

**THE LEARNING OF MULTICULTURAL/GLOBAL THEMES THROUGH
AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN EFL CLASSROOMS**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the learning of Multicultural Education (ME) and Global Education (GE) in Taiwan's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms using authentic materials. The study was based on the data collected from an elective course named "Multicultural and Global Education" at a university in northern Taiwan. The study aimed to explore (1) what multicultural/global learning means to EFL students and (2) how EFL students relate multicultural/global themes to their lives. The data were collected from students taking the course during the 2006 school year. The data consisted of students' interviews, students' reflective journals, and the instructor's (i.e., the researcher) reflective journals. The study found that multicultural/global learning helped construct students' knowledge, provided them with opportunities to learn more about themselves, and encouraged them to take actions within and outside of their communities. It also found that authentic materials helped motivate students in learning English. Based on the findings, some theoretical and pedagogical implications are provided.

Key Words: multicultural education, global education, English as a Foreign Language, authentic materials

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural Education and Global Education

Multicultural Education (ME) developed out of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s in the United States with major concern over issues such as equity, social justice, and the educational success of students of color (The American Association of Colleges for Teacher

Education [AACTE], 1997). Over the years, ME has evolved and become a comprehensive curriculum critical for all students. Issues such as sexism, classism, disability, exceptionality, age, sexual orientation, etc., are essential to a multicultural curriculum (Banks, 1998; Nieto, 1996; Sleeter & Grant, 1999).

According to Suzuki (1980), ME is an educational program which “provides multiple learning environments that properly match the academic and social needs of students” (p.21); through such a program, students learn to appreciate and respect cultural diversity and understand the complexity of social, historical, and cultural reality. According to Nieto (1996), ME is a process of comprehensive curriculum reform which challenges racism and other forms of discrimination and affirms the pluralism of all people. Moreover, ME stresses the importance of the construction of knowledge for students and encourages students to examine the process of their knowledge construction (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

As ME is very comprehensive and represents various concepts, issues, and themes, its practice also varies depending on individual teachers’ knowledge of ME. When discussing multicultural content, Banks and Banks (1993) presented four approaches for integrating multicultural content into course syllabus:

- (1) the Contributions Approach: this approach focuses on holidays and other cultural elements, such as food, music, dances, gift exchanging, fashion, etc., of different racial/ethnic groups.
- (2) the Additive Approach: this approach adds cultural concepts (e.g., death, birth, social participation), themes (e.g., ecology, justice, economic development), and perspectives to the content of the curriculum without changing the overall structure of the curriculum.
- (3) the Transformation Approach: this approach aims at bringing structural and didactic changes to the curriculum, thus enabling students to view concepts and issues from perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.
- (4) the Social Action Approach: this approach provides further changes in educational methodology with students taking part in decision making on multicultural issues and taking actions to help solve the problems. Teachers adopting this approach usually help students become reflective thinkers and competent

promoters of constructive social change.

On the other hand, Global Education (GE) was originally developed in the post-World War II era because of the U.S.'s emphasis on area studies, foreign policy, and international educational and cultural exchanges (AACTE, 1997). One of its original goals was to help American students understand the mechanics of up-and-coming global systems and their own personal economic, political, environmental, and cultural connections with other people around the world (Tye, 1999).

Over the years, many scholars have provided definitions, dimensions, and scopes of GE. Hicks (2003) defined GE as an academic field concerned with teaching and learning about global issues, events, and perspectives. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) considered that GE involves learning about problems and issues that cut across national boundaries and about “the interconnectedness of systems—cultural, ecological, economic, political, and technological” (Tye, 1991, p. 5). Other scholars defined global education as a type of education which helps learners develop sound knowledge, skills, and attitude in order to participate in their own community as well as domestic and international affairs (Case, 1993; Kniep, 1986).

According to Hanvey (1975), GE consists of five dimensions which help prepare students to achieve global awareness: perspective consciousness, state-of-the-planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices. In addition, the English “Global Teacher Project” funded by U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID) provided eight key concepts within the global dimension: global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development, and values and perceptions. It also suggested that GE should not merely be a school subject, rather, it should be “a dimension that runs through the curriculum” (2005, p. 1).

