

Developing Tourism Undergraduates' Intercultural Communicative Competence in the English Language with Regard to the Needs of the Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The present paper presents the results of an innovative and interdisciplinary project based on today's foreign language education requirements for tourism, intensive international cooperation with several foreign institutions and close partnerships with numerous tourism companies.

The central idea of the project can be connected to the necessity of developing intercultural communicative competences (ICC) in the English language, especially for the field of tourism, since tourism products or companies can only be successful if they take into consideration the cultural specifics of a given market, i.e. of the customers, they want to attract. However, probably the greatest challenge of Slovakia's society and economy today is the discrepancy between the content and the outcomes of education and the needs of the labour market. Hence, it is of considerable importance that fostering ICC in the English language be adjusted to the expectations of the practice. In addition, education must also keep pace with technological advances and should continuously integrate the latest innovations of our digital era into the teaching/ learning process.

With regard to the mentioned requirements, the educational goals of the project included the adjustment of the content of developing ICC in English language to the needs of the tourism labour market, designing a textbook and an e-learning course, as well as the implementation of innovative methods such as Peer Instruction a Design Thinking. The scientific and research objectives of the project focused on mapping the expectations and experience of the employers in terms of intercultural communication within the particular fields of tourism, as well as on the verification of the selected ICT-based methods from the point of view of conceptual understanding and motivation. Applying several research methods, such as content analysis, observation, interview, questionnaire survey and action research, the project brought a lot of original results. In particular, in the field of implementing Peer Instruction

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and Design Thinking methods, the findings revealed that both of them can efficiently develop ICC in the English language. In addition, they significantly stimulate creativity and teamwork, increase motivation, and develop critical thinking and the ability to solve problem situations.

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competences In English Language, Tourism, Innovative And Interactive Teaching Methods, Curricular Documents, Textbooks, E-Learning Course