celebrated the first Thanksgiving Day in the fall of 1621. The pilgrims sailed to America from Plymouth, England, in September, 1620. They came to America for religious freedom. They were among the first European settlers in America. The name of their ship was the "Mayflower." They landed at Plymouth Rock, in what is now the state of Massachusetts, in December, 1620. So, today is 390 years from the day when first English people came to America.

The pupils recite the poems “The Pilgrims” and “The Pilgrims Came”:

“The Pilgrims”

In the year of 1620
on a cold December day
a hundred and two pilgrims

sailed into Plymouth Bay.
Still wary from their voyage -
still suffering winter's chill -
they kept their sights on freedom
with courage, work, and will.
Pilgrims did not stop to think
of riches, fame, or glory
while bravely playing starring roles
in our new nation's story.

"The Pilgrims Came"

The Pilgrims came across the sea
And never thought of you and me;
And yet it's very strange the way
We think of them Thanksgiving Day.
We tell their story old and true
Of how they sailed across the blue
And found a new land to be free
And built their homes quite near the sea.
The people think that they were sad
And grave; I'm sure that they were glad -
They made Thanksgiving Day - that's fun -
We thank the Pilgrims everyone!

The girl says:

There were people living in America before the pilgrims arrived. These people were the Native American Indians. The Indians began settling in America about 25,000 years ago. They hunted, fished, and farmed to survive. There were many groups, or tribes, and each had its own customs and beliefs.

The boy says:

The pilgrims' first winter in the New World was difficult. They had arrived too late to grow many crops. Without fresh food, half of the pilgrims died. The following spring the Indians taught the pilgrims how to hunt, fish, plant, and survive in America. The crops did well, and in the fall of 1621 the pilgrims had a great harvest.

The girl says:

They were thankful and decided to celebrate with a Thanksgiving feast. They prepared a dinner of turkey, corn, beans, and pumpkins. They invited their Indian friends to share this feast. The Indians brought food to the feast, too (they even brought popcorn!). Americans still celebrate Thanksgiving Day in the fall. It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. Turkey is still the main dish and pumpkin pie is the most popular dessert.

A short role-play:

Three boys come to the scene (There are necessary decorations on the stage).

The first boy says:

- Oh, thanks God, we have gathered a rich harvest. Nobody will be hungry this winter.

The second boy says:

- Our first winter was really very difficult here. We had arrived too late to grow many crops.

The third boy says:

- Without fresh food half of our friends died.

The first boy says:

- There is plenty of food for our feast now: cucumbers, carrots, cabbage, turnips, onions and beets.

The second boy says:

- We hunted wild turkeys, geese and ducks.

The third boy says:

- We went fishing and now we have a lot of fish.

The first boy says:

- Let's organize a big holiday.

The second boy says:

- It's a wonderful idea. Let's invite our Indian friends. They helped us a lot.

The third boy says:

- We'll really have a nice feast.

The first boy says:

- We will celebrate Thanksgiving Day!

The second boy says:

- Thanksgiving Day is a holiday to give thanks for the food collected at the end of the harvest season.

The third boy says:

- Thanksgiving Day is an opportunity for us to express our sincerest gratitude to people who love and care for us.

Pupils sing the song "Thanksgiving Medley".

The leading boy says:

Thanksgiving Day is a communal celebration marked as a sense of gratitude people feel for all the good things in life. This is done by offering prayers, gifting your near and dear ones. And here are some Thanksgiving Day Traditions.

The leading girl says:

Family feast is an important tradition during Thanksgiving. The entire family sits at the table during dinner. It is also a time for relatives living in different places to come together and celebrate.

The pupils recite the poem "It's Happy Thanksgiving":

"It's Happy Thanksgiving"

It's happy Thanksgiving,
Thanksgiving! Horray!
We're going to dinner
at Grandma's today.
I love it at Grandma's
It's cosy and snug,
I love giving Grandma
a Thanksgiving hug.
I help make the gravy.
I pour and stir,

it smells so delicious
I love helping her.
We laugh and we talk,
oh! She makes such a fuss
as she bustles about
cooking dinner for us.
When we sit at the table
and Daddy says grace,
there's a beautiful smile
on my grandmother's face.
Though the weather is windy
and chilly and gray,
our family is happy
this Thanksgiving day.

The girl sings the song "When I was young".

The dance in the country-style.

The leading boy says:

The traditional stuffed turkey adorns every dinner table during the feast. Pumpkin pie, Cranberry sauce, Corns are some of the dishes cooked everywhere to mark the day. Though historians don't have an evidence to prove that turkey was eaten during the first Thanksgiving dinner, but the thanksgiving celebration will be incomplete without it.

