



## Activity to Promote Intercultural Competency in an ESL Classroom

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**The activity in question is building a “Cultural Awareness Quilt”.**

**Function:** Reading quotations and writing sentences about culture/melting pot/immigration/refugee

**Skills:** Reading, speaking, listening, and writing

- ✓ **Reading:** students read different quotations
- ✓ **Speaking:** they reflect on the quotations they read and talk about it to each other
- ✓ **Listening:** they listen to each other and express their ideas and thoughts about their quotations
- ✓ **Writing:** they have to write their own thoughts on the topics discussed

**Objective:** Students will learn how to discuss a series of cultural issues and how that affects their identity, how they behave, how they perceive different behaviors, and how to be more understanding and tolerant towards the things that are different from what they are used to.

**Level:** High Intermediate/Advanced, but it can be adaptable to lower levels according to the degree of difficulty the teacher wants to establish and the simplification of the vocabulary utilized.

**Age group:** From 16 – 25 years old

### **Materials:**

- ✓ White paper
- ✓ Colored paper
- ✓ Photos chosen by students regarding
  - o Culture,
  - o Melting pot,
  - o Immigration,
  - o Refugee
- ✓ Scotch tape
- ✓ Photos that students choose that represent the theme of the lesson (1 sheet)
- ✓ The sentences written by each student symbolizing their interpretation of the theme



### **Procedure/Steps:**

1) Divide the class into groups of 3-4, depending on the size of the class. This division is made using quotes regarding culture/melting pot/immigration/refugee cut up into 3-4 pieces, each student

chooses a piece of paper, and they have to find their partners. This way, they will be more open minded to work with other students that otherwise they would have never worked with.

2) Each group sits together and talks about that particular quote, and what it represents to them.

3) After that, they can use their cell phones to read quotes about the theme. Each student within the group chooses 4-5 quotes. Then, they have to discuss each quote with the other members of the group. They should explain why they chose their quotes, what each quote means to them, how they can relate it to their own culture, and how they can relate them to other cultures.

4) Next, each student chooses an image/photo that represents the theme and their feelings about it and print it.

5) After reading and talking about the theme, each student writes their own statement regarding one subtopic discussed in class: culture/melting pot/ immigration/refugee and print it in colored paper.

6) So, now that each student has 2 sheets printed (having about 15-20 students in the class), the whole class gets together and built a paper quilt with their colored statement sheet and their image/photo sheet putting them together with a transparent Scotch tape (it will be about 30-40 sheets, plus the colored sheets that will be used to create the border (optional)).

This is a great activity because it is interactive, engaging, thought-provoking, engaging, cooperative, meaningful, adaptable, and creative. It relates to the real world, discusses topics that are very relevant/personal, uses authentic material, uses visuals, and most of all, uses the target language in a natural context, and students are in a situation where they have to negotiate meaning.

PS: The quilt can be horizontal or vertical. The teacher can also add a border with blank colored paper to make it more colorful and interesting. The quilt can be posted in a common are where all students can see and learn more about the theme, and that can generate conversations.