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**TEACHING CULTURE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM:
AN ANALYSIS OF THREE LESSON PLANS
MA thesis**

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Abstract

The current Master's thesis aims to create teaching materials for teaching culture whereas stressing the importance of cultural learning as a process. The thesis will concentrate on the following research question: How to create teaching materials for teaching culture based on the experiential learning cycle for an English language classroom.

The thesis consists of the theoretical and empirical part. The theoretical part of the thesis explores different views on culture, the relationship between culture and language, and the notion of teaching culture. The subchapter on teaching culture will take a closer look at the process of teaching culture, concentrating more specifically on Patrick R. Moran's (2001) experiential learning cycle.

The empirical part of the Master's thesis focuses on the process of creating, teaching, and analysing the materials for teaching culture. First, the reasons for the creation of the materials will be given. Secondly, the main objectives for the lesson plans will be set by drawing ideas from various scholars. Thirdly, the analyses based on the alternating creation and teaching of the three lesson plans will be presented.

The conclusion summarises the main findings of the thesis.

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Introduction

The Estonian National Curriculum (Vabariigi Valitsuse 28. jaanuari 2010. a. määruse nr.14 „Põhikooli riiklik õppekava” lisa 2: 2-3) states that through getting to know different cultures and their values, students learn to be more tolerant and acceptant towards value systems which are foreign to them. Foreign language education broadens learners' worldview and their ability to communicate in a multicultural society.

Whilst working as an English teacher I have had the chance to be acquainted with a language learning method called the immersion method. The immersion method creates similar conditions, which exist when a child acquires his or her first language. By immersing the child into as much target language as possible and minimising the use of mother tongue, the second language should be obtained naturally. Language immersion programmes do not distinguish any one group of methods to be superior to the other, but are the combination of all the best parts of different teaching methods (Nordgren & Bergström 1984: 23).

The aim of the present Master's thesis is to create a set of materials for teaching culture in the English language classroom, which could also complement the already existing materials and programme at my school. The need for creating a set of materials for teaching culture was inspired by the wish to diversify the currently used materials by introducing more cross-cultural topics and themes to the program, but also create materials, which would concentrate on the cultural learning process rather than on fixed cultural facts. The hope was to develop additional materials that would guide the students to becoming more aware of their own cultural backgrounds as well as tolerant towards foreign cultures and ideas. These teaching materials would help students to fulfil their communicative needs. The thesis will concentrate on the following research question: How

to create teaching materials for teaching culture based on the experiential learning cycle for an English language classroom.

The current thesis consists of a theoretical and empirical part. These two chapters have been created side by side through constant trials, analyses, and modifications. The theoretical part of the thesis will comprise three subtopics. Firstly, the topic of culture will be further analysed, with a focus on the concept culture and its components. Secondly, the relationship between culture and language will be explored. Thirdly, the topic of teaching culture will be scrutinised. Different interpretations of cultural learning will be looked at, whereas the focus of examination will be on Moran's experiential cycle and cultural learning as a process. Finally, a brief overview of the materials and methods for teaching culture will be given. The second chapter forms the empirical part of the thesis, which presents three analyses of three different lesson plans. These three lesson plans, which deal with the cultural implications of the topics of manners, stereotypes, and school uniforms, were taught to three different groups of students between the ages of 11 and 14. The creation of the three lesson plans has been a lengthy process during which the materials have constantly been analysed and improved after each teaching round. The three lesson plans have been included in the appendices.

1. Theoretical Part: Culture and Teaching Culture

1.1. What is Culture?

The current chapter will be exploring the concept of culture. Albeit the specifics of the term and opinions on it may vary, Edward T. Hall (1989: 16) notes how culture is seen to have three common characteristics, which the majority of scholars seem to agree upon. Firstly, culture is thought to be learnt, rather than being a property humans are born with. Secondly, all aspects of culture are interconnected, meaning that alterations made on one of the constituent parts affect the whole system. Lastly, culture is a medium shared by all humans. Clifford Geertz (1973 cited in Moran 2001: 5) depicts culture as a constantly changing and developing construct created by people. Anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2001: 3) defines culture as “the abilities, notions and forms of behaviour persons have acquired as members of society”. Culture is ambiguous – on the one hand, it is something which is intrinsic to all humans and makes us all cultural beings, on the other hand, culture is something we have obtained, thus making each one of us different from the other.

Colin Sowden (2007: 304-305) refers to the past when culture used to have a more specific and narrower definition than it has nowadays. The culture of a person could be reduced to their social status, ethnicity or nationality, such as the culture of a specific country or a group of people.

According to Brian Fay (Fay 1996: 55-60 cited in Holliday et al 2004: 60-61) culture is a collectively shared system of “beliefs, values, and concepts”. For the participants, this system offers a set of rules for participating in the life of that particular community. Patrick R. Moran (2001: 23-24) drawing ideas from the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (cited in Moran 2001: 23) states that human culture consists of the following basic components: practices (actions), products (artefacts), and

perspectives (meaning). Believing that these ideas could not exist without the outside help of cultural people who put these three dimensions into use, Moran adds two more components: persons (individual members) and communities (social groups and contexts). As a result, Moran formulates the following definition: “Culture is the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social context” (ibid: 24).

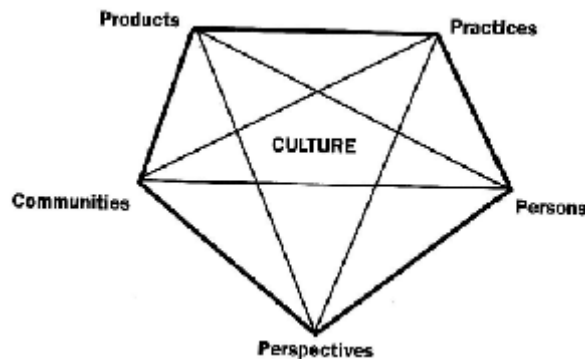


Fig. 1 Five cultural dimensions (Moran 2001:24)

Moran (2001) expands more clearly on the five different aspects of culture (see Fig. 1) by bringing out the essence of each dimension as follows:

- Cultural products are cultural artefacts that are often created by the members of a particular community. These objects can be both tangible or intangible (Moran 2001: 48).
- Cultural practices consist of verbal or nonverbal actions that the cultural participants engage in (Moran 2001: 57-58).

- Cultural perspectives are the beliefs, values, and attitudes that offer guidance to the people who participate in different cultural acts. In other terms, perspectives provide people with how they perceive and view the world (Moran 2001: 74).
- Cultural communities or social groups, amidst which cultural practices are implemented by participants. The groups can be divided into broad and narrow communities. The broader communities incorporate gender, race, religion, class, etc. whereas, the narrower groupings are more localised in their nature, ranging from political parties and sports teams to co-workers and family (Moran 2001: 90).
- Cultural persons are what culture is made of. Through interacting with one another, people are acquainted with each other's cultures (Moran 2001:98).

Culture is not seen as a static entity but rather as an onward moving process. In his definition, Moran (2001: 24) states that culture is “the evolving way of life”, meaning that each entity has gone through an evolutionary process and is still constantly changing and renewing. Yueg-Hung Tseng (2002: 15) agrees by highlighting the notion that culture should be seen as a process rather than an array of facts to be learned.

Culture is sometimes described through the image of an iceberg (Levin et al. 87; Weaver 93; Brake et al. 95 cited in Moran 2001: 27). This metaphoric depiction of culture states that the smaller, top part of the iceberg represents everything that is visible to the naked eye, “explicit knowledge” – communities, products, practices, and persons (see Fig. 2), whereas the considerably larger, bottom half of the iceberg represents the invisible perspectives of culture, the “tacit knowledge”.

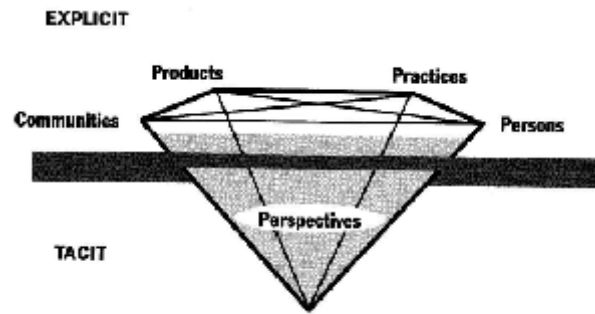


Fig. 2 The iceberg of culture (Moran 2001: 28)

Culture is a medium created by man, whereas nothing in human life is disconnected from culture. The following subchapter will take a closer look at the role of language against the background and context of culture.

1.2. Language and Culture

This subchapter will be exploring the relationship between language and culture. Both of these mediums exist in a foreign language classroom, thus it would be interesting to witness how exactly these two notions can be bound together.

Moran (2001: 35) states that in order to grasp the essence of culture completely we must take a closer look at language. The author continues to explain how language acts as a “window to culture”, meaning that similarly to all products of culture have a language aspect all dimensions of language contain culture. Irene Krasner (1999) agrees and goes on to describe the relationship between culture and language as a one of a kind symbiosis, where language is one of the ingredients of culture, but at the same time, each structure of language comprises pieces of cultural information. Ramona Tang (2000) goes as far as to state that language *is* culture, adding that, by speaking the language, we adopt the culture of the target language to some extent. The author also believes that in order to be proficient in a language one must be capable of thinking in that language.

Kramsch (2000a: 10) maintains that language and culture are connected in various ways. With the help of language, people are able to communicate a vast amount of collective ideas, which are shared by people. At the same time, language also represents and reflects cultural reality.

Moran (2001: 36-38) has conceptualised how we use language in cultural processes and has expanded on the five aspects as follows: as the first dimension, Moran believes cultural practices to be the most usual expression of culture; when people meet and communicate with each other, they use language. Language is also used to express and talk about our values, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes, the bottom part of the cultural iceberg. These implicit perspectives of culture, as Moran calls them, are made explicit by using language. Different situations demand us to adopt various language skills, both receptive and productive. By examining different words and expressions, we are able to discover meanings and values that are often culture-specific (e.g. idioms). People handle different products of culture by using language. Some of these products, such as literature, are comprised fully of language. Languages used in cultural communities have different variations, thus jargons specific to only certain communities will form. Moran also points out that within these communities, norms and social conventions exist, which in turn dictate appropriate register in speech. In addition to the previously mentioned collective aspect of culture, also a personal dimension of language exists. Our unique backgrounds determine what our “personal style” of language is. By using a certain vocabulary, pitch, tone of voice, etc, we are able to use “our own version of language” to communicate.

The aforementioned authors seem to agree how a strong connection between language and culture exists, often making the boundaries between the two realms disappear. Within the context of the current Master’s thesis and the classroom context, it is important to stress how language can be intertwined with all aspects of culture, but also

how through language we are able to express the culture surrounding us. As the next step, the concept of teaching culture will be examined.

1.3. Teaching Culture

As the aim of this thesis is to create materials for teaching culture, it is vital to explore different ideas on culture pedagogy. These ideas will work as the theoretical cornerstone both for creating the materials, and when teaching these materials.

Teaching culture of the target language is sometimes neglected. Gilberte Furstenberg (2010) speaks how language teachers do not feel comfortable teaching topics which have always belonged to other disciplines such as anthropology; for that reason they have often left culture teaching aside and focused on language teaching instead, especially at the beginning of learning a language. Karen Risager (2007: 7) believes that all subjects taught at school have language and culture aspect, but we are usually able to see the culture dimension only when dealing with a foreign or second language. Kramsch (2000b: 1) debates how culture does not act as a fifth skill in a foreign language classroom next to reading, writing, listening and speaking, but instead is an ever-present and inseparable part of all these skills. Culture in the language classroom is a constant source of conflict for learners when they experience the joining of two different cultures.

