

The Inter-subjectivity of Culture

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Introduction

Working with students to develop intercultural communication competency is essential towards preparing them for the global world. Working with them to be motivated, open, curious and interactive with people from other cultures is significant in this process (Deardorff, 2006; Konrath, O'Brien, Hsing, 2011).

Lee, Poch, Shaw and Williams (2012) argue that a combination of content and skill based instruction is important for the development of intercultural communication competency development.

Textbooks for intercultural communication cover many important concepts. But what do students think are some of the keys concepts they need to know and how can they apply them?

Objectives

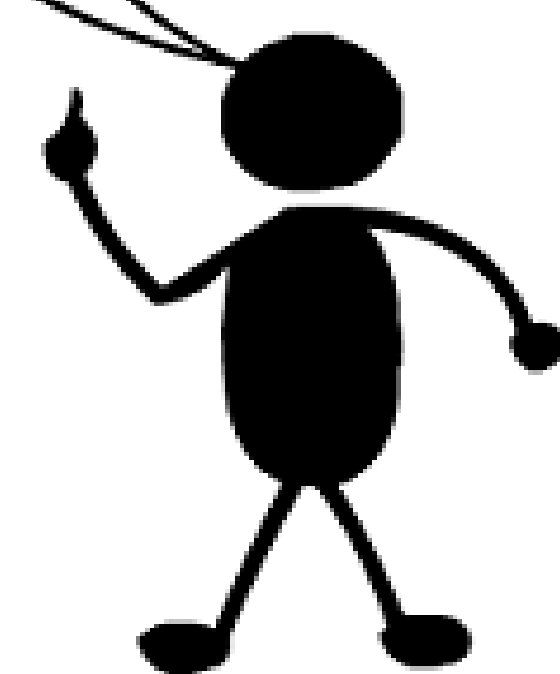
This study seeks to examine what international students identify as key concepts in intercultural communication and the views of American students on how they can apply them. The research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1. What key concepts do students need to know to prepare them to have meaningful interactions with people from other cultural backgrounds?

RQ 2. What are students' views on how to apply key intercultural communication concepts?

INTERCUL APP - BY SUSUMA

To be polite is very important because no matter how "abnormal" something is, it is normal to their culture.



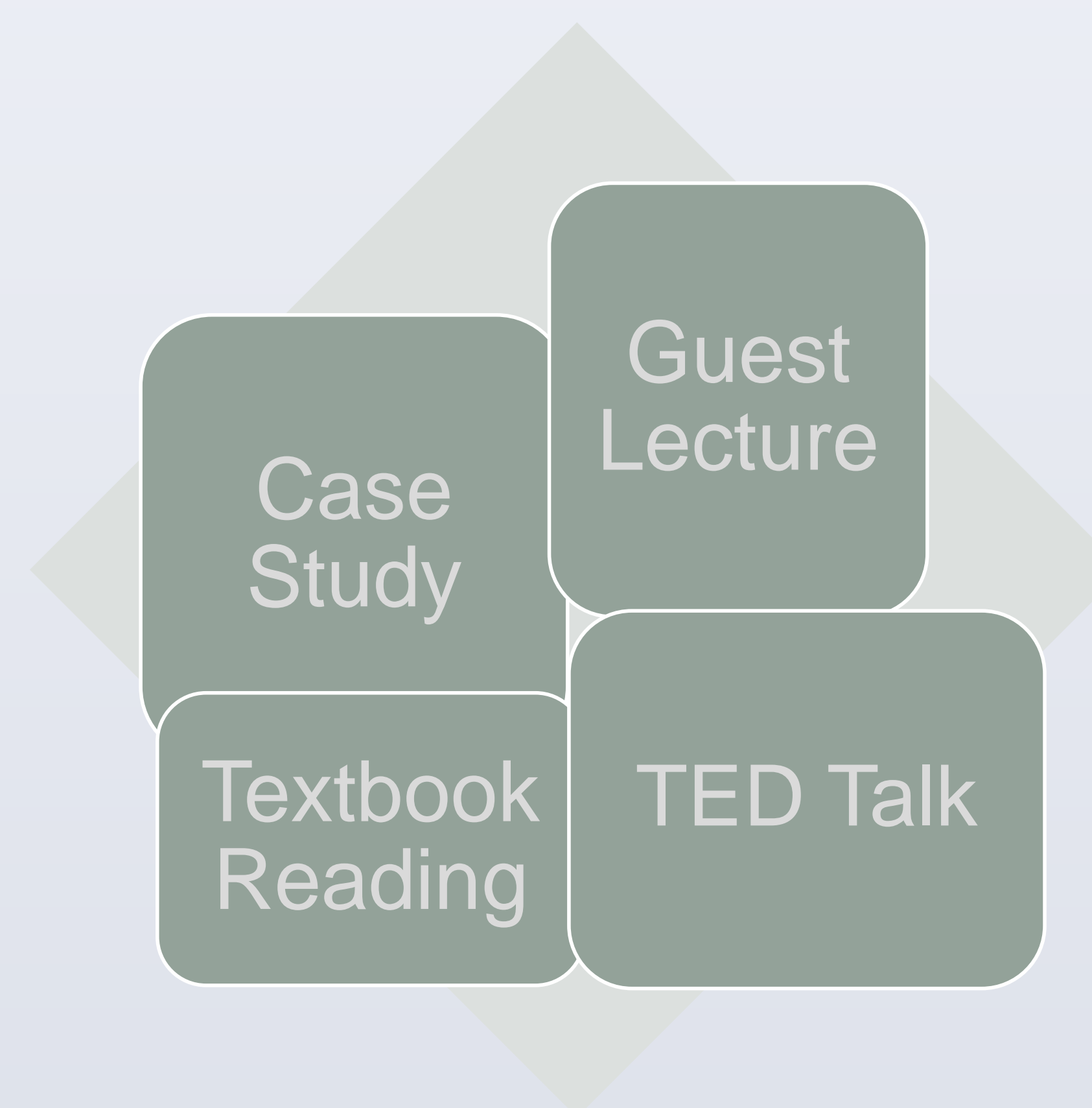
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Method

To answer these two questions, this study employed the qualitative research methods of focus group and surveys.

