



## **An Online Workshop for Intercultural Training**

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### **Abstract**

The shape of our society is changing rapidly towards a multicultural mosaic for which our students need to be prepared. Intercultural dialogue is at the very center of the future of Europe and the world.

Language learning seems to be moving in that direction, taking into account that the concept of culture has been present in the classroom for years. For decades now, the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has replaced and improved the well-known Communicative Competence. We agree with Byram when he foresees that the main goal in a second language is to attain communication among cultures. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are needed to achieve this objective.

Foreign language classroom is the ideal environment to implement these values within the educational framework for many reasons, but mainly because the students often encounter a different culture there for the first time. However we believe the place of intercultural education remains throughout the whole curriculum, as a crosscurricular topic.

In order to put these ideas into practice, teachers need to be trained specifically. Lack of knowledge and negative attitudes towards the target culture seem to be two of the greatest problems hindering this process.

Initial training, at least in the Spanish case, is not up to the task. Intercultural values, permanently present in political speech, are absent when the degrees are designed, thus disregarding a multicultural context which demands proper action. Students must be educated to become respectful and tolerant citizens if a common future is to be sought.

Once we define the theoretical background, we will give an example of how language teachers can be trained interculturally using all the tools ICT provide. We will use this paper to present an online workshop in intercultural communication, designed with in-service teachers and undergraduates in mind. This workshop is intended to develop skills, improve knowledge and raise awareness towards “otherness” and one’s own culture.