

The Use of ICT in the Development of Intercultural Business Communication

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Abstract

Language learning today gives ample evidence of the changes that have been brought about by technological advances and the increasing globalization of the world. The specificity of language learning and the information revolution have reshaped language courses.

General English courses are playing a minor role in favour of professional English, as the increasing mobility of citizens and the demanding (and tough) work market require an international language (English) for professional and academic disciplines; traditional printed books have evolved into multimedia materials featuring images, video, animation, etc. The interactivity these elements provide is a highly motivational feature for learners. Besides, virtual sessions and virtual courses have been introduced to facilitate and promote language learning.

Since economy is the most visible aspect of globalization, the need to do business in an international context has increased the demand to learn Business English. Nevertheless, the development of intercultural communication has made clear that despite today's globalization, cultural differences persist. Speakers of different languages see the world differently since cultural values are usually transferred to the communicative process. Then, doing business in a global market depends on the ability to successfully communicate in an intercultural context. The emergence of Intercultural Business Communication reflects the concern of global organizations with the cost of doing business. Business students are expected to develop an awareness of the cultural aspects that influence business relations all over the world and to acquire the ability to behave appropriately in different cultural settings. As Gordon and Newburry (2007) assert "the ability to recognize and adapt appropriate behaviors in differing cultural settings is increasingly being viewed as a desirable employee characteristic".

With such ideas in mind, our paper will summarize the main concepts, processes and factors influencing Intercultural Business Communication. Once the theoretical background has been established, we will move on to the actual teaching/learning practice as we focus on online resources to promote intercultural communicative competence in business settings. With the help of those resources, we will show how we can plan virtual and motivating sessions offering the students the genuine advantages of ICT learning.