In addition to the above-mentioned aspects of GE, many GE scholars and educators believe that school curriculum should be designed to help students develop the following abilities: (1) cross-cultural understanding and communication skills, (2) self-knowledge and substantive knowledge of the world, (3) anticipation of complexity, (4) resistance of ethnic, racial, linguistic, and other types of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, and (5) perspective consciousness (i.e., recognition and

appreciation of others' points of view) (Alger & Harf, 1986; Case, 1993; Hicks, 2003).

Like many of the scholars of ME, GE scholars believe that school curriculum should be designed to help students recognize the complexity of the world, understand the interconnectedness among nations, and build up decision-making and critical thinking skills (AACTE, 1997; Case, 1993; Hanvey, 1975; Kniep, 1986). As a result, many scholars of ME have made connections with GE as the two share many commonalities.

The importance of integrating concepts and issues of ME/GE into school curricula therefore should not be overlooked. For years, scholars in the United States and other countries have highlighted the critical role ME/GE plays in educational processes. By the same token, themes addressed in ME/GE could be learning materials of great value to Taiwanese students, especially EFL learners. This is because among all subject matters, EFL seems to be the ideal vehicle for integrating concepts and issues of ME/GE and language teaching, since extensive knowledge of the English language is culturally embedded, and mastering the language will require mastering a deeper level of target-language culture and the way knowledge is constructed in English-speaking countries (Huang, 2003).

Unfortunately, the scarcity of teaching ME/GE in Taiwan's EFL classrooms is obvious. In Taiwan, ME/GE is rarely an element of curriculum design in schools, be it in elementary-, high school-, or college-level. Truth be told, although ME/GE are educational approaches developed and practiced overseas, many concepts and issues discussed, such as the emphasis on knowledge construction and multiple perspectives, the development of critical thinking skills, and the racial, political, cultural, social, and economical realities of the world, could greatly benefit Taiwan's EFL learners. As Harmer (1991) put it, language teaching is not just about teaching language. The importance of integrating concepts and issues of ME/GE into Taiwan's EFL classrooms cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore it is crucial for Taiwan's EFL teachers to recognize the importance of teaching ME/GE and to help students become world citizens while learning English.

Authentic Materials

When teaching concepts and issues of ME/GE to EFL students, the selection of textbooks becomes crucial. It is common that EFL teachers

use textbooks that are specifically designed and carefully written for EFL learners. Although the traditional textbooks are usually more “manageable” and convenient to use for EFL teachers, they are usually being created in “a climate for isolated learning” (Karpova, 1999, p.18). According to Erkaya (2005), the choice between using traditional textbooks and authentic materials to help students communicate in a meaningful way is an easy one: classrooms using traditional textbooks seem to be less creative and dull while classrooms using authentic materials appear to be more natural and communicative.

In the literature, scholars have provided various definitions of “authentic materials.” Nunan (1989) defined authentic materials as the materials produced for purposes *other than* language teaching. Harmer (1991) proposed that authentic materials are those produced for native speakers of a particular language, rather than learners of such a language. In addition, Morrow (1977) defined authentic materials as an extension of a real language which is produced by native speakers for a real audience (i.e., other native speakers), and its intention is to convey a real message.

Although the ideal authentic materials are intended for native speakers of the target language, the use of them in an EFL context will be equally meaningful. Erkaya (2005) suggested that authentic materials produced by and for native speakers can help EFL classes focus more on communication and make the language instruction more natural, rewarding, and interesting. By using them in class, EFL teachers in a sense welcome the cultural, societal, and historical aspects of the target language into their classrooms.

Many scholars and educators have stressed the importance of using authentic materials in ESL/EFL classrooms with various forms, from print to audio-visual. Yang (2001) presented a case study in which authentic fictions were used to help ESL students develop their reading skills and other linguistic competence. Results of the study suggested that such authentic materials did indeed help improve learners’ language proficiency. Wood (1999) suggested that the majority of ESL teachers using video prefer authentic video which is not specifically made for teaching English. He also asserted that authentic films’ sense of reality could stimulate real-world language demands. Further, Kataoka (2000) pointed out that the use of newspapers, broadcast media, etc. could offer more opportunities for realistic communication, because learners would

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have access to real documents written for practical purposes, and thus facilitate their language learning.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The course “Multicultural and Global Education”