When learning a new language, it is important not to dismiss culture as an essential component of the learning process; Milton J. Bennet (1993: 16) describes this type of ignorance as becoming a “fluent fool” – a sort of a “person who speaks the language but does not comprehend the social and philosophical content of that language”. The language learner has to become aware of the cultural components of language in order not to view the foreign culture too superficially.

All over the world the term culture is perceived by language teachers either as a humanistic or a sociolinguistic concept, the former being named also the “big C” culture

and the latter “little c” culture (Furstenberg 2010; Kramsch 2006; Tomalin & Stempleski 1993). The humanistic concept can be expressed most commonly by teaching the history, literature, arts, etc of the target culture. The sociolinguistic concept or the “little c” culture shows the everyday side of the target culture. Teaching the habits, behaviours and customs of the target culture has become the core in teaching culture. As a drawback, though, teaching the characteristics or typical representations of a culture could lead to stereotyping and shallowness both in language teaching as well as learning (Kramsch 2006). Culture is a rather diverse and complex entity with no one clear definition or unanimity on its structure. For that reason, it should be the teacher’s goal to create some sort of order amongst the “chaos”, or at the least make culture an attainable entity for the learners (Moran 2001:13).

Risager (2007: 9-10) expands the content of culture pedagogy by speaking of two different points of departure, the former being from the humanities and/ or social sciences, the latter from linguistics and/ or sociolinguistics. Culture pedagogy influenced by the humanities and social sciences views language learning as a holistic concept, which means that in addition to language, the learner acquires knowledge about the world in general. This type of cultural pedagogy has focused on the culture and society of the countries with target language as their mother tongue. The extent of content is wide, ranging from a variety of topics such as “everyday life, subcultures, music, education, regional conditions, environment, and technology”. From the 1970s to 1990s culture pedagogy has concentrated on the communicative approach towards language teaching, in the meantime being also influenced by linguistics and sociolinguistics (Risager, 2007: 10). According to a communicative approach, meaningful communication can most efficiently be developed through the use of meaningful content, thus the main aim was on discovering the specific knowledge that was needed in order to communicate efficaciously in the target language.

Furthermore, communicative approach focused more on intercultural communication and teaching cultural differences in the use of language.

Kramsch (2000b: 206) urges not to view culture only from the perspective of characteristics specific to nationality, but instead concentrate equally on other aspects of a person's culture, such as age, gender, ethnicity, etc. The author gives a valid argument here by stating that when emphasising only one aspect of culture we might leave the other dimensions unnoticed.

Large parts of people's identity are changeable meaning that one's identity is "negotiated" in interactions with other people in various situations. For the development of cultural identity, learners need to place themselves into different cultural contexts which would help learners understand who *they* really are (Collier & Thomas 1988: 112 cited in Cortazzi & Jin 1999: 206). Kramsch (2000b: 205) goes a step further by concluding that in order to understand a foreign culture, it is necessary to position the foreign culture into a framework which is already familiar to the learner – their own cultural background. This approach entails exploring both the target culture as well as the native culture. Concetta Fiorito (2000: 33) speaks how learning about different cultures teaches tolerance. Seeing the differences between their own culture and the target culture helps the students to see the underlying rules, which each culture possesses, thus leading to acceptance of the foreign. Elizabeth Peterson & Bronwyn Coltrane (2003) add the importance of making learners aware of the cultural differences in verbal actions and behaviour, for example, what is seen as suitable in one's own culture may be considered unsuitable in the foreign culture.

Krasner (1999) shares this opinion on *awareness*, noting that students should be guided so far as to recognise various "cultural frames", what in turn should direct them towards "nonjudgmental evaluation" and "acceptance" of the new and foreign. Cortazzi

and Jin (1999: 217-218) expand further by stating that the main stress in teaching culture should be on cultural awareness. This means becoming conscious of cultural members extraneous to us, and at the same time trying to comprehend their motives for behaviour. In order to achieve that goal, the cultural learners and their teachers ought to view the cultural content in a more contemplative manner. Cultural awareness gives students the ability to behave appropriately in different cultural contexts (Peterson and Bronwyn, 2003; Tseng, 2002).

Risager (2007: 1) adds how foreign language teaching ought to concentrate on developing students' communicative skills, at the same time creating "multilingually" and "multiculturally" informed persons. Furstenberg (2010) goes further by saying that language teachers' goal ought not only be just to improve students' language and communication skills but also to make the development of "intercultural competence" one of the main aims in the English language lessons. The goal of which is to successfully communicate with people from other cultures (Rathje 2007:256).

As various scholars have mentioned, the teaching of culture is often left on the outskirts of language teaching, though without grasping the medium of culture of a language the language experience itself is incomplete. The current thesis does not aim to label the content of culture to be with a capital or lower-case "C", nor does it set out to create materials which could breed stereotypes and shallowness. Instead, it aspires to view culture learning as a holistic phenomenon, at the same time stressing the importance of meaningful communication in language learning. Furthermore, the materials, which are created, intend to form tolerant and considerate students through recognising similarities and differences among cultures.

1.3.1. Culture Learning as a Process vs. Learning Fixed Cultural Phenomena

Now, as I have given an overview of the main ideas on teaching culture, the actual process of learning and teaching culture will be further examined. Analysing the mechanisms of teaching culture will help to lay the foundation for creating the teaching materials for teaching culture.

Cortazzi & Jin (1999: 210- 211) propose the idea of cultural learning as dialogue between the student, the cultural content (or the author of the material), and the teacher. The teacher's role in this conversation is to be a mediator who helps the students to make sense of the cultural information gathered from the materials. Both the student and the teacher enter the dialogue with some cultural knowledge of the target culture, which they have acquired previously. Risager (2007:10-11) speaks of a replacement of priorities in culture pedagogy in the past two to three decades, where the focus has moved from "teaching material" onto the "learning processes"; the attention shifted from the subject matter onto the learner's personal development. The author expands further on the focal point of culture pedagogy:

There is an emphasis on comparing cultures, reflexiveness and an understanding of 'the other'. The focus is on such concepts as intercultural competence and the intercultural speaker: a person who is able to mediate between various languages and various cultural contexts. (Risager 2007:10)

Kramsch (2000b: 205-206) suggests that if meaning is born in an interaction between people, a focus on normativity in language instruction is useless. She goes on to argue that one should follow the lead of the educators, such as e.g., Martine Abdallah-Pretceille (1983) and Bernd Müller-Jacuire (1986), who propose that instead of teaching fixed cultural facts and practices, it would be more meaningful to teach the "process" that concentrates on revealing and understanding the foreign or the other. Moran (2001: 147) asserts that cultural information tends to alter, but the obtaining process of that information

usually stays the same. Moran (2001: 136-137) goes to combine the cultural content and the process of culture learning into one cultural experience. Within this cultural experience the teaching of culture takes place, hence the process when students are led through the cultural experience is what Moran (2001: 137) refers to as teaching culture.

The main emphasis in the creation of the lesson plans will be put on cultural learning as a process. Instead of giving the students the ready-made knowledge, which is often changeable, it would be more sensible to give the students the access to a process, which gives cultural meaning. For this reason, the experiential learning cycle with its constituent parts will be explored in the following subchapter more thoroughly.

1.3.2. Experiential Learning Cycle: the Process of Learning Culture

Going a step further, in order to create this specific set of culture teaching materials, Moran's (2001) learning cycle has been put into use. The specific stages within the cycle offer a systematised structure for developing the teaching materials for teaching culture.

Moran (2001: 18-19) has adapted the *Experiential Learning Cycle* from David A. Kolb, adding how people learn by experiencing different phenomena. By undergoing the experiences proposed at each of the four stages of the cycle, students are able to obtain and assimilate certain cultural notions and ideas. These four different stages in Moran's cycle – participation, description, interpretation and response – concentrate on the learner as the recipient of cultural knowledge. Each of these stages of experiential cycle in turn correspond to the four cultural knowings (How, About, Why, Oneself) or what Moran (2001: 15) specifies as “learning interactions”. Fig. 3 shows how in the Participation stage a student is involved in a specific cultural act concentrating on the Knowing How. From this, the student moves on to the Description stage concentrating on the Knowing About. The following stage – the Interpretation stage deals with the Knowing Why, whereas the

final stage of the experiential cycle called the Response stage centres on developing the learner's self-awareness.

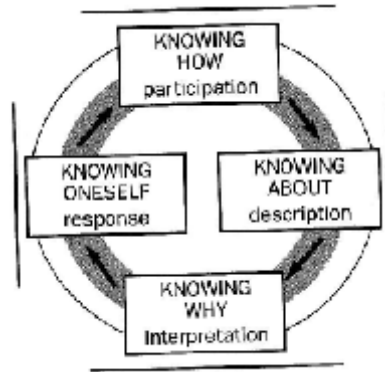


Fig. 3. Moran's experiential learning cycle (2001: 141) adapted from Kolb (1984)

Moran (ibid: 141-142) adds that since the process of learning is often not a linear one, it is not wise to follow the experiential cycle too rigidly. Each of the knowings, though, ought to be approached separately, requiring careful planning and monitoring by the teacher. At every stage of the experiential cycle, the content for each of the cultural knowings has been explored side by side with the learning outcomes, learning activities and the teacher's role during the whole process.

- Participation stage - Knowing How (Moran 2001: 142-144).

The first stage of the cycle, the participation stage, concentrates on developing the knowing how. In this stage, cultural learning is based on action, key words being engagement, acting, and participation. Participation stage allows the students to develop skills that help them to take part in specific cultural practices. It offers them the ability to use the products of culture in useful and appropriate manner. The outcome of learning at this stage is that learners are able choose the correct forms of behaviour and capable of putting them into use accurately. The activities involved are practical in their nature and concentrate on the use of the products of

culture – rituals, role-plays, dialogues, performances, enactments, simulations, and excursions. Teachers' role at this stage involves assisting the students in acquiring the cultural behaviours by being a “model” or “a coach”.

- Description stage - Knowing About (Moran 2001:144-146)

Moran believes the second stage of the cycle to be the foundation of cultural learning. The content in this stage involves information about the target language culture, learner's own culture, theoretical information about culture itself and how it is learned, as well as a variety of direct cultural experiences the participants undergo. As the learning outcomes at this stage, students are able to show what sort of cultural information they acquired previously. Furthermore, learners should be able to separate factual knowledge from opinions, or of their personal interpretations of those facts. The practice at this stage involves working with authentic and pedagogical materials (e.g. books, newspapers, films, videos, textbooks, studies, etc) as well as participants' personal stories or even direct contact with the target culture (e.g. travel, field trips, etc). Teachers' role is to either give the students the cultural information or show them where to find it. The teacher also has to assess whether students have understood the information correctly.

- Interpretation stage - Knowing Why (Moran 2001:148-150)

The third stage of the experiential cycle concentrates on knowing why, and in Moran's opinion, tends to be the most challenging for the student of all the four knowings since learners' aim at this point is to grasp fully the cultural phenomenon obtained thus far. Students need to comprehend both the external and internal perspectives on culture, but also make comparisons between the two realms. The internal (emic) perspectives look at how the people inside the culture themselves perceive and interpret their culture, whereas the external (etic) perspectives include outsiders views of a specific culture. The learners are expected to position themselves in the emic position in order to fully comprehend the

foreign worldview. Comparisons between learner's own culture and the target culture help to propose appropriate explanations of different cultural phenomena. Learning activities at the interpretation stage include cultural analyses (giving meanings to different cultural phenomena), research projects, and field-based research. The teacher at this stage has to act as "a guide" who helps the students to give cultural explanations to different phenomena. It is important that the teacher does not get too involved but instead directs the student towards seeing the "patterns, consistencies, and inconsistencies".

