Teaching culture - teaching language. The role of popularization lectures and seminars - case study of Confucius Institute in Krakow

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Teaching language and culture

- … is a slogan, really
- Language *is* culture – teaching word context and usage means teaching *culture*
- Essential question:
- Can culture be taught during a “cultural event”?
- Or in class, for that matter?
At the Institute of Middle and Far Eastern Studies (IMFES)....

• “Confucian Civilization” - 30 hours of lectures; reading materials; other classes on similar topics

• All these are but an introduction...

• So, what's the point of a popular, 25 min long lecture during a Chinese New Year celebration?
Lion dancing in primary school
Zhangzhou Puppeteers Show

Public: appreciation of skill, but not of the play
Two kinds of events: for the audience and for the participants

Events “for the participants” - students seminars, workshops etc.

Events “for the audience”: lectures, shows, exhibitions
Events “for participants” - goals:

- “The best way to learn is to teach others”
- Active learning of:
  - Chinese culture
  - presentation & communication skills
  - organizational (and even personal) skills

Main point: sustain interest in learning outside the class
Failed example: *Hanyu Qiao*

Yearly “Chinese Bridge” competition

- On paper: “ideal combination of language and culture”
- In fact:
  - stale format: speech-question-artistic performance
  - “forced” participation
  - it is the teachers who compete...
Hanyu Qiao 2013 – as many teachers as students
Confucius Institute provides

- venue
- equipment
- a bit of funding
- lots of good advice

Most important:
organizational framework
Events “for audience” - goals:

“I am interested in the Far East....”

- Well-targeted advertisement
- “Personal” and “interactive”
- Facilitate contact with proper institutions: CI, IMFES, Students' Club etc.
Breaking stereotypes

China:

kung-fu + panda = kung-fu panda
Moulds for producing rice wine can also be entertaining.
or 17th cent. Jesuit books: 
Flora Sinensis
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Serves as support for the main “China-teaching” unit”: IMFES

Offers a path of learning from kindergarten to high school and above

Serves as a liason centre for people interested in China

Teachers work to preserve academic integrity