



From ‘intercultural-washing’ to meaningful intercultural education: Revisiting teaching practices in tertiary education

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Increasing emphasis is placed on *diversity* and *internationalization* in tertiary education (e.g. Jibeen & Khan, 2015). Unfortunately, limited views often underpin the way these terms are understood, leaving practitioners with arbitrary injunctions to encourage international exchanges and incorporate non-Western literature in course syllabi. These isolated efforts are often not enough to ensure that learners will develop the competences needed to function in a world where intercultural contacts are increasingly prominent. As a theoretical framework, critical intercultural communication offers conceptual tools that can help tertiary education move from ‘intercultural-washing’ to meaningful intercultural education. Challenges nevertheless await: How to incorporate critical views of intercultural communication into teaching practices? How to combine policies, students’ learning goals, and teachers’ knowledge? **This special issue aims to highlight solutions to these challenges by presenting concrete ways of integrating critical approaches to intercultural communication into higher education teaching practices.**

Teaching based on solid understandings of culture has been criticized for providing incomplete pictures of what intercultural communication entails (e.g. Dervin, 2010; Kundnani, 2004; Piller, 2017). It nevertheless remains prominent in disciplines such as business and management, language or health education (Breidenbach & Nyíri, 2009; Dervin & Tourneise, 2013). Designed to provide easy ready-made solutions, such teaching builds on monolithic and essentialist views of culture which present intercultural communication as disconnected from societal, historical, and political tensions (Holliday, 2010). Consequently, this pedagogical approach to intercultural communication often reiterates typical pitfalls of *banal nationalism* which reduce culture to (dominant) national discourses (Billig, 1995). Although the field of intercultural communication has largely moved away from such an approach, educational tools and curricula conveying critical views of culture are not as visible and popular as teaching drawing on the essentialist paradigm or a “Janusian” vision of culture (Dervin, 2011) that combines essentialist and non-essentialist understandings of culture. The gap between theory and practice therefore remains prominent and, despite good intentions, “most intercultural education practice supports, rather than challenges, dominant hegemony, prevailing social hierarchies, and inequitable distributions of power and privilege” (Gorski, 2008, p. 1).



Critical approaches to intercultural communication do not associate culture with fixed entities such as nation, but conceptualize it as a dynamic and multi-layered notion that encompasses the intersection of different social and cultural dimensions (Piller, 2017). Bringing such an approach into learning situations can be challenging for teachers who are not necessarily familiar with such literature nor equipped to deviate from mainstream materials and curricula. Moreover, teachers can find it difficult to meet learners' expectations regarding what intercultural communication and culture mean.

This special issue provides a forum in which to address the difficulties and opportunities that arise in tertiary education when revisiting intercultural teaching practices. It therefore calls for papers that provide theoretical as well as practical insights into the implementation of critical approaches to intercultural communication. We welcome qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods empirical studies as well as theoretical and practical articles. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Incorporating critical approaches to intercultural communication in teaching materials and/or ICT
- Learners' experiences of intercultural education and/or expectations of intercultural communication
- Difficulties faced by teachers in developing new understandings of intercultural communication
- Critical approaches to intercultural communication in specific subjects
- Tertiary education policies and 'intercultural-washing' approaches
- Intercultural education in supervision and mentoring

Please submit the following in one Word document to Mélodine Sommer (sommier@eshcc.eur.nl), Anssi Roiha (anssi.roiha@hu.nl), and Malgorzata Lahti (malgorzata.lahti@jyu.fi):

1. Tentative title
2. Abstract of 250-350 words
3. Biography of max. 100 words
4. Author details: full names, affiliation, contact email

Deadline for submission: **30th of June 2020**

In addition, we welcome book reviews on the topic of critical intercultural education at tertiary level (these will not undergo blind peer-review). The language of the review is English even if the book is in another language. If you are interested, please send an e-mail to the special issue editors briefly presenting the book you wish to review and explaining your research background and suitability to do the review by **30th of June 2020**.



Provisional timeline for the special issue:

- Decision from the special issue editors: 1st of August 2020
- First drafts (6,000-8,000 words) due: 1st of December 2020
- Expected publication date: summer 2021.

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