

**Resolving the culture conundrum:
A conceptual framework for the management
of culture in TESOL**

Submitted by

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Abstract

The thesis explores the place of culture in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). The study originally set out to investigate the ways in which teachers understand culture and deal with it in their teaching of English. A survey of teachers found that while the teachers had sophisticated understandings about culture and its relationship with language at a general level, they did not have clear understandings about how cultural teaching can be enacted in the classroom. This conundrum was also evident in the literature on teaching culture in TESOL. An extensive survey of the literature found that while there are a number of different perspectives on how culture can be understood and dealt with in TESOL, none of these provide a comprehensive basis for the understandings teachers need for the practicalities of teaching. The focus of the study shifted from an investigation of professional development to the articulation of a conceptual framework to inform teachers in the way they can manage the teaching of culture. The framework draws on some significant insights of one of the perspectives in the literature, Intercultural Language Teaching, as well as some insights from other perspectives. The framework identifies dimensions in which teachers need to understand how culture can be manifest and managed in TESOL. For each dimension a number of factors on which decisions need to be made are identified. The framework also identifies a number of principles to guide teachers in their decision-making about the teaching culture. The potential of the framework to inform the teaching of English to adult immigrants in Australia, as well as students studying English in a university in Vietnam is explored. The capacity of the framework to inform TESOL teacher education, research and theory building is also evaluated.

Statement of authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

The thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

The research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Education.

Signature:.....Date.....

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