- Response stage - Knowing Oneself (Moran 2001: 150-152)

At the last stage of the Experiential Learning cycle the attention shifts from culture to the learner's own worldview and personal development. The response stage deals with the learners' immediate responses to different cultural phenomena and cultural experiences. Students need to analyse and reflect on their reactions, which occur when adapting with the new. Learners also need to explore their own "values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices" not related to the specific cultural setting. By the end of the response stage learners should be more aware of their own feelings, perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes. They are capable of expressing self-awareness about one's own culture and see themselves as cultural beings. Learning activities at response stage include reflection, focused talking and writing. The teacher acquires the roles of "a listener, witness, and co-learner".

With the intention of creating the materials based on these four cycles, specific activities have been chosen in order to ensure cultural learning experience most accurately. The following subchapter will concentrate on some of these activities and materials, which were chosen keeping mind the culture learning framework.

1.3.3. Materials and Methods for Teaching Culture

When speaking of the cultural content that is depicted in different EFL textbooks Coratzzi and Jin (1999: 204-210) divide the materials roughly into three groups: source

culture materials, target culture materials, and international target culture materials. The authors, though, insist that in addition to an array of diverse set of materials for cultural learning, appropriate methodology should be applied. The first type, source culture materials concentrate on the learner's own culture. Instead of concentrating on target cultures, these materials focus on source cultures but in a target language. The aim of these materials is firstly, to teach the students to speak to foreigners about their own culture. Secondly, allow the students to contemplate on their own culture on a much deeper level, thus gaining awareness of their own cultural background. Secondly, target culture materials offer cultural content from the target cultures, dealing with a range of topics from social to environmental issues (ibid: 208). International target culture materials concentrate on the cultures where English can be used as the first or second language, but also as an international language. Materials with international content can propose a difficult challenge for the educator, since the materials often tend to be too scattered, making it difficult to connect the topics into coherent units.

The communicative approach to language teaching centres on the idea that language is most effectively acquired by using meaningful and authentic materials and language (Johnson 1982 cited in Richards & Rogers 1994: 161). Cortazzi & Jin (1999: 197) support the idea by stressing the importance of authentic communication existing within specific contexts that are always bound by culture, making communication itself culture bound. Drawing from the communicative approach, according to Diane Larsen-Freeman (2000: 132-135) the following methods/materials would seem suitable for teaching culture.

- Authentic materials such as newspaper articles, radio and television shows, etc, give the students a chance to work with natural language. Using authentic materials

helps the learners more easily transfer what they have learnt on to real-life situations.

- Role plays give the learners a chance to practice communication in various situations and roles. Roles plays can be either loosely or rigidly structured. The more natural the conversation, the more it sets out to fulfil students communicative needs. Students themselves have to contribute to the dialogue as they would in real life conversations.

Brian Cullen & Kazuyoshi Sato (2000) encourage using activities, which allow the students to view culture from more than one perspective.

- Contrasting notions such as similarities and differences allows students to find opposing views in a cultural framework; this helps the learners to understand that cultures can be looked at from more than one point of view.
- Pair and group work – working in small groups allows the students to practice the language more than with the whole class. Cullen & Sato (ibid) add that work in groups allows the students to maximise their learning since each student has more possibilities to express his or her opinion on the topics in the target language.

Cullen & Sato (ibid) though point out that the most important aspect when choosing the right activity type is to make sure that students are interested and focused on the target culture. Authors add that regular activities such as “games, role plays, field trips, reading activities, listening activities, writing activities, discussion activities, and singing” can often be made useful in lessons that concentrate on cultural topics.

In the context of the current Master’s thesis, the materials which were created were based on three different texts. These materials, according to Cortazzi and Jin (1999: 208-209) could be classified as target culture materials. Topics, which were chosen, posed intriguing conflicts and possibilities for cultural comparisons. The lesson plans, which

have been developed, put all four language skills into use. The activities, which were applied include discussion, role play, short essays, reading comprehension, etc.

2. Empirical Part: Creating the Teaching Materials

2.1. The Reasons for Creating This Set of Materials

The Estonian National Curriculum for basic school (Põhikooli riiklik õppekava Lisa 2: 2) highlights the communicative nature of foreign language education in Estonia; the focus is on the students with the aim of fulfilling their communicative needs. The main stress of the contemporary language education is on the use of language rather than the mere knowledge of language structures. In addition to enhancing students' communicative needs, the foreign language education in Estonia highlights how the knowledge on different cultures helps to recognise and accept the nuances in one's own language and culture more easily. This could be done by comparing one's own culture to the target culture; understanding and embracing the traits of other cultures and languages; being tolerant and unbiased towards the foreign.

During my first year of working as a teacher of English, I came to the idea of creating teaching materials for teaching culture. The idea to create a set of materials for teaching culture came from the wish to create additional materials for teaching culture for students from 11 to 14 years of age. I believe that there are certain topics and issues that should be introduced to this specific age group while these are treated rather superficially in regular textbooks or omitted completely. Furthermore, with these materials, which will be created, I wish to emphasise a contemporary take on culture and the teaching of culture.

The aim is to create a set of autonomous materials, which could be used as extra material, separate from textbooks or the programmes. Even though the current collection of materials is intended to be coherent, some of the activities could be also used separately. In

the compilation process, I have kept in mind that these materials should be of interest to early adolescent students. The language proficiency level has not been strictly determined but can be altered to suit less or more advanced and experienced students within the lower intermediate language level.

2.2. Learning Outcomes and Objectives of the Materials

The underlying idea for the teaching materials was to create three lesson plans, which could be used as extra material side by side with the already existing curriculum. This collection of materials should give the students an opportunity to analyse critically different types of material such as texts, audio-visual material but also topics such as manners, racial issues, and uniforms as part of tradition. When teaching culture, the aim is not to teach facts about specific English speaking countries, but instead explore matters which are cross-cultural and offer situations for cultural comparison. Students would come into contact with different cultural phenomena which would require them to become more aware of their own culture as well as allow discover the target culture.

Based on the ideas of various scholars and the requirements set in the Estonian National Curriculum the following list of learning objectives were established for the materials as a whole as well as for each lesson:

- ✓ Teach the process of understanding the foreign, rather than fixed phenomena of language cultural facts (Moran 2001).
- ✓ Students are able to see differences and similarities, between their own and the foreign culture (Kramsch 2000).
- ✓ Students become more tolerant and acceptant towards the differences between cultures (Fiorito 2000). Students express unbiased and tolerant attitude towards the foreign; they gain insights into the behaviour of people from other cultures –

cultural awareness (Cortazzi & Jin 1999; Peterson and Bronwyn 2003; Tseng, 2002).

- ✓ Students become more conscious of their own culture (Põhikooli riiklik õppekava Lisa 2: 2).
- ✓ Students are able to more successfully communicate with members of other cultures – intercultural competence (Furstenberg 2010).

Combining all of these objectives, three main focal points surfaced, which will be used as the incentive for creating the teaching materials for teaching culture. The following subchapter will give a brief overview of these three objectives, how the three lesson plans were created. Since these three lesson plans were also tried out, a short introduction to the analyses will be made.

2.3. Method and Discussion of the Three Lesson Plans

Culture and language are never separate entities. In the placement of culture in the foreign language lessons, the author has to agree with the idea of culture being found in all of the components of language, rather than it being an extra skill, which should be approached separately. With the purpose of creating cultural teaching materials for EFL classes, the main aim would be to create materials that would perceive cultural learning as a process. Moran's experiential cycle (2001) offers an organised framework upon which to create a set of materials for teaching culture. The four stages in the experiential cycle explain the process of acquiring cultural information most elaborately.

The empirical part of the current thesis will be concentrating on the creation of three different lesson plans dealing with the topic of culture from different points of view. When creating these three lesson plans, the focus was on the following three aspects of how to teach culture successfully.

- ✓ Teaching culture is seen as a process, which means that the stress was put on the learners' personal development
- ✓ The cultural learning process is aimed at fulfilling students' communicative needs by using authentic materials and meaningful content.
- ✓ To guide the students towards more tolerant and unbiased worldview by comparing and contrasting one's own culture with the foreign culture in order to detect similarities as well as differences.

Keeping in mind all these objectives three different lesson plans were created which were then tried out on three different groups of students, creating nine different teaching rounds. All nine rounds were then analysed separately by examining the more and less successful aspects of each lesson, specifically from the culture pedagogical point of view. Finally, these nine analyses were regrouped according to the topics, creating three exhaustive analyses.

The three lesson plans were designed keeping in mind the pre-intermediate level. The target group involved students between the ages of 11 to 14 from one Estonian school. All of these students had been learning English from the first grade, having four to five lessons a week. All the three lessons proved to be age-appropriate and engaging for the students even though the skill and age level of the students varied. Each of the three original lesson plans were supposed to fill 45 minutes of lesson time, though the intended period proved to be too short in order to explore the topics fully. Consequently, all of the trial lessons were extended up to 90 minute-long lessons. Throughout the trial lessons, several alterations were made concerning the level of difficulty of the articles, task types, essay questions, and the arrangement of different tasks in order to fully reach the cultural teaching objectives, which had been set beforehand.

The three lesson plans concentrated on the following three topics: manners, racial stereotypes and school uniforms. The first two lesson plans allowed the students to move from general concepts onto specific conclusions, whereas the third lesson plan applied an opposite approach, which required students to explore general concepts derived from specific notions. Adopting both deductive and inductive reasoning skills lets the students to see the links between specific cultural phenomena and a more general cultural framework.

In the following chapter, all the three lesson plan analyses will be previewed separately. Students' ideas on cultural matters were revealed through discussions and essay questions. Some of the students' written answers will be previewed in the following three analyses.

2.3.1. Lesson Plan Number 1: “Manners”

The first lesson plan (see Appendix 1) focuses on the topic of manners, more specifically polite and impolite behaviour. The first lesson of this lesson plan concentrated on the article titled “Do manners matter?” (Do Manners matter?, Transcript), whereas the second lesson took a more practical approach to the topic by introducing an instructional video titled “How to ask somebody to repeat something?” (How to ask, Video). This lesson plan concentrates on uncovering the cultural implications of manners, and whether polite and impolite behaviour are culture-specific notions, or instead, are related to individual people not depending on their cultural backgrounds. The second lesson from the two focuses on teaching the students a practical skill on how to act in situations which require them to respond properly if they had misheard a piece of information. The current lesson plan focuses on the topic of manners not by exploring the cultural etiquette rules of any specific cultures, but instead views polite and impolite behaviour as cross-cultural phenomena. The focus in this lesson plan was to encourage students to see and

acknowledge the differences and similarities between their own culture as well as the foreign culture.

The first lesson in this lesson plan was built around the article “Do Manners Matter?” The article focused on how impolite behaviour in the USA has become more ordinary. The pre-reading activities involved a discussion on the topic of manners in general and an article-related vocabulary task. A number of comprehension questions and a vocabulary task followed the article. A task which had the students compare American and British English was later removed for being too arbitrary an ill-fitting amidst the whole lesson plan. The focal point of this lesson was on the task, which required students to find all the situations that implied rude behaviour from the article and afterwards change them into positive statements. This exercise was followed by discussion and an essay-type question, which focused on making comparisons between students’ own experiences and the information they had acquired from the article about Americans. The second lesson focused on teaching the students a practical skill by firstly showing them a video on how to ask somebody to repeat something. Students were then asked again to make comparisons with their own experiences and create similar dialogues. The two lessons were concluded by a short essay-type question about what students had learned about culture and what sort of conclusions they could make about Americans, Estonians and manners. In the following analysis, all the activities will be looked at separately.

