

Exploring Human-Centric Approaches and Applications in Language Education beyond Communication-Focused Teaching

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Description

Our aim is to track and elucidate both theoretical and practical advancements in the teaching of foreign/world languages over the past decade or longer. Language instruction, since its transformation during the Reform Movement in the century, has revolved around the imperative for learners to acquire a foreign language for the purpose of communication. Additional objectives encompass language learning as a cognitive exercise, the cultivation of linguistic abilities, and the expansion of horizons by acquainting individuals with other nations. In this discourse, we contend that while these objectives are reasonable and enriching, they can truly flourish when combined. We advocate that by embracing a humanistic standpoint, language instruction can transcend communication as its sole primary objective. This humanistic perspective is actualized through two interrelated developments. The first is centered on recognizing that learners are part of various communities, including their local community, national community, and the global community. The second underscores the importance of acknowledging that learners bring their anxieties and apprehensions into the classroom, especially during times of crisis. Language educators, who serve not only as skill instructors but also as holistic educators, must address their learners' needs both as members of society and as distinct individuals. We commence by elucidating the theoretical foundation and its evolution, subsequently outlining two experimental initiatives. One project concentrates on societal requirements, while the other extends this focus to cater to the affective needs of learners. Lastly, we discuss how recent debates can be navigated within the language teaching environment. Our inception point in this discourse is the conviction that language instructors possess responsibilities as educators that extend beyond imparting linguistic competence and communication abilities the conventional objectives of language teaching across various educational settings. These responsibilities emerge from a humanistic educational philosophy that nurtures not only students' personal development but also contributes to the evolution of societies as harmonious, democratic, sustainable, and equitable entities. In the forthcoming sections, we expound on intercultural citizenship theory and its fusion with contentious and sensitive themes within the language classroom. We illustrate how this theory is operationalized through the case of the 1978 World Cup virtual project, undertaken in 2013, involving Argentine and British language students. In this project, the students tackled the subject of Argentina's last military dictatorship within the backdrop of the 1978

Football World Cup. Through well-defined stages, the project guided students to examine how the World Cup was exploited to conceal human rights transgressions that encompassed torture, abduction, and the killing of civilians suspected of opposing the military regime. Within this project, students were encouraged to glean insights from both a historical event (the dictatorship) and a sporting event (the 1978 World Cup) within their foreign language classrooms, with the intention of informing and reshaping their present and future. The students engaged in creative endeavors, such as crafting leaflets, posters, and videos, aimed at raising awareness within their community about human rights abuses during the 1978 World Cup. They also took concrete actions within their community, such as delivering presentations, contributing project materials to a local museum, conducting interviews with parents who had lost their children during the dictatorship, and more.

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Conflict of Interest

None