

POSTCROSSING AS A MEANS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Although the ability to communicate effectively has long been an important aspect of any social interaction between people from different cultures, within the past two decades it has become essential [1, p.1]. In general, communication is the process by which messages or information is sent from one place or person to another or the message itself [2].

We live in an era where intercultural communication skills are not just an asset, they are a requirement. Never before has it been so easy for people from different nations and ethnicities to meet and interact. People all over the world now interact daily with others through the medium of modern telecommunications—telephones, Internet, teleconferencing [1, p.4].

There are many different ways that people engage in communication every day by listening to music, talking to friends, searching for something new, sending and receiving messages through e-mail, Facebook or Twitter [1, p.8]. Despite the convenience of social networks many people prefer to send letters and today this can be easily done with the help of postcrossing.

Postcrossing is a popular leisure activity which is widespread around the world among different countries and cultures. The Postcrossing project was created in 2005 by P. Magalhaes as a side project when he was a student in Portugal. Friends helped test the first version, A. Campos designed the first logo and after much indecision about the name, on July 14th, 2005 the Postcrossing project was open to everyone. Since then, postcrossing has been in the media spotlight around the world, from the widely known BBC News to newspapers, magazines and blogs. [3]

The goal of the Postcrossing project is to allow anyone to send and receive postcards from all over the world. The idea of this project is simple as it is supposed that for each postcard a person sends, one back from a random postcrosser will be received. To participate, one creates an account where the address and an idea of the postcard and its theme should be mentioned. The system gives a code that should be written inside the postcard and with the help of this code the receiver can register his own card.

Thus, postcrossing brings many people together, making the world a smaller and happier place. There are countless reports of new friendships made, new languages learned and numerous cultural facts about other countries that people learned through their exchanges in the project. [3]

The relevance is determined by the fact that every year more and more people are interested in such modern project as the Postcrossing.

The aim of the research is to involve all the participants of the educational process in the project and to increase their motivation of international and intercultural communication with native speakers and to improve their English speaking skills.

The questionnaire was made among the students of the linguistic specialty to find out if postcrossing is an effective means of intercultural communication. According to the results we must admit that most students know about the Postcrossing project and believe that the project helps to develop intercultural relations. A smaller part of the respondents have already taken part in this project, but the majority of our students would like to become participants.

Our analysis showed that students are interested in the Postcrossing project and would like to take part in it because they believe that it is a convenient way to develop communicative relations with English-speaking people. Thus, we can consider the Postcrossing project as a means of intercultural communication. What is more, it can't but mentioned our life and future depends on how well and correctly we are able to communicate. It is something we have to do and something we enjoy doing, and in the digital age, we do a lot of it. In other words, communication is inescapable and we seem to have an innate need to associate with and connect to other people through communication. [1, p.8]

References

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