The first activity required students to describe a picture and elicit possible topics for the lesson. Students quickly mentioned the key words such as impoliteness, rudeness, bad manners, and spoke about their own experiences with impolite behaviour. The second part, where students had to name situations which exhibit good manners, was done in reversed manner in all of the teaching rounds, since students themselves focused more on speaking about impolite behaviour. It would be a good idea to force the students to speak about the

opposites as well, in order to introduce the polarity of this topic. Since it was the first activity with the intention of getting the students conversing, the discussion topic was not changed and students got to express their ideas uninterruptedly.

As the next step, students moved on to the article where they first had to work with new vocabulary. The activity (No. 2) was done in pairs and then with the whole class. The vocabulary activity was made shorter comparing to the task which was used in the first teaching round so that students could concentrate on the article rather than having to deal with comprehension difficulties.

The article “Do manners matter?” (Activity 3) proved to be somewhat complicated for the students since several comprehension problems arose in the first two teaching rounds, thus some modifications were made concerning the vocabulary. As the post-reading activity (Activity 4) students had to find answers to comprehension questions. Before moving on to the analytical part of the lesson I wanted to make sure that students had fully comprehended the main idea and important facts of the text. Students’ responses showed that the article, though not being the easiest, proved to be feasible. A fact within the text, which caused comprehension problems in previous lessons and led students to make premature conclusions, “69 % American adults surveyed said that Americans are getting ruder” (see Appendix 1) was included as a comprehension question in the last teaching round. Additionally, the word *survey* was explained in the class so that each student comprehended the meaning of that fact fully.

Activity No. 5 required students to find statements from the article that indicated rude behaviour and then change these into statements which indicate polite behaviour. The first teaching round showed that this task should be left as homework. Still, students did not find all of the statements from the text, probably because they were not given a specific amount of facts they had to find.

The article, comprehension questions, and the polite/impolite behaviour task offer cultural information about the target culture, thus these activities were supported by the Description Stage of cultural learning according to Moran's (2001) experiential cycle. The prepared pedagogical material in the form of the article and comprehension questions, offered the students cultural information, but also gave them a chance to express their understanding of the information presented. In addition, the fifth activity required the students to work with facts, which they found from the text by using their own personal experiences about the world.

In between two lessons, students had to summarise and express their preliminary thoughts on the topic of manners with its cultural implications through the form of discussion (Activity 6).

The seventh activity was done only in the second and third round of teaching. Since the assignments were altered in between both occasions, the questions and the results from each of the two teaching rounds will be presented. The question: "What similarities can you notice concerning the manners and polite behaviour of Americans and Estonians?", was included in the second teaching round. The responses showed that students had mostly recognised how their own culture is not that different from the foreign culture. Students' answers (provided in an unedited form) showed great variation but in general, the task fulfilled its purpose, which was to recognise how multilayered cultural phenomena can be.

- ✓ "I think that we have better manners in Estonia but we are both rude a little bit."
- ✓ "Some Americans and Estonians are polite and some impolite."
- ✓ "Estonians are politer."
- ✓ "I think Estonians is politer."
- ✓ "They are both rude and polite."
- ✓ "Americans are polite."

- ✓ “They are both impolite.”
- ✓ “Some things are similar but there are differences as well.”
- ✓ “They are rude.”
- ✓ “Estonian manners are very important to our people but in America they don’t really have such old manners like Estonians.”

The results also show that students’ answers tend to be rather vague, thus for the third teaching round this question was reformulated. Students were asked to compare two specific situations, one of which could be found from the article and another from real-life experience (see Appendix 1, activity 7). This task helped the students to see more clearly how issues concerning manners are not culture specific and generalizations based on nationalities are often excessive. This analytical task was in accordance with the Interpretation Stage in Moran’s experiential cycle. This activity required the students to place themselves in the emic and etic perspectives of culture in order to understand why different people had acted the way they had in these situations.

- ✓ “Listening to music too loudly. She didn’t realize that her music was too loud. I saw one man listening to music from phone without headphones. I think that the man just didn’t have headphones and he wanted to lessen to music so much. The girl just didn’t know her music was too loud”.
- ✓ “Talking with the phone in cinema it happens also in Estonia. They don’t care about others, they do care only about themselves. If you really want to contact with someone, then you could turn your phone brightness down, and send a sms or just go out from hall”.

Activities No. 8 and No. 9 proved to be successful in the second and the third teaching rounds. The video activity “How to ask someone to repeat something”, was done in the second lesson after students had had a chance to discuss the topic of manners and

politeness. The accompanying task required the students to create dialogues, which resembled the ones they had seen in the video. Before doing that, students were asked to think of similar situations, which required someone asking to repeat something. The activities fulfilled their purpose in the second and third trial. An interesting result that appeared was that younger students created longer and more creative dialogues compared to the ones the older students generated (e.g. eating whilst talking, losing one's fake teeth, etc). This could be due to the fact that this specific group of students is usually more talkative in regular classes as well. Since this activity teaches students the skills, which are needed in order to effectively participate in cultural practices, they are guided through the Participation Stage in Moran's experiential cycle. At first, students are exposed to a situation which expresses the correct way of behaving, then getting the chance to invent their own situations in which they would imagine similar phrases to be used appropriately. By acting out this sort of meaningful activity – a role-play, students would probably acquire the needed communicative tools more easily.

The last activity involved a final analysis of the two lessons. Students were asked to express their thoughts on what they had learned during the past two lessons. Students' answers showed that they tended to make rather bold assumptions either because of not comprehending the article fully: "69 % of American people have bad manners"; „I learned that 69 % of Americans are impolite", or just making superficial generalisations: "I learned how impolite are Americans, how they want cheap things and run (for them), „That most americans have bad manners“. At the same time, this question also proved to inspire students to create responses that were more detailed and illustrated with examples: "Being polite to people and talking clearly makes people around you understand you better and think that you are good person."; "(I learned) that I have to speak nicely. Don't be rude!"; "(I learned) that I need to speak politely and I need to say please and thank you. (Also,

some of the Americans are rude”; “I learned that you should be polite. For an example speak clearly or even simple things like turn(ing) down music on your headphones“.

Even though the final analysis which was done during the 1st and 2nd teaching round showed that students were able to express their thoughts on the matters learned rather diligently, the cultural comparison did not prevail as much as was expected. For this reason, the question was slightly specified so that students had a possibility to make some comparisons and speak about their own reactions to the whole topic of manners in the USA as well as in Estonia. The answers from the third teaching round did not vary as much as in the previous lessons. In general, students were able to see that impolite and polite behaviour are universal notions, which can be found anywhere, not depending on people's nationalities. They were able to see strengths and weaknesses in the behaviour of both of groups. Students not only had to express their opinion from the cultural aspects of manners by speaking of Americans and Estonians, but also from their own personal stance on the matter. This could be seen as the Response Stage in Moran's experiential cycle.

- ✓ “Americans and Estonians some of them can be rude.”
- ✓ “Some Estonians are rude. Lots of Americans are impolite.”
- ✓ “That Americans and Estonian could be rude.”
- ✓ “Some Americans and Estonians are polite, but some of them are rude.”
- ✓ “I concluded that Estonians and Americans are sometimes both impolite.”
- ✓ “Everybody can be rude.”

Students also concluded that manners are very important.

- ✓ “Manners are very important or everything goes out of control.”
- ✓ “You gotta be good with the other people.”
- ✓ “Manners are very important because this shows what kind of person you are.”
- ✓ “You must speak with clear voice.”

2. 3. 2. Lesson Plan Number 2: “Racial Stereotypes”

This analysis will examine the second lesson plan (see Appendix 2) which concentrated on the topics of race, stereotypes and multiculturalism. In the centre of the lesson was an article titled “From Survivor to a Star” (Rainsford 2012) and a video by the CNN titled “Black Dancers Can’t Be Ballerinas” (Black Dancers, video). The first lesson of the trial focused on the article, whereas the second lesson on the video.

The lesson focuses on an orphan girl, Michaela de Prince, from Sierra Leone, who, at a young age is adopted by an American family. The article speaks about Michaela’s past and present struggles of being an African-American ballet dancer. The video concentrates on Michaela’s journey back to her homeland and her intentions on changing people’s ill-conceived perceptions on African- American ballet dancers. The first lesson was complied of a short discussion and vocabulary task as pre-reading activities, the article itself, and as the comprehension task students had to order the events presented in the article. The 2nd and 3rd trial also included a short introductory Power Point presentation on Sierra Leone, which had the intention of explaining the background of the girl in question. The last task of the lesson required students to contemplate on one incident concerning racism which occurred with Michaela. At the centre of the second lesson of this lesson plan was the video of Michaela, this was accompanied by comprehension and discussion questions concerning both the content of the video as well as the notions of race, stereotypes and pre-conceived thoughts. As the final essay-type question students had to sum up what they had learned and why it was necessary to change people’s narrow-minded opinions on African-American dancers.

The first activity, a pre-reading activity required students to look at the picture of a African-American ballet dancer and give their preliminary thoughts on the topic. Students

came along with the discussion even though the topic of ballet did not excite everyone at first, though the picture got the students conversing.

The second activity required students to work on the vocabulary form the article. Students had to match words and phrases with their definitions, since the first two teaching rounds proved that this type of arrangement is too difficult, the words were underlined in the article itself, so that students could use contextual help to figure out the meanings. By highlighting the necessary words students did not struggle with the comprehension of the vocabulary as much as at the beginning.

As the third activity students had to read an article titled “From Survivor to Star”. This posed some challenges for the students in the first two teaching rounds due to difficult vocabulary, whereas the first teaching round proved that the comprehension difficulties impede the cultural learning process. As mentioned earlier, after the first and second round the vocabulary comprehension activity was made more accessible. In addition, some adaptations were made to the article by simplifying the vocabulary which had previously caused some comprehension difficulties for the students. The article was followed by a post-reading comprehension activity (No. 4) where students had to chronologically order the events according to the text. This task did not pose any problems for any of the three groups and proved that students had understood the basic gist of the article.

The fifth activity included a Power Point presentation on Sierra Leone, Michaela’s homeland. The presentation about Sierra Leone was supposed to give a simple background story for the lesson’s main character, Michaela DePrince. The presentation was only done in the 2nd and 3rd teaching round. Even though some modifications were made in between the second and third round, the presentation should be done in its initial form. Another possibility would be to ask the students themselves to find out information about the country using the Internet. The article and the background information on Sierra Leone

gave the students the chance to move through the Description Stage of the experiential learning cycle.

The sixth activity consisted of two parts (6a, 6b). First, students had to speak about the topic of stereotypes. The class discussion (Activity No. 6a) showed that the topic of stereotypes is not a simple one for students to grasp in a foreign language, but if the concept would be explained through brainstorming ideas about different stereotypes they had come across, it would be more attainable for them. The first teaching round showed that the discussion question was formulated confusingly for the students and they had trouble understanding the intended aim of this question, as a result students instead talked about UFOs and ghosts. The students in this class were 11 or 12 years old, so it would be reasonable for these children not to analyse abstract notions on an appropriate level yet. For the second and third teaching round this question was specified and now students were required to speak about specific stereotypes and analyse, whether, what happened to Michaela, could be due to people's preconceived thoughts on stereotypes.

In the second half of this activity (No. 6b) students had to write about their opinions on why they think Michaela was turned down the role of White Swan, and what their ideas were about that situation. The essay question required students to contemplate on the idea how Michaela was once not allowed to play the part of White Swan in *Swan Lake* because it would have been strange to have a black girl acting the part of White Swan. This activity required students to place themselves in the role of the people who turned Michaela down, and come up with reasons for doing so. Following that, students had to express their own opinions about the situation. This task forced the student to move between the insider's and outsider's points of view, which in Moran's experiential cycle could be classified as the Interpretation Stage.

The essay question firstly required students to think about the people who had

created this unfair situation for Michaela. Students' answers showed that they had understood how people would consider a black ballerina playing the part of the White Swan to be strange.