The pupil recites the poem "The Turkey Song":

"The Turkey Song"

I'm a little turkey
Short and Fat
Thanksgiving Day is coming.
Now what do you think of that?
I had better run as fast as I can
Oh, your mommy will roast me in a pan!

Pupils sing the song "The Turkey Song".

The leading girl says:

The traditional Thanksgiving parade probably started with President Lincoln proclaiming it an official day. The full-dress parade is a way to display the country's military strength and discipline. The main aim of such parades is to lift the spirits of the spectators, provide them with wholesome entertainment. In the present day, parades are accompanied with musical shows and celebrities.

The pupil recites the poem "The Thanksgiving Day Parade":

"The Thanksgiving Day Parade"

Thanksgiving Day is here today,
the great parade is under way,
and though it's drizzling quite a bit,
I'm sure that I'll see all of it.
Great ballons are floating by,
cartoon creatures stories high,
Mickey Mouse and Mother Goose,
Snoopy and mammoth moose.

The band are marching, here they come,
pipers pipe and drummers drum,
hear the tubas and the flutes,
see the clowns in silly suits.
It's pouring now, but not on me,
I'm just as dry as I can be,
I watch and watch, but don't get wet,
I'm watching on our TV set.

The leading boy says:

Watching football during Thanksgiving is a popular tradition. The traditional game between the Detroit Lions and the Green Bay Packers continues. One of the most memorable games had been played on this day.

The pupil recites the poem below:

Our turkey dinner's hardly gone
when Daddy says, "The game is on."
He tunes it in, takes off his shoes,
and turns to watch his heroes lose.
He sits and screams, we sit and grin,
he gets so mad when they don't win.
Thanksgiving wouldn't be the same
without my father's football game.

The dance

The leadin girl says:

Thanksgiving Day in the United States is traditionally a holiday to give thanks for the food collected at the end of the harvest season.

The pupils recite the poem below (They hold fruits and vegetables in their hands):

Thank You
For all my hands can hold
Apples red
And melons gold
Yellow corn
Both ripe and sweet
Peas and beans
So good to eat!

Thank You
For all my eyes can see
Lovely sunlight
Field and tree
White cloud-boats
In sea-deep sky
Soaring bird
And butterfly.

Thank You
For all my ears can hear -
Birds' song echoing
Far and near.
Songs of little
Stream, big sea

Cricket, bullfrog
Duck and bee!

T for time to be together, turkey, talk, and tangy weather
H for harvest stored away, home, and hearth, and holiday
A for autumn's frosty art, and abundance in the heart
N for neighbors, and November, nice things, new things to remember
K for kitchen, kettles' croon, kith and kin expected soon
S for sizzles, sights, and sounds, and something special that abounds
That spells «**THANKS**» for joy in living and a jolly good Thanksgiving!

The leading boy says:

Thanksgiving Day is an opportunity for us to express our sincerest gratitude to people who love and care for us. One of the most preferred and appreciated way of expressing gratitude is to say it through a beautiful Thanksgiving Day Card. While there are lot of Thanksgiving cards available in cards shop, you may also make the card yourself. The recipient will be touched to receive a handmade card and will be thankful to you!

The leading girl says:

A Thanksgiving Card should be sent to everyone who has helped you in some way. Also remember to thank all people who love you and care for you. You should go ahead and send a Thanksgiving Greeting to your parents, grandparents and other members of the family. In your workplace you may present Thanksgiving card to your business partners and colleagues.

The leadin boy says:

Besides, Thanksgiving Greetings could also be given to neighbours, teachers, doctors or any other social acquaintance who helped you in improving the quality of your life. Remember Thanksgiving Card is all about bringing a smile on each of these people face with a genuine expression of your admiration for them.

The leading girl says:

Thanksgiving Greeting Cards are usually adorned with traditional Thanksgiving Day symbols like wreath, turkey, pumpkin etc. Images of fruits and flowers are also used to symbolize happiness and prosperity associated with harvest festival. Sometimes a simple "Thank You" is printed to depict the feeling of gratitude felt by the sender.

The pupils come to the scene. They express their sincerest gratitude to people who are sitting in the assembly hall .Then they give the guests special cards.

The leading girl says:

It's Thanksgiving Time...
It's giving thanks time,
And here's a hug to say...
I'm thankful to you for
Making me how I am today.
Happy Thanksgiving Day!!!

The boy says:

Rich with happiness...
Filled with warmth...
Is the season!
So my heart ...
Blessed with the precious gift of your friendship!
Happy Thanksgiving Day!!!

The girl says:

Wishing this Thanksgiving
Finds you with
Plenty of reasons to give thanks!
Happy Thanksgiving Day!!!

The boy says:

The moments you held my hand...
You touched my heart
Thanks for loving me the way you do!
Happy Thanksgiving Day!!!

The girl says:

A special gift for our dear guests - a beautiful song.

The song.

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