As previously stated, multicultural/global concepts and issues have not been a focus of school curricula in Taiwan. Therefore curricula designed to highlight the essence of ME/GE are needed. In order to probe into the learning of ME/GE in Taiwan’s EFL classrooms, I conducted a research project based on a university-level, elective course that I offered, entitled “Multicultural and Global Education,” during the 2006 school year. The course was conducted by presenting five multicultural/global themes using one or several authentic English materials for each theme. The five themes were selected not only because they were important ones but also because they were themes unfamiliar to the majority of Taiwanese students. An in-depth study of each of the themes could hopefully help develop students’ world views and multiple perspectives. In addition, the themes seemed to best represent the spirit of two of Banks and Banks’ (1993) approaches. Their Transformation Approach stresses the fundamentally structural change in designing the multicultural syllabus, rather than “adding” or “infusing” some multicultural concepts to the existing curriculum. In addition, a part of Banks and Banks’ Social Action Approach stresses the importance of the process of knowledge construction and decision-making skills, so that students are able to respond to multicultural themes more critically and eventually become change agents.

Table 1 shows the list of the five themes presented in the course and the materials used for the particular theme.

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Table 1. Themes and Authentic Materials used for “Multicultural and Global Education”

Themes	Authentic Materials Related to the Particular Theme
racial/ethnic issues	1. The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children (book chapters) 2. “I Have a Dream” (speech DVD and speech script)
sexual orientation	1. Brokeback Mountain (novel) 2. Philadelphia (movie)
environmental protection	1. An inconvenient Truth (documentary film)
international politics/affairs	1. Life and Debt (documentary film) 2. Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years (book chapters) 3. Islamic-related cartoons on Jyllands-Posten (newspaper cartoons)
societal issues	1. Where is the Love (song)

The following is a brief introduction to the authentic materials used in the course:

- (1) The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children (Ladson-Billings, 1997): a book centered on the education of African-American students. It details many thought-provoking stories related to racism, classism, etc.
- (2) I Have a Dream: The speech DVD and script from Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech “I Have a Dream” at the 1963 political rally “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.” The speech addressed the issue of segregation and racial discrimination and raised public consciousness of the civil rights movement.
- (3) Brokeback Mountain: A short story written by Annie Proulx and published in 2005, which is about two Wyoming cowboys’ homosexual romance, the ordeals they endured, and the difficulties they encountered for being homosexuals.
- (4) Philadelphia: A movie about an AIDS-infected lawyer fighting for his human rights against his former law firm supervisors. Issues such as homophobia, discrimination against homosexuality, and humanity are presented in the movie. The movie was directed by Jonathan Demme and was released in 1993.
- (5) An Inconvenient Truth: A 2006 documentary film about global

- warming, climate change, and environmental protection. It was presented by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore and directed by Davis Guggenheim.
- (6) *Life & Debt*: A documentary film examining the social and economic situation in Third World countries and the impact thereon of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's globalization policies. It is directed by Stephanie Black and was released in 2001.
 - (7) *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*: A book containing reports and articles related to the controversial issue of whether Christopher Columbus "discovered" or "occupied" the Americas. The book was edited by Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson and released in 1998.
 - (8) *Islamic-related cartoons on Jyllands-Posten*: A series of cartoons drawn by Western cartoonists on a Denmark newspaper. The cartoons were drawn to ridicule Muslims, Islamic suicide bombers, and the Prophet Mohammed. They have triggered much anger among the Islamic community worldwide.
 - (9) *Where is the Love*: A 2003 song by the Black Eyed Peas. The song contains several multicultural themes such as war, terrorism, gangsters, materialism, chaos in the media, youngsters' loss of hope and outlook on life, etc.

The course lasted one school year, and the students met once a week for two periods. Based on the above course materials, two research questions were explored: (1) What does multicultural/global learning mean to EFL students? (2) How do EFL students relate multicultural/global themes to their lives?

Qualitative Inquiry and Interpretivism

My study is grounded in qualitative approaches in order to develop an understanding of an educational phenomenon—the learning of ME/GE in EFL classrooms in Taiwan. Qualitative inquiry meets the goal of this study because this approach allows me to deal with the complexities of teaching and learning of multicultural/global concepts and issues. In addition, the openness of qualitative inquiry allows for in-depth understanding of what is happening from my participants' own point of view and how acquiring ME/GE has related to their learning and affected their lives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1980,

1990; Stake, 1994).