“Because it was White Swan and she was black”; “Because its strange to have a black girl playing a White Swan”; “Because it is White Swan”.

One of the answers that at first seemed rather extreme needed further clarification, which was acquired from the student personally. “It would be inappropriate to let “slaves” play in white people’s theatres. Black in white? I don’t think it’s fair”. In his explanation, he argued how theatres are often seen more as white people’s playground, where other races could be marginalised. This stood out from the rest due to its wide yet thorough analysis of the matter.

The second half of the question, which required the students to give their own opinion on this situation, showed that students label this type of attitude towards black dancers to be racist. Students' answers showed maturity and tolerance; on the one hand, students were able to understand why people would consider this notion as strange, but on the other hand, condemned the unfair treatment by declaring it to be unacceptable. Students' responses show how they consider people's skills to be more important than skin colour, which is a very good example of acceptance towards the foreign:

- ✓ “I think skin color doesn’t matter.”
- ✓ “I think it’s not right.”
- ✓ “I think it is vary racist, because the White Swan can be a professional ballet dancer doesn’t always have to be white girl.”
- ✓ “I think it wasn’t good because anybody is allowed to dance”
- ✓ “I think those people are racist because it doesn’t matter white or black skin.”

- ✓ “They should let black girl play white swan when she is better then the others. It’s stupid explanation for not leting black girl play the white swan.”
- ✓ “People were racist cause Michaela was better than others she should have had the role. She should have had the chance to try. She should have had the role.”
- ✓ “The skin colour doesn’t matter. This is about how you dance.”

Since this question allowed the students to give their immediate reactions to this type of unfair treatment, it would classify as the Response Stage in the experiential cycle.

Some students believed that Michaela should still be allowed to participate in the play but with some modifications such as another role, or wearing heavier make-up to make her look more like a *white* swan.

- ✓ “She could join another show (or ballet show). I don’t get why they didn’t name the show something else.”
- ✓ “She should be in the balley. She could be even a tree.”
- ✓ “I give another part in Swan Lake. I think it was racist.”

The second trial showed that students had some problems answering this question. The amount of grammatical errors in the answers, but also the polarity of opinions which appears within individual student’s answers leaves the impression that at this point of the learning process students are confused and still trying to make sense of the concepts which are under discussion.

- ✓ “Because maybe the people don’t like a black person in the part. I give another part in Swan Lake. I think it was racist.”
- ✓ “I think its wurd. Because she ’s black and I don’t think people like it then.”
- ✓ “I couldn’t give access because he is black. It was racism. Because she is black and they was right.”

Some of the students' responses show that their thoughts are overshadowed by preconceptions on what people should and should not be allowed to do depending on their skin colour. The process of changing people's opinions on certain matters is not a rapid one. Though allowing students to express their opinions on these issues in a safe environment could work as the first step in becoming more tolerant and accepting towards the foreign.

The seventh activity focuses on the video about Michaela returning to her home country and trying to inspire her compatriots. Students had to answer comprehension questions that helped them to understand the content. The video also worked as a transition into the deeper level of the topic by analysing further the topic of stereotypes, differences between people and preconceived thoughts. This was done through discussion questions in the eighth activity. The analysis at this point in the lesson helped students to sum up their thoughts about the topic as well as prepare them for the final conclusive activity, which required them to analyse their own opinions and thoughts on the matter of race, stereotypes, and preconceived thoughts. The questions and students' answers at this point showed that they had understood the protagonist's struggles and her endeavours on making the world a more versatile and accepting place. For the discussion question (activity 8a), whether students would imagine ballerinas to be either black or white, the majority would respond "white", explaining that it is something what they have come across most often. This question highlighted the aspect of stereotypical thinking by people, mainly, how it is not automatically bad but just a technique people use to interpret the world. Since students, at this point in the lesson had to focus on their own thoughts about Michaela's situation, Moran (2001) would classify it as the Response Stage of the learning cycle.

As the last activity (No. 8b), students had to contemplate on the question whether is it necessary to change people's opinions on racial stereotypes and how would that be

possible (“Michaela said that she would like to change people’s opinions on African American ballet dancers. Why is it necessary? What do you think, how would that be possible? Name some ideas.”). As for the first half of the question, students’ answers could be divided into four different categories. All students believed that it was necessary to change people’s narrow-minded opinions on African American ballet dancers mainly because of the following four reasons:

- All people are equal.

“They are as good as white. Every color people can dance”; “That the black people are (as) important (as) white people.”; “Because it isn’t equal that white people can dance and black people can’t. All kind of people have to be equal”; “Everybody should be equal.”

- Person’s skin colour is not important, his or hers skills are.

“Because the skin colour means no more than people dancing skills”; “To show that black peoples can dance too and white and black people can be equal.”

- White people consider themselves to be superior to black people.

“Its necessary because African Americans dont feel good. Because then the whites wont bully blacks”; “Because white people are not allowing black people to do something that they are good at.” ; “This is racism. White people think that they are better.”

- In order to keep a good relationship with black people.

“To keep good relation ships to black people.”

Students’ answers show that they value equality amongst people the highest, also that people should not be judged by their skin colour but instead their skill set. Students’ answers expressed maturity, tolerance, and thoughtfulness; they were able to empathise with Michaela about her ordeals on being ostracised due to the colour of her skin. This

activity allowed the students to experience the Interpretation stage again, as students had to adopt the negative viewpoint towards African-American ballet dancers and contemplate, why people might think like that.

The second half of the question required students to think of some ideas on *how* to change people's opinions. Students found that it would be important to make black dancers more popular, at the same time making ballet more popular amongst black people. These answers showed that students had understood how situations where somebody is not treated the same way as others because of the colour of their skin could occur if people have not had much experience with the foreign. The part of the question allowed students to experience the Response Stage, which meant that students had to express their own ideas on the matter, on how to change people's opinions.

- ✓ “Teach some white dancers and dance with her and make them very popular. Then teach more black dancers and make them popular. Then black ballet will be common to other people.”
- ✓ “She proves that black people can dance maybe better than the others and at the same time inspiring black people to dance.”
- ✓ “She show that black people can do job what they want. She will dance and show not only white people can dance. She will open a dance school in Africa.”
- ✓ “A dance school, more black dancers. Then white people can see that black people can dance too.”

2. 3. 3. Lesson Plan Number 3: “School Uniforms”

The last lesson plan (see Appendix 3) focuses on the topic of uniforms and traditions. In the first lesson, students have to synthesise and analyse information dealing with the pros and cons of wearing a uniform, whereas the second lesson takes a more in-

depth view onto the topic of traditions and how, in some contexts, uniforms are part of school traditions.

The first lesson is built upon an article “School Uniforms: Awesome or Awful?” (Tarshis 2011). The accompanying task had the students analyse the positive and negative aspects of having to wear a uniform (Tarshis 2011). By the end of the first lesson, students had to contemplate on the reasons why some schools have adopted the use of uniforms. In the second lesson, a Power Point presentation was given on the tradition of uniforms in three British schools. From the perspective of uniforms as traditions, students were guided to conceptualise the notion of *traditions*. This matter was further investigated by examining the traditions that surround students in their everyday lives – their family, their country, and their school. As the final task students had to design uniforms for their own school. All the activities will be discussed separately in the following passages.

The second teaching round showed that it was possible not to involve students’ own opinions on wearing uniforms but instead adopt an impartial point of view – not having to choose a specific point of view at the beginning of the lesson allowed the students to understand both of the opposing sides more easily. In the first and the third trial students’ own preferences on the matter were more recognisable, this though proved to impede the impartial intake of the topic. Students were influenced by their own judgements and preconceived thoughts on the topic of uniforms.

The first activity was intended as a warm-up activity, which required students to speak about a caricature and its implicit meaning. The younger students did not fully grasp the irony represented in the picture and the idea of conformism amongst their peers remained distant to them. The older ones, even though understanding the meaning of the caricature, did not fully agree with its intention.

The second activity required students to work on the new vocabulary. A small amount of vocabulary, which was paramount for the comprehension of the article was chosen together with definitions, which students then had to find from the article and highlight. By implementing skim-reading technique, the context and the definitions helped students to make sense of the words as well as the article (activity No. 3). The definitions and Estonian meanings were reviewed together with the whole class.

The fourth activity required students to reflect on the notion of uniforms in real-life: “Where else they had seen uniforms and why were they necessary?” (see Appendix 3). Students named different jobs and hobbies but the reasoning was not very thorough (e.g., to recognise each other; one does not have to wear one’s own clothes, so it is cheaper). This activity helped the students to start thinking about how uniforms can be a part of traditions for certain social systems.

The fifth activity had students finding pros and cons for having to wear a uniform, at first individually, then in pairs, and lastly in two different groups of four. Even though at first, the idea was to do this activity as homework, it was done as class work. This arrangement was beneficial since students got the chance to work in several groups. Furthermore, homework is often not done as diligently as it ought to be. By allowing the students to work in pairs, each student got the chance to hear the ideas of each of his or her fellow classmates. Though looking at students’ responses, it is visible that not all the possible reasons were found by the students, some had only written down a few. This type of superficiality could be explained in various ways. Firstly, the students were not used to this type of task, so giving them a large amount of independence enabled them to be more superficial. The problem could have been resolved by monitoring the groups more thoroughly throughout the group work. Secondly, all three teaching rounds showed that students should have been given a specific amount of pros and cons in advance, rather than

allowing them to choose the sufficient amount themselves. This activity of finding pros and cons for the use of uniforms in the USA could be seen to fit the Description Stage of Moran's experiential cycle. Students were given an article, which spoke of the practices and products of the target culture, though they should have been made more aware of the cultural context of the article, which was somewhat different from students' own cultural background.

The sixth activity had the students complete a short writing task where they were asked to write a paragraph on why they thought some schools had adopted the use of school uniforms and how that would be useful for the schools. Students' answers from different trial lessons showed that they had only added some original ideas and instead gave answers which they had come across in the article earlier. At this point, a greater generalization was expected of the students, meaning that more original ideas should have been presented. It is also possible that some students did not understand the instructions fully by writing only about the ideas specific to the article they had just read. An example of uniforms being useful for hiding dangerous object under clothes was rather specific to the article. Students' answers included the prevention of fights over clothing, recognizing one another, and uniforms ensuring safety in schools. Some students had briefly mentioned that school uniforms could be part of the schools traditions: "It (the tradition) can be over 100 years old"; "In some school are uniforms tradition"; "It's a tradition ...sometimes.")

The answers of the younger students showed versatility and uniqueness. Unlike others, they believed that having uniforms makes the students study harder, thus also making schools more popular.

- ✓ "...students are smarter. It makes school more popular if the quality of studying is better."

- ✓ “It (having uniforms) is useful because they will get smarter students. The school gets more students.”
- ✓ “Students study better. School got more students.”

Students were also able to see logic and connections behind different reasons on why some school have uniforms: “When children wear uniform they are safer and they learn better. If children are safer they study better then more children come to this school”.

Many students figured how, by having uniforms schools can earn money. This idea, whether the schools are institutions which are set out to make money or not was discussed in class. The class discussion helped students to understand that this cannot be the reasoning behind the use of uniforms. Students, at this stage, were asked to give explanations as to why they thought this cultural phenomenon – the use of uniforms in schools, exists. The experiential cycle defines this as the Interpretation Stage. Through cultural analysis students reflect on the ideas they have learned, as well as their previous ideas on the matter.

