

Teaching Tolerance in the Language Classroom through a Text

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Abstract : In an ever-increasing globalization, one's grasp of diversity and tolerance has never been more indispensable, and it is a vital duty for all those in the field of foreign language teaching to help children cultivate such values. The present study explores the role of DIVERSITY and TOLERANCE in the language classroom and elementary, middle, and high school students' perceptions of these two concepts. It draws on several theoretical domains of language acquisition, cultural awareness, and school psychology. Relying on these frameworks, the major findings are synthesized, and a paradigm of teaching tolerance through language-teaching is formulated. Upon analysing how tolerant our children are with 'others' in and outside the classroom, we have concluded that intolerance and aggression towards the 'other' increase with age, and that a feeling of supremacy over migrants and a sense of fear towards them begin to manifest more apparently when the students are in high school. In addition, we have also found that children in elementary school do not exhibit such prejudiced thoughts and behavior, which leads us to believe that tolerance as well as intolerance are learned. Therefore, it is within our reach to teach our children to be open-minded and accepting. We have used the novel 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' by Harriet Beecher Stowe as a springboard for lessons which are not only targeted at shedding light on the role of language in the modern world, but also aim to stimulate an awareness of cultural diversity. We equally strive to conduct further cross-cultural research in order to solidify the theory behind this study, and thus devise a language-based curriculum which would encourage tolerance through the examination of various literary texts.

Keywords : literary text, tolerance, EFL classroom, word-association test

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