Within the qualitative paradigm, I chose the interpretivist approach (Denzin, 1989; Thomson, 1975; Schwandt, 1994) as the basis for this study because this approach also emphasizes the complexity of an educational phenomenon. Scholars of interpretivism emphasize the communicative interaction between researchers and their participants. They view every human situation as filled with multiple meanings and interpretations, and it is the researchers' job to capture the core of these meanings and interpretations. In this study, the data collected were based on the courses that I taught. Given the fact that I could not exclude my values, beliefs, and pedagogical decisions from the inquiry, and my interpretations of the participants' reality would inevitably feed back into my constructs, qualitative inquiry's interpretivist orientation seems to best serve this study.

Participants

The 48 students taking the course in the 2006 school year (i.e., from August, 2006 to June, 2007) were the participants of this research project. They were students from a university in northern Taiwan majoring in Applied Foreign Languages. The average English proficiency of these students is from intermediate to advanced.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, three types of data were collected: (1) interviews: in order to get in-depth information regarding the students' development in and reflections on their multicultural/global learning, a two-hour interview was conducted with each of the 12 students (out of the 48). In the last period of the class, I solicited volunteering students to participate in the interviews. The students who were interested in participating in the interview would come up to me, and the first 12 who approached me were accepted as interviewees. Therefore the interviewees for this study were not purposely selected using any criteria, rather, they participated in the study voluntarily. All interviews with the participants were audiotaped and transcribed. (2) students' reflective journals: all the students were asked to keep a reflective journal to record their thoughts on the materials learned in the class, experiences in multicultural/global issues, and changes in attitudes and behaviors. The students were required to write one entry each week, either in English or Chinese, with

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no less than 500 words, during the period of taking the course. (3) Instructor's/researcher's reflective journals: in this study, I tape-recorded each of my teaching periods. After each class, based on the recording, I wrote notes in my reflective journal to reflect on curriculum design and my own teaching. During the course of data collection, I also kept reflective journals to record my pedagogical as well as methodological concerns and decisions.

In this study, I utilized two data analysis methods, inductive data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and constant comparative data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 1990) to develop codes and categories which grew out of the data. I chose these methods because they allowed me to work back and forth across the data to expand the meaning of the categories. The credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the findings centered on four aspects: (1) my prolonged engagement with the research phenomenon, (2) the opinions of a former colleague for peer debriefing, (3) the member checking process, and (4) triangulation at multiple levels.

The data collected in the study, including the interviews and reflective journals, were mostly in the students' and my native language—Chinese/Mandarin. For the purpose of the study, I have translated the collected materials into English.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, I provide analysis across the participants' learning of ME/GE and discuss in detail four major findings based on my analysis of the data collected. Regarding the first research question (i.e., What does multicultural/global learning mean to EFL students?), the study found that multicultural/global learning helped construct students' knowledge and provided them with opportunities to learn more about themselves. Regarding the second research question (i.e., How do EFL students relate multicultural/global themes to their lives?), the study found that such themes encouraged the students to take actions within and outside of their communities. In addition, this study also found that authentic materials helped motivate students in learning English.

Multicultural/Global Learning and Knowledge Construction

The first finding centers on the students' multicultural learning and

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the process of their knowledge construction. In the classroom, the students and I spent quite a lot of time discussing the five themes of ME/GE, and these were the themes that students seldom thought about or had no contact with prior to taking the course, therefore most of them had formed various stereotypes before coming into the classroom. However, many students said that their perspectives have changed after taking this course, and/or they were willing to try to look at those themes from different perspectives. The following journal entry is from a male student (dated 11/06/2006) concerning his previously-formed stereotype toward people in the Middle East:

When the teacher first showed us the cartoon in which a guy who was covered with a beard had a bomb wrapped around his head, I thought he was [Osama] bin Laden or some sort of terrorist. I suspected that most of my classmates thought the same way. Later when the teacher revealed that the person was not the terrorist but the Prophet Mohammed, I was stunned. And then it hit me that I had formed a stereotype about the people in the Middle East for a very long time. To me, a terrorist was someone with a Middle Eastern look. A terrorist couldn't have been white....

Similarly, in an interview (dated 07/17/2007), another male student talked about his prejudice toward people in the Central and South Americas, and how the documentary "Life and Debt" has changed his perspective:

[I've always despised people from the Central and South Americas, because] from what I have heard, the people there are generally lazy and the governments corrupt.... Compared with Taiwan, most countries there have more land and larger amounts of natural resources, but they are very poor and lack competitiveness. However, after watching "Life and Debt," I came to realize that countries like Jamaica have suffered unjust treatment from the international society, especially institutions such as [IMF] and the World Bank. These countries are the victims of the so-called "globalization." I've also come to realize that globalization isn't panacea for everyone.

