

CCERBAL 2023
BILINGUALISM AND MULTILINGUALISM: TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES,
MOBILITY, AND WELL-BEING
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KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Crossing virtual borders as an intercultural encounter

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The incorporation of cultural elements into lessons, whether through songs, stories, films, advertisements or other means, is a common instructional practice for second language teachers. Often, this involves merely celebrating the target language culture to further develop students' intercultural competence without much thought to the concept of "culture" or how to understand "difference" (Dasli & Díaz, 2017). In the current global socio-political context intercultural understanding is an essential component (Jacquet, 2016), given the need for a better understanding and heightened respect for Indigenous priorities, the foregrounding of anti-racist and decolonizing approaches, and the implementation of inclusive and equitable practices in our classrooms. Implementing an inclusive approach that values multiple realities, knowledges, and identities in our schools requires us to turn our gaze inward, to accept a sense of vulnerability, and to embrace being uncomfortable in the learning process (Zembylas & Papamichael, 2017).

In this presentation, I will discuss a critical approach to intercultural learning that explores this vulnerability through a process of decentering (Andreotti et al., 2014). The discussion will focus on the results of a research project examining perceptions of interculturality in French second language programs in British Columbia to better understand the needs of pre- and in-service teachers in approaching intercultural learning in their teaching. My specific focus will be on the content of a workshop developed as part of the study to explore examples of cultural translation (Kramsch & Zhua Hua, 2020) as a productive means of intercultural learning. The focus is on virtual resources, namely, how these cultural texts are extracted and rearticulated (Leppänen et al., 2014) across spaces filled with different codes, conventions, and expectations (Blommaert, 2005). The presentation will conclude with a brief discussion of implications, in particular the willingness to be open to such an approach to intercultural learning.