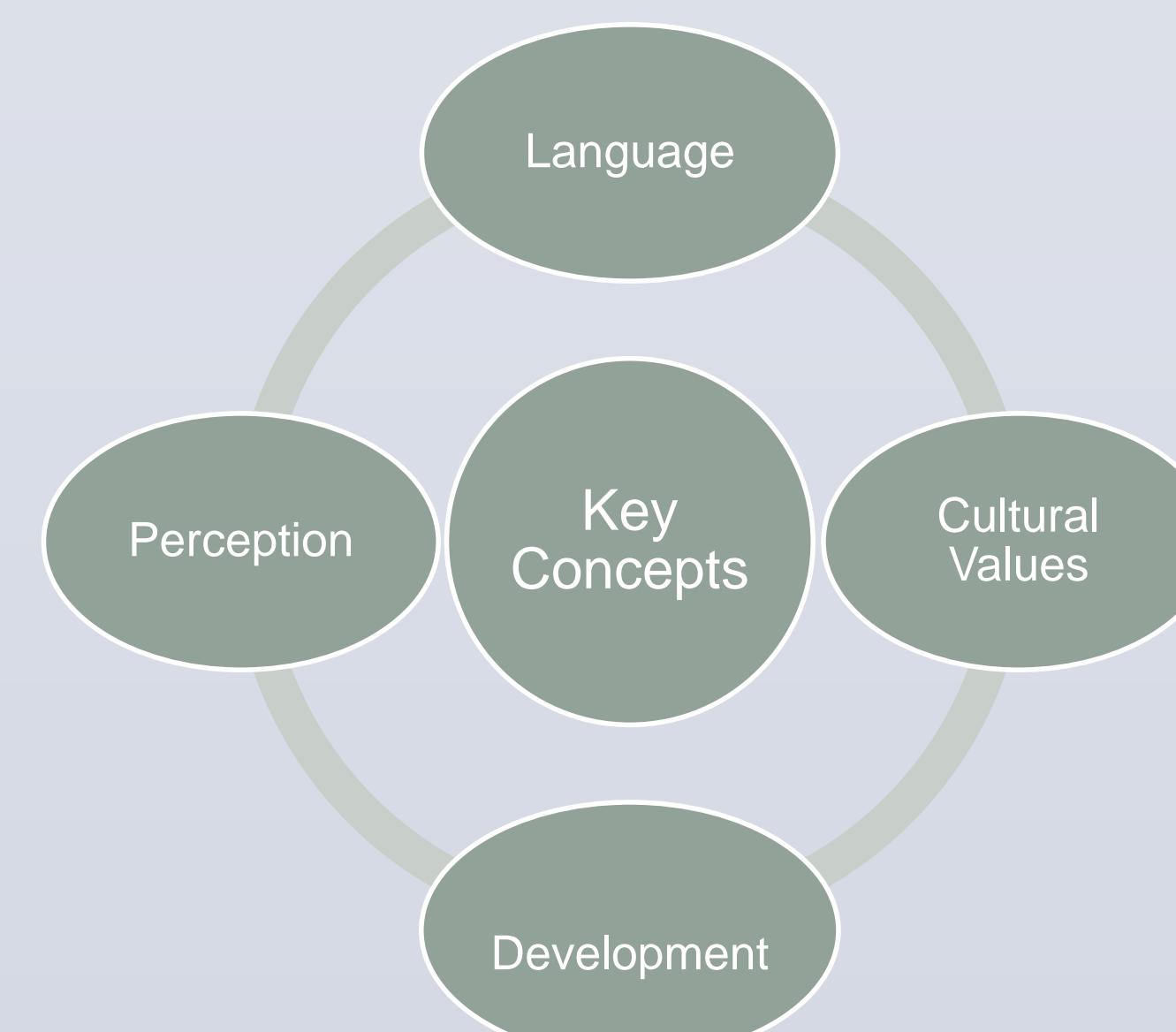
I. Focus groups, are a means by which one can learn more about what a group of people think about a particular topic (Krueger and Casey, 2008). To answer the RQ1, a focus group of international students was organized by the researcher. Five international students from parts of Africa and Asia participated. The participants were asked questions related to their experiences as sojourners as well as their interactions with American students. The key goal was to find out from them what they believe are some of the key concepts that could be proven useful in helping students to develop intercultural communication competency.

II. To answer RQ2, students in an introduction to Intercultural Communication class in a small Midwest university, were asked to fill out responses to four separate surveys on key concepts identified by the focus group participants. Four different teaching methods were also used:



Results

I. Four main concepts emerged from the focus group:



II. About 95% of the students who participated in the surveys after a lesson of each key concept, indicated that they deem the key concepts very important in their development of intercultural communication competence. About 5% indicated some as neutral or slightly important due to their intercultural backgrounds.

III. Students identified various ways they can apply these concepts in specific scenarios. Examples include, the need to understand how values shape peoples' behaviors.

Conclusion

- I. When exposed to various concepts students imagine how they can apply them in real life situations.
- II. The significance of using varied teaching methods in an intercultural communication course.
- III. This study underscores the significance of using students as resources in teaching.

References

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