Becoming multicultural/global beings does not take place over night. However, it is still possible when the students are given the opportunity.

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The following are interview excerpts (dated 07/25/2007 and 07/02/2007) from two female students talking about their newly-developed perspectives on issues raised by “Columbus discovered America” and racial/ethnic discrimination:

I was very astonished when I read the articles concerning Columbus’s cruelty toward the Native Americans. I’ve always thought that he discovered America, and that he was a huge hero—at least to the Americans. When I read about how he had set the dogs to attack the Indians and enslaved them, I was shocked. This is another side of American history that I didn’t understand before, the dark side.... Then I thought to myself: how can such a big “scandal” in the world history be hidden and distorted for so long? Are there more things like this in the history books that I didn’t know, even now?

Before this class, the only country that I knew to practice segregation was South Africa. From [Dr. King’s] speech script, I realized that the U.S. had been practicing racial segregation up until the late 1960s, which was not long ago at all. And this was a very big surprise to me, because I’ve always thought that the U.S. is a free country. I couldn’t imagine not being able to sit on the bus, to wash my hands after using the toilet, to eat in a restaurant, or even to go to the school in my neighborhood [like happened to the Blacks]—and all this was only a few decades ago!

Sometimes the students form misconceptions toward different issues because they lack in-depth background information of the issues. Once such a gap is filled, the students are able to reshape or change their already-formed perspectives, as the following interview excerpt shows (dated 08/02/2007):

When I read [Brokeback Mountain] for the first time, there were many parts of the story that I didn’t quite understand, such as: why they had to hide their sexual preference and why they were married to women.... I also didn’t understand why the two men had to be so secretive when they spent time together. [After being given the background information,] I realized that homosexuality was not approved in many states in the 1960s, even the 1980s, in the U.S. I then realized that there exist conservative sides in the U.S. This was

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very new to me. I've always thought that the US is such an open society and people can do whatever they want... This is obviously not the case.

In addition, after having learned to look at things from different perspectives, some students were able to provide me with useful suggestions in various aspects, and often times the suggestions became a source of my curriculum planning in the future, as shown in one of my reflective journals (dated 01/17/2007):

Under [student's name]'s recommendation, I watched the movie "Crash" today. It reminded me of the heated yet wonderful debates on racial issues that took place during my doctoral program. The movie reminded me of several different racial stereotypes that I'm familiar with. Although the movie was a bit affectedly unconventional, it is not without significant merit: people are neither all bad nor all good, rather, they are often in a grey area. Just like [student's name]'s comment, "People possess multiple facets, and there are diverse characteristics in every race." This notion is worth sharing with other students. Perhaps I will add this movie to my recommendation list next year.

In addition, sometimes the students' previously-formed conceptions were changed due to an unexpected event outside of the classroom. Interestingly, the students were capable of making connections with what they have learned in class and the new information. According to the students, when such connection took place, the impact was profound. The following excerpt is from a female student's reflective journal (dated 03/01/2007) in which she talked about how much she was touched by Al Gore's speeches in "An Inconvenient Truth" and his devotion to the global warming issue but then changed her mind due to a newspaper report in late February which revealed that Gore's mansion consumes more electricity every month than the average American household uses in an entire year:

I was very much disturbed [by the news]. I couldn't believe the news. I don't know if he is the biggest hypocrite or what. How can a person be so two-faced? How can people preach one thing and do another? I then asked myself: can a person's great contribution to one thing

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outweigh his bad deeds on the other? Isn't he an honorable man? He even gave up the opportunity of becoming the President in 2000.... I've always thought that the American politicians are more honest and less deceitful than their Taiwanese counterparts. Now I guess I have to be suspicious about what I see and learn..., everything.

