

Yumin Ao (Kennesaw State University)

Cross-cultural Awareness and Solutions: A Social Perspective Taking (SPT) Module for Competence-based Training

Panel: Education and professional development of Chinese language teachers

CFL teachers from China encounter a challenge when trying to bridge large cultural gaps and may lack skills to effectively engage with the local populace, including students, teachers, parents and host-school administrators. The successful promotion of Chinese education requires the full support of a partnership with host schools and local communities. Thus, it is of crucial importance that CFL teachers use effective interpersonal technique and communication strategies in the classroom and beyond to overcome potential barriers in cross-cultural communication. However, the majority of CFL teachers from China either have had no exposure to new ideas, people and cultural situations, or had occasional but insufficient cross-cultural knowledge prior to being deployed to host schools. This paper uses Social Perspective Taking (SPT) to address these interpersonal challenges of CFL teachers. 37 CFL teachers voluntarily and anonymously participated in a recent survey regarding cross-cultural interactions and competence. The results of the survey have shown the necessity of competence-based training programs to be designed for in-service CFL teachers. The SPT module proposed in the paper allows teachers to accurately consider students, parents, host-schools' perspectives without cultural bias and erroneous assumptions, which is the key to successfully promoting instruction of Chinese language and culture. The paper introduces the implementation of the SPT module for an in-service professional development workshop. The paper aims to: (1) contribute to escalating CFL teachers' cultural competence locally and globally; (2) allow teachers to understand host-schools' goals while accomplishing objectives of Chinese education; and (3) provide constructive suggestions to develop courses for in-service teacher training.