1. **Goals of Teaching culture**

Tomalin & Stempleski (1993: 7-8) explain seven goals of cultural instruction:

* To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors.
* To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
* To help students to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.
* To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
* To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
* To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
* To stimulate students’ intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

Setting the goals and objectives for cross-cultural communication teaching has to be backed up by selecting what to teach. Brook’s work (1968) is a pioneering attempt to list topics that learners need to pay attention to like: greetings, politeness, taboos, festivals, music, food;;;etc. Although the list contains 62 topics, Brooks (1968) notes that it is not exhaustive. Chastain (1988) suggests 37 topics including home, family, religion, clothes, non-verbal communication…etc. According to Hasselgreen (2003), what to teach is derived from what is needed by learners; hence he suggests to focus on developing the following abilities:

- the ability of coping with daily life activities, traditions and living conditions (home, school, festivals)

- the ability to deal with social conventions ( good manners, dressing and meeting people)

-the ability to use verbal communication ( greetings, apologizing, expressing gratitude, embarrassment and love)

-the ability to use non-verbal language (body language and facial expressions)

**2. Approaches to Teaching Cross-cultural Communication**

In the literature of teaching culture and cross-cultural communication, many approaches have been suggested by researchers and scholars. While some of these approaches focus on the target language, some others take into consideration the comparison between the learner’s own culture and the target one (s). These approaches include:

* 1. **The Mono-cultural Approach**

It is also known as the foreign cultural approach (Slauver, 2004). If a teacher opts for this approach to teach culture, focus will be on the target culture i.e. the culture of the language being learned with no reference to the learner’s culture in any way. This approach provides learners with factual information and patterned ways of communication in the foreign language.

* 1. **The Comparative Approach**

Choosing the comparative approach to teaching cross-cultural communication involves both the target language and the learner’s language. Here, teachers may make good use of possible similarities between the two cultures to facilitate communication. Noting the differences between the two cultures is itself a way of reinforcing learners’ cultural awareness in order to avoid cross-cultural communicative problems. This approach encourages openness to the world and acceptance of others. This approach according to Byram and Planet ( 2000: 189) “does involve evaluation but not in terms of comparison with something which is better, but in terms of improving what is all too familiar. Comparison makes the strange, the other, familiar, and makes the familiar, the self, strange – and therefore easier to re-consider.”

The comparative approach encompasses two very important sub-approaches to teaching culture namely the intercultural approach and the multicultural approach. According to Risager (1998), the former emphasizes the similarities and differences between the learner’s own culture and one foreign culture whose language he is using. The latter builds on the belief that a single culture is made up of several cultures relating to ethnic and linguistic diversity that all have to be considered.

1. **Techniques and Materials for Teaching Cross-cultural Communication**

According to Atamna (2008: 291), techniques for teaching culture must have a general scheme. Each technique must have an objective, aims at providing the learners with some sort of cultural input and should involve some kind of exploration and interpretation, i.e., developing the skills of learners as cultural observers and interpreters. Among many others, the following techniques with suggested materials aim to understand many cultural aspects and can be used for cross-cultural instruction for EFL learners.

* **Cultural capsules**

According to Seelye (1993 P. 174), a culture capsule consists of a paragraph or so of explanation of one minimal difference between leaner’s’ own and a target custom, along with several illustrative photos or relevant realia. He adds further that the student has to identify culturally appropriate explanations of the cross-cultural difference for the described situation (1993 P. 177)

* **Cultural clusters**

A culture cluster consists of “ about three culture capsules that develop related topics, plus one 30-minute classroom simulation that integrates the information contained in the capsules (Seelye 1993 P. 177)

* **Cultural assimilators**

According to Seelye (1993, p. 163) cultural assimilators are episodes of target cultural behavior which describe a “critical incident’ of cross-cultural interaction that could be found ‘puzzling’ or ‘conflictful’ but that can be interpreted in a fairly unequivocal manner, given sufficient knowledge about the other’s culture. Once the episode is presented, multiple choice testing is applied with four options that include only one correct answer.

* **Critical incidents and problem solving**

Critical incidents are the descriptions of incidents or situations which demand that a participant makes some kind of decision. Students usually read the incident independently and make individual decisions then a group discussion follows to see the reasons behind the students’ decisions. At the end, students’ decisions are compared to ones taken by the natives of the target culture. (Henrichsen 1998)

* **Cultural quiz**

Cultural quizzes are a good starting point in order to raise the learners’ awareness of the differences between their native culture and the cultures of English speaking countries, with regard to such topics as values, taboos, customs and etiquette (Atamna 2008). Teachers use this technique for example to ask whether some behaviors are accepted or not in the target culture. Knowing the right answer is not as important as the eagerness to know more this technique develops in students. The answers can be given via listening or reading an addition to extra information by teachers.

* **Drama**

The use of drama is a very good technique for clarifying possible cross-cultural differences and when taught properly is “ an ideal context for exploration of cultural values, both one’s own and other people’s.” (Byram and Flemming 1998, p. 134)

* **Technology empowered techniques**

Levy (2009) lists many new trends in teaching culture that rely on technology. These include virtual learning environments which use audio and video conferencing like the Collaborative Cyber Community which allow audio, video and text chat. He adds further that culture can be conveyed through receptive and productive means. Simply accessing an L2 web site can expose learners to numerous aspects of the target culture, and much knowledge may be acquired through reading, listening, and observing. Here, authentic materials play an especially important role because they are designed by native speakers for native speakers and, therefore, provide real data for any exploration of the L2 culture. Learners may also engage with the L2 culture more productively, and there are many technologies that may be employed for this purpose. They include tele-collaboration, intercultural exchanges, or key pal projects. More specifically, they feature email, chat, discussion forums, wikis, video conferencing and Web-based projects of various kinds. As well as enabling contact and interaction with native speakers, these learning environments for culture provide students with the opportunities to reflect on both their own culture and the culture. (Levy, 2009, P.776-7) Added to these are web quests and cultural quests which enable learners to know about the target culture through doing guided tasks using internet resources suggested in the web quest.

**Conclusion**

For EFL learners, successful communication does not rely solely on knowing the target language but it also entails knowing of and about the target culture. As a result, many approaches, technique and materials have been suggested by different scholars in order to teach culture. The choice among the available options is determined by teachers’ evaluation of learners needs, setting clear objectives for the lessons, knowing what to teach, and which skills to emphasize.