Multicultural/Global Learning and Learning About Oneself

According to the data, the multicultural/global themes learned from the class have provided the students with chances to learn about themselves and opportunities for ongoing reflection on their own experiences, and based on such reflection, they were able to examine and re-examine their previously-acquired value systems. Further, some students were able to consequentially form a basis of transformation and change their value systems, as the following interview excerpts illustrate (dated 08/02/2007 and 07/10/2007):

The [Islamic-related] cartoons that we saw in class reminds me of the news that I saw on TV a few years ago. It said that after the 9/11 attack, many Middle Easterners have had trouble entering the US, because they would definitely be profiled and scrutinized by the immigration officials at the airport. The cartoons also reminded me of some of the movies that I saw, like "Breakfast at Tiffany's," where Asians or Chinese were stereotypically portrayed. The news and the movies didn't bother me then, but as I learn more, I have started to sense how terrible stereotypes and prejudices are.

The chapters [in the Dreamkeepers] startled me. I've always thought that the Blacks in the U.S. deserve to be in slums because they were born less diligent and less intelligent. I've never thought that their predicament could be caused by institutional discrimination... and structural inequality. This reminded me of the under-achieving children in rural Taiwan. Most of them are from lower-income or single-parent families; many of them were raised by their grandparents. They are not lazy or stupid, instead, the society and the school didn't treat them right.... It's like what you said in class—sometimes education can be a reproduction of social injustice. Those children didn't learn well because they are disadvantaged....

One of the themes presented in class was sexual orientation. To

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address this issue, students were asked to read the novel “Brokeback Mountain” and view the movie “Philadelphia.” From my observation, most students seemed to relate to both and were able to reflect on their previous viewpoints toward this issue. The following is a journal (dated 01/04/2007) representing a male student’s reflection on homosexuality:

Through my part-time job at a Japanese restaurant I came to know this homosexual friend of mine.... To me he is a very unique person—I mean, with a very nice and gentle personality. Therefore it bothers me every time when other co-workers make fun of him or say nasty things about him behind his back. The sad thing is my [guy] friend has no clue about other people’s ridicule. I felt very sorry for him and have wanted to say something to those people who ridiculed him. But I guess I was afraid I would be treated like the lawyer in “Philadelphia”.... I don’t want people to think I’m a homosexual... (*laughed*) because I’m not. I just want to help my friend—that’s all, but I don’t know how.

Another multicultural/global theme presented in class was domestic and foreign societal problems. To address this issue, the song “Where is the Love” was presented. From my observation, most students reacted very well with both the song’s melody and lyrics. In addition to liking the song, the students seemed to be capable of connecting it to Taiwan’s societal problems. The students’ ability to reflect on the society they live in is illustrated in the following interview excerpt (dated 06/28/2007):

The song [Where is the Love] reminds me of Taiwan’s society, you know. Taiwan is undergoing such a big change where the rich are richer and the poor poorer.... It’s like, today you hear the wife of this CEO of a hi-tech company bought a ten-million dollar diamond and the next day you hear this poor old woman killed herself and her three children because they couldn’t even get a decent meal. It’s like the lyrics in “Where is the Love:” “people only care about money making”....

Yet another multicultural/global theme presented in class is international politics and affairs, including racial/ethnic prejudice and discrimination, religious conflict, etc. According to the data, the students seemed to be able to make connections with Taiwan’s own racial/ethnic

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problem after being encouraged to analyze historical events from alternative perspectives, as one female student stated in the following interview excerpt (dated 07/03/2007):

I couldn't believe the way Columbus and his crew treated the Indians—it's like treating them as some kind of animal. Then I recall reading some articles a long time ago about how Taiwanese immigrants first came to Taiwan and slaughtered the aborigines and drove them to the desolate mountain areas.... The funny thing is, after so many years of bullying and taking advantage of the aborigines, most Taiwanese people still blame them for putting themselves into unfortunate circumstances. And then I think about the foreign workers and foreign brides in Taiwan. It seems like they are the new version of the Indians of the U.S. and the new version of the aborigines in Taiwan.

Multicultural/Global Learning and Taking Action

The third finding emerging from the data is that learning multicultural/global themes seems to motivate students to take action, to show their responsibility and to help solve problems. Inspired by the issues presented in class, some students seemed to be aware of the way their knowledge was constructed and consequently formed a desire to participate in social change. This was a demonstration of what Banks and Banks (1993) referred to as the essence of the Social Action Approach. The following excerpts show the students' desire to contribute to some of the multicultural/global issues; the first one is a female student's reflective journal (dated 04/21/2007) and the second is from an interview (dated 06/26/2007):

Yesterday was the World Earth Day. Last week in class the teacher asked each of us to do three things that were good for the environment, so the first thing I decided to do was not to use hairspray for this entire week. Yesterday I also decided to ride my mom's bike to Danshui to meet my friends instead of riding my scooter. The ride to Danshui turned out to be horrible. There were cars everywhere on the street, and I almost got hit by a car. But when I got to Guandu, I saw many bikers riding bikes to celebrate the Earth Day. This made me feel good... and very proud of myself..., a kind of feeling that I contributed a bit to the protection of our

environment.

