

19 September 2016

Re: External review of the manuscript *Intercultural Communicative Competence: How to get there*.

This reviewer recommends for publication the manuscript titled *Intercultural Communicative Competence: How to get there*. The following account gives a brief explanation of the contents of the text and an overview of its strengths, and concludes by offering a few suggestions for developing the work further.

This workbook is aimed at guiding learners of English as a second language to improve their intercultural competence through exercises and activities that require reflection, analysis and discussion. The units with exercises are followed by texts to help learners think further about the exercises and key concepts, appendices containing explanations and an answer key, and finally, a bibliography.

Intercultural Communicative Competence provides a much-needed tool to guide students towards a reflective approach to intercultural encounters. Importantly, it fills a rather large gap in the field of teaching intercultural competence (which unfortunately has been dominated by neo-essentialism) by offering teachers and students the opportunity to get below surface differences by engaging in critical dialogues on examples from real-life cultural encounters.

The reflection questions (signaled by a hand icon, which makes them easy for students and teachers to find) will foster personal insight, and have the added benefit of promoting in-class discussion and strengthening oral skills. It is also clear that the author understands intercultural competence as a two-way street: that is, to learn about other cultures while learning more about one's own. Several of the questions ask students how they might explain their own cultural norms to someone from another culture. This type of two-way reflection pervades the book and fulfills the aim given in the introduction of making a "conscious effort to take a different perspective, and try to walk in another person's shoes."

The "race literacy quiz" is a welcome and timely addition to the workbook, in particular given the current migrant situation. While racial literacy has been integrated into first and second language learning in the United States, it has yet to gain good ground in Europe.

The additional texts that follow the units are relevant, interesting, and up-to-date. The author could add a few more of these, as they open up possibilities for classroom conversation and further insight. One suggestion for such an addition is Adrian Holliday's discussion of what he calls "neo-essentialist traps" in intercultural encounters (see: "A Reconstructed Narrative", pp. 22-26 in *Intercultural Communication and Ideology*, Sage: 2011.)

The author has done a significant amount of research, and as such the bibliography is substantial. This is not by any means a negative factor, but the author may want to consider

adding a small section for “Further Reading” in the introduction so that learners and teachers could quickly and easily be made aware of sources appropriate to them on the topic of intercultural competence.

In conclusion, it is encouraging to see a manuscript devoted to fighting ethnocentrism in ESL teaching, and I believe it will be of interest and great use to learners and teachers alike.

Sincerely,



Jena Habegger-Conti