

Promoting Respect for Other Cultures: A Modification to Curricula in Higher Education

Güler Siper

Alanya HEP University

Abstract

With new doors opening and walls coming down cultures have become more involved with each other. This has sometimes brought about clashes between various cultures sharing the same land and privileges, especially within the young generation. Therefore, it has become important to promote acceptance and communication within and among cultures, to combat biases and stereotypes, to find a balance between respect for our own culture, to appreciate diversity and strive for equality among various national communities. This course aims to help students at international universities in or outside their countries to become aware of their own prejudices as regards their own as well as other cultures. We designed this course to be integrated into compulsory or elective courses - mother tongue, history, English, IT and/or Civics/Social Science instruction. It can be exploited in a variety of ways (e.g., workshops, individual or group projects, theme weeks) depending on the flexibility of the general curriculum. The course consists of 3 stages. Stage One focuses on factors which shape our own identity. Students develop a more objective approach to national matters. Stage Two enables students to become more aware of others, question and study the roots of their prejudices and find ways to coexist with others. In Stage Three students act on their curiosity towards others, become comfortable with understanding, respecting and accepting differences without trying to change them. At the end of the course students write a report reflecting their views, covering the themes of the stages.

Keywords: prejudices, curriculum, stereotypes, multicultural education