The seventh activity, which concentrated on different school uniforms in the UK paved the way to the following activity which required students to speak about the topic of traditions. As the lead in, students had to answer a question, whether their school has the tradition of uniforms or not? Then, pictures of different uniforms from three schools from the UK were shown to the students. Students had to identify the correct pictures by only listening to the descriptions of the uniforms. This task helped the students to see that there are some uniforms which have become part of traditions and date back centuries. This matching exercise was followed by a short discussion, as to which uniform would the students themselves prefer. Students seemed genuinely interested and the task helped them to get tuned in for the topic of traditions. This activity again dealt with the Description Stage in Moran’s cycle where authentic materials in the form of photographs were

presented to the students showing the cultural products of, in this case, British culture. At this point Moran encourages to include personal experiences on specific cultural phenomena, either by the teacher or the students. Since I had visited Eton College during the 4th of June celebrations I had the chance of describing the atmosphere and the uniforms from firsthand experience.

The eighth activity dealt with the topics of traditions, customs and school uniforms as elements used in cultural communities. Students first had to define the concept of *traditions* using their own interpretation and experiences. Subsequently, students were provided with one possible definition of the term. Furthermore, students were required to personalise the notion by naming a few traditions related to their own lives (traditions in their family, country, school). The main aim of this task was to clarify the concept of traditions for students by making it more personal. The most challenging question seemed to be the one dealing with traditions in their own school. Most of this task was done in the form of a discussion, some ideas were also written down. Students were keen on participating in the discussion and sharing their own experiences of traditions with the whole class. Moran's experiential cycle, again, identifies this as the Description Stage, where students get to explore cultural content and the nature of culture. Students are given a definition of a cultural notion alongside with personal interpretations about their own cultural practices (traditions in their home, country, and school) which are still considered to be cultural facts.

Only the students in the last two trials got the chance to do the ninth activity. In order to conclude the topic of uniforms, students had to give arguments as to how they would make wearing uniforms popular. Students mostly believed that it could be beneficial to let the students choose the design of the uniforms but additional opinions emerged as well.

- ✓ “Uniforms need to look good.”
- ✓ “The uniforms have to be cool.”
- ✓ “You say them the uniform pros.”
- ✓ “It would be cool if the school have three uniforms for boys and 3 for girls.”

The tenth activity allowed the students to design uniform for their own school, which they had to then present to their classmates, describing why they had designed these specific outfits.

The first two teaching rounds showed that the topic of *tradition* was not very thoroughly analysed so one extra question was added to the third teaching round. The ninth activity worked as a lead in for the next task which required the students to design their own uniforms. The final activity (No. 11) required students to answer a question, first orally, then in written form: Why are traditions important? Why do we need them? (see Appendix 3). Students’ answers previewed students’ understanding on how culture and traditions are so closely connected that one could not exist without the other.

- ✓ “We need tradition in order to keep the culture of a country alive.”
- ✓ “So we could let our culture go on and on.”
- ✓ “To keep culture alive. To be special.”
- ✓ “Because without culture theres no generation to be different.”
- ✓ “We need traditions to keep culture alive, to be special.”

The last question, which was added in the final teaching round, combines the Interpretation and Response Stages in Moran’s experiential cycle. On the one hand, students have to reflect on what role do traditions play in different cultures, they had to generalise the information they had come across in the whole lesson by giving explanations to the notion of traditions. On the other hand, students go through the Response Stage simultaneously, even though it is not that visible. Students have to become aware of themselves as

members of a culture and how they, as the participants, can take part in the process of keeping traditions alive. “We need traditions to keep culture alive, to be special”; “To hold culture alive.”; “To be special. Make country alive”.

2. 3.4 Summary of All the Three Lesson Plan Analyses

The following subchapter will take a closer look at the fulfilment of each of the three goals, which were set as the main objectives for the lesson plans.

- Teaching culture is seen as a process

The central idea when creating these materials was to keep in mind the notion that teaching culture is seen as a process. Choosing the specific activities in accordance with the stages of Moran’s experiential cycle was not a simple task to fulfil. The result, where all of the four stages would be represented in the whole lesson plan was only achieved with the first lesson plan concerning manners. Participation Stage was an element, which was left out in the last two lesson plans since finding a practical activity for the two other topics was not achieved in this Master’s thesis. Moran (2001) does not mention this type of situation where one of the stages within the learning process does not occur, though the author stresses how it is not necessary to stay fixated on the correct order of the stages, since this might misguide the students and impede the learning process (Moran 2001: 141-142). The lessons were constructed bearing in mind the logic and the order of the cycle with a few exceptions where some of the stages reoccurred several times. For future reference, students could be made more aware of the learning process or the learning cycle, so that the cultural learning itself could be more visible for the learners.

- Fulfilling students’ communicative needs by using meaningful content.

The cultural learning process is aimed at fulfilling students’ communicative needs by using authentic materials and meaningful content. All of the three lesson plans proved that the topics which were chosen engaged students truly and deeply. The three topics included

manners, racial stereotypes and school uniforms; the lesson plans included issues, which were current and sensitive and thus touched a wide array of students.

Students' wish to engage in conversations about these diverse topics was apparent. Whilst teaching the lesson about Michaela and racial stereotypes, one of the students approached me in between the two lessons during recess, asking, whether we were going to have another one of those "fun lessons" where they would get the chance to discuss on such gripping matters.

Another example which showed how using authentic interaction in classroom situation can be beneficial and engaging for students was during the lesson about manners. Students had to create dialogues based on a conversation, which itself was not an authentic one. They had to think of similar situations to what they had witnessed in the video and afterwards act it out using some of the phrases for polite behaviour they had heard. This task, even though based on an instructional video, was made authentic by adding students' personal experiences and input to the task.

- Guiding students towards more tolerant and unbiased worldview.

The lesson about manners required students to contemplate on the topic of manners from two separate points of view but also to make conclusions about the behaviours of these two groups of people under discussion. The overall lesson about manners in the USA and Estonia showed how through cultural comparisons it is possible to avoid creating stereotypes based on nationalities, and rather focus on the underlying similarities, which help students to become more tolerant towards the foreign.

The lesson, which concentrated on the issue of preconceived thoughts based on race, gained the widest feedback from the students. Rather than having the chance of making cultural comparisons based on students' own cultural backgrounds, they got the opportunity to compare their own beliefs against the backdrop of the negative views on

race, which emerged throughout the lesson. This type of conflict helped the students to visualise their own opinions more clearly as the end result.

The third lesson plan about school uniforms placed the main stress on the notion of *traditions*. Students were able to illustrate the notion of traditions with their own cultural experience: traditions in Estonia, at their home and at school.

Conclusion

Culture is a multidimensional concept, which is notoriously difficult to define. What makes it such a complex entity is the fact that culture is a notion that is socially constructed by people, thus constantly changing and developing. People interact with one another by using language and through that, build the culture which surrounds them. An array of different scholars (Moran 2001; Kramsch 2000b, 2006; Krasner 1999; Cortazzi & Jin 1999; Risager 2007; Furstenberg 2010) believe that culture should also belong to the foreign language classroom. The content of culture in culture pedagogy is often reduced to two subdivisions: culture with a lower or upper case “c”. Perspectives that are more modern suggest removing boundaries as to where culture begins and where it ends, and instead view culture from a holistic perspective (Risager 2007). Another contemporary point of view indulges to view cultural learning as a process. As mentioned earlier, culture is a construct which is always evolving, thus teaching culture should be treated in the same manner.

The main aim of the current Master’s thesis was to create a set of teaching materials for teaching culture. In order to ensure the value and merit of these materials each of the lesson plans was tried out on three different groups of students. The creation of the materials was an ongoing process, which meant that each lesson was analysed after each teaching round, whereas necessary alterations were made if needed.

The most valuable aspect of these teaching materials is the fact that each of the three lesson plans has been tested out on students on three different occasions. These materials have not just been created in “isolation”, but through repetitive trials, where the strengths and the weaknesses have emerged. This would give a sense of security to other teachers who would like to use these materials.

These materials allowed the students to demonstrate the following skills:

- Lesson plan No.1 let the students explore matters such as polite and impolite behaviour. Students understood how making generalisations about good or bad manners based on nationalities is not valid. Impoliteness and politeness are rather notions which could occur anywhere, situations which indicate impolite behaviour in the USA could easily occur in Estonia as well.
- Lesson plan No. 2 allowed the students to analyse, discuss, and share their opinions on preconceived thoughts based on racial stereotypes. The poignant questions, which were posed to the students, required them to step out of their comfort zones and include their own opinions on these ethical questions. Students were guided to see how preconceived thoughts on people could work as impediments for others in reaching their goals, or even lead to rejection and ostracism from certain groups.
- Lesson plan No. 3 showed that even by exploring this regular element in people's daily lives such as clothing, students got the chance to explore traditions and the reasons for having different traditions in our daily lives. Students were directed to recognise traditions which surround them, but also to comprehend their own positioning in the realm of traditions.

One of the aims of this thesis was to view cultural learning as a process, by using Moran's experiential cycle the lesson plans were created, keeping in mind that each of the four steps would be included. The results showed that not all of the lesson plans included all four stages of Moran's experiential learning cycle. This, though, is not a detrimental problem since according to Moran, learning process does not have to be linear, hence, following the cycle too strictly could have a negative effect on the whole learning process. Nevertheless, the stages of the cycle, which were present in the lesson plans, supported the fulfilment of the general objectives which were set. Moran's experiential cycle proved to

be very practical as well as productive in the sense that its flexible and inspiring nature created an opportunity to further improvement and enhancement of the teaching materials.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Lesson plan 1

Topic: Manners

Key words: polite behaviour, impolite behaviour, manners in the USA, asking somebody to repeat something

Aims:

- Students are able to talk about politeness and manners
- Ss are able to give examples of their own behaviour of what is polite and what is impolite.
- Students learn how to ask someone to repeat something politely
- Students are able to talk about manners in the U.S.A. and Estonia and find similarities and differences in people's behaviour.
- Students can find a statement about impolite behaviour from an article and create corresponding statements about polite behaviour.
- Students can communicate their discoveries in the form of paired and group discussion and short essays

Time: 90 minutes



(www.istockphoto.com)

Activity 1: Pre-reading

- ✓ Students look at the picture and guess what they are going to talk about next (manners, politeness, impoliteness).
- ✓ Students name things which are considered as good manners. (*not fighting, saying „Hello“,*)

Activity 2: Skim through the article. What do the words or phrases written in bold mean? Match the words with their definitions (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2013). **Work in pairs.**

Teaching tip! Teacher should explain any new words before reading. Use the glossary for help or alternatively students can work individually or in pairs to guess the meanings of these words. The definitions are given in a random order.

emitting an ear-splitting whine
deliberately

poverty

obnoxious

destruction

.....- adj. very unpleasant or rude

(obnoxious)

.....- n. when something is destroyed

(destruction)

.....- n. the condition of being extremely poor (poverty)

.....- adv. on purpose

(deliberately)

.....- to send out a very loud noise (emitting an ear-splitting whine)

Activity 3: Reading

Do Manners Matter? (Do Manners matter?, Transcript)

Experts say we're turning into a bunch of savages. Should we care?

A major crisis is threatening America. And no, we're not talking about the economy or climate change or the fact that there are four TV shows on the air starring members of the Kardashian family.

The problem is that Americans have become extremely—even dangerously—RUDE.

The evidence is everywhere, from the guy chatting on his cell phone in the middle of *The Dark Knight Rises* to your best friend never thanking you for the awesome birthday gift you gave her. And while **obnoxious** behavior is nothing new, 69 percent of American adults surveyed in 2010 said they think Americans are getting ruder. What is going on?

A CODE OF BEHAVIOR

According to experts, impolite behavior is worse than annoying; it's threatening our civilized way of life. Think about how many fights are caused by rudeness—fights that break out when people cut in line or road rage that happens when one driver cuts off another. "Good manners are a

code of behavior for how we treat one another," says P. M. Forni, a civility expert and Johns Hopkins University professor.