In this course, I feel very strongly about the chapters of “The Dreamkeepers” and... the articles about Columbus. I’m an aborigine, and it takes a minority to understand what it feels like to be a minority. The ridicules, the prejudices,... It’s like having a stain on your shirt that you can never get rid of. (*laughed*) Well, at least I used to think that way.... I’m very grateful that you gave us these articles to read. I really hope more people have access to them, so maybe they will get some ideas about what it’s like being a minority. So I have decided to try to translate “The Dreamkeepers” before graduation and maybe send the manuscript to the national aboriginal institute to see if they can publish it.

When the multicultural/global themes presented in class were “echoed” by the real-life events, the students’ motivation for doing something to give back to the society or change the status quo seemed stronger. The following reflective journal (dated 10/26/2006) shows one student’s aspiration to volunteer in local charity institutes when she learned about the Bangladeshi banker Muhammad Yunus winning the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, a week after the movie “Life and Debt” was shown in class:

What a coincidence! After we watched the movie, a week later the banker won the prize. Normally I wouldn’t pay attention to this kind of news, but because of the movie, I ended up doing a little research on the Internet. [I] found out that he had invented the concept of “microcredit” which gives small loans to poor people who are not qualified for traditional bank loans. At that time he was not worried that the poor people wouldn’t pay back the money. Surprisingly, most of the poor people paid back the money and have used the loan to start their small business. I was very moved by his story.... From the Internet, I also found some Taiwanese non-profit organizations using his concept and following his footsteps in helping the poor, especially those of single-mothers. I also come from a single-parent family, and this has inspired me to be a volunteer in those organizations.

When some controversial issues (e.g., homosexuality) were first

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brought up in class, the students usually reacted with uneasiness; however, after being exposed to the information and having participated in the class discussion, the students in turn would want to learn more about the issues. In this case, although the students were not empowered to become “change agents,” they were still capable of finding ways to show their care, as illustrated in the following interview excerpt (06/25/2007):

[In Philadelphia,] Andrew was infected with AIDS, and his co-workers abandoned him. Even the lawyer who defended him was afraid of him at first. I couldn't bear to watch the scene where he languished on the corner of the street feeling the world had abandoned him.... The scene reminded me of one of my friends back in the junior college. He was also infected with AIDS, not from homosexuality but from a blood transmission due to a motorcycle accident. After he was diagnosed with AIDS, he was kicked out of his family and expelled from the school. He now lives in a private institute. I only saw him once after his illness.... I called him the night before and went to see him yesterday. I wanted to tell him that the world has not abandoned him—it's just that we are too scared.

The Use of Authentic Materials and Motivation in English Learning

In this course, in order for the students to learn about the five multicultural/global themes, various forms for authentic materials were presented, including book chapters, movies, documentaries, novels, the speech DVD and script, songs, and newspaper cartoons. Although the benefit of using (English) authentic materials in EFL classrooms has been documented in the literature, as stated previously, the purpose of this study was to explore the students' learning and development of ME/GE, and not to examine or assess the effectiveness of authentic materials. Therefore it was somewhat surprising to find that many students voluntarily commented on the use of various authentic materials in class, and how they were inspired or motivated to advance their English. The following reflective journal (dated 03/22/2007) shows a female student's desire to read more English novels after reading Annie Proulx's “Brokeback Mountain:”

Although I'm an English major, this is the first time that I read an entire novel in English. The experience was phenomenal. I was...

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how should I say... amazed..., and very much impressed. Proulx's writing is very powerful. Her sentences are short but to the point—very powerful. Thanks to this novel, I've started to read Proulx's other short stories and even other English novels.

