Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience

Dr. G. Kalpana Devi
Assistant Professor of English
RVR & JC College of Engineering (A)
Chowdavaram, Guntur, A.P.

Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Professor & HoD of BS&H
Chalapathi Institute of Technology (A)
Mothadaka, Gunter, A.P.

Abstract: Engineers play a pivotal role in addressing societal challenges through innovation and sustainable solutions. In today's globalized world, engineers are expected to possess not only technical expertise but also strong interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills. As workplaces become increasingly diverse, the ability to navigate cultural differences is essential for effective collaboration and problem-solving. Initiating cultural awareness programs in the engineering classroom, particularly within English language instruction, can equip students with the necessary skills to work in international teams. This article explores how skit-based team activity in the English classroom can enhance students' understanding of diverse cultures while fostering teamwork, creativity and language skills. The results revealed that integrating cultural awareness into English Language Teaching Pedagogy promotes communication skills and soft skills necessary for navigating a multicultural working environment. However, challenges such as time constraints, communication barriers and resistance to change attitude among learners could be addressed by a teacher with effective planning, clear instructions, monitoring, mentoring and providing enough time at each level.

Keywords: Cultural Awareness, Skit-Based Activities, English Language Teaching, Collaborative Learning, Cross-Cultural Communication.

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:7 July 2025**
Dr. G. Kalpana Devi & Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience

Introduction

Engineering is a global profession, with projects and collaborations that span countries, cultures and continents. A strong understanding of different cultures prepares students to engage with international colleagues, clients and stake holders. In the interconnected world of modern engineering, being culturally competent and inclusive is vital for successful global collaboration which helps engineers make more equitable decisions, considering the needs of all members of society. It also develops a greater sense of social responsibility, which is vital to address unconscious bias that may affect their decision-making or interactions with others. Introducing diversity and inclusion concepts can raise awareness about different cultures helping students to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity or background.

In the context of a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, engineers must navigate fast-changing environments, requiring not just technical knowledge but also the ability to communicate across cultures. A well-rounded engineering student needs a combination of technical expertise, soft skills and a global perspective. Together, these qualities ensure that engineering students are prepared not only to succeed in their careers but to contribute positively to society and the global community.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, cultural awareness is no longer just a valuable asset but a necessity. In an educational context, developing cultural awareness involves understanding and appreciating cultural differences, which fosters tolerance, empathy and effective cross-cultural communication. The English classroom, as a space for language learning and personal development, presents an ideal environment for promoting cultural awareness through creative and participatory methods. One such method is the skit-based team activity, which combines the benefits of collaborative learning, creativity and cultural exploration. Skits offer a dynamic way to immerse students in various cultural scenarios, helping them to engage with new perspectives, language nuances and cultural norms while honing their Reading, Speaking, Listening, and Writing skills.

Previous research on incorporating cultural awareness through activity-based learning in the English classroom has shown significant positive results, particularly in enhancing students' global competencies, communication skills and cross-cultural understanding. Several studies highlight the effectiveness of interactive activities, role plays, case studies and collaborative projects to engage students in learning about different cultures while simultaneously improving their language proficiency. For instance, research by Carter and Nunan (2001) found that when English language learners were exposed to cultural content through task-based activities, they developed a deeper understanding of intercultural dynamics which facilitated better communication in diverse settings. Activities such as Group Discussions on global issues, debates, and cultural exchange projects allow students to engage with real-world cultural perspectives, fostering empathy and adaptability. In the engineering context, studies like Kern & Searle (2017) demonstrate that incorporating culture-focused tasks in English classrooms helps future engineers develop the soft skills necessary for working in multi-cultural teams. For example, simulations of international project collaborations, where students must work together on solutions while considering cultural nuances, have been shown to improve teamwork and problem-solving abilities.