A few years ago, shoppers at a New York Walmart took rudeness to a new, and extreme, level. Before the store was scheduled to open for a pre-Christmas sale, a crowd smashed the store's glass doors and charged inside. Many were hurt. One man was killed.

The shoppers rushed by. No one stopped to help.

Of course, most rudeness doesn't result in death and

destruction. But the Walmart stampede is an example of what can happen when people fail to show care for others.

WHO CARES?

Manners might not seem like a big deal, especially when you consider all the serious problems facing the world, like war, **poverty**, and disease. You have a lot in your own life to worry about too— school, sports, pressures from friends and family. Does it really matter if you forget to say "please" or "thank you"?

Besides, our society has become more casual. We send text messages instead of handwritten letters. We say "no problem" instead of "you're welcome." It's not that people don't

care about each other; it's just that our rules of behaviour are less formal than in the past.

Plenty of Americans, however, are fighting to keep formal manners alive. At etiquette schools around the country, you can learn how to address the Queen of England and the difference between a salad fork and a dinner fork.

Ultimately, though, knowing which fork to use isn't as important as simply being aware of those around you. After all, most people aren't **deliberately** rude. That kid on the bus wasn't trying to gross you out by picking his nose; he just has a bad habit. That girl at the mall didn't

realize her headphones were **emitting an ear-splitting whine**; she was just grooving to Rihanna. In other words, most rudeness results from simple carelessness.

Still, you might feel dorky as the one person who holds the door for others or refuses to start eating until everyone is served. But don't worry. Studies show that teens with good manners are more likely to be successful: They get higher grades, receive better pay at their jobs, and are more impressive in interviews.

Even better? Your good manners will make the world a happier, safer, and more peaceful place.

Activity 4: Comprehension questions

Once you have read the text, find answers to these questions. (Students read the text and answer the three comprehension questions at the end of the text.)

- a) What is the main idea of this article? (manners are getting worse in the USA; bad manners)
- b) What does the survey carried out in 2010 say? (69 percent of American adults surveyed in 2010 said they think Americans are getting ruder)
- c) What happened at the Walmart pre-Christmas sale? (A crowd smashed the store's glass doors and charged inside. A few people injured, one killed)
- d) How are some Americans trying to promote the importance of manners? (special etiquette schools)
- e) Why are people rude according to this article? (people are more casual; people are careless)

Activity 5: Impolite vs. Polite behaviour

Students work with the text and find all the activities which express bad manners or impoliteness. Then change these into positive statements- what would be polite behaviour.

Impolite behaviour

Using a mobile phone in the cinema

polite behaviour

switch off your phone in the cinema

Activity 6: Discussion: Students can discuss these problems in small groups or pairs and then with the whole class.

1. Recall a time when you have seen somebody behaving in a rude way in the public? Describe this situation.
2. Do we have similar problems with impolite behaviour in Estonia?
3. In your opinion, how rude do you think Estonians are? (*possibility to carry out a small survey in the classroom*)

Activity 7: Short essay

Choose one impolite situation from the last exercise that you have experienced in Estonia as well. Describe these situations, explain why people acted the way they did in these similar situations. What conclusions can you make?

Activity 8: Video: How to ask someone to repeat something (How to ask..., video)

- ✓ Introductions: teacher asks how students act in a situation in which they can't hear what the other person is saying, and want them to repeat what they have said (also, what would they say in their own language?). How to ask somebody to repeat something politely in English.
- ✓ Students watch the video once. This is followed by a short discussion: Teacher asks the students what did they see? Can they name any occasion when they have experienced a similar situation.
- ✓ The video is watched again and after each phrase the teacher can pause the video and ask the students to repeat it/ or before watching the video, teacher asks the students to pay attention to what the girl in the video is saying, what specific phrases is she using? Afterwards, students can recall these statements individually.
- ✓ Students work in pairs and create similar dialogues they have already witnessed. Some students can act out their dialogue in front of the class.

Transcript (How to ask..., transcript)

Man: (Mumbling "Have you seen a green pen anywhere?")

Woman: I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that.

Man: (Mumbling)

Woman: Could you say that again?

Man: (Mumbling "Green pen, see it anywhere?")

Woman: I'm sorry... er I still didn't get that.

Man: (Trying very hard but still mumbling)

Woman: Could you say that again?

Man: (slightly frustrated and mumbling again)

Woman: One more time?

Man: (Mumbling)

Woman: No. Sorry. Nothing.

Man: (Mumbling)

Woman: Look! I can't hear a word you're saying.

Man: I said "Have you seen a green... pen." Oh, there it is!

Activity 9: How to ask somebody to repeat something: a dialogue

Can you think of a similar situation? Create your own dialogue. Act out the dialogue with your partner.

Activity 10: Short writing task

Summarise your thoughts about the past two lessons. What conclusions can you make about Estonians, Americans and manners?

Appendix 2

Lesson Plan 2

Topic: African-American ballet dancer

Key words: ballet, race, stereotypes, racism, preconceived thoughts

Learning objectives:

- Students can speak on the topic of race and people's opinions on race.
- Students can speak about preconceived thoughts, stereotypes and prejudices towards racial issues.
- Students can identify and speak about the stereotypes associated with their own country.
- Students can communicate their discoveries in the form of paired and group discussion and short essays.

Time: 90 minutes

Activity 1: Pre-reading I

Picture / Short discussion on what they can see below (a ballerina, ballet dancing). Have you ever seen a ballet performance? Can they name any famous ballet shows? (Swan Lake, The Nutcracker)



(Verve, n.d.)

Activity 2: Pre-reading II, Vocabulary (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2013).

Look at the words in the left column? Match the words with the correct definitions from the right column. The words have been highlighted in the article.

Tip! If you do not know exactly the meaning of a word or phrase, find it in the text and study the whole sentence.

Tip! More advanced students could firstly find the words from the article themselves and only then match the words with the definitions.

- a) **tutu** (n.) _____ the willingness to give a lot of time and energy to something because it is important (f)
- b) **starvation** (n.) _____ to force someone or something to go somewhere or do something(g)
- c) **orphanage** (n.) _____ worth having and wanted by most people (e)
- d) **prospective adoptive parents** (n.) _____ the state of having no food for a long period (b)
- e) **desirable** (adj.) _____ a very short skirt made of many layers of very thin, stiff material, worn by female ballet dancers (a)
- f) **dedication** (n.) _____ people who are expected to become adoptive (d) parents
- g) **drive** (v.) _____ a home for children with no parents (c)

Activity 3: Reading (Rainsford 2012, Transcript)

From Survivor to Star

A sad, violent past didn't stop Michaela from reaching for her dreams of dancing.

Michaela de Prince twirls and leaps high into the air, wearing elegant tutus and sparkling tiaras. In July, she made her debut as a professional dancer.

The occasion exceeded Michaela's long-held expectations. "It was wonderful", recalls the 17-year-old, who cherishes her supportive family and friends.

However, Michaela's life wasn't always so joyful. She was born in Sierra Leone, a country in Africa, during an extremely violent civil war. When Michaela was 3, soldiers killed her father, and her mother died of starvation shortly afterward.

Number 27

Michaela ended up in an orphanage with 26 other children. She stood out among others because she has a condition that turns patches of her skin white. Because of that condition, orphanage workers referred to her as "the Devil's child".

Sometimes workers called Michaela "27" because they considered

her the least desirable orphan for prospective adoptive parents. Michaela was always the last in line to receive clothing and food. Michaela's best friend, Mia, was "26". The two girls shared a sleeping mat, and they fantasized about being adopted and having a loving mother. When Michaela had nightmares, Mia would tell her stories.

A photo of hope

One day, as Michaela played in the yard, a page from a magazine blew against the fence. On it was photograph of a beautiful ballerina. Michaela tucked the photo under her clothing, treasuring the hope and happiness it represented.

When Michaela was 4, a couple from New Jersey decided to adopt Mia. Orphanage workers informed the couple that no family would ever want Michaela – but the couple proved them wrong by adopting both children. Soon the girls were traveling to the United States with their new family.

Dreams Come True

Michaela's parents signed her up in dance classes right away – and she's been dancing ever since.

Sometimes it's been difficult. At age 13, Michaela lived far from home at a ballet boarding school. She practiced 6 to 10 hours a day, sometimes 7 days a week.

Michaela's dedication has paid off; she's earned scholarships and won competitions. For one competition, Michaela's mom made her a pink tutu, thoroughly sewing on a thousand glittering crystals.

"When I performed in that, I felt the exact same feeling as when I saw the magazine at the orphanage," Michaela remembers.

Today, the girl who once dreamed about a magazine photo is appearing in magazines herself. Last year, Michaela performed in *Dancing with the Stars*. She was also featured in an award-winning movie, *First Position*. And in August, she joined New York City's prestigious Dance Theatre of Harlem.

Future Challenges

Michaela doesn't focus on her horrific past. "My future is what drives me," she declares.

However, she still encounters some difficulties. Because African-American ballet dancers are somewhat uncommon, Michaela has faced racism.

Once, Michaela wasn't allowed the part of the White Swan in *Swan Lake*. "They said it was strange to have a black girl doing White Swan," she recalls.

Michaela wants to change people's opinions on African-American ballet dancers. She hopes to become a world-class ballerina, performing any role she chooses.

She intends to set up a dance school for children in Sierra Leone someday. "Dance is what saved me," Michaela notes. "If I'm able to share it, that would be amazing."

-Blair Rainsford-

Activity 4: Post-reading: Arrange the events into chronological order, starting from the earliest.

- _____ Michaela joined New York City's prestigious Dance Theatre of Harlem (8)
- _____ Michaela was enrolled in ballet classes(6)
- _____ Michaela's mother and father died and she had to live in an orphanage (2)
- _____ Michaela performed on *Dancing With the Stars* (7)
- _____ Michaela was born in Sierra Leone.(1)
- _____ Michaela was adopted, along with her friend Mia, by a couple from New Jersey(5)
- _____ Michaela found a picture of a beautiful ballerina which represented hope and happiness to her(4)
- _____ Michaela met Mia who became her best friend.(3)

Activity 5: Power Point Presentation "Sierra Leone" (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013; Sierra Leone - History & Background, n.d)

Do you know anything about Michaela's homeland Sierra Leone? (Teacher gives a short presentation, the location of Sierra Leone could be shown on the map)

- Sierra Leone, a tiny country on the west coast of Africa with the population of ~ 6 million people (2012)
- A Portuguese sailor, Pedro da Cintra, named it Sierra Leone (“Lion Mountains”) in the 15th century.
- Sierra Leone has faced a series of foreign invasions and been one of the sources for slaves in the Atlantic slave trade during the 17th -18th century
- Since becoming independent from the UK in 1961, Sierra Leone has adopted the British school system. The official language is English.
- Civil war in Sierra Leone 1991–2002

Activity 6a: Discussion

- ✓ Discuss: Go back to the last part of the article. Michaela mentions how, on one occasion, she was not allowed to play the part of White Swan in *Swan Lake* because it would have been strange to have a black girl acting the part of White Swan.
- ✓ How are people different from one another? (race, gender, appearance, religion, health, etc); Stereotypes are based on differences. Can this, what was thought of Michaela (the underlined part of the quote), be a stereotype?

A definition for the word stereotype was given (Oxford Dictionaries 2013): “A stereotype is a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing”

Activity 6b: Short essay, write 2-3 sentences

Go back to the last part of the article. Michaela mentions how she was once not allowed to play the part of White Swan in *Swan Lake* because it would have been strange to have a black girl acting the part of White Swan. (a) Why do people think that? (b) What are your opinions on these ideas?

Activity 7: Watch the video and answer comprehension questions.

