

TITLE

Somatic Dialogues: Teaching Foreign Language and Culture Through Immersion

DESCRIPTION

This paper explores the efficacy of teaching foreign language through somatic engagement with the target culture in the context of an on-campus immersion program. Students learned to engage empathy and develop cultural and linguistic competency in the target language through interactive experiences with theater, music, sports, and food preparation.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING STRANDS

Culture

AUDIENCE

Higher Education

CONTENT

This paper explores the efficacy of somatic methodology used to teach introductory level Spanish language and culture at the North Georgia College Spanish Summer Language Institute during the summer of 2011. The research presented analyzes the theory and method of language teaching that structured and informed the program's interactive curriculum design. Students participated in activities in the target language including improvisational theater exercises drawn from Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, student participation in performing music and dance traditions, weekly soccer practice, and group preparation of traditional dishes from the target culture. All activities were led by native speakers, who were encouraged to draw on their own lives and perspectives in their instruction. This study concludes that the interactive and participatory nature of the program resulted in student mastery of linguistic and cultural concepts, providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful future study abroad experience.

METHODS

Materials needed: laptop, projector.

This study will be introduced through a brief explanation of the program structure, accompanied by maps, images and schedules from the summer program website. Photographs and short video clips will accompany a brief overview of theater, music, sports, and culinary activities, providing audience members with the opportunity to observe student engagement and enthusiasm throughout the summer and demonstrate the growth and development of language skills during the experience. Additional video footage will be published on a website, and audience members will be encouraged to explore additional images and clips after the presentation as well as share the information with their colleagues and departments.

OUTCOMES

This presentation aims to disseminate a creative and interactive approach to language teaching in an on-campus immersion program. Participants will be provided with theory,

methods, and learning outcomes used in order to develop immersion programs at their home institution. Faculty concerned about the degree of student preparedness for a study abroad experience might consider implementing such a program.

PRESENTER

Dr. Jennifer Formwalt

LANGUAGES

Presentation will be made in English.

Presentation content is related to Spanish language instruction.