This qualitative research attempts to share an experience of a teacher implementing skit-based activity entitled "Rhythms of India" in a classroom. Skit-based a form of role-playing where students enact short scenes or dramatic dialogues. These scenes could be constructed around cultural themes such as traditional festivals, social customs or historical events and could be performed in front of the class. These activities in the English classroom encouraged active participation, creativity and effective communication. They enhanced language fluency, promoted teamwork and provide a fun, engaging way to practice vocabulary and cultural expressions. These activities also built confidence level of the students and helped them understand real-life contexts, improving both language skills and interpersonal dynamics.

The detailed activity has been given below for further reference:

Title: Rhythms of India (Creating Cultural Awareness through Skit-Based Activity)

Class: Undergraduate Engineering Students

Class Size: 70

Activity duration: 180 minutes

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:7 July 2025**
Dr. G. Kalpana Devi & Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience

192

Materials Needed:

- Multimedia facility (Projector, Mic, Speakers)
- Power Point Presentations
- Costumes for skit performance (if available)
- Timer

Pre- Activity

Class Discussion (10 minutes):

- Introduced the importance of cultural awareness in today's globalized world especially in the context of engineering and teamwork.
- Explained how understanding the culture of different regions could enhance communication, creativity and collaboration, especially in global teams and how cultural factors such as language, food, festivals, geography and famous places shape communication and social interaction.

Guidelines (10 minutes):

- Divided the class into 7 teams and each team consists of 10 members, as the class strength is 70.
- Assigned each team one state of India.
  (Suggested states are Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, etc.)

- Asked the students to do research on the assigned state based on specific cultural aspects as follows:

  - Language(s): Key languages spoken and important phrases (e.g., greetings).
  - Food: Traditional dishes, eating habits and famous regional specialties.
  - Culture: Social norms, traditions, daily life.
  - Festivals: Major cultural and religious festivals (e.g., Diwali, Onam, Baisakhi).
  - Geographical Indicators: Key geographical features (rivers, mountains, significant natural landmarks).

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:7 July 2025**
Dr. G. Kalpana Devi & Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience

- ○ Famous Places: Historical sites, monuments, popular tourist destinations.

- ○ Famous People: Notable figures from the state in politics, arts, sports or history.

- ○ Dance Forms: Traditional dance forms, folk dances.

- ○ Other Aspects: Art, clothing, customs, festivals, music.

Sample Team Presentation includes the following:

Team 1 - Kerala

Culture: Kathakali dance, Ayurvedic practices

Language: Malayalam

Food: Sadya (traditional feast), appam, fish curry

Famous Places: Backwaters, Munnar, Alappuzha

Traditions and Festivals: Onam, Theyyam

Team 2 - Punjab

Culture: Bhangra, Gidda, folk music

Language: Punjabi

Food: Butter chicken, sarson da saag with makki di roti, lassi

Famous Places: Golden Temple, Amritsar

Traditions and Festivals: Lohri, Baisakhi, Gurpurabs

Instructions:

- Asked the teams to prepare a skit that portrays key aspects of the assigned state (e.g., a scenario where people from different cultures interact or a traditional family gathering or dance forms).

- Along with the skit, each team must prepare a Power Point presentation summarizing the cultural aspects of the state they have researched. Each slide should be simple and visually engaging.

- Instructed them to use costumes (if available) to bring the cultural context to life.

- Everyone should participate in the skit and present a portion of the Power Point.

- Should include at least one language-related interaction in the skit (e.g., using a local greeting or phrase in the regional language).

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:7 July 2025
Dr. G. Kalpana Devi & Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience

Research and Planning (35 minutes):

- Asked the students work in their teams to collect information and plan for their skit and Power Point.
- Encouraged them to divide the workload. For example: assign one member to research language, another for food, another for geography etc., to ensure all cultural aspects are covered.
- Provided teams with extra hours to rehearse their skit and finalize the PowerPoint slides.

Teacher's Role:

- Monitoring team progress and assisting with any questions or challenges.
- Provided guidance on cultural accuracy and ensure that students are using appropriate resources for research.