Video: “Black dancers can’t be ballerinas“, play until 3:10 (Black Dancers can’t be..., video)

- ✓ Why has Michaela gone back to Sierra Leone?
 - To perform; inspire the youth there to rise above their challenges and chase their dreams
- ✓ How many black ballerinas do they have in the USA according to Michaela?
 - Two
- ✓ What did Michaela’s trainer tell her mother? What was the reason why not a lot of effort is put into black dancers?
 - They think that black people tend to be larger; they tend to get big thighs/chest
- ✓ Why was Lauren Anderson important to Michaela?
 - She was the only principal dancer she had ever known
 - she was the darkest ballerina

- because of her Michaela didn't quit ballet, she was her inspiration to keep on going
- ✓ What was Michaela trying to prove?
- She wants to prove those people wrong who say that black people can't be ballet dancers

Activity 8a: Discuss as a whole class or in small groups

- ✓ Michaela asked a question from these young people in Sierra Leone. "If you see ballet (in real life or on TV), what do you picture? Do you picture black people or white people?"
- ✓ Do you picture black people or white people? What did they say?(white people) Why do you think people would say "white people"? (Because we are used to seeing things in a certain way).
- ✓ What happens if we make generalisations like these about large groups of people? E.g. *only white people can dance the part of a white swan*. (we can be unfair to other people, we create stereotypes)
- ✓ What is it called if people think worse (in this case, dark skinned people can't do certain things...) of others due to the colour of their skin? (racism) Why do people think worse of others because of their skin colour? (Prejudiced/not being used to people who are different from them...). Is it right?

Activity 8b: Short essay. Write 3-4 sentences

Michaela said in the video that she would like to change people's opinions on African American ballet dancers. Why is it necessary? How could it be done?

Appendix 3

Lesson plan 3

Topic: School uniforms

Key words: traditions within groups, traditions in different schools, school uniforms

Learning objectives:

- Students are able to express their opinion on the topic of school uniforms and are able to give arguments approving and opposing the use of school uniforms in schools.
- Students know the meaning of the term *tradition* and are able to name different traditions specific to their own lives (family life, school life).
- Students are able to understand the importance and necessity of traditions.
- Ss can communicate their ideas in the form of paired and group discussion and short essays

Estimated time: 90 minutes

Activity 1 Pre-reading: Students briefly discuss on the following topics.



(Tarshis 2011)

- ✓ What do you usually wear to school?
- ✓ Do you worry about what you wear to school?
- ✓ Look at the cartoon, what does it mean?

Activity 2: Find and underline the following words from the article. Make sure you know their meanings (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2013).

appropriate- suitable or right

outfit - a set of clothes worn for a particular occasion or activity

decked out- to clothe in a striking or elegant manner

transform- to change completely the appearance or character of something or someone

drawbacks- a disadvantage or the negative part of a situation

unflattering- making someone look less attractive or seem worse than they usually do

Activity 3: Read the article (Tarshis 2011, Transcript)

School Uniforms: Awesome- or Awful?

More and more schools are telling students what to wear.

By Lauren Tarshis

It was bad enough that Sam Gebocko had to learn the ropes at a brand new school. It was bad enough that she had to say goodbye to her old friends. But what really stressed her out?

“The uniform,” says Sam, 12. “When I first saw it, I couldn’t believe it.

At her new school, Sam would have to wear a white shirt, a plaid jumper, black necktie. Yes, a necktie. She would wear this outfit every day, rain or shine. There would be no more jeans, no more T-shirts, no more legging or Crocs.

“I wanted to cry,” she says. But is wearing a school uniform really something to shed tears over? Many experts insist that uniforms improve learning, make schools safer, and even help students feel happier. It’s no wonder that the number of schools requiring uniforms is growing.

Today more than 18 per cent of students in the U.S. wear uniforms. In the past, it was mostly private schools that required them. But more and more public schools are bringing on the jumpers and the blazers. In Cleveland, Boston, Chicago, and Miami, more than half of all public schools require uniforms. In New Orleans, kids at 95 percent of schools are decked out in them.

Dress Without Stress

Many principals in high-crime areas say uniforms can transform a school by making students and teachers safer. Troublemakers can’t hide dangerous objects under baggy clothes. Fights don’t break out over expensive jackets or fancy sneakers. Kids can’t show up to class wearing gang colours or symbols.

Even in quiet towns, uniforms are catching on. When all students wear the same thing, kids don’t have to stress about having the latest brands. Why beg your parents for a pair of \$150 Uggs if you can’t wear them to school?

Lost opportunities?

Still, some experts believe uniforms have drawbacks. Schools often require families to buy the uniforms, which can be expensive. Some styles are unflattering to certain body types, which can add another challenge for kids already struggling with their self-image.

There’s also the fact that clothing can help us all- teens especially- express who we are: a Jay-Z fan or a Steelers fanatics, one of the crowd or someone who dares to be different. Some schools do allow kids to spice up their uniform look with jewellery or hair accessories, but in general, options for creative expression are limited.

Last, kids who don’t have to choose clothes for school lose an opportunity to practice for later in life. Wearing the appropriate clothes for a job interview or college visit can mean the difference between success and failure.

Nevertheless, education experts are virtually united in their support of school uniforms. And after four years of wearing a uniform, Sam Gebicki agrees with them. “I do miss being able to express myself through my clothes and seeing what my friends were wearing every day,” she says, “but it’s nice to just get up and get dressed without worrying.”

Activity 4: Post-reading. Students briefly discuss the following topics.

- Can you think where else you have seen uniforms? What sorts of groups have uniforms in society? (the police, footballers, military, flight attendants, pilots, different organisations)
- Are there any jobs/organisations where you think people should wear uniforms?

Activity 5: Pros and cons of wearing school uniforms (Tarshis 2011): *After reading the text students work in pairs to find pros and cons for wearing school uniforms according to the article. Once finished, students may add more statements to their lists.*

What's good about having to wear a school uniform?

- ✓ uniforms improve learning
- ✓ make schools safer
- ✓ help students feel happier
- ✓ troublemakers can't hide dangerous objects under baggy clothes.
- ✓ Students don't fight over expensive clothes
- ✓ Kids can't show up to class wearing gang colours or symbols.
- ✓ Kids don't have to stress about having the latest brands.

What are the negative sides about having to wear a school uniform?

- ✓ They're expensive
- ✓ They are unflattering
- ✓ Students can't learn to dress themselves for their future jobs

Activity 6: Short essay question

What is your opinion, why do some schools require students to wear uniforms? How is it useful for the school?

Activity 7: Traditions and School Uniforms

Students are shown the pictures of three different British schools (Eton College, Hill House School, and Westminster school). The teacher introduces each school's uniform and explains what specific clothes they are wearing. Teacher can also ask Students to name the different types of clothing that the students in the pictures are wearing. Any new vocabulary should be taught. A matching game can also be played where students match the uniform descriptions with the correct school.

Picture No. 1



(Wigglesworth 2003)

Picture No. 2



(Hill House Winter Uniform, n.d.)

Picture No. 3



(Godwin 2010)

- Picture No. 1: “Eton College Boys wear a tailcoat and wing collar. The tailcoat was created as befitting 19th-century gentlemen”. (Garner 2010, Transcript)
- Picture No. 2: “Hill House, A preparatory school in west London attended by Prince Charles. Pupils wear burgundy knickerbockers, yellow jumpers and cravats. "A grey uniform produces grey boys," said Beatrice Townsend, wife of the school's founder, Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Townsend.” (Garner 2010, Transcript)
- Picture No. 3: Students at Christ's Hospital wear a “Tudor-era uniform, which consists of a long, dark-blue belted coat, co-ordinated knee breeches and white neck bands”. (Garner 2010, Transcript)

Activity 8: Traditions and customs: home, country, school

a) Discussion part I

Culture within a culture. Short discussion- What are traditions? Students try to define the words, after sufficient discussion teacher can provide the students with the definitions

“*Tradition* - a belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time, or all of these beliefs, etc. in a particular society or group” (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2013).

Teacher may guide the students to consider the definition that *tradition* does not just refer to actions that are passed on, but also to items and ideas.

- #### b) Discussion part II : Students brainstorm ideas on the different traditions in their lives. Oral work only.

Can you name different traditions in your family? (birthdays, family gatherings for holidays, summer vacations, passing on important items through generations, passing on the know-how; eating meals together as a family; celebrating holidays with the whole family) traditions within traditions

Traditions have different traditions within them- traditional birthday traditions

- c) Discussion part III: Students discuss their ideas in small groups of 3-4 students. Students should make some notes at this point. The ideas of each group should be shared with the whole class.

Can you name different traditions in Estonia? (make a list of 5 traditions)

- d) Discussion part IV: Students discuss their ideas in small groups of 3-4 students. Students should make some notes at this point. The teacher could write the ideas on different groups on the board.

Can you name traditions in your school, what customs make your school different from other schools? (bazaars, ...do we have uniforms?)

Activity 9: Short writing task (3-4 sentences)

How can wearing uniforms be made popular? What can be done to make all students want to wear uniforms?

Activity 10: design your own uniform

Design a uniform for your school. Present your work, why have you chosen these colours and symbols.

Activity 11: Short writing task (2-3 sentences)

Why are traditions important? Why do we need them?

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
INGLISE FILOLOOGIA OSAKOND

Nimi: Kaisa Keisk

Töö pealkiri: Teaching Culture in the English Language Classroom: An Analysis of Three Lesson Plans [Kultuuri õpetamine inglise keele tunnis: kolme tunnikava analüüs]

Töö liik: magistritöö

Aasta: 2013

Lehekülgede arv: 71

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks on uurida kultuuri õpetamise erinevaid käsitlusi ning selle baasil kolme tunnikava loomine. Töö on jaotatud kaheks osaks: teoreetiline ja empiiriline osa. Töö teoreetiline osa analüüsib kultuuri mõistet, selle seost keelega ning annab ülevaate kultuuri õpetamise erinevatest käsitlustest. Antud magistritöö suurimaks mõjutajaks võib lugeda Patrick R. Moran'it (2001), kelle väljatöötatud kogemusliku õppimistsükli läbimisel erinevaid kultuurilisi fenomene omandatakse. Käesoleva magistritöö ühe osana loodi kolm tunnikava, mis toetuvad Moran'i kogemuslikule õppimis-tsüklile. Loodud tunnikavad õpetati läbi kolmes erinevas õpilaste rühmas. Materjalide loomine ja tundides katse-õpetamine oli pidev protsess, mille käigus tunnikavasid pidevalt täiustati ja vastavust teooriaga kontrolliti. Töö empiirilise osa keskmes on kolme tunnikava ja nende katse-õpetamiste kontsentreeritud analüüsid.

Analüüsid näitasid, et Moran'i kogemuslik õppimis-tsükel on praktiline ja paindlik õppevahend, mille abil õpilastele kultuurilisi fenomene edastada. Samuti võimaldasid loodud tunnikavad õpilastel kasutada nii deduktiivset kui ka induktiivset info töötlemise protsessi.

Kommetele, viisakale ning ebaviisakale käitumisele keskenduv tunnikava võimaldas õpilastel järeldada, et üldistuste tegemine erinevate rahvuste baasil segab suhtlemist. Rassiliste stereotüüpidega tegelev tunnikava andis aluse õpilastel mõtiskleda ühiskonnas valitsevate eelarvamuste üle, paigutades iseennast vastandlikesse vaatenurkadesse. Õpilased olid võimelised tajuma, kuidas eelarvamuslikud arusaamad võivad pärssida inimeste püüdlusi ja unistusi. Uurides koolivormi, kui ühe kultuurilise produkti omadusi ja tagamaid, olid õpilased võimelised mõtestama *traditsiooni*, kui keerukama kontseptsiooni olemust ja väärtust.

Märksõnad: kultuuri õpetamine võõrkeele tunnis, Moran'i kogemuslik õppimis-tsükel

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