The following interview excerpts (dated 07/16/2007 and 06/26/2007) also show two students' motivation in enhancing their English public speaking skills and poem writing/rhyming skills upon viewing the film "An Inconvenient Truth" and learning the song "Where is the Love:"

In the past few years, we have heard a lot about the green house effect, global warming, climate refugees, etc., but those terms didn't really hit me until I watched [An Inconvenient Truth]. Watching an inspirational speaker like Gore speaking in front of a large audience really touched me. The words coming out of his mouth are worth more than a thousand scientific reports.... After watching his speeches, I made a resolution that I'd like to be an inspirational speaker like him one day.... I'd like to better my [English] speech skills and affect others as well!

After learning the song, I and several classmates had a "rap contest" in Andrew's dorm. We were trying to imitate the rhythms in the lyrics and create our own verses or poems.... It was very hard... harder than we'd thought actually, but a lot of fun.... And the song also changed our false ideas about rap songs, because the lyrics are actually very well-written and bear a lot of social consciences.

Finally, in their reflective journals, some students expressed their admiration for Dr. Martin Luther King's manner of delivering the famous "I Have a Dream" speech, while others said that they wished they could write speech scripts as powerful as that of Dr. King's. The following is an interview excerpt in which a female student commented on Dr. King's script (dated 06/27/2007):

Dr. King's speech script inspired me a lot. Reading the script, I can really envision his "dreams" for black people. In the text, he also used a lot of metaphoric images, such as changes of seasons and natural sceneries to convey his anger, dreams, hopes.... This has led me to reflect on my speech writing skills in my public speaking

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class.... To be honest I didn't put too much effort in writing the script back then. But now I feel like putting my mind into it and really trying hard to come up with something similar to that of Dr. King's.... Words are mightier than swords, you know.

THEORETICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study explored the learning of ME/GE in Taiwan's EFL classrooms using authentic materials. It found that multicultural/global learning helped construct students' knowledge, provided them with opportunities to learn more about themselves, and encouraged them to take actions in their communities as well as outside of their communities. It also found that authentic materials helped motivate students in learning English. Based on the findings, I provide some theoretical and pedagogical implications.

Multidisciplinary and Collaborative Research

In the course which the current study was based on, some social, political, cultural, and international issues were presented to the students. According to the data collected, the students expressed their desire to learn more about issues such as global warming, Taiwan's ethnic issues, Black English/Ebonics, and so on. The issues and topics the students identified are important ones. Unfortunately, as an instructor, I am not an expert in each of the areas mentioned-above. Therefore it would be helpful if instructors with various backgrounds and expertise on matters such as Cultural Studies, Science, Sociology, Linguistics, etc., could teach the course collectively and conduct research infusing various perspectives.

Integrate Multicultural/Global Content into EFL Syllabus

In the current study, multicultural/global concepts and issues such as racism, cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries, environmental protection, sexual preference, etc. were presented in the class. The findings showed that teaching them seemed to help students develop multiple perspectives, and they seemed to be able to connect what they have learned inside the classroom with learning outside of the classroom.

As mentioned earlier, Banks and Banks (1993) presented four

approaches for integrating multicultural/global content into the course syllabus, and among the four approaches, the Transformation Approach and the Social Action Approach are the most ideal because the former enables students to view things with diverse perspectives and to understand the complexity of human activities, while the latter educates students in social criticism and helps them become reflective thinkers and promoters of constructive social change. It is my suggestion that Taiwan's EFL teachers adopt or integrate the two approaches into their curriculum.

Use Authentic Materials in Teaching Multicultural/Global Themes

In the current study, the multicultural/global themes were presented through various forms of authentic materials. The reasons for not using textbooks and the benefit of using authentic English materials were stated earlier, and the result showed that such materials seemed to motivate students in further English learning.

In my view, the major advantage of using various authentic sources to teach multicultural/global themes is that it reflects the multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multi-dimensional reality of the world we currently live in. By doing so, the students are exposed to a variety of English, as well as native speakers of English, writing styles, view points, cultures, etc. It helps prepare the students for the rich diversity of accents and dialects present in the English speaking world (Dahbany-Miraglia, 2005).

Truth be told, it is important to note that although authentic materials are commonly viewed as ideal materials for language learners and useful teaching support for language teachers, caution should still be utilized. As Tubtimtong (1998) pointed out, due to learners' various degrees of language proficiency, authentic materials may not automatically yield the kind of discourse that is appropriate to *all* language learners' needs. In this regard, scholars and educators believe that authentic materials are most suitable for intermediate and advanced ESL learners (Wyss, 2003). Therefore it is suggested that language teachers take their students' linguistic competence into consideration when choosing authentic texts.

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