During Activity: (Skit Presentations, Reflections and Feedback 180 minutes)

- Skit Performances and Team Presentations:
    - Each team took 15-20-minutes for their presentation.
    - After each performance, students are allowed to share their feedback.
    - Suggested them to provide constructive feedback to each team on their skit's cultural accuracy, creativity and teamwork.
    - Teacher's feedback to each other and discuss the strengths and areas for improvement.

Assessment:

Assessment took place based on the major factors like presentation skills (clarity and engagement level of the Power Point and skit presentation), cultural accuracy (accurately and creatively the cultural aspects of the state are portrayed in the skit), teamwork and collaboration (how effectively the students work together during the research and preparation phase), and Reflections (participation in the reflection and feedback session).

Post- Activity:

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:7 July 2025
Dr. G. Kalpana Devi & Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience

- As an extension activity, asked the students to write a 2-page report on the cultural aspects of the state they researched, expanding on what they presented in the skit using the below prompt questions:
  - What did you learn about the culture of the state you researched or the states your peers presented?
  - How did the skit help you understand cultural differences and communication styles?
  - How can this cultural knowledge help you in your future career as an engineer, especially when working in global teams or with clients from different regions?
- Encourage students to share personal insights or experiences related to the activity.

Teacher's reflections: While skit-based activities offer numerous benefits, there are potential challenges in implementing them effectively. Some of the common challenges include:

- **Time Constraints:** Preparing skits could be time-consuming. To mitigate this problem, a teacher took additional hours for research, discussion and rehearsal and assigning portions of the activity as homework.
- **Language Barriers:** Some students struggled with language proficiency, which could affect their performance. To address this, a teacher provided additional language support such as vocabulary and sentence structures related to the cultural theme to help students feel more confident in their roles.
- **Unwilling to participate:** To address this problem, a teacher provided additional attention towards the students who were less motivated. Continuous mentoring and special attention from the peers and teacher helped to participate well.

Students' feedback in brief: Students felt more energetic while performances. They told that they not only enhance their presentation and language skills but also develop a deeper appreciation for the richness of global cultures, team work, collaboration. Overall, it was an experiential and enjoyable learning.

Future Scope: In this paper researcher attempts within Indian context for this study to create cultural awareness among students. It is not limited to India alone. There is a scope for

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:7 July 2025
Dr. G. Kalpana Devi & Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience

improvement by introducing different countries in a global range that provides a wider range of experience to the learners.

Conclusion

In today's interconnected world, the importance of cultural awareness cannot be overstated, especially for engineering students who are preparing to work in diverse global teams. While engineering education often focuses on technical knowledge, it is equally important for students to develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and cultural sensitivity. By combining research, collaboration, creativity, and skit and presentation performance helped students develop the communication, teamwork, and empathy needed to succeed in a globalized professional world. With proper guidance and support, these activities could enrich students' educational experiences, preparing them for the cultural complexities they will face in their professional careers. Ultimately, fostering cultural awareness through engaging experiences like skit-based activities could help shape well-rounded, globally-conscious engineers who are ready to tackle the challenges of an interconnected world.

References:

1. Carter, R., & Nunan, D. (2001). *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.* Cambridge University Press.

2. Kern, R., & Searle, D. (2017). *Language and Culture in the Language Classroom: From Language Instruction to Intercultural Communication.* Routledge.

3. Kramsch, C. (2014). Language and culture. https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4929920/mod_resource/content/1/Kramsch%20Claire.-Language%20and%20Culture.pdf

4. Byram, M., & Feng, A. (2006). *Teaching and Learning Language and Culture.*

5. Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching.* Oxford University Press.

6. https://www.irejournals.com/formatedpaper/1706073.pdf

==
Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:7 July 2025**
Dr. G. Kalpana Devi & Dr. V.V. Subba Rao
Creating Cultural Awareness at Tertiary Level through Skit Based Activity: A Teacher Experience