Stimulating intercultural learning through content and language integrated learning: Insights from quasi-experimental studies

Vera Busse
University of Oldenburg, Germany

The paper presents the results of a 2x2-factorial quasi-experimental intervention study, where we implemented an intercultural learning unit and varied the teaching approach and the language of instruction. It covered six 45-minute segments and was conducted in nine school classes (n = 143) at the upper secondary level. Five additional school classes (n = 66) served as a control group which did not take part in the learning unit.

The learning unit was based on findings of a previous quasi-experimental study (Busse & Krause, 2015) in which students worked on authentic problems in the form of critical incidents that display misunderstandings or conflicts that arise as a result of cultural differences. The intervention was implemented via two teaching approaches, one being more affective-experiential and the other being more analytical.

Results indicate that the problem-based approach was successful as on average students in the experimental groups made better learning progress than students in the control groups (Busse & Krause, 2016). Students in the experimental groups showed higher levels of cultural awareness when working on the critical incidents, were better able to change perspective and thought of more appropriate strategies to deal with the situations depicted than their peers in the control condition. The affective-experiential approach had a positive effect on motivation, and students taught in English performed as well as students taught in German indicating that teaching through a foreign language did not impede content acquisition. Implications for teaching will be discussed.

References


Keywords: affective-experiential learning, intercultural learning